

Theme 4

Thriving & Vibrant Activity Centres

Activate and improve activity centres throughout Banyule to support a range of uses, increase visitation and usage and deliver benefits to residents, workers, businesses and visitors.

Overview

Supporting Banyule's activity centre network will help foster economic development outcomes and deliver flow-on benefits throughout the local economy.

Banyule's activity centres and shopping precincts are key assets that provide a range of social and economic benefits for the region. Industry and stakeholders consulted indicated that activity centres in Banyule are facing a variety of challenges including ageing facilities and amenity, labour shortages, sub-optimal business mix as well as impacts associated with the pandemic.

Strengthening the employment and business role of Banyule's activity centres and ensuring they develop to capture greater business activity will be critical to the future success of the network. Many business stakeholders identified the need to improve public spaces in activity centres to make them more desirable to users as well as improve placemaking of centres. Ensuring the municipality's activity centres are managed in a strategic nature will also play an important role in futureproofing their sustained economic value.

Strategic Directions

4.1: A coordinated and strategic approach to the activity centre network

4.2: Support a diversity of uses including retail, hospitality and commercial

4.3: Support and enable Traders' Associations to activate and enhance activity centres using an outcomes-based approach

Indicators of Success

- Increase in visitation/footfall across a representative sample of the activity centre network
- Increase in expenditure/turnover across the activity centre network
- Delivery of a program of public realm investment across activity centres.



Strategic Directions



4.1: A Coordinated and Strategic Approach to the Activity Centre Network

Given Council plays an important leadership role in the management and funding of Banyule's activity centre network, facilitating a coordinated and strategic approach will be critical to the network's future success. Council should ensure shopping precincts cater to the need of the local community and visitors, and are accessible and inclusive for all users.

The current approach to activity centres has been described as piecemeal, and is lacking a strong strategic vision. There is a need for a municipal-wide activity centres strategy that clearly defines the hierarchy and role of each centre, as well as a uniform set of individual strategies that are aligned. Placemaking is also an important component of shopping precinct improvement and should inform future investments and strategic decisions.

Consideration should also be given to the adoption of a precinct-based approach to activity centre management in the future to align with Council's investigation of a place-based framework for its service delivery.



4.2: Support a Diversity of Uses including Retail, Hospitality and Commercial

Fostering a diverse range of economic and community uses within activity centres promotes sustainable growth.

For the activity centres and shopping precincts to generate visitation and local consumption, Council should support diversity of uses that caters to all users, including residents, workers and visitors. This should focus on the retail, hospitality and commercial industries, which are the core business base of the activity centre network and provide key services and amenity.

As demand for temporary business/meeting spaces and supporting services increases due to the shift to remote working, activity centres in Banyule should explore opportunities to capture additional economic activity within the local economy. These activities could also support the development of a more diverse and innovative business base, as providing support to SMEs could attract new start-ups, digital enterprises and entrepreneur-based businesses.



4.3: Support and Enable Traders' Associations to Activate and Enhance Activity Centres Using an Outcomes-Based Approach

Traders' Associations are important assets for Council as they represent and support key activity centres and shopping precincts and provide/facilitate key services. They provide a useful collaboration mechanism for local businesses and facilitate precinct development initiatives. Council should support existing associations using an outcomes-based approach to ensure efficient use of funding, particularly given Council's substantial ongoing investment in these associations.

Council is currently considering adopting a place-based framework for its service delivery over the longer term horizon, which is likely to have implications for its approach to managing the activity centre network.

The key objectives of the place-based framework are to:

- Tailor local government service delivery, including town planning, economic development, community services and open space investment to the liveability needs and aspirations of Banyule's distinct communities; and
- Design Council's internal operations to ensure service delivery is:
- Prioritised according to evidence; and
- Coordinated to achieve financial and operational efficiencies.

If this place-based framework is adopted, Council's approach will shift from undertaking one-off activity centre improvements to integrating investments across precincts to ensure economies of scale in service delivery and cohesive precinct-based outcomes are achieved.

Findings from a review of the activity centre network's management and funding model found that improvements can be made to the existing model to ensure optimal community and economic outcomes are achieved.

Action Plan

The Action Plan provides a guide for the delivery of the projects and actions to achieve each theme's strategic directions and overall objective. The plan includes relevant actions, internal/supporting stakeholders, indicative costs and timeframes, categorised as follows:

- Short term (within 1 year);
- Medium term (1-3 years); and
- Long term (4 years +).

Note: Indicative costs are subject to confirmation and are assumed to be expenditure beyond the existing budget. In instances where projects are able to be delivered within existing resources, or where costs are unknown, these are listed as 'N/A'.

Importantly, these costs do not refer to specific internal staffing requirements for Council.

Project	Action	Stakeholder/s		Priority	Time frame	Indicative Cost
		Internal	Partner			
Activity Centre Performance Indicators	Investigate the implementation of consistent performance indicators across all major and minor activity centres within the municipality. This could include the installation of pedestrian counters or a subscription to expenditure data Spendmapp. This would provide an evidence base to make informed investment decisions and track the performance of individual centres.	Economic Development		Medium	Short & Ongoing	\$22k/year
Neighbourhood Activity Centre Strategy	Develop an Activity Centre Strategy which provides an overarching framework and hierarchy for the activity centre network in Banyule. The strategy should align with Council's place-based framework and would ideally provide an evidence base to define a series of precincts within the municipality. This will provide clear guidance to the community and businesses as to the future role of each activity centre and ensure a coordinated and strategic approach going forward.	Strategic Planning & Urban Design		High	Medium	\$20k
Co-working Feasibility Study	Investigate the potential to provide co-working facilities and supporting infrastructure in strategic locations to support small businesses, home-based businesses and remote workers in Banyule. This could include provision of Council-owned facilities/meeting spaces or advocating for private investment in co-working hubs.	Strategic Properties & Projects	Private investors	Medium	Medium	\$20k
Development Program	Establishing effective internal program to engage with local property owners and the investment and development community to promote Banyule development opportunities within (or in proximity to) activity centres.	Strategic Properties & Projects	Private investors	Medium	Medium	N/A

Project	Action	Stakeholder/s		Priority	Time frame	Indicative Cost
		Internal	Partner			
Placemaking Program and Streetscape Renewal Program	Prepare and fund a place making and streetscape renewal program that identifies future prioritisation for streetscape upgrades and place making projects to activate all major and minor activity centres, including initiatives that enhance utilisation and increase local business activity as well as build community attachment and value to local places. These projects will be identified and prioritised according to the outcomes of the Integrated Placed Based Framework and the Activity Centre Strategy.	Strategic Planning & Urban Design, Arts & Culture, Economic Development		High	Medium/ Long Term	N/A
Activity Centre Governance Model Review & Implementation*	Implement the recommended improvements to the current activity centre governance model as detailed in the 2022 review. Council should also review the activity centre governance model in line with recommendations made in the 2022. The timing of the review should align to the completion of Council's investigation into the adoption of a place-based framework for its service delivery.	Economic Development		High	Short	N/A

*Note these actions/programs are already delivered by Council in some capacity.

Indicators of Success & Monitoring Tools

Indicators	Monitoring
<i>Increase in visitation/footfall across a representative sample of the activity centre network</i>	Quarterly, via pedestrian counters
<i>Increase in expenditure/turnover across the activity centre network</i>	Annually, via Spendmapp database*
<i>Delivery of a program of public realm investment across activity centres</i>	Annually, via Council's database
<i>Increase in liveability across Bayule's precincts</i>	Biennial Liveability Survey

*Spendmapp and Living in Place subscriptions are under consideration.