

# SECTION 1: BECOMING A REGIONAL CENTRE

## Regional Context

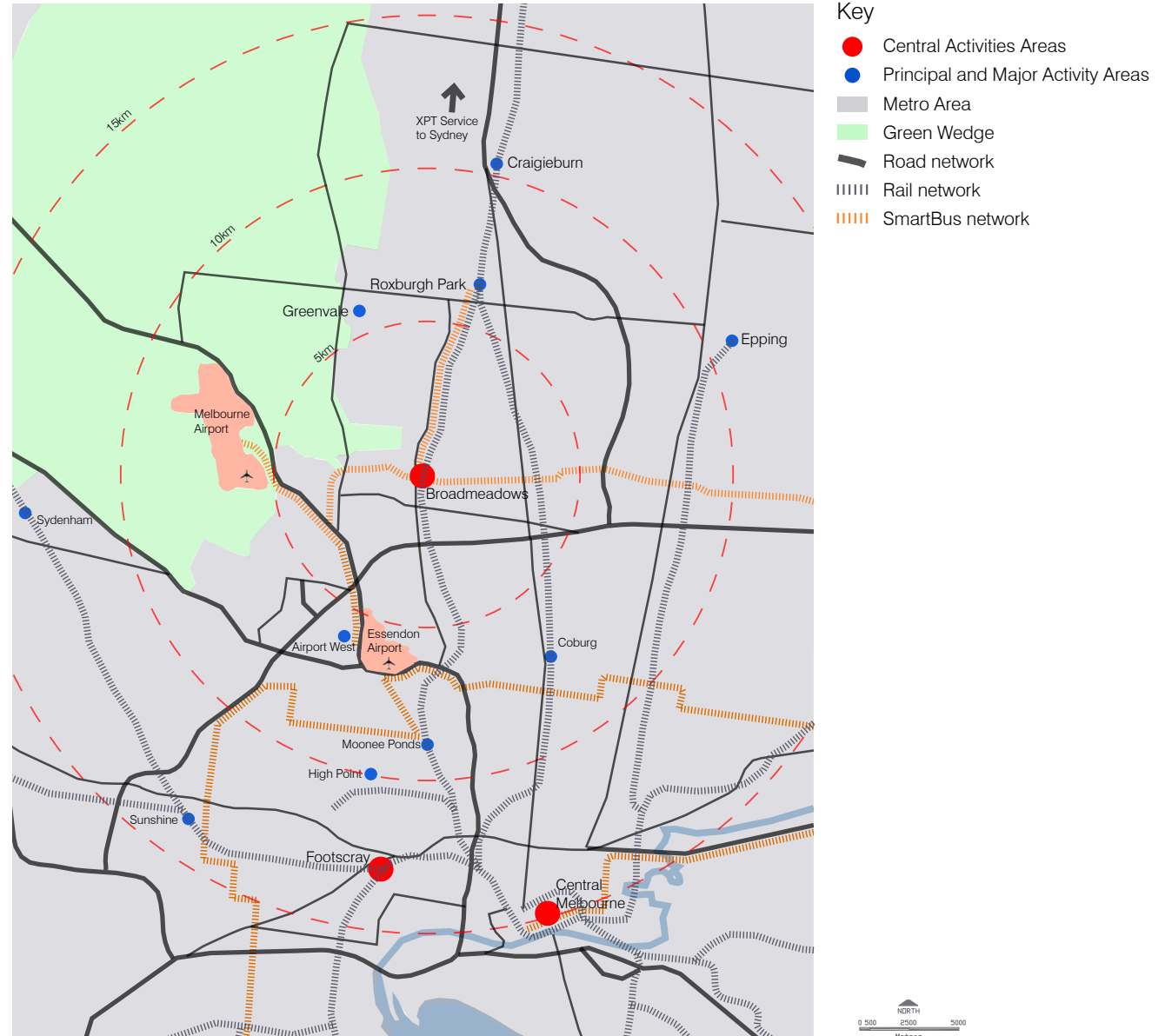
Broadmeadows is located in the Hume City Council, approximately 15 kilometres north of Melbourne's CBD. It is the Central Activities Area in the northern metropolitan area and serves surrounding established suburbs as well as northern growth corridors extending along the Hume Highway and through Epping. This potential regional catchment is expected to grow from 500,000 people to around 770,000 people over the next 20 years, and will be influenced by its accessibility to and from Broadmeadows.

Broadmeadows is close to the M80 Freeway and is located on the metropolitan railway line, between Melbourne's CBD and Craigieburn. The station also acts as a regional passenger interchange for destinations such as Seymour and Sydney.

Located only five kilometres to the west and connected by the Smart Bus route 901, Melbourne International Airport is a notable specialist centre in the Broadmeadows regional catchment. Essendon Airport is also only five kilometres to the south on the Tullamarine Freeway.

Broadmeadows forms part of a network of centres within the region, which include important specialist uses and major attractions. Key centres within the region include Epping, Moonee Ponds and Coburg. To the north along the Hume corridor is Roxburgh Park and a significant town centre is soon to be developed in Craigieburn.

> Figure 2 Regional context





## Local context

Broadmeadows has a long and rich history. The Wurundjeri were the original inhabitants of the area and the Gunung-Willam-Balluk people's living culture continues to play a unique role in the life of Broadmeadows.

Broadmeadows Shire Council was established in 1871, followed by the opening of the railway station two years later. This key infrastructure opened the area up for farming, quarrying and a military base. In 1951 the Victorian Housing Commission started to develop a housing estate in Broadmeadows to accommodate manufacturing workers for major industries such as Ford. Houses, schools, roads and infrastructure were swiftly built as part of this development, although shops and other facilities lagged behind.

The traditional town centre of Broadmeadows was developed in the post-war era of the motor car. As such Broadmeadows is based around an enclosed shopping mall and a series of large land holdings containing discrete uses. Access is primarily provided from the arterial roads of Johnstone Street / Camp Road and Pascoe Vale Road. Access is also provided from Broadmeadows Station which is located towards the southern end of the town centre in close proximity to core shopping, government and community facilities. The transport corridor containing the railway line and Pascoe Vale Road is a notable physical barrier and essentially divides Broadmeadows into two parts, separating residential areas from the town centre. There are limited road, cycle and pedestrian connections between these two parts of Broadmeadows.

Covering an area of around three square kilometres, the Broadmeadows Activities Area extends between the two corridors of Moonee Ponds and Merlynston

Creek. These corridors provide green open space 'bookends' that frame the activity centre.

Significant government infrastructure is located within Broadmeadows, including:

- Hume City Council civic and community facilities
- health facilities including Broadmeadows Health Service
- primary and secondary schools
- tertiary education provided by Kangan Institute
- VicRoads, Victoria Police, Centrelink and Magistrates Court.

On the eastern side of the railway line is the 60 hectare industrial Eastmeadows Precinct. This precinct contains a variety of industrial, warehouse and commercial uses. These uses are primarily located on large land parcels that are transitioning away from heavy manufacturing activity.

Surrounding these central precincts are suburban residential neighbourhoods, which primarily comprise modest, detached, brick and pre-cast concrete housing, interspersed with more recent multi-unit developments. These residential areas are centred around a number of small neighbourhood activity centres which provide for local shopping and convenience needs. Two of these, Dallas and Olsen Place, are located on Blair Street just north and south of the Broadmeadows Structure Plan boundary.

Broadmeadows is located in close proximity to the Upfield railway line and Sydney Road corridor. Large parcels of employment land, including major local businesses such as CSL and the Maygar Barracks lie between Sydney Road and Merlynston Creek.

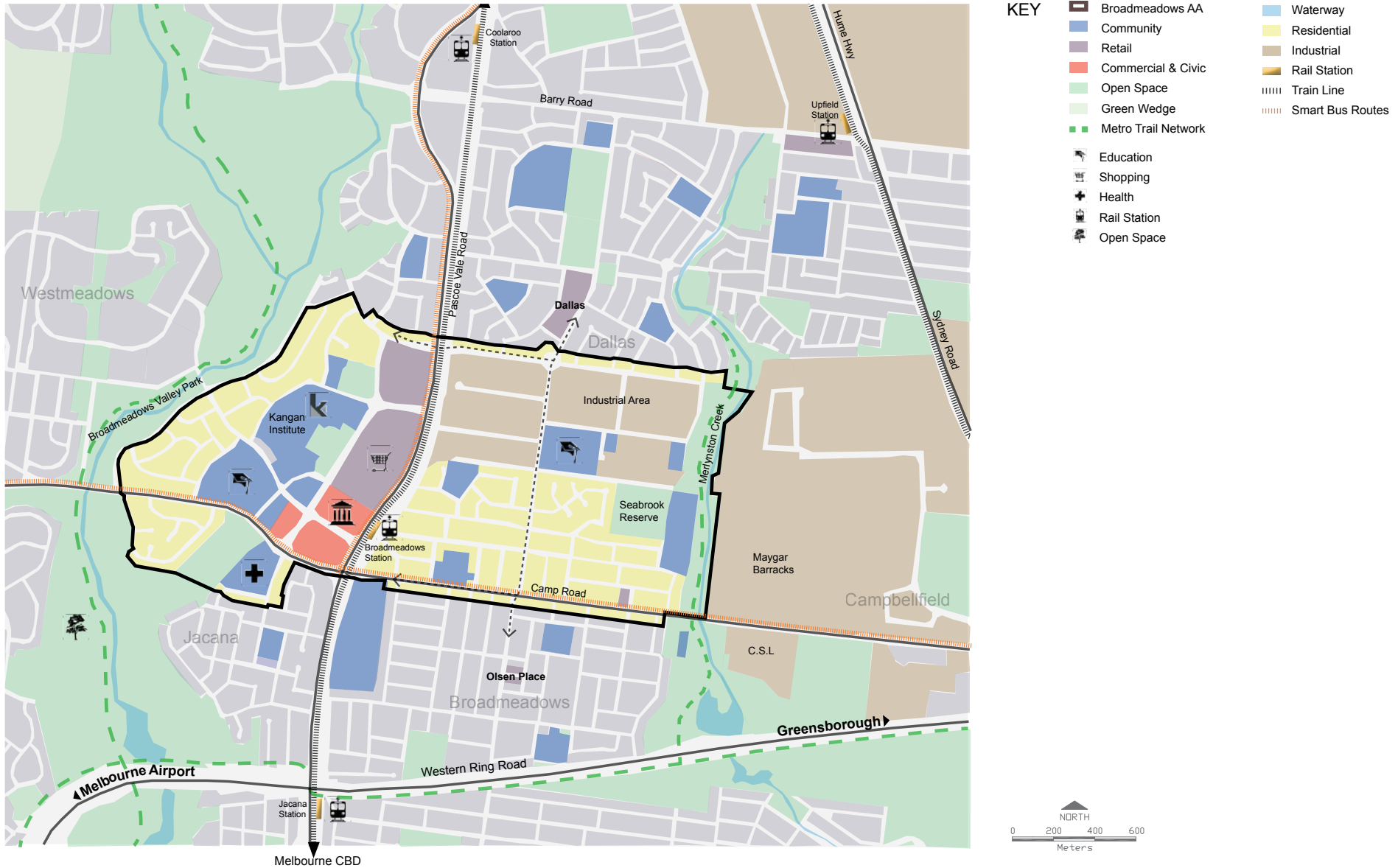
## Community profile

The Broadmeadows community has traditionally been one of high cultural diversity, in part due to waves of migrants who have settled in ample affordable or public housing. Broadmeadows is also relatively disadvantaged in comparison to the wider regional catchment and metropolitan Melbourne. It is characterised by vulnerable and at risk communities, including people with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the elderly and disengaged youth.

It is likely that the demographic characteristics of Broadmeadows will change over coming years, driven by an ageing population, new emerging jobs and industries, and increasing education and employment opportunities.



► **Figure 3** Existing local context





### Key features, issues and opportunities

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Broadmeadows is uniquely positioned to play a key role in servicing the needs of community and business at a local and regional scale. This opportunity lies in the strategic location of Broadmeadows between Melbourne's CBD, Melbourne International Airport and the northern growth corridor. These proximate advantages are reinforced by the many high-capacity transport routes that connect Broadmeadows on a metropolitan, national and international level.

Existing civic, community and public transport infrastructure, in addition to the availability of long-term land supply for redevelopment, presents a strong case for further government and private sector investment. The redevelopment of key sites would result in an increased range of employment and housing opportunities, services, facilities and attractions to match the diversity of activity and quality of experiences offered by major city centres. Ultimately, existing and new residents would be able to sustain a better quality of life by being able to work, learn and socialise close to home.

### Built form, public realm and sustainability

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The Broadmeadows Town Centre precinct has developed as a series of large buildings, set back from the street and surrounded by car parking. This development pattern, in which streets are used primarily for access and buildings sit as 'objects in space', results in an urban form which lacks a clear structure or cohesiveness.

The existing buildings generally don't contribute activity to the street, resulting in a public realm that does not support pedestrian movement or passive surveillance. The Broadmeadows Shopping Centre is a prime example of this type of development, resulting in issues of a diminished pedestrian experience and poor personal safety.

These challenges, while significant, present considerable opportunities for the transformation of public spaces within Broadmeadows into vibrant, people-focused places. New development will play an integral role in this transformation by creating an urban structure with buildings that address the public realm and activate the street with a range of diverse uses.

### Enterprise, retail and business

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Existing retailing and business in Broadmeadows is predominantly in the form of large-scale 'big box' retail holdings. There is a distinct lack of fine grain development and smaller scale business premises, like those found in smaller strip shopping neighbourhood centres such as Railway Crescent.

Broadmeadows is not perceived as a major private sector corporate office address but is emerging as a significant service centre. This could see the area become a centre of service and business activity in Melbourne's north, with a diversity of retail services and experiences and a broad employment base.

#### **Strategic action:**

- Support the development of regional level retail attractors and major commercial development, including department stores and specialty retailing.
- Support neighbourhood centres and community hubs surrounding the Activities Area as a strong focus for local employment and services.

## Places for people to live

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The residential areas of Broadmeadows are characterised by detached public and private sector housing, at conventional suburban densities. Many of the homes in the area are older, not energy efficient and have poor access to services and community facilities. Furthermore, low housing diversity, in terms of housing type, tenure and size, means there is little opportunity for smaller households, ageing persons and students to find appropriate accommodation in Broadmeadows. However, the age of the housing stock, the low density character of Broadmeadows' residential areas and sites for redevelopment, means there is considerable scope for incremental change and diversification of housing types and tenures to meet the needs of the existing and emerging community. There is also an opportunity to deliver more affordable, diverse and inclusive high quality housing as part of mixed use development in the Town Centre, Northmeadows and Eastmeadows precincts.

### **Strategic action:**

- Support the development of new and varied housing on key renewal sites and in the town centre.

## Community and culture

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Broadmeadows currently fulfils a local and sub-regional role in the provision of health, education, and community services and facilities. The Broadmeadows Schools Regeneration Program has delivered significant investment in primary and secondary schools within the area, and the Kangan Institute provides a range of vocational and employment programs. The Broadmeadows Health Centre currently accommodates the majority of health services in Broadmeadows and is at full capacity. There is demand for additional health services to cater for the growing local and regional population.

It is important that planning for Broadmeadows facilitates its emerging role as the regional provider of a broad range of community functions, including public and private health services, quality schools, life-long education and training, leisure and recreation.

The cultural diversity of Broadmeadows is a defining characteristic and strength of the area. This presents a considerable opportunity to deliver a diverse range of arts, cultural and faith-based services and facilities as part of the growth and development of Broadmeadows.

### **Strategic action:**

- Encourage regional-level services and facilities to locate within Broadmeadows ahead of other centres in Hume and northern Melbourne.

## Transport and access

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Broadmeadows is well serviced by train and bus public transport, the M80 freeway and the Metropolitan Trail Network. However, direct transport links between Melbourne International Airport and Broadmeadows are relatively limited and there is no access to Broadmeadows for eastbound traffic on the freeway. Central to achieving the vision for Broadmeadows as Melbourne's 'capital of the north' is the need to enhance the accessibility of Broadmeadows to its regional catchment. Furthermore, there is potential to enhance street and public transport connections to achieve a highly accessible centre that prioritises pedestrian, cycling and public transport movements, to and within Broadmeadows. Importantly this would include a connection across the railway line and Pascoe Vale Road.

### **Strategic action:**

- Promote enhanced access between Broadmeadows and its regional catchments.
- Upgrade the station and enhance east-west connections.



### Open space and the sustainable urban environment

Existing open space assets in Broadmeadows are highly valued by the community, particularly the Merlynston Creek and Broadmeadows Valley Park (Moonee Ponds Creek) corridors, which border the centre on the east and west. However road reservations currently exist through both of these regionally important open space corridors. There has been significant recent investment in open space assets within Broadmeadows, including the Hume Civic Plaza and the redevelopment of Town Park. There is an opportunity to build on these solid foundations through the enhancement of existing open spaces to deliver a safe, high quality and sustainable environment with opportunities for socialising and relaxing. There is also considerable scope to improve accessibility to these open spaces through new shared paths and green corridors. It will be important to provide appropriate facilities, such as the new basketball stadium and planned upgrade of the Broadmeadows leisure centre. These upgrades will encourage people of diverse cultural backgrounds and ages to participate in sport and informal recreation.

#### Strategic action:

- Ensure priority is given to the retention of the Broadmeadows Valley Park and Merlynston Creek open space corridors.

### Key regeneration areas

Broadmeadows is fortunate to have a number of sites that are currently available or have future potential for various types of development. These sites include the Eastmeadows Precinct, the former Broadmeadows Primary School, areas of public housing, the civic precinct and the existing 'big box' retail area. The redevelopment of these sites could help realise the vision for Broadmeadows.

Within the Town Centre Precinct, much of the land is developed with at-grade car parking, and a significant proportion of the land is government owned. The Northmeadows and Eastmeadows precincts are occupied with bulky goods retail stores and transitioning industrial uses. There is considerable potential for new residential, retail and commercial development on these sites, which would reduce the pressure on existing residential areas to achieve the higher density built form necessary for Broadmeadows to become a regional centre.

