

Well located housing

State Government policy states that new housing should be located in areas which have good access to public transport, and shops which, at a minimum, provide for daily needs like fruits and vegetables. This approach is aligned with the principles of creating more sustainable, livable, and pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods. By designing neighborhoods so that housing is within a walkable distance of amenities like public transport stops, schools, parks, shops, and other essential services, it promotes active transportation, reduces dependence on cars, and enhances the overall well-being of residents. In turn, easy access to shops, services and public transport enables residents to shop locally more easily, creating a stronger local market.

5-minute and 10-minute “walkability catchments” are used to define a walkable distance. As a base, a 5-minute walk is measured at 400m, and a 10-minute walk is measured at 800m. These are considered reasonable distances for individuals to walk comfortably to access various amenities and services. These catchment distances are based on research indicating that people are more likely to choose walking as a mode of transportation when destinations are conveniently located within a comfortable walking distance for most people.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Train stations and strategic bus or tram routes are mapped by the State Government, known as the Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN). The maps below identify the PPTN public transport stops including train stations, tram stops and high frequency bus stops, and show a 400m and 800m buffer, along with the actual walkability via street access.

ACTIVITY CENTRES AND SERVICES

Activity centres across Banyule and near the border in neighbouring Councils have been assessed for their ability to deliver daily shopping needs. The below mapped activity centres have, or have the ability to accommodate such shops, and show a 400m and 800m buffer, along with the actual walkability via street access.

EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING GROWTH

Banyule's *Housing Strategy (2009)* identifies that housing growth should be directed to the Major Activity Centres (MACs) of Ivanhoe, Heidelberg and Greensborough. These locations continue to be supported by this *Housing Strategy (2024)*.

There are other locations in Banyule, outside the MACs, which have good access to public transport, services and shops such as Watsonia, Rosanna and Bundoora. A measured approach to housing growth in more places across the municipality will help ease the pressure for development on the southern MACs in Banyule (Ivanhoe and Heidelberg). The level of housing growth should be measured and applied to protect what the community value about the area.

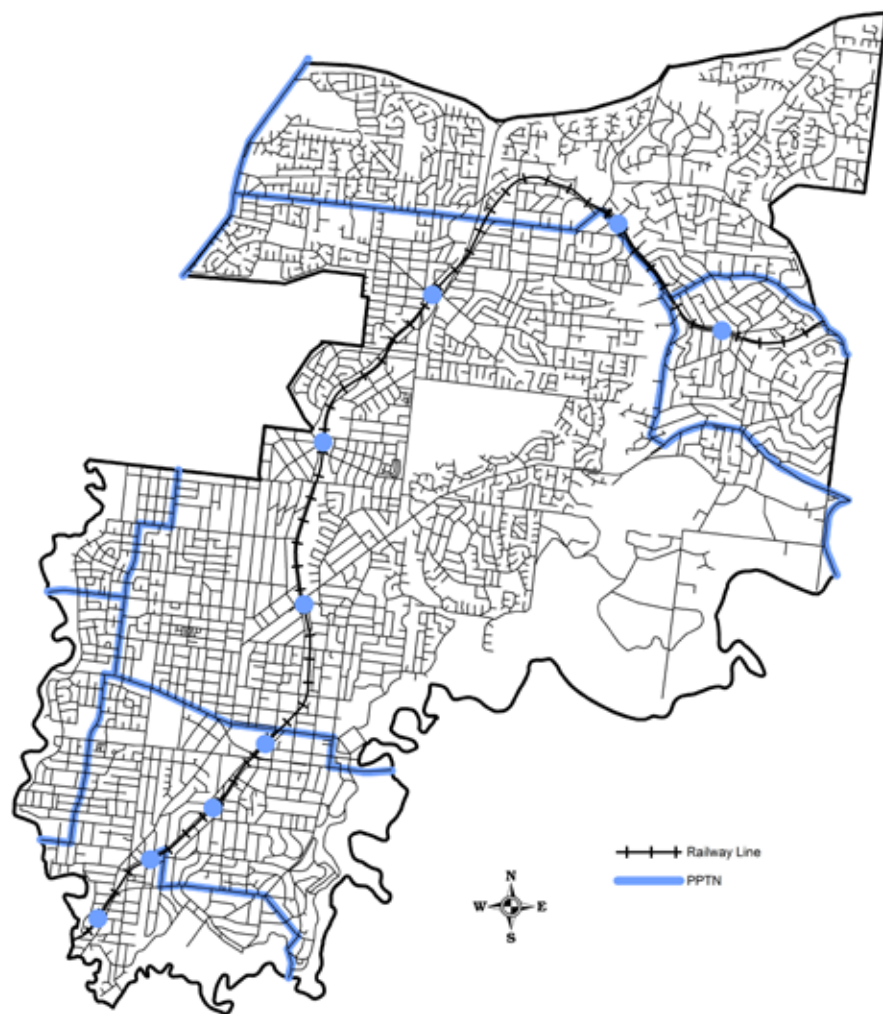


Figure 3: Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN)

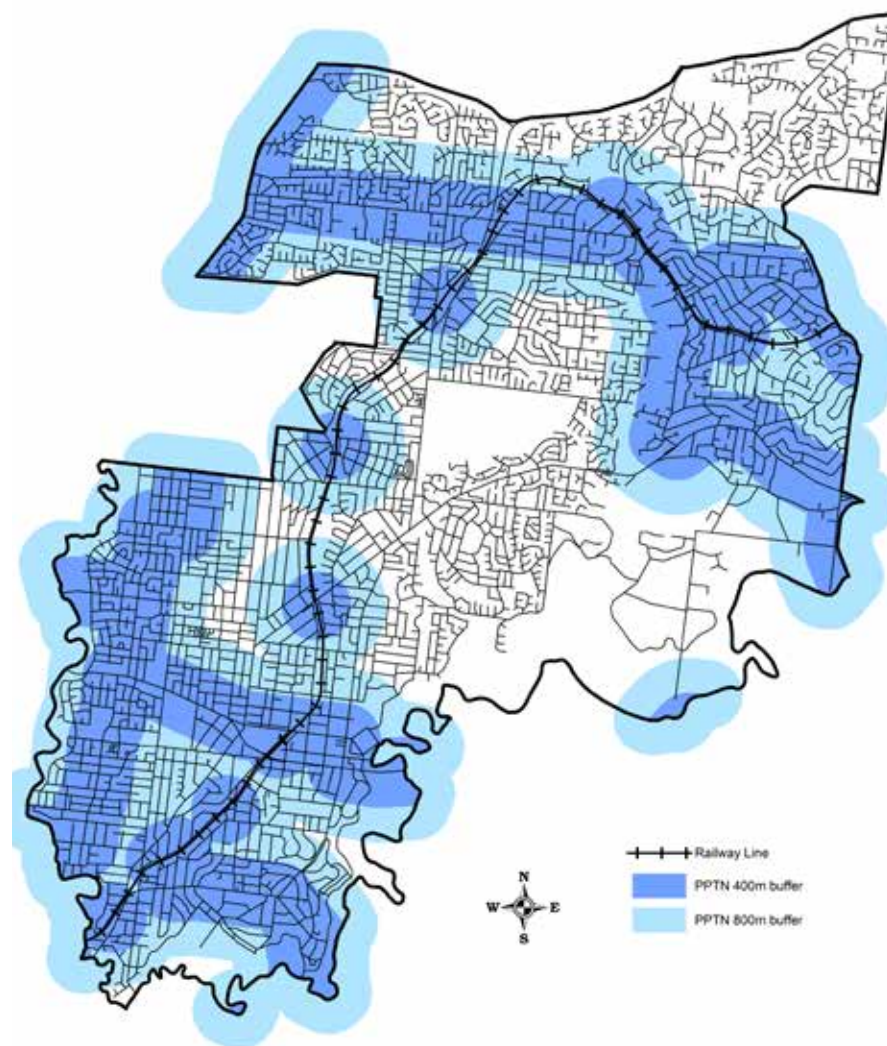


Figure 4: Walkability buffers from PPTN

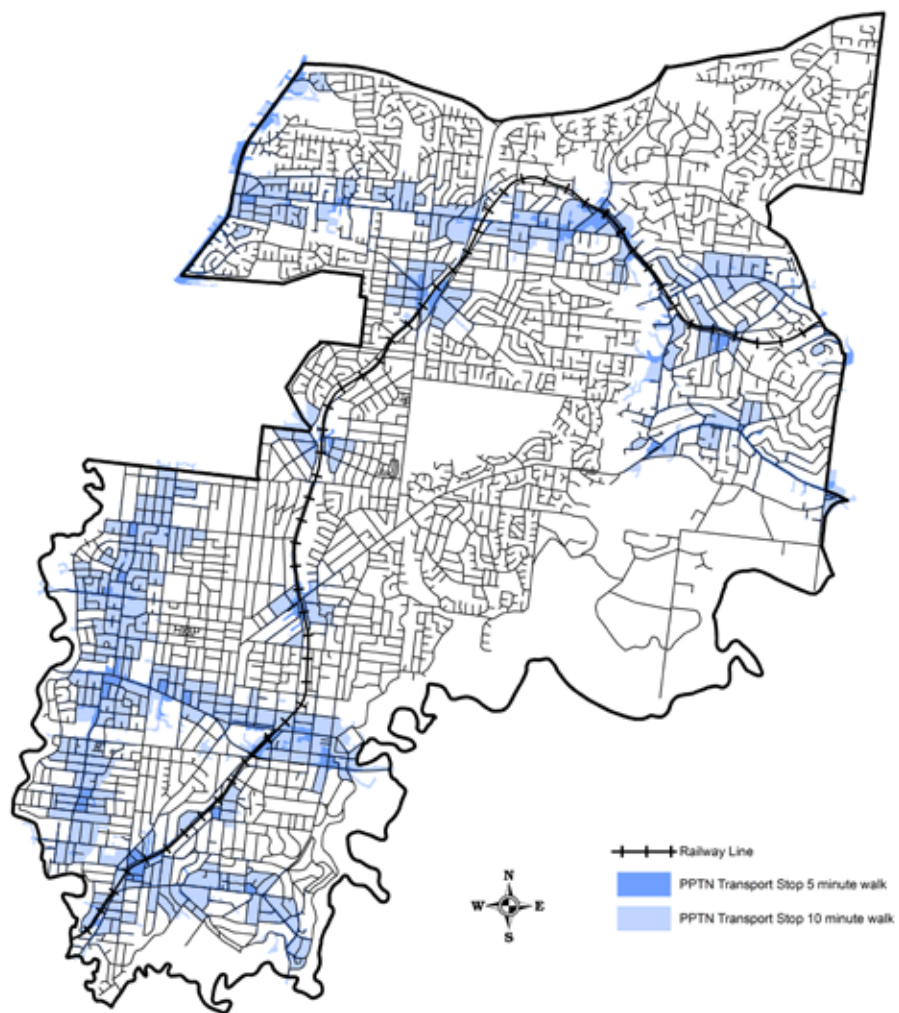


Figure 5: Walkability modelling from PPTN train, tram and bus stops



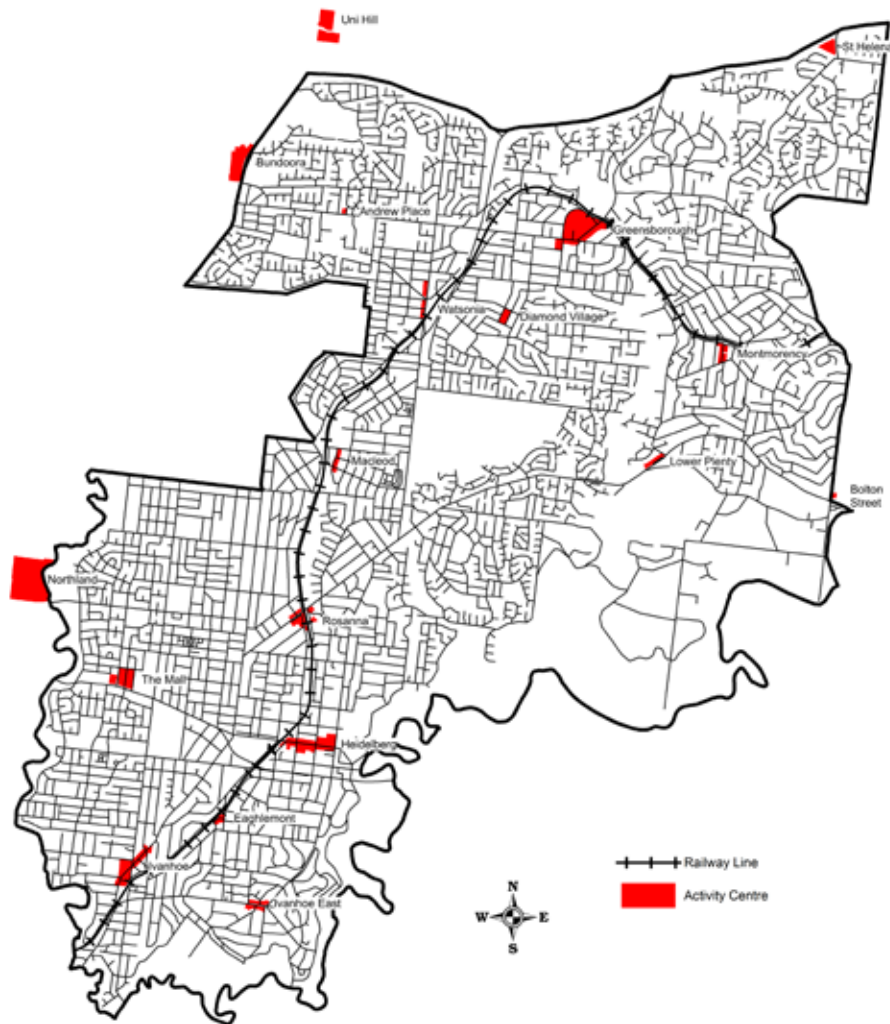


Figure 6: Activity centres

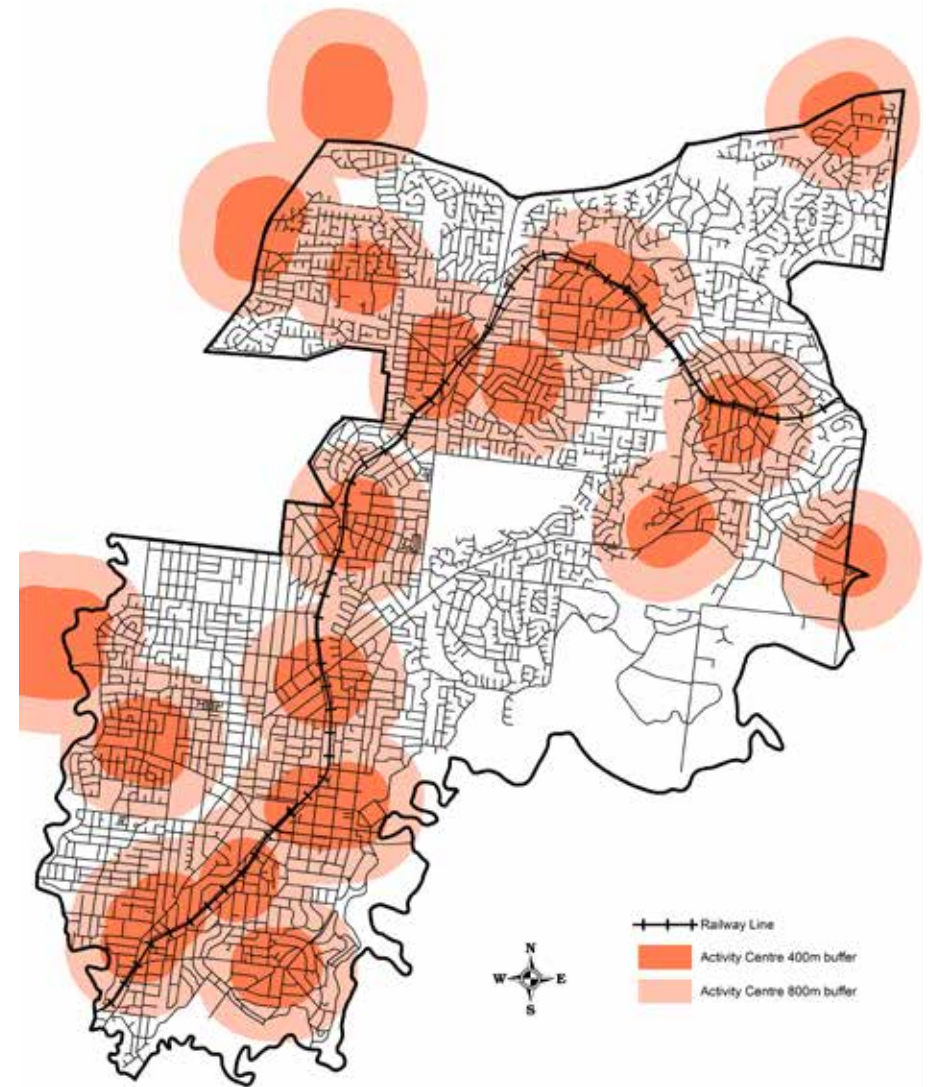


Figure 7: Walkability buffers from activity centres

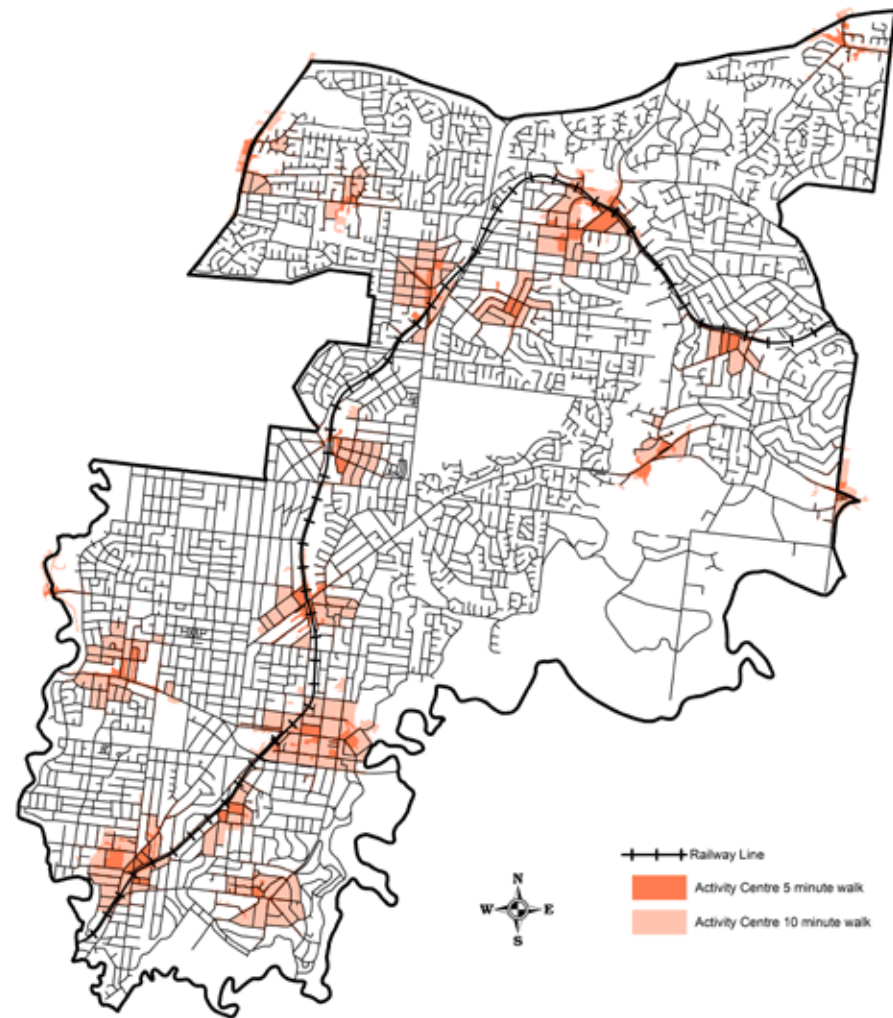


Figure 8: Walkability modelling from activity centres



OPEN SPACE

Open spaces are not proposed to be changed to residential uses through this Strategy.

Banyule is generally well provided for in relation to public open space. The corridors formed by the Yarra River, Plenty River and Darebin Creek which all flow through the municipality have played a significant role in placing Banyule in this position. However, the distribution of open space is inconsistent and in some areas of Banyule, access to open space could be improved.

As shown on Figure 9, the East Precinct (Lower Plenty, Viewbank and Yallambie) includes over 300 hectares of open space, while the North-East Precinct (Montmorency, Briar Hill, St Helena and Eltham North) has 60 hectares, the North West (Bundoora, Watsonia and Watsonia North) has 61 hectares and the Mid Precinct (Heidelberg, Rosanna and Macleod), the most populated in Banyule, has 98 hectares.

The South precinct (Ivanhoe, Ivanhoe East and Eaglemont) has 199 hectares of open space, large tracts of which are along the Darebin Creek and Yarra River Corridors.

Banyule's *Public Open Space Plan 2016-31* (POSP) identifies areas across Banyule most in need of public open space. When several metrics are considered, there are currently 26 different areas across the municipality that have been identified as needing increased access to open space and their priority considers population, urban heat data, Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) index and other relevant data.

As our housing landscape develops, and housing scale is increased in some areas, our open space provision must cater to the community. The most proactive tool available to increase the amount and quality of Banyule's open space is via the Public Open Space Levy (the Levy). The Levy is a contribution to future public open space required to be paid as part of subdivision of land, either in land or equivalent financial value. Currently, the Banyule Planning Scheme includes a levy of 5% contribution for residential land. This rate has been insufficient to meet the future open space needs set out in the POSP. A review of the Levy and contribution rate is required to ensure our open space network meets the needs of the community.

BIODIVERSITY

Banyule is fortunate to have many important conservation reserves, wildlife corridors and green open spaces that support our local flora and fauna. Our community feel connected to these places and care about how they are managed and protected. Our plan for housing must carefully consider any impacts on biodiversity.

Biodiversity can be impacted at many stages of the development process: such as through clearing more vegetation than is needed, building homes which take up the majority of a site, and planting trees and vegetation which is not suitable and is therefore removed shortly after the home is occupied.

The map identifies potential significant areas of biodiversity in Banyule. Areas have been selected based on historic and current documentation (conservation plans, habitat mapping, significant

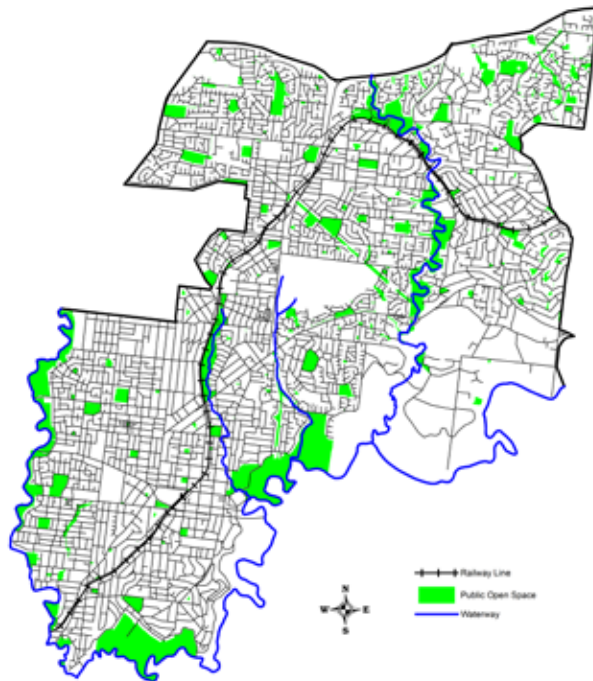


Figure 9: Public Open Space

species occurrence) for areas of high level indigenous faunal and floral occurrence (highlighted in green). These areas are mostly around wildlife corridors and fragmented conservation reserves where significant species (both state and federally listed) occur. These are high value biodiversity areas, in both developed areas and more natural creek-side or parkland areas which should be given a higher level of protection from development.

The other areas (highlighted in orange) are areas which are urbanised that have existing biodiversity contributing assets (existing established indigenous trees and other vegetation) which are important to consider for connection potential to more intact wildlife corridors and reserves. Development in these areas should be careful not to impact existing biodiversity and consider ways to strengthen wildlife corridors.

Development can still occur in both the green and orange areas, with careful consideration about the impact on biodiversity. Many of the identified areas are already under the protection of existing Banyule Planning Scheme overlays, such as Vegetation Protection Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay and Significant Landscape Overlay. A review of the overlays could ensure that biodiversity being supported strongly through existing tree retention and landscaping plans that use local indigenous species.

In Heidelberg West and Bellfield, there is a section of high value biodiversity which intersects with Residential Growth Zone (RGZ) areas. The RGZ identifies areas that are appropriate for higher scale housing. In these locations, the high value biodiversity should be protected and the RGZ changes to Neighbourhood Residential Zone, which identifies areas suitable for lower scale housing.

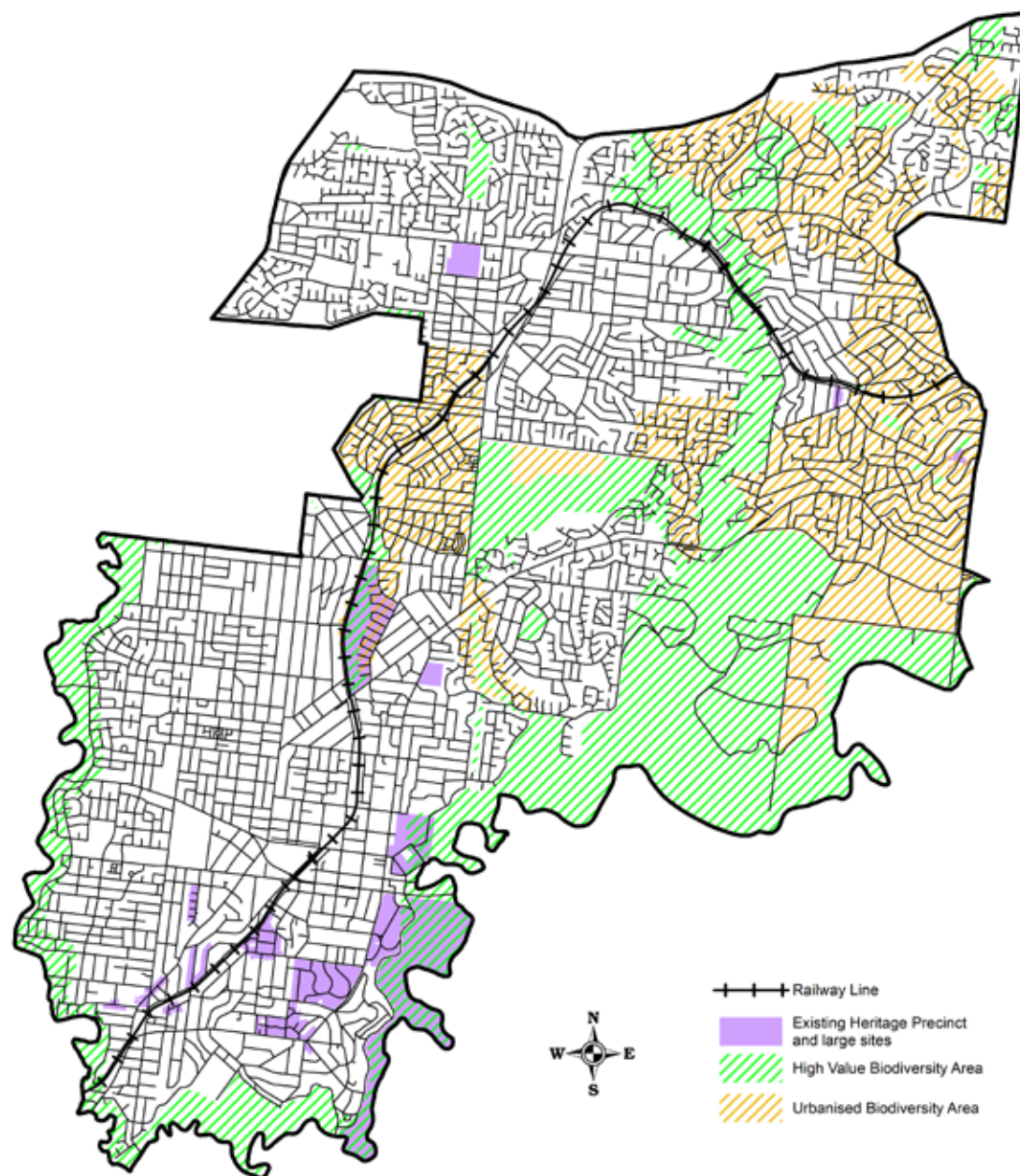


Figure 10: Heritage precincts and biodiversity areas

HERITAGE VALUES

Heritage differs from neighbourhood character. Heritage is about the conservation of culturally significant places. Neighbourhood character is about how the area looks and feels, and qualities that make it distinct from other areas. All areas have a history, not all areas are historically significant. Heritage significance is determined by recognized criteria set by the Commonwealth, State and local agencies which specialize in heritage matters.

Banyule has a newly adopted *Heritage Strategy 2024-2034 (2024)* which provides high level direction to guide Council's heritage program of work over the next 10 years. It focuses on identification, protection, management and promotion of Banyule's heritage assets.

There are 11 areas that are currently considered as a heritage precinct or large heritage sites. The scale of housing identified for these precincts should be restricted in line with the objectives of heritage protection, and identified as a minimal change area.

RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS

A 'restrictive covenant' is an agreement typically recorded on the Certificate of Title between landowners to restrict the use or development of land for a perceived benefit. One type of covenant restricts development on residential lots to a single dwelling. The restriction remains in place even if the Planning Scheme allows or encourages multi-unit developments.

The issue of these restrictive covenants has been considered by the Residential Zones Standing Advisory Committee (2014) and various Planning Panels. Their conclusion is that strategic planning objectives should be the main driver for applying the residential zones in an area, independent of covenants. The Housing Strategy takes into consideration the advice whilst recognising that restrictive covenants may compromise those objectives in some areas.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

Increased population and density will put further pressure on Council's delivery of essential services and asset management. It is important that infrastructure, including for transport and community, keeps pace with our growing population.

A Development Contributions Plan (DCP) identifies Council's future capital expenditure and strategic investment priorities and recognises that funding for these projects must (at least in part) come from new residential development. It acknowledges that new residential development can add stress on the existing infrastructure, and therefore should contribute to upgrades which can accommodate the population growth. A review of Banyule's DCP is required and this Housing Strategy will provide input in terms of the location of new housing.

We must also continue to advocate to the Victorian Government to ensure that existing and future state-led infrastructure projects (e.g. the

North East link and Suburban Rail Link) deliver the best possible outcomes for our community, especially if we are to meet the State's housing density requirements. This includes an integrated and efficient transport system and supporting infrastructure that better connects community to sustainable and active transport options.

FIRE AND FLOOD RISK

The planning and building systems regulate land use and development to ensure bushfire and flooding risk are considered and managed. When planning for housing growth, state planning policy relating to bushfire risk requires that priority is given to protection of human life over all other policy considerations.

In Banyule, areas of higher fire risk are zoned Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) through which housing growth is limited. Housing growth is directed away from these low density residential areas and they will remain LDRZ.

Higher flood risk areas are mostly located in open space areas. Higher flood risk is managed through the Special Building Overlay (SBO), which provides direction on how development can occur. Residential properties affected by the SBO are often in high value biodiversity areas and this strategy recommends minimal housing growth in these areas.