Somerton Road & Reservoir Drive,
Coolaroo

Strategic Analysis Report

September 2003
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the report prepared by Coomes Consulting and dated October 2001. The Coomes Report has been reviewed and amended by Council to bring it in line with Hume City Council's current thinking on the strategic directions for the site at the south-east corner of Somerton Road and Pascoe Vale, including the land either side of Reservoir Road, Coolaroo.

This report considers the further strategic justification required by the Panel into the Amendment C6, to advance the rezoning of the site off Pascoe Vale Road/Reservoir Road, Somerton. (Attachment 1 indicates the PUZ land, the rezoning of which is the subject of Amendment C21).

This report addresses the strategic role and zoning of a vacant area of 18.57ha on the southeast corner of Somerton and Pascoe Vale Roads, Coolaroo, in the City of Hume.

The northern portion of the land, generally to Somerton Road is currently zoned Business 4, whilst the balance of the site to the south is zoned Public Use 1.

The report is to be read in conjunction with an amendment to the Hume Planning Scheme proposing the rezoning of the southern portion of the above land from Public Use Zone to Business 4 Zone.

The amendment also provides additional strategic direction on the future use and development of the site through proposed changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and the introduction of a new site-specific interim planning policy.

This report has been prepared in the context of the existing planning scheme, including its supporting studies and relies upon established sources of information.

The report draws attention to the need for a clearer statement on activity centres throughout the municipality, but does draft such a strategy.

In this regard, the report is a stand-alone document that deals specifically with the subject land, whilst also illustrating the relationships it has with the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre and provides limited commentary as to how it integrates in the broader context of commercial and industrial land within the municipality.
1.1 The land

The land had been used as a water reservoir by Melbourne Water and therefore had Public Purposes zoning under the Hume Planning Scheme. However, the reservoir was surplus to Melbourne Water's needs and was filled in and the land has been transferred to the Urban Land Corporation (ULC).

As shown on Map 2 (Attachment 2):

- the land has been subdivided into 8 lots,
- a corner area of approximately 5ha has been severed by an internal road (Reservoir Drive); and
- about 0.65ha has been retained for water distribution facilities by Melbourne Water.

1.2 Amendment C6

In April 2000, on the ULC's request, the Council exhibited and amendment (C6) to the Hume Planning Scheme, which proposed to rezone the majority of the land to Business 4, to allow for restricted retailing and associated activities. The more prominent corner area was to be rezoned to Business 2.

The Amendment attracted 8 submissions. These were considered by a Panel appointed by the Minister, which handed down an 'Interim Report' on 10 January 2001, heard further submissions, then produced a 'Supplementary Report', on February 2001.

The Panel did not support the proposed Business 2 zoning but in summary recommended that:

1. the four lots facing Somerton Road by rezoned to Business 4;
2(a) minimum floor areas not be set 'at this time' for premises to be developed on the four frontage lots, but
2(b) be considered in the context of a policy statement that guides development of the whole site;
3. an existing clause on the land's use as a reservoir be deleted;
4. an interim policy statement be developed for the four lots to be rezoned, emphasising the need to complement the
Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre, to the immediate north; and

5. A strategic analysis be undertaken and used:
   - as the basis for an amendment to the MSS; and
   - to define the appropriate zoning and any development controls to be applied to the land.

The amendment to the MSS is to set out a strategy for restricted retailing, the subject land’s place in that strategy, its relationship to the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre, and the implications for its zoning and management of development.

This study seeks to give effect to the above recommendations of the Panel.
2.0 METHODOLOGY

This report does not reproduce the detailed evidence and other submission presented to the Panel in respect of Planning Scheme Amendment C6, but draws upon some of the principal conclusions offered by the material.

The study has:

- Reviewed all submissions to the hearing and the Panel's Interim and Supplementary Reports, including:
  - The planning evidence prepared by Rob Milner of Coomes Consulting Group for Best Hooper, solicitors on behalf of the City of Hume dated October 2000.
  - The evidence prepared by Jebb Holland Dimassi for Arnold Bloch Leibler on behalf of Birdwood Developments Pty Ltd dated October 2000.
  - The planning evidence prepared by Julie Katz of the Planning Group on behalf of Birdwood Developments Pty Ltd dated October 2000.
  - The planning submission prepared by Collie Planning and Development on behalf of the Urban Land Corporation (ULC).
  - The planning submission prepared by urbis on behalf of the Gandel Group of Companies, dated October 2000.
  - The submission prepared by Essential Economics on behalf of the Urban Land Corporation (ULC), dated October 2000.

- Consulted Council and reviewed its files,

- Reviewed the Hume Planning Scheme, especially the objectives and strategies for the three most relevant neighbourhoods,

- Consulted several major stakeholders, including representatives of the:
  a. Urban Land Corporation (owners of most of the site),
  b. Gandel Retail Trust, (owners and operators of Roxburgh Park and Broadmeadows Shopping Centres),
  c. Pacific Shopping Centres, owners of Epping Plaza Shopping centre,
  d. Visy Industries, owners of the adjoining land to the south and the major paper and cardboard manufacturing and recycling plant to the south-east, and
e. Birdwood Developments Pty. Ltd. Owners of Lot 3, on the south-east corner of Somerton Road and Reservoir Drive;

- Undertaken a strategic review of the factors affecting the site, the activity centre (which the site’s development would effectively diversify), the scope of restricted retailing and other forms of highway retail and associated development;

- Assessed the land use options for the site;

- Reviewed the appropriate zoning and the case for detailed development controls; and

- Formulated proposals for planning provisions for the site and variations to associated strategies.

This report concludes with recommendation for the Hume Planning Scheme Amendment C21.

The report also recommends that an interim policy for the use and development of the site be implemented immediately as part of the planning scheme amendment.
3.0 MUNICIPAL CONTEXT

3.1 Panel Position

This report was commissioned by Council, in response to the Panel's concerns in essence that:

- There is not a sufficient strategic foundation for the proposed amendment;

- In particular, there is no strategy on the distribution or management of 'restricted retail' development in the City, or in this Corridor;

- Although there are local policies in place for some adjacent areas, they do not indicate the relationship to this site;

- There is no definition of the intended development or use of this land, or of its relationship to the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre; and

- There needs to be a reassessment of the appropriate zoning of the southerly 75% of the land (although the Panel accepts that Business 4 may be appropriate), plus a review of whether there is a need to:
  - specify minimum floor areas, or
  - apply a design and development overlay.

3.2 Current Strategy Context

The Interim Panel Report contains a succinct summary of the key State and Local Planning Policies relevant to this site, in Sections 6.1 to 6.3 (pages 13-17); and an outline of considerations which are fundamental to the assessment of the Amendment (Section 6.4, pages 18-21).

The State and Local Planning Policies provide the foundation for all planning decisions, and some of the key ones which affect Amendment C6 are worth highlighting, as follows:

3.2.1 State Planning and Policy Framework (SPPF)

As stated by the Panel, the objective for planning in Victoria is:
To provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land as provided in the Planning and Environment Act 1987. (Clause 11)

This objective is to be achieved through:

Appropriate land use and development planning policies and practices which integrate relevant environmental, social and economic factors in the interests of net community benefit and sustainable development. (Clause 12)

Clause 13 sets out principles of land use and development planning, including the ‘Settlement’ principle, under which planning is to anticipate and respond to the needs of existing and future communities through the provision of zoned and serviced land for commercial purposes.

Clause 14.01 seeks a sufficient supply of land, for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional and other public uses. It states that planning should adopt at least a 10-year horizon.

- Outward metropolitan growth, under Clause 14.02, is to be confined to designated growth corridors, such as the Merri Corridor. Within these growth corridors consolidation of residential and employment activities is encouraged and major suburban retail, commercial, administrative, health, education, entertainment and cultural developments should be concentrated in and around activity centres with good access to integrated transport nodes.

- In planning for Activity Centres, Clause 17.01 encourages the concentration of major retail, commercial and associated uses in highly accessible locations. Activity centres should be planned to incorporate and integrate a variety of land uses, encourage multi-purpose trip making to such centres, maximise opportunities for co-location and sharing of facilities and minimise the effects of commercial development on the amenity of residential areas.

- In planning for business development more broadly, Clause 17.02 seeks to provide net community benefit in relation to accessibility, efficient infrastructure use and the aggregation and sustainability of commercial facilities; and states that:

‘Commercial facilities should be located in existing or planned activity centres unless they are new freestanding...
commercial developments in new residential areas which have extensive potential for population growth....'

- The design and built form of development should achieve high quality urban design and architecture (Clause 19.03) and particular design principles that should be considered in relation to non-residential development are specified.

Most of the proposals under Amendment C6 either comply, or can readily comply with these State policies, but the link needs to be tightened.

3.2.2 The Local Planning Policy Framework and its Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)

The MSS is a vision statement, to direct land use planning in Hume.

Clause 21.01.5 provides context information for Council's vision. The Panel noted the following factors:

- The southeastern corner of the City (within which the subject site is located) contains the principal urban areas, with a population estimated to be 88,000 in 1996 (The City of Hume's population in 1996 was 116,000).

- The Merri Growth Corridor (which extends north from Somerton Road, opposite the site) is the principal residential growth area in the City.

- The population forecast for the City by 2001 is 189,000, an increase of 73,000 residents from 1996. Most new population growth will be contained in the Merri Growth Corridor.

- The Broadmeadows District Centre is identified as a regional activity centre and one of the two major centres for retailing in Hume. Several new activity centres are also planned for the Merri Growth area.

Council's MSS vision contains several relevant objectives (Clause 21.02-4):

- The cost effective and orderly management of urban growth in a way that achieves the greatest social benefits to the
community, but does not diminish the unique character and identity of the City.

- A rational hierarchy of attractive and accessible activity centres that maximises resident spending within the City and provides for a range of retail, community and entertainment services and facilities.

- Enhanced amenity and appearance of the City’s employment and residential areas, activity centres, open spaces, gateways and approach roads.

The Hume Strategic Framework Plan (CI 21.02-5):

- Seeks to ensure maximum integration with existing urban areas and achieve the most cost effective outcomes and social benefits to the community;

- Notes that new residential development in the Merri Growth Corridor will be preceded by a local structure plan that describes the overall pattern of development; and

- Seeks to provide a rational hierarchy of activity centres which will support the continued growth of the Broadmeadows district centre as a regional-order activity centre and the development of Sunbury town centre, Craigieburn Shopping Centre and Campbellfield Shopping Centre as sub-regional order activity centres.

The development of new activity centres will also be encouraged to service the needs of existing and future residents of Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park.

Detailed objectives and strategies for eight localities within the City are provided in Clause 21.03. The Broadmeadows and Meadow Heights area (Clause 21.03-1) and the Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park Neighbourhood (Clause 21.03-2) are relevant to the subject site. The Panel noted “objectives and strategies for these areas are mostly 'hard-edged' and focus on development within these areas, with little provision in intent or strategies for the integration of development within these areas across the nominated boundaries. This is an important issue relevant to the strategic planning analysis appropriate to this amendment”.

3.2.3 Strategic Planning for Broadmeadows and Meadow Heights

The Broadmeadows and Meadow Heights area of the City is nearly fully developed and the population is expected to remain stable over the next 15 years.
The Broadmeadows District Centre is a focal point and the planning objective for this centre is to establish it "as a vibrant, attractive and safe regional activity centre that provides a full range of community, cultural, educational, retail and commercial services appropriate to the needs of the local community and the region".

Relevant planning strategies for the Broadmeadows and Meadow Heights area, as noted by the Panel, are to:

- **Encourage higher density housing to be developed in close proximity to the Broadmeadows District Centre...and other areas.**

- **Ensure that new development along Pascoe Vale Road enhances the appearance and gateway function of that road.**

- **Discourage industry from establishing on the vacant land located south of the former reservoir, between the railway line and Pascoe Vale Road, which has potential to cause detriment to the surrounding area.**

- **Identify appropriate uses for the former reservoir site located on the southeast corner of Somerton and Pascoe Vale Roads as part of the General Plan review and implement the findings of this in the first review of the Planning Scheme.** (Emphasis added)

The Planning Scheme response in relation to these strategies includes the following in relation to the land to the south and the site itself:

- **Including the land generally bounded by the former reservoir site, railway line and Pascoe Vale Road, in a Special Use Zone which, among other things, requires that the land be used for purposes that ensure that it acts as a buffer between the adjoining residential use and industrial areas; and**

- **To zone land located on the southeast corner of Pascoe Vale Road and Somerton Roads to the Public Use Zone. Until the land is rezoned, permit applications which seek to use or develop the land for any purpose not related to its original intended use as a reservoir will not be supported.**
The Panel noted that the amendment proposed to delete this paragraph, which clearly inconsistent with current planning for the site.

3.2.4 Strategic Planning for Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park

The Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park Neighbourhood is seen in Clause 21.03-02 as a major metropolitan growth area that will contain an additional 60-70,000 people over the present population of 18,000. Craigieburn is at the northern end of the Merri Growth Corridor and Roxburgh Park is at the southern end, opposite the Meadow Heights area. Roxburgh Park is receiving most of the initial population increase as urban settlement grows in a northerly direction, but it is noted that nevertheless, retail, commercial and community facilities are still largely undeveloped and have not kept pace with the needs and expectations or residents'.

The Panel noted that a key-planning objective for this area is:

To provide for high quality residential development, vibrant and accessible activity centres in Craigieburn and Roxburgh neighbourhoods that offer a wide range of retail, commercial, community and cultural facilities and services, a comprehensive transport network, attractive open spaces and access to a range of employment opportunities.

Local structure plans have been prepared and approved for Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn.

The planning strategies for these areas include encouraging urban development in accordance with the approved structure plans, discouraging rezoning unless integration with existing communities can be demonstrated and encouraging a regional-order activity centre at the intersection of Craigieburn Road West and the proposed E14 arterial road.

Clause 21.03-2 provides for a Planning Scheme response in relation to the objectives and strategies for the Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park neighbourhoods. This includes zoning -

Existing activity centres and the proposed Roxburgh Park sub-regional activity centre site to Business 1 zone.

and proposes to apply

The Mixed Use Zone to land adjacent to existing centre sites to encourage its use for a range of community and
commercial uses that will complement the role and functions of those sites and nearby housing.

(The Mixed Use Zone is essentially a residential zone, but with scope for compatible retail, office and industrial use.)

3.2.5 Strategic Planning between the Melbourne – Sydney Railway and the Hume Highway

The land in this belt is mostly zoned Industrial 1 and forms part of the Somerton-Campbellfield industrial belt, straddling the Hume Highway. This area is listed in the State Planning Policy for Industry (Clause 17.03) as an ‘industrial area of State significance’.

The MSS includes a section on strategic planning in Somerton, in Clause 21.03-7. Its profile states that:

‘The employment areas in the Somerton neighbourhood are extremely valuable to the local, regional, metropolitan and national economy. The primary employment activities found in this area are large-scale warehousing, manufacturing and distribution activity. This area is close to existing and future national road, rail, air and port transport linkages making it an ideal location for further industrial development reliant on good transport networks and freight movement.’

However, the strategy and its map are open to interpretation as they mainly relate to the area east of the Hume Highway. Certainly the ‘Planning Scheme Response’ calls for ‘Cooper Street/Somerton Road’ to be in Road Zone 1, with Public Acquisition Overlays where road widenings are proposed. However, there is no reference to:

- Somerton Road’s role (with Cooper street) as the major east-west route in the region, or as the gateway to the residential areas beyond the railway;

- The potential for rail-related industries and distribution centres associated with the National Rail route;

- The proposed extension of the suburban rail service to Craigieburn and the proposed stations at Roxburgh Park and Patullus Lane (2km northward); or

- The planned sub-regional activity centre at Roxburgh Park.

These observations suggest that the Somerton neighbourhood section in the MSS also needs attention as part of an overall strategic review.
4.0 STRATEGY INFLUENCES

4.1 Metropolitan Growth

The Merri Growth Corridor is one of the major designated corridors for metropolitan growth. It officially begins at Somerton Road, but it is clearly an outward extension of the existing corridor through Broadmeadows.

To the south, the 'Orbital' Corridor, given policy recognition and support by 'Living Suburbs' and 'Transporting Melbourne' in 1995 and 1996, straddles the Western Ring Road. The Ring Road and the activities concentrating along it are amongst the major drivers of economic and residential growth in the Merri Corridor, reinforcing its existing accessibility to the Melbourne CBD, Port and Airport.

Map 3 (Attachment 3) indicates that the Merri Corridor accounted for a significant proportion of Melbourne's new dwelling approvals in 1996-2000, only headed by the Melton and Casey Corridors and the Inner South of Melbourne. The Corridor's dominant growth area was in Roxburgh Park.

Jebb Holland Dimasi's submission to the Panel hearing tabulated growth in the City's Broadmeadows and Craigieburn Statistical Local Areas (SLA's) which meet at Somerton Road. It indicates that the Broadmeadows SLA will continue to experience slight decline, averaging about -0.3% per annum, whilst the Craigieburn SLA continues to grow at an average of about 4% per annum.

Roxburgh Park's residential catchment is essentially west of the railway and its major growth potential is to the north and northwest. However, Roxburgh Park is nearing its limit with the areas west of Craigieburn soon to take over as the major growth area of the Corridor.

A major new residential community has recently been announced by the Urban Land Corporation, in Epping North and Wollert, extending westwards to within 3km of the Hume Highway. However, although it will house over 40,000 people, it will have marginal relevance to business development at Roxburgh Park, as the whole project is closer to the regional centre at Epping Plaza, is likely to have its own sub-regional activity centre and it commences on the north side of O'Herns Road 1.6km north of Cooper Street.
4.2 Transport Network

4.2.1 Roads

The existing and proposed arterial road network in the region can be considered as follows:

a. The Dominant Arterial Routes

The primary arterial system is currently dominated by the Hume Highway (carrying 60,000 vehicles per day (v.p.d) south of Somerton Road) and the Western Ring Road (70,000 vpd) west of the Hume Highway, according to VicRoads.

The economic importance of these two roads is emphasised by the fact that VicRoads data shows that some 19% of all vehicles on the Hume Highway are classified as freight vehicles and 17% of those on the Ring Road, west of the Hume Highway. To put this in context, freight traffic on most metropolitan arterials ranges between 4 and 8% and it is likely that other commercial vehicles will account for another 20-30%.

The Hume Highway is expected to be supplemented by a freeway bypass, east of the current Highway, to connect to the Western Ring Road. This will divert a substantial proportion of the longer distance traffic, so the Highway’s traffic volumes will considerably decline, to be steadily rebuilt as regional growth continues.

About 1.6km to the west of the subject site, the proposed E14 Expressway offers another, longer term arterial road option. This road is to accommodate traffic generated by residential development at and around Craigieburn. The E14 route continues south of Somerton Road to the Western Ring Road, however, the future of this section is in doubt given the constraints such as high property acquisition and construction costs, sensitivity of adjacent residential areas to noise intrusion and environment impacts on Yuroke Creek and Broadmeadows Valley Park.

b. Mickleham and Pascoe Vale Roads

The corridor’s other two north-south arterials are Mickleham Road, 4.3km westward, which defines much of the Corridor’s western boundary and Pascoe Vale Road, which form the western boundary of the subject land.

Pascoe Vale Road’s single, two-lane carriageway has been tested by continuing growth in through traffic (via Somerton Road) as well as locally generated traffic, as the population
continues to grow. As one of the routes feeding the Western Ring Road, it will continue to experience growth pressure. A number of factors will impact on Pascoe Vale Road’s future role:

- The Hume Freeway diversion will provide initial relief, especially from some of the heavier freight and other traffic which uses it to bypass the more congested section of the Hume Highway, from Somerton Road to the Ring Road.

- Continued industrial and residential development in this part of the Merri Corridor and development of the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre, will, however, largely offset the effects of the Hume diversion.

- Bridgewater Drive, in Craigieburn, is soon to be linked to Pascoe Vale Road via the internal road network in Roxburgh Park. This will provide Craigieburn residents with a much more direct link through Roxburgh Park to Broadmeadows and the Ring Road. It will not appeal to freight traffic, as the Hume Highway offers a quicker, simpler option north of Somerton Road, where the residential streets’ lower speed limits several roundabouts would deter longer distance and freight vehicles from traversing those streets. The traffic increase from the connection to Craigieburn will therefore be mostly intra-regional and mostly domestic. An upgrade of Patullos Lane, connection Roxburgh Park to the Hume Highway, is presently scheduled to commence in 2003/4. This upgrade, which includes duplication and re-opening of the rail crossing, will relieve some of the pressure of traffic travelling through Roxburgh Park.

- Pascoe Vale Road is to be duplicated to create a 4-lane, divided arterial road. Duplication currently ceases at Riggall Street, Broadmeadows, but is soon to be extended to Barry Road, just 2.4km to the south. Duplication will relieve current (and increasing) congestion and double the road’s capacity.

Consequently, Pascoe Vale Road’s current daily traffic volumes, of approximately 22,500 vpd can be expected to increase towards 30-35,000 vpd and probably reach that range inside 10 years, despite the Hume Freeway diversion.

c. Somerton Road

Somerton Road and Cooper Street constitute one of the most important cross-regional links in Melbourne’s north:
• Connecting Sunbury and Melbourne Airport to Roxburgh Park-Somerton in the Merri Corridor and Epping in the Epping Corridor;

• Providing the most northerly link from Pascoe Vale Road to the Hume Highway;

• Offering the only current rail crossing in the 7km's between Craigieburn and Barry Roads;

• Providing the primary east-west road routes to the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre and its potential rail station;

• Serving as the main easterly and westerly gateways into the Roxburgh Park – Meadow Heights – Greenvale residential area;

• Offering an essential long-distance east-west bus service from at least as far west as Mickleham Road or the Airport, to Roxburgh Park and on through the major employment area taking shape along Somerton Road – Cooper Street to Epping; and

• Also enabling a key east-west pedestrian-cycle route to be established.

Somerton Road's traffic volumes have considerably increased in recent years, reaching the order of 23,500 vpd near the subject site at present and 17,000 west of Pascoe Vale Road.

Duplication of Somerton Road between the railway crossing and the Hume Highway is planned, as is construction of an overpass at the railway line, which will enhance its safety, fluency of movement and capacity. This will prevent frontage access to the electrical sub-station proposed on Lot 6 and Melbourne Water's property, but both are to be accessed from the rear. An indication of timing for these proposed works is not presently available.

It appears that Somerton Road East can be expected to see traffic volumes in the order of 35-40,000 vpd in 10 years, despite the Hume Freeway diversion.

At these levels, Somerton Road would be a significant at-grade arterial route, linking all 3 northern corridors, although still secondary to the freeways and major radial highways.
4.2.2 Passenger Rail Services

The Upfield and Broadmeadows rail lines coverage immediately east of the site, but neither offers suburban passenger services past this point, excepting the limited V-line service which stops at Craigieburn and Broadmeadows.

However, there are plans to extend the Broadmeadows suburban line to Craigieburn, with new stations at Coolaroo (near Barry Road 2.4km to the south), Roxburgh Park (adjacent to the Shopping Centre), and Patullo's (at Patullo's Lane, 2km further north).

The new stations would all be in zone 2 under the current ticketing system, offering competitive travel to the Melbourne CBD and key nodes along the way.

The rapid growth in transport, logistics and manufacturing activity around the Orbital Corridor and in the Merri Corridor itself has brought substantial employment growth to the Region and the Ring Road has enhanced access to many other jobs.

However, the region's economic growth sectors do not fully explain the surge in residential development which has emerged in all northern and western corridors.

The Merri Corridor's major residential growth areas are within acceptable commuting distances to the massive concentration of administrative, service, health and education jobs in and around the Melbourne CBD. This factor is reinforced by developers offering a range of attractive, affordable housing of the types seen in Roxburgh Park. As a consequence:

- The North and West have become the dominant suburban sources of commuting growth to Inner Melbourne (whilst most net commuting growth in the East and South is intra-regional); and

- The need for radial rail services is therefore growing more strongly in the North and West; reinforced in the Merri Corridor's case by restraints on road use by City Link tolls and congestion on alternative routes.

The distribution of surrounding housing, form of the road network and association with the sub-regional activity centre will probably result in the new Roxburgh Park station being well-patronised, despite the less intensive demands likely to be generated by the industrial areas to the east.
Optimal performance of the new stations will depend on their amenity, ease of car, bus and pedestrian-cycle access and parking levels. Effective integration into the activity centre will be important to both the successes of the railway station, as well as, the activity centre itself.

4.2.3 Rail Freight

Railways are more competitive in freight movement on long, high volume routes, such as those between interstate capitals.

Substantial new sidings and logistics/trans-shipment facilities have been built and planned. The largest has just been commenced by Austrak, 900 metres north of Somerton Road, east of the Rail Line. Combined with Evans Deakin’s rolling stock maintenance complex to the immediate east of the subject site and Martin Bright Steel’s siding 500m north of Somerton Road, the Austrak project, with up to 5 lines and provision for multiple warehouses, represents creation of a major new rail freight and service centre.

Added to the 100ha Victorian Transport Centres Development to the east, across the Hume Highway, the rail initiatives are creating a strategically vital freight complex. However, it will probably create relatively low employment densities and may present few opportunities to reinforce the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre.

4.2.4 Bus Services

Like passenger rail services, bus services in this Corridor have lagged well behind residential development.

VicCode calls for new residential development to be provided within 1km of rail stations or 400m of bus routes; (existing or proposed). The layout of Roxburgh Park generally provides for those standards to be met.

Somerton Road (as already noted) and the internal road network in Roxburgh Park provide scope for effective, direct bus services, passing or radiating from the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre. Bus services have been provided in Meadow Heights (although the road layout is not conducive to effective public transport) and the 541 and 542 services both commence at the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre.
4.2.5 Pedestrian and Cycle Routes

Reasonably direct pedestrian-cycle routes have been to Roxburgh Park from most of the adjacent residential areas.

Integrated pedestrian and cycleway links in Roxburgh Park have been developed as part of the Roxburgh Park Local Structure Plan. Connecting bikeway linkages to neighbouring suburbs are outlined in the Hume City Council Bicycle Strategy Plan, 1996.

4.3 Retail Activity

4.3.1 Activity Centres

As outlined in Section 4.2.2, the MSS in the Hume Planning Scheme calls for a 'rational hierarchy of activity centres' featuring a 45,000m2 regional centre at Broadmeadows and a proposed regional centre at the corner of Craigieburn Road and the proposed E14 Expressway; with sub-regional centres at Sunbury, Campbellfield and Craigieburn. A further sub-regional centre is proposed at Roxburgh Park.

The approved size of the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre, 18,300m2 is clearly consistent with the proposed sub-regional role, as are its existing and potential 'catchments'. (Based on Hume City Council estimates, some 27,400 people currently live closer to Roxburgh Park than to any existing or proposed centre of at least comparable size, with scope to grow to over 40,000 people. This well within the typical range for a centre of 15-20,000m2, with only 3 small neighbourhood centres in the same catchment.)

For this report, it is not necessary to revisit the studies already conducted to define the appropriate scale of the Centre. However, the above observations are useful rules-of-thumb which also reinforce the view that Roxburgh Park's proper role is not of some higher order, either. This view has essentially been adopted by all parties to Amendment C6; none calling for the subject site to be used to expand Roxburgh Park's conventional retail area.

Planning evidence prepared by Coomes Consulting Group for Best Hooper, solicitors dated 18 October 2000 is appended as Attachment 4. Section 3.4 of this evidence, as presented to the Panel in respect of Amendment C6 to the Hume Planning Scheme, provides a useful commentary on activity centres within the region.
4.3.2 'Highway' Retailing

The Hume Highway traverses the length of the City of Hume offering high exposure that may be attractive to a number of land uses. Land adjacent to the Hume Highway is also part of the State significant industrial area and the importance of the industrial area to the broader metropolitan economy will outweigh alternative uses.

The broad range of retailing which may be loosely called 'highway retailing' can include:

- 'restricted retailing' including the sale or hire of
  - automotive parts and accessories;
  - camping equipment;
  - electric light fittings;
  - equestrian supplies;
  - floor coverings;
  - furnishings;
  - furniture;
  - household appliances;
  - lighting;
  - party supplies;
  - videos, or
  - office supplies.

- Indoor recreation and amusement centres;

- Sale of:
  - motor vehicles;
  - boats, and
  - caravans.

- Hotels, bistros and nightclubs;

- Restaurants and cafes;

- Reception centres;

- Commercial display areas;
- Retail plant nurseries;
- Garden suppliers;
- Service stations; or
- Trade supplies; including the sale or hire of:
  - automotive products and components
  - timber and other building supplies, and
  - commercial and industrial equipment and supplies.

Few of these activities, even service stations, are entirely confined to major highway locations. However, most primarily seek locations offering high exposure and ready access.

They are commonly joined by a number of other commercial services, such as:

- funeral parlours;
- medical centres;
- offices, and
- veterinary centres;

And occasionally by places of worship.

4.3.3 'Restricted Retailing'

The various submissions to the Panel on Amendment C6 all focussed primarily on the 'restricted retailing' group. This is logical, given their dominant role in 'homemaker' centres and the major 'highway retail' strips around Melbourne. However, as requested by the Panel, this report examines the role of the other possible uses.

There is no precise formula for determining the appropriate distribution and scale of restricted retail development, or the capacity of a given site to "capture" or "retain" this type of trade. In any event, a series of factors will influence the outcome:

a. Distribution of Competition and the Potential Trade Area

It was freely accepted at the Panel hearing that this Corridor has relatively limited "restricted retail" development. This was amply
demonstrated in Jebb Holland Dimasi’s report. A copy of Map 3.3(b) of their report is reproduced as Map 4 (Attachment 5) and confirms supporting factors including:

- The Corridor’s lack of major restricted retail outlets north of Broadmeadows,
- The lack of substantial concentrations of these retailers closer than Epping (9km east). Thomastown (13km south-east) and Niddrie (14km south);
- Regional concentrations at Northland (16km south-east by road) and Highpoint (19km south); and
- The association of all but Thomastown with shopping centres of at least a sub-regional order.

However, the same map also demonstrates that:

- The largest restricted retail concentrations are dominated by the two homemakers’ centres, associated with Northland and Highpoint;
- All but Epping are located well within very substantial urban areas or corridors;
- The Merri Corridor’s residential growth has been occurring in a relatively narrow belt, west of the Railway, constrained to the west by the low density Greenvale area and the Greenvale Reservoir to its north;
- Craigieburn, further north, is only indirectly connected to the Somerton Road site, although a direct link will soon be created as reported above; and
- Even Epping services a significantly larger residential area, with South Morang and Mill Park immediately off the map to the east.

As at October 2001, Roxburgh Park’s potential trade area for restricted retailing nominally has a moderate current population of about 49,000 persons, (including Craigieburn and the just-emerging Mernda). However, perhaps 80,000 persons live closer than to any concentration of more than 2 such outlets, more clearly resembling Epping Plaza’s trading area.

Outward growth in the Corridor is expected to add over 45,000 to the above figures by 2016, creating a much more substantial trade area.
In fact, it could be noted that even the present ‘catchment’
populations are much larger than Sunbury’s 29,900 and it has at
least 4 restricted retail outlets. However, Sunbury is over 20km
from the nearest competitor and also services townships further
north and northwest.

Nevertheless, the above trade areas for the subject site are
clearly encouraging, especially when it is noted that restricted
retailers include several types of specialists which are not
represented in the nearer ‘rival’ sites. These include furniture,
carpet and electrical stores, well adjusted to growth area
locations. The ‘catchments’ for some of these forms of outlets
are therefore arguably much larger than stated above, although
residents from further south may continue to direct their spending
towards the large, established centres.

What is apparent is that residential areas in the Merri Corridor
have grown substantial over recent times and further significant
growth is anticipated.

b. Hierarchal Relationships for Restricted Retailing

The Hume Planning Scheme clearly intends that Broadmeadows
and the proposed centre west of Craigieburn will be the two
‘regional’ retail centres in Hume, with Roxburgh Park performing
a sub-regional role. It is not prescribed that major highway
retailing should be related to the regional centres.

Given the site’s exposure to two arterial roads, relationship to the
shopping centre and convenient location in the overall
Broadmeadows – Merri Corridor, the site is ideal in becoming the
Corridor’s major restricted retail location. This is addition the
advantages of alleviating pressure on the State significant
industrial land from non-industrial uses.

c. Location and Accessibility

The discussion on transport networks established that this one of
the Corridor’s most accessible locations, to be reinforced by the
proposed link to Craigieburn. Most restricted retail shopping is
by car, so it is the quality of the road network which is most
important.

d. Vulnerability to Competition

Broadmeadows’ Bunnings outlet is linked to the District Centre
by a site with approvals to add another 11,000m2 of restricted
retail or related floor space. The Broadmeadows site will
undoubtedly attract suitable businesses in due course and their
presence may reduce the subject site’s appeal to similar outlets.
The proposed Craigieburn (west) regional centre is intended to be larger than Roxburgh Park. The site has scope to incorporate restricted retailing due to its area (over 30ha) and frontages of 1km to Craigieburn Road and 600m to the proposed E14 Expressway (Craigieburn Bypass). It is also well placed to service the major Craigieburn-Mickleham growth area. However, there is no indication of an early commencement, and it may be up to 10 years or more before restricted retailing would be viable there.

Epping is 9km away, but it is in a larger growth corridor in population terms and is establishing a critical mass which will help draw other restricted retailers and possibly competitors to those there now. Epping Plaza can therefore be expected to attract some Merri Corridor trade and some stores may decide to locate in only the broader of the two corridors.

The Hume Highway has attracted a large number of highway retailers, but only 4 of 68 noted between Somerton and Mahoneys Roads sell electrical goods, vacuum cleaners, furniture or carpet (1 of each). All are relatively small and only Godfrey's (vacuum cleaners) appears to have a profile beyond the locality. The Highway is therefore unlikely to constrain most forms of peripheral retailing on the subject land, unless a major operator established there. (Automotive accessories are discussed below.)

e. Exposure

The discussion on transport established that Somerton and Pascoe Vale Roads currently carry about 23,500 and 22,500 vehicles per day respectively with potential for growth to above 30,000 and 35,000 within 10 years. These figures are not cumulative as it appears that at least 50% of Pascoe Vale Road's current traffic goes to or from the east, on Somerton Road. However, a combined 35-50,000 vpd of passing traffic with growth to around 50,000 in 10 years is attractive, especially for the corner (hotel) site, although some major highway retail strips face divided highways carrying over 60,000 vpd in addition to intersecting routes.

f. Association with Conventional Retailing

Excepting Thomastown, all other major restricted retail concentrations shown on Map 6 are associated with regional or sub-regional shopping centres. This is positive for the subject site, although Roxburgh Park will be smaller than most other noted centres.
g. Anchor Occupants and Store Mix

In the absence of confidence that any of the 'majors' would establish stores of 6-10,000m2 here, it appears that smaller national and local retailers may be the leading restricted retail operators for the site. The largest of these may not require more than 2,000m2 or so and they may average little more than 1,000m2.

This would support the Panel's observation that the site may only attract around 11,000m2 of peripheral retailing.

h. Time Frames

The range of 'restricted' and other forms of highway retailing has steadily widened and this process may continue. Combined with growth in catchment populations and increasing traffic, these factors could see new operators continuing to establish well beyond 10 years hence. However, whilst the planning scheme should leave reasonable flexibility for longer-term growth, 10 years could also see the emergence of a major restricted retail competitor at Craigieburn West, so realistic options are needed.

i. Summation – Restricted Retailing

Many factors, such as the investment decision of a single major operator, can impact on the scale of restricted retailing which establishes on this site. The site has obvious appeal for such activities, but market limitations and risks will curtail its potential, especially if no 'major' operator establishes. Even if 20,000m2 of these activities establish, they will need barely 25-30% of the available site area and only on the frontage(s).

4.4 Other Activities

4.4.1 Automotive and Related Outlets

Of the 68 highway retailers noted along the Hume Highway, 31 were in automotive or related fields, including:

- Truck sales, parts and accessories,
- Car sales, wrecking, part, tyres and other accessories
- Vehicle servicing, and
- Caravans and campervans.
Many of these businesses are already related to the heavy transport activity associated with the Hume Highway, emphasised by the presence of 5 truck sales yards. The absence of used car dealerships is surprising, although there are several further south.

Many of the accessories outlets operated from premises which, appeared to be in the 200-500m² range, a relevant factor if these are to establish on the subject site. Significantly, a number are recently established and a new complex provides for 9 new outlets (not necessarily automotive). If automotive outlets were to be permitted to establish in the subject area, those that are typically unattractive or noisy would need to be screened out, or tightly regulated in their location and operation.

The land could attract one or possibly more car dealerships.

4.4.2 Building and Related Products

Outlets offering timber and hardware, plumbing, plaster, doors and windows, roof and interior tiles and associated products occupied another 11 outlets along the Hume Highway despite the presence of Bunnings in Broadmeadows, to the west. These have also obviously been attracted by the highway exposure and industrial zoning. Some of these also can be unsightly or require noisy machinery to mover products. If permissible, these would also need to be tightly managed or excluded from frontages opposite housing.

4.4.3 Uses or Combination of uses Serving Industry and Housing

Occupiers of major industrial areas need access to motels, conference/meeting facilities and restaurants; their staff will use hotels and bistros and residents will use most of the above including reception facilities. However, the emphasis and peak times of use do vary, so a business which provides most or all of the above services can spread its hours of effective operation whilst increasing total patronage.

Whilst motels and conference/reception facilities are also available along the Hume Highway, the subject site offers a more attractive environment and links to the shopping centre as well as to other highway retail outlets. The existing hotel permit offers a nucleus of such activities but the others would ideally be attracted, preferably to one of the adjacent sites ideally in Pascoe Vale Road.
4.4.4 Offices and Consulting Rooms

Offices may also provide services to industry, retailers and residents. Whilst they are not expected to require substantial floor areas, offices would provide synergies with other activities and should be able to establish.

A substantial medical centre has already been proposed and a centre with a range of consulting rooms and/or a small private hospital would provide valuable community services. It would potentially absorb another lot, probably on one of the arterials (preferably Pascoe Vale Road, as it would relate better to housing than most other options.)

4.4.5 Nurseries and Garden Supplies

There is already one nursery and garden supply centre along Somerton Road, to the east, in the industrial area. These may be valid uses for the site.

4.4.6 Industry and Warehousing

The above discussion leads to the conclusion that:

- "highway" retailers may not occupy more than 10-20,000 square meters of floor area or 3-4 hectares of the total site;

- one site is committed to the hotel;

- desirably, another 1.6-1.7 hectare lot would be occupied by a motel-conference-restaurant-reception centre and another lot by consulting rooms;

- the above activities could absorb all of the main frontage lots;

- one or more car dealerships may be attracted if permitted and if land is available on Somerton Road;

- the lots lacking arterial exposure are unlikely to attract substantial interest from most of the assessed activities. Specialised businesses such as importers and distributors of industrial products and supplies may be well located on the less useable lots but it is believed that other large area users should be assessed.

Industry and warehousing are obvious candidates because:
they occupy a range of building sizes which may be quite large if required;

- they can act as a buffer to rail and industrial noise to the east if their own operations are quiet;

- the site area would represent a small part of a large market;

- high amenity should be sought to the success of the transition role of the subject site, as well as to protect the amenity of the proposed restricted retailing developments; and

- demand should be strong as some industries and distributors will seek out high amenity, well serviced locations if their market profile and/or staff interests warrant.

4.4.7 Housing

Housing faces a welter of challenges on this site as discussed later. However from a strategic viewpoint, a location near a sub-regional activity centre and planned suburban passenger station where most nearby residential development options are committed and where there is negligible multi-unit housing has obvious appeal. It would be a desirable option if its long-term amenity could be assured but this is doubtful.
5.0 LOCAL CONTEXT AND INFLUENCES

Within the context of the above strategic influences there are attributes about the site, the road and rail networks that bound the site and the use and development of adjoining and adjacent land that will also influence the most appropriate use and development.

Each is reviewed in turn.

5.1 The Site

As shown on Map 1 the land has already been subdivided into 8 lots. The 4 lots fronting Somerton Road and 3 lots near the corner of Pascoe Vale Road and Reservoir Drive range from 0.9 to 1.7ha, whilst Lot 53 in the southeast corner is 7.5ha.

The land has its highest point near the centre of the boundary of Lots 1 and 7 in the northwest and has a gentle slope down to the south, southeast and east. The slope is sufficient to influence the character of the ultimate landscape increasing the visual impact of structures with Pascoe Vale Road frontages.

Birdwood Developments Pty Ltd have a planning permit to construct 5 ‘showroom’ premises on Lot 3 plus a freestanding ‘fast food’ outlet all of which have now been constructed. They have indicated that they will be seeking planning approval for the two units removed as a result of the VCAT decision.

However, several other proposals are at various stages. The following table shows the current state of proposals on the various lots:

Figure 1 – Status of Current Development proposals, May 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Number</th>
<th>Current Ownership Status</th>
<th>Current Development Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sold</td>
<td>Permit granted for hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Possible sale</td>
<td>Preliminary discussions about possible use as a medical centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Owned by Birdwood Properties</td>
<td>Constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Contract of sale subject to rezoning and planning permit</td>
<td>Letter tabled before Panel indicating that the preparation of a permit application for restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Number</td>
<td>Current Ownership Status</td>
<td>Current Development Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Not sold. Still owned by ULC</td>
<td>No current proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Owned by Australian Gaslight Company</td>
<td>Proposed electricity sub-station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Possible sale</td>
<td>Preliminary inquiries about use as an entertainment complex but no further discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>Not sold. Still owned by ULC</td>
<td>No current proposals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.1 Opportunities

The opportunities presented by the site may be summarised as:

- Its large size (18.5 hectares)
- Its open and expansive character unconstrained by vegetation
- Its elevation relative to the road network and its consequential good exposure to arterial traffic
- Extensive frontage to Pascoe Vale and Somerton Roads and access to surrounding areas via the arterial network
- Gentle slope which would suit most forms of development and use
- Proximity to existing residential and commercial areas
- Potential to prosper from and serve the growth of Roxburgh Park
- Proximity to public transport routes
- The diversity of surrounding land use
- Proximity to the Roxburgh Park activity centre and offering the only significant continuous development area for further expansion
- Potential for a range of end uses (it has no obvious single use)
- The absence of any heritage, environmental, cultural or landscape significance

5.1.2 Constraints

The constraints presented by the site are:

- Its separate ownership and subdivision into eight lots
- Existing residential uses to the west of Pascoe Vale Road
- Existing development and land use approvals granted in the absence of clear strategic objectives, including development guidelines
- Its abuttal with the Melbourne – Sydney rail line and the impact of associated noise on potential land uses
- The implications of the off-site impacts of industrial land use east of the rail line on future land use
- The unknown future use of adjoining land to the south (VISY land zoned Special Use 3)
- The restrictive covenant on title that does not allow the land to be used for the purpose of a supermarket or hotel (other than on lot 1) until 2028
- The proposed Somerton Road overpass will deny direct vehicle access to both the Melbourne Water and AGL land from Somerton Road and a significant portion of the Birdwood land frontage. The subdivision layout has, however, contemplated this and provides a carriageway easement, (E-12) extending from Reservoir Drive along the southern boundaries of the above lots.

This effectively provides the Birdwood land with three road frontages, whilst also providing Melbourne Water and AGL with convenient access to their respective parcels of land. The proposed overpass has no direct implications for the balance of the land.

- The subject land is encumbered by a number of easements, including one in favour of Melbourne Water that impacts primarily on lot S3. This water supply easement (E-1) extends south of the Melbourne Water pumping station sited...
between lots 3 and 6 to the south-east corner of the subject site. It forms the western boundary of the retarding basin. The retarding basin itself occupies a significant portion of lot S3 and is effectively redundant land that cannot be improved. This easement alone is one of the most significant features of the site constraining its future use and development.

A multitude of other easements encumber the subject land. Those lots least affected are located to the north and west of Reservoir Drive, being lots 1, 2 and 7. The Birdwood land lot 3 has the benefit of a carriageway easement along its southern boundary (within lot S3) effectively giving it three road frontages as mentioned above.

It does, however also have an easement up to 13.5 metres in width in favour of Melbourne Water (E-1) extending the length of its Somerton Road frontage. This does not pose as a development constraint given that this is set aside for landscaping and parking and access purposed. Similarly the same can be said for lot 6, the AGL land to be used for an electrical substation.

5.2 The environs of the site

The land is surrounded by:

- **Somerton Road to the north**, with the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre, a Safeway petrol station and two fast food outlets with another under construction on the north side;

- **The Melbourne-Sydney rail line to the east**, including the junction of the Broadmeadows-Craigieburn and Upfield lines, with the Evans Deakin rolling stock maintenance centre in the Industrial 1 zoning beyond and Visyboard’s offices and Coolaroo recycling plant to the south-east;

- **Land owned by Visyboard to the south primarily purchased as a buffer between housing and its recycling plant and currently vacant with peripheral landscaping and**

- **Pascoe Vale Road to the west** with the established Meadow Heights residential area beyond.

The attributes and influences of each of these are addressed in turn below.
5.2.1 The rail corridor and industrial land to the east

a) The railway

The Melbourne-Sydney rail corridor forms the eastern boundary of the subject site land. In addition to interstate passenger and freight services, limited suburban and intra state services utilise the corridor.

The volume and nature of the rail traffic means that it is a source of constant noise and disturbance with implications for land uses sensitive to this type of acoustic environment.

b) Visy Industries

Visy Industries occupies a large parcel of land on the eastern side of the rail corridor and opposite the subject land. The land is zoned part Industrial 1 and part Industrial 3. That part of the land zoned Industrial 3 forms a strip parallel to the railway line.

The land is of sufficient size to enable an expansion of activities on the site. Convenient access to major road transport corridors such as the Hume Freeway and rail facilities is essential for the company’s efficient and effective operation. In short, Visy Industries is a valuable industry and a long-term occupier of the land that will continue to expand.

The industrial processes involved in recycling the paper-based waste on this land requires adequate buffer distances between it and nearby residential land, given off-site impacts. Visy operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Despite their proposal for the installation of a $7 million ECO Gasifier for the conversion of processes rejects to energy, an apparatus that requires an EPA works approval and which is ‘cleaner’ technology, there is still the potential to impact on any residential land within close proximity.

c) Austrak and Evans Deakin

Both Austrak’s industrial and modal interchange project and Evans Deakin’s rolling stock maintenance centre are located on the eastern side of the rail corridor and occupy large land holdings. They are both concerned with rail rolling stock and require private spur lines in order to conduct their business. Both have further potential for expansion.
d) **Opportunities and constraints**

In relation to the use and development of the subject site the above land use and development conditions suggest that the eastern portion of the site, if not all of the land would be most suited to a business or industrial role that would not be detrimentally affected by the noise and activities to the east.

The eastern portion of the subject site has the poorest amenity with the outlook to the east being an industrial landscape of low attraction to residential use.

### 5.2.2 Roxburgh Park and the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre

Forming part of Roxburgh Park and located directly opposite the subject land on the northern side of Somerton Road is the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre, owned by the Gandel Retail Trust. The shopping centre forms part of a designated activity centre and comprises a Safeway supermarket of approximately 3,500 square metres and specialty shops and a medical centre totalling approximately 1,000 square metres. Existing development is the first of three stages that may ultimately realise a total floor area of 18,500 square metres.

Also in close proximity to the centre are a McDonalds and Red Rooster restaurants. These have frontage to Somerton Road and can be considered as components of the activity centre. A third fast food outlet was under construction as at January 2002.

As the submissions to the Panel considering Amendment C6 and the report of the Panel illustrate, the subject site is of strategic significance in contemplating any expanding roles and function for the activity centre. While there are alternative areas of residential and industrial use, the subject site is the only realistic option for the siting of activity that may have a synergy with the subregional shopping centre.

The Somerton Road frontage has been rezoned Business 4, reinforcing the above conclusion.

The constraints to that outcome are that it is undesirable to replicate the role and uses of the shopping centre south of Somerton Road. Further, Somerton Road presents significant barrier and division in the middle of an expanded centre. The signalised intersection provides partial relief in this regard.
5.2.3 Meadow Heights residential areas west

The Meadow Heights residential area extends west of Pascoe Vale Road to the proposed Craigieburn Bypass and is bounded by Somerton Road to the north and Barry Road to the south. It forms the entire western interface of the subject land.

Meadow Heights can be considered as an almost fully developed area with only limited opportunities for further growth. Direct access to properties within Meadow Heights is restricted from Pascoe Vale Road with only Shankland Boulevard and Paringa Boulevard providing access to lower order residential streets. The housing backs onto the main road so the interface with Pascoe Vale Road is one of high timber paling fences and landscaping.

The Meadow Heights area presents a number of opportunities and constraints in respect of the subject land.

- It offers an established catchment for activity centre uses.

- There is a lack of community facilities within the area although there are a number of current proposals for the areas including the Meadow Heights Learning Centre with the first stage of construction scheduled for 2002/03.

- There is a lack of entertainment facilities within the area.

- Existing amenity can already be considered as fairly low for those properties abutting Pascoe Vale Road, future development in adjacent areas will need to be carefully managed to ensure that the amenity is not further eroded.

The constraints presented by the adjacent residential area may be summarised as follows.

- The proximity to the subject land means that off-site impacts of any future use and development must be controlled given the sensitive nature of the residential use.

- Residents may view the site as a buffer between themselves and the industrial land to the east and the rail corridor.

- Pascoe Vale Road is a major arterial road which divides and separates the Meadow Heights area from the subject site. It is also likely to impact on residential use that might be located in proximity.
Residents within the area would welcome additional community facilities. These may include entertainment, medical, retail and other uses. The benefits of travelling shorter distances than currently required to access these facilities would be recognised and valued.

Industry or a similar use with a notable off-site impact perceived to have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity would be opposed. This would hold particularly true for such uses that may seek to locate on those lots with Pascoe Vale Road frontage.

5.2.4 The vacant land to the south

This land adjoins to the south of the subject land and is owned by VISY Industries, the occupiers of land east of the adjoining rail corridor. They bought and hold onto the land as a buffer between their operations and the established residential areas. The land in unimproved, save for its perimeter landscaping. It has minimal fall, generally from north to south. As with the subject land it is elevated in comparison to its surrounds.

The opportunities that this land presents to the subject site can be summarised as the following:

- It will not be developed for residential purposes given that accommodation (with the exception of a caretaker’s house) is a prohibited use under the schedule to the Special Use Zone 3 which covers the land. As a result there are unlikely to be any sensitive interface issues.

- The purpose of the zone promotes the land as a site for recreational purpose or other land use(s) that will have net benefit to the community.

- It is currently unimproved.

- It is not of sufficient size and lacks the exposure for it to present as a real alternative to potential uses considering the subject land.

The purpose of schedule 3 to the Special Use Zone acknowledges the buffer role that this land currently performs. As contained in the Hume Planning Scheme these purposes include:

- To enable the development of the land to be used for such recreational and other purposes that will ensure that the land acts as a buffer between the adjoining industrial and residential zones;
- To develop facilities and services on the land for the benefit of the local community; and

- To provide on the land uses which are compatible with and complementary to uses on adjoining land.

Prohibited uses including accommodation (other than caretaker's house), shop (other than convenience shop), hospital, primary or secondary school and materials recycling are prohibited under the schedule.

Discretionary uses include but are not limited to a convenience shop, industry (other than materials recycling), leisure and recreation (other than indoor recreation facility, informal outdoor recreation, motor racing track, major sports and recreation facility and open sports ground) and place of assembly (other than amusement parlour). Any industry must not have adverse amenity potential.

Section 1 uses include, but are not limited to a child care centre, education centre (other than a primary or secondary school) and subject to the condition that the use is associated with a nominated Certificate of Title for a car park, office and warehouse (other than fuel depot and rural store).
6.0 CANDIDATE USES

6.1 Overview

Having regard to the above site and environs context of constraints and opportunities, the following section reviews the viability of candidate uses from a local perspective. Current planning approvals and proposals or expressions of interest in land forming part of the subject site indicates a demand for a number of different land uses, including restricted retail premises, a hotel, a fast food outlet, and entertainment complex and a medical centre. To date the range of likely uses has been market driven without regard to the site and strategic policy context. Whilst this has shed some light on how the market perceives the role of the site, the pattern of proposals to date suggests the emergence of an uncoordinated mix of activities with few synergies. For example, a restricted retail development is approved on the most northwesterly available land and another is proposed in the far southeast with unrelated proposals between the two sites.

6.2 Accommodation

The constraints previously discussed raise the question as to whether or not any reasonable degree of residential amenity could be afforded to any future residents on the subject land especially the area in close proximity to the railway line and in turn nearby industry.

Any residential use would generally only be suited away from the rail corridor and closer to Pascoe Vale Road. The nature of uses proposed and/or approved, particularly along Somerton Road, dictate this (as does the Business 4 Zone which precludes accommodation). Similarly, maintaining adequate buffer distances between residential land use and industry must also be a priority.

Any residential community would be quite small and isolated from Meadow Heights by Pascoe Vale Road and the residential layout. The road itself would also impact on the amenity of housing. In these circumstances, it is difficult to justify residential uses other than in specialised forms such as a motel which does not require interaction with more conventional housing.
6.3 Office use

Similarly both the Panel and the submitters of evidence before it could not identify any planning basis for a zone that is primarily concerned with office use and development, such as the Business 2 Zone. In essence, the site is not considered an appropriate address for large-scale office development that would demand multi-storey development comprising large floor areas.

That is not to say that all office type uses would be inappropriate for the land. A zone that provides discretion for office use would be appropriate. Specifically a medical centre, whilst separately defined, is included in the definition. A medical centre would provide for existing and future residential populations in the surrounding area and is seen as a complementary use to the Roxburgh Park activity centre. Small businesses providing accounting, computer, financial and legal services can also provide benefits to nearby industry and housing.

6.4 Business use

The foregoing discussion of the site and its context has identified that the land has a strategic role as part and an extension of the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre.

That analysis and commentary has clarified that:

- The business role should be associated with activities of a non-convenience nature which ordinarily would be found in a sub-regional shopping centre. Be it by policy or schedule to the zone, it is desirable that the planning scheme clearly conveys this.

- The exposure of the land to arterial road frontage and its regional location provides the land with a strategic advantage as a place where restricted retail activity might be established.

- There is insufficient apparent demand to commit the entire site for restricted retail purposes. The site has appeal and attributes that would be attractive to a range of other commercial and community uses associated with an activity centre.

6.5 Industrial use

The site has potential for part of the land to be used for an industrial/warehouse type of use which has no detrimental off-site impacts.
As will be developed more fully in the next section of this report this role would be most appropriately contained to that portion of the site with the poorest exposure to the adjacent shopping centre and residential areas.

The large site area and relatively close association between peripheral retail and light industrial and warehouse makes industry a viable use option for part of the site.

6.6 Summary and conclusion

Any use and development occurring on the subject land must form an appropriate transition between industrial land use to the east, commercial land use (including retail components) to the north and the residential subdivisions to the west.

The impact on the west side of Pascoe Vale Road of business and industrial activity conducted on the site must be given careful consideration.
7.0 THE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PARCELS OF LAND

Whilst the entire subject land is the subject of this work it is pertinent to examine the site's separate parcels to guide their most appropriate use and development.

For this purpose the site can be divided into three areas. The first area comprises those lots with frontage to Somerton Road, that is, lots 1, 7, 3 and 6 and the Melbourne Water land between lots 3 and 6.

The second area is those lots with frontage to Pascoe Vale Road being lots 1, 2 and 4 whilst the third area is the balance of the land being lot 5 and lot 53.

7.1 Area 1

This area has recently been rezoned to Business 4. Lots 1 and 3 have planning approvals for a hotel and restricted retail outlets respectively though work has not commenced on the hotel.

Only non-commercial development is expected on lot 6 and the adjoining Melbourne Water land to its west.

The Business 4 Zone allows subject to a permit, among other things, retail premises (other than shop and trade supplies). A shop (other than adult sex bookshop, convenience shop and restricted retail premises) is prohibited in the zone as is accommodation (other than caretaker's house and motel).

Assuming the hotel on lot 1 proceeds, Lot 2 would be the only remaining uncommitted lot on the Somerton Road frontage. Combined with Lot 3 (Birdwood) however it would enable up to 12 – 14,000 square metres of restricted retail and associated development. This would meet the current estimates of likely potential by the Panel and this study wholly within the adopted Business 4 Zone. However, more recent discussions have indicated that a major car dealership may be interested in operating on the site and thereby reducing the amount of B4 Zoned land available for restricted retailing.

7.2 Area 2

Restricted retailing and other commercial or community uses would suit the Pascoe Vale Road frontage.

As noted earlier, other commercial uses might include a motel, potentially a restaurant(s) and conference-meeting-reception
facilities. It could also include a medical centre, a private hospital or nursing home and small offices and similar uses. If residential use were to be enabled anywhere, Area 2 would be the best option.

7.3 Area 3

As mentioned above, lots 5 and S3 have no main road frontage. Bulky goods retailing typically relies on direct exposure to main roads (preferably highway locations) in order to perform strongly however there are a number of exceptions to this rule.

In this regard lot S3 in particular suffers from relatively poor exposure given that it is effectively screened by other developments to its north and west.

For these reasons and for those discussed throughout this section of the report lot S3 would appear to be most suited to warehousing or light industry. This arguably should be established in the manner of a small, attractive industrial park with features including:

- Coordinated building design;

- Integrated landscaping

- A combination of individual and shared parking with concessions reflecting the benefits of sharing

- A high proportion of floor areas in offices; and

- Planning provisions which accept a range of semi-retail activities such as trade and industrial supplies when consistent with the above features.

7.4 Site access

Both Somerton and Pascoe Vale Roads are arterial routes projected to carry over 30,000 v.p.d each at speeds of at least 60km and potentially both at 80km once divided. Both are in Road Zone 1.

Well established practice in access management would suggest that adjacent development would be accessed where possible via a service road or side street. This has been achieved on Somerton Road in relation to the AGL and Melbourne Water land.
The Birdwood site has a single left in, left out access about 200m east of Reservoir Drive and the hotel site and Lot 7 have a single shared access to Somerton Road.

Lot 2’s substantial frontages to Reservoir Drive reduce the need for Pascoe Vale Road access. However the whole Pascoe Vale Road frontage is considered to be unsuitable for site access due to its location on the departure (acceleration) side of the Somerton Road intersection and poor sight distances due to the curvature on the road and traffic volumes. Any roadside parking would aggravate these problems.
8.0 PLANNING PROVISIONS

8.1 Overview

The Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP’s) contain a range of tools that can be drawn upon to achieve the desired planning outcome(s) for the site.

Whilst the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) contains a number of policies that can provide some direction as to the appropriate use and forms of development for the (particularly in the form of Clause 17, Economic Development and Clause 19.03, Design and Built Form) they do not and cannot provide direction or exert control that is specific to the site.

Similarly whilst the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) includes some broad references through the MSS and policy to the retail hierarchy within the City and business and industry in general additional references and directions are warranted in order to bring about greater certainty for key stakeholders in the site.

It has already been highlighted that the scope of this report does not encompass the strategic work that is lacking in the Hume Planning Scheme as it currently stands. Such work must be undertaken as a comprehensive review of the scheme including the MSS which is due to occur shortly.

Further and as an extension of the above argument the decision guidelines under Clause 65 and forming part of any zone provisions that ultimately apply to the land have their limitations.

This leaves a situation where the remaining tools in the VPP’s must be considered in order to provide the necessary strategic direction for the future use and development of the site and a level of control that gives effect to that strategic direction.

The available planning tools are:-

- A choice from the range of Industrial and Business Zones
- Additional statements contained in the MSS
- New local planning policy or changes to existing policy
- The use of a schedule to the adopted zone
- The use of a Design and Development Overlay (DDO)
- The use of a Development Plan Overlay (DPO)
8.1.1 Zone selection

A discussion and analysis of the appropriate zone for the site follows at section 8.2.1 below.

8.1.2 MSS and Policy

From the outset, the MSS should be viewed as the starting point in identifying and communicating issues requiring further strategic direction. A statement or set of statements that follow key themes for the site can readily be included in the MSS without the immediate need to prepare policies to give effect to those objectives and strategies.

Put simply, the MSS can be used to identify an area requiring additional strategic work including the need for new planning policy without proceeding to the next step and preparing that policy or introducing schedules to zones or overlays incorporating specific guidelines and prescriptive requirements in respect of design and built form issues.

This is particularly relevant to the site and its wider context where it is acknowledged that further municipal wide strategic work must be undertaken with a view to preparing new policies and perhaps introducing additional planning controls to influence certain design outcomes though the scope of this report only focuses on the site.

The inclusion of additional statements in the MSS that place the site in a wider context in respect of the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre and its position in respect of Activity Centres within the municipality in particular must form the starting point for the amendment.

As for policy, it is considered that a policy that addresses a wider Roxburgh Park Activity Centre and which applies to the subject land should be considered as part of an overall review of the Hume Planning Scheme.

To introduce a policy that deals with the site alone may have some merit though this must be weighed against the effectiveness of the MSS and other tools including but not limited to a DDO in achieving the desired outcome in terms of targeted uses and design and built form issues.

Such a policy should be viewed as an interim measure that gives immediate effect to MSS objectives and strategies, thus providing a degree of direction and certainty in terms of development and
land use outcomes, whilst not prejudicing the use and development of physically separate yet related sites such as the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre which would be the subject of further strategic work.

8.1.3 Schedule to zone

The use of a schedule to the zone selected could be used to specify minimum floor areas for individual restricted retail premises or other use(s) permissible within the zone.

In this regard, there is a need to ensure that land use on the site complements the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre.

This is discussed in greater detail under section 8.3.1.

8.1.4 Design and Development Overlay

The purpose of the Design and Development Overlay includes “To identify areas which are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development”.

A schedule under the overlay may include requirements relating to building setbacks, building height, plot ratio, landscaping and any other requirements relating to the design or built form of new development.

Under the overlay, a permit may be granted to construct a building or construct or carry out works which are not in accordance with any requirement in a schedule to the overlay unless the schedule specifies otherwise.

The advantages of a DDO can be seen in terms of giving affect to a policy statement by prescribing particular built form and landscape requirements that achieve a specific outcome for a site or precinct whilst providing a high degree of certainty as to that outcome.

The inbuilt flexibility of enabling planning permit applications to be made for developments that are not in accordance with a schedule to the overlay, provides the scope for Council to accommodate proposals that may not meet the prescriptive requirements, but can be justified on their own merits.

In terms of the subject site, there are a number of factors that must be considered in determining the appropriateness or otherwise of a DDO.
Firstly the land has already been subdivided and is in separate ownership with a number of the lots having planning approvals in place for their development. These comprise those lots with frontage to Somerton Road where any control over built form and design issues additional to those built into the zoning provisions and State and local planning policy frameworks could be justified in particular, given the important interface with the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre.

Similarly the Pascoe Vale Road frontage of the site has an important relationship with the established residential subdivisions of Meadow Heights on its west side. New development should provide for generous building setbacks incorporating landscaping and an articulated built form of a scale that is respectful of the residential scale of adjacent development. The issue of direct vehicle access to sites from Pascoe Vale Road is an important consideration also.

In respect of front building setbacks, it would be pertinent to consider the setbacks of approved but yet to be constructed development in order to achieve a consistent approach to built form and siting issues. This is not to say that an overly prescriptive approach should necessarily prevail, however it is important to set some broad parameters that have sufficient flexibility in the construction of any control to accommodate site responsive development that may not meet prescribed setbacks, yet possesses certain characteristics deemed appropriate to the locality.

In this regard, it is noted that approved development for the site (and development under Council's consideration) typically have front building setbacks in the order of 35 metres from Pascoe Vale Road, 15 metres from Somerton Road and 10 from Reservoir Road. These setbacks appear to have evolved rather than being based on any detailed consideration of siting and landscape issues for the site as a whole.

In respect of the use and development Lot 3 (30 – 32 Reservoir Drive) and Application for Review No's 2000/045196, 2000/055116 and 2000/058392 the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (the Tribunal) determined that a proposed development for separate tenancies to be used for restricted retailing be scaled back and consolidated in order to not prejudice the future development of land to the south (Lot 53) which was considered to be 'already locationally disadvantage'. In this regard, issues of the building setback to Reservoir Drive where considered, with the possible need for integrated parking and a landscape buffer along the southern portion of the land being key considerations.
It was however pointed out by the Tribunal that once development had occurred on Lot S3, it might be appropriate at a later time to reconsider the issue and possibly allow development that was sited closer to the Reservoir Drive boundary.

A setback of 10 metres from Reservoir Drive would seem reasonable as a guide, though as the above decision highlights the paramount concern is the relationship between developments and how successfully they achieve integration.

Whilst there is clearly a need for new development to incorporate such principles, the use of a DDO is not the only means of achieving these design objectives. An appropriately worded policy that promotes a high standard of development that is site responsive and which respects not only existing adjacent development as referred to above, but also other development occurring on the site, may be just as effective. A policy may also promote nominated building setbacks, whilst being sufficiently flexible to accommodate lesser or greater setbacks.

If a Design and Development Overlay (DDO) was to be placed over the site, its objectives would be to:

- Establish the land’s role as a component of the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre;
- Provide for integrated landscaping within its area and with that on surrounding development;
- Seek well-designed buildings which relate well to each other and their surroundings;
- Provide for convenient pedestrian and cycle movement;
- Require development of Lots S3 and 5 as an integrated industrial or business park as outlined above whether in separate or the same ownership;
- Promote a range of businesses along the Pascoe Vale Road frontage perhaps including restricted retail, a motel, reception – conference facilities and consulting rooms and offices;
- Except on Lot 1, encourage use of Reservoir Drive for all direct access and egress by vehicles and discourage both from Pascoe Vale Road, on safety and traffic management grounds;
- Provide for exemption from public notification for proposals which are consistent with the overlay.
It is noted, however, that no part of the municipality is currently covered by a DDO. This may suggest a number of things, one of which is the effectiveness of other existing planning tools (and the discretion they provide), including policy in achieving quality, site responsive development on key sites.

Given the need for policy that covers land not just confined to within the site’s boundaries, but also the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre, it is considered premature at this stage to be proposing a DDO. A DDO could be considered at a later time as part of a broader analysis of the level of control required over built form issues across the municipality and/or for a newly defined Roxburgh Park Activity Centre.

8.1.5 Development Plan Overlay

A number of approvals have been granted for development on separately owned titles would make it extremely difficult to apply a DPO.

Further, the considerations that lead to the conclusion that a DDO was not warranted at this time might also be applied to a DPO.
8.2 Zoning and Overlays

8.2.1 Candidate Zones and Land Use Options

The Business 3 and 4, Mixed Use and Industrial 3 zones have been evaluated further sustainability for the areas not already zoned Business 4. Their applicability for the main candidate uses is summarised as follows, beginning with the Pascoe Vale Road frontage.

Figure 2 – Zoning Assessment table – Pascoe Vale Road frontage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land use</th>
<th>Business 4</th>
<th>Business 3</th>
<th>Mixed Use</th>
<th>Industrial 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preferred Uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting rooms</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>2 (500m2)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (500m2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of worship</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Possible Uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (most)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted retailing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amusement Parlour</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicle sales</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial display</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral parlour</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service station</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden supplies</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant nursery</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (limited)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade supplies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unsuitable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any industry listed in</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause 52.10 (*Some</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exclusions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 (Sched)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1 = permitted use 2 = discretionary use 3 = prohibited use)
it is clearly possible that the preferred group of uses would occupy the whole Pascoe Vale Road frontage, (where only 2 lots are uncommitted). However, the 500m2 limit on offices in Business 4 may be a constraint and there is an element of doubt about the level of demand for the other preferred uses. As noted earlier those which generate substantial late night activity and egress traffic would need their access and egress to be from Reservoir Drive.

Most of the ‘other possible’ uses group would need special locational and/or design controls; for example to:

- Direct heavy vehicle loading excess to Reservoir Drive;
- Try to ensure reasonable attention to building design;
- Ensure ample landscaping (which may discourage some use);
- Avoid unsightly types of open air displays;
- Manage signage;
- Encourage uses such as restricted retailing to be as far north as practical; and

In the case of restricted retailing the northern leg of Reservoir Drive has some potential due to the approved ‘Birdwood’ project and the Tribunal’s requirement that its design be opened out into Reservoir Drive. The significant intersection with Somerton Road and link into the Shopping Centre also help, as noted above, and restricted retail development and use of Lot 7 (between Reservoir Drive and the Hotel) would further improved that option for the east end of Lot 2 to the rear.

Lots S3 and 5 in the southeast warrant separate evaluation as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Business 4</th>
<th>Business 3</th>
<th>Mixed Use</th>
<th>Industrial 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preferred Uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry (Not in Clause 52.10)</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse (<strong>Some exclusions</strong>)</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted retail premises (where viable)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (mostly)</td>
<td>2 (mostly)</td>
<td>2 (mostly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Possible Uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Assembly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (mostly)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing sales</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade supplies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant nursery</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undesirable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (mostly)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry listed in Clause 52.10 (<strong>Some exclusions</strong>)</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this sector, the Mixed Use Zone offers ample discretion but suffers the major weakness that accommodation falls into Section 1. It would therefore be necessary to use an overlay control to preclude accommodation from the area east and south of Reservoir Drive or within specified distances of land in the industrial 1 zone. This may raise concerns about its validity as a control on a Section 1 use.

As discussed above the best use of this land would be for a small "industrial" or "business" park. This could well incorporate restricted retailing, industrial supplies and other forms of "showroom" uses, if desired. The design could optimise this opportunity by taking advantage of the association with the Birdwood site and previously noted design controls applied by the Tribunal. A Design and Development Overlay could achieve a comprehensive, integrated design which:

- Effectively continues the siting and design theme of the 'Birdwood' project;
- Provides for well-designed, integrated development;
- Lays out its buildings to optimise their acoustic effects to the east and south-west;

And which could achieve the other benefits listed above for a small industrial park.

Such an overlay could apply in any zone.

8.1.2 Conceptual Effect

A preferred land use pattern is illustrated in Map 5 (Attachment 5) with:

- Restricted retailing focussed on the Somerton Road – Reservoir Drive intersection opposite the Shopping Centre;

- Any extension of restricted retailing or other showroom activities preferably being southwest along Reservoir Drive;

- An industrial/business park in the south west half of the site; and

- A graduation along Pascoe Vale Road from the approved hotel in the north to a motel reception conference centre and consulting rooms or offices in the south.

8.1.3 Consequences for Preferred Zoning

No single zoning provides a perfect solution. However, we observe that:

- The stated purpose of the Business 4 zone most closely articulates the conclusions from the above analysis. Within the zone industry, warehousing, trade supplies and service station as well as restricted retailing and lighting shops, are Section 1 uses.

- Business 3 and 4, Industrial 3 and Mixed Use all allow all preferred options as Section 2 uses, excepting offices which are Section 1 in Business 3.

- Accommodation is prohibited except in Mixed Use where it is Section 1.

- Business 3 offers more control except over industry and warehousing, whose truck movements should be restrained opposite the rear of housing.
• Industrial 3 lists all preferred and possible uses in Section 2 and prohibits industries requiring buffers under Clause 52.10. It also prohibits accommodation but a service station is in Section 1.

If a single zone for the balance of the land were to be preferred, we would consider that the Business 4 zone has its most relevant purpose but the Industrial 3 zone has the most appropriate level of controls. The purpose of Business 4 Zone is:

• To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy and Framework including the Municipality Strategic Statement with local planning policies.

• To encourage the development of a mix of bulky goods retailing and manufacturing industry and their associated business services.

The industrial 3 has the most substantial control over industry and warehousing with both requiring a permit and industry precluding any activities needing buffers under Clause 52.10;

• It enables only one potentially intrusive use without a permit, a service station;

• It enables encouragement of the preferred land use pattern without using prohibitions; and

• As noted earlier, no preferred use is prohibited and of the 'other possible' uses, only accommodation is not allowable.

On balance the Business 4 Zone is recommended with its explicit emphasis on the most viable land use mix.

8.3 Minimum Size of Premises

8.3.1 Restricted Retailing

In the Business 4 Zone, restricted retailing is in Section 1 if at least 1000m² as is a lighting shop if at least 500m². Otherwise, both require permission.

Given that there is current discretion to allow smaller restricted retail premises on the Somerton Road frontage we believe this discretion could be reasonably extended by schedule to land facing the north south leg of Reservoir Drive.

In the regard, there is a clear need to promote end uses that complement the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre. In the absence
of a schedule to the Business 4 Zone there would be scope for application to be made to Council seeking restricted retail premises with floor areas of less than 1000 square metres. This could be viewed as leaving the door open to de facto shop premises that may undermine the role of the shopping centre as the main retail centre in the area.

That said, the use of a schedule to specify floor area minimums must be based on a sound economic analysis of the type (and size) of restricted retail uses that may potentially pose problems for the centre. Such work has not been undertaken, or indeed, there is no consensus to date as to what would be regarded as inappropriate based on economic grounds.

To impose a minimum floor space requirement at this time would be to set an arbitrary figure that may potentially preclude restricted retail uses that could in fact complement the shopping centre and be consistent with the MSS.

Further the discretion afforded to Council in assessing such applications under the provisions of the Business 4 Zone allows the rejection of applications deemed to be inappropriate or in circumstances where there is some doubt as to whether the proposed use satisfies the planning scheme definition of restricted retail premises.
9.0 INTEGRATION STRATEGY

9.1 Need

Following further strategic analysis of the site, the preferred conceptual effect sought for the land can be summarised as follows:-

- Restricted retailing focussed on the Somerton Road – Reservoir Drive intersection, opposite the Shopping Centre;

- Any extension of restricted retailing or other showroom activities preferably being south-west along Reservoir Drive;

- An industrial/business park in the south west half of the site; and

- A gradation along Pascoe Vale Road from the approved hotel in the north to a motel reception conference centre and consulting rooms or offices in the south.

Whilst no single zone provides a perfect solution, it is noted that the Business 4 Zone most closely articulates the intended land use outcome.

To achieve the desired land use outcome a number of amendments to the Hume Planning Scheme are required.

As noted in the Panel report, the Hume Planning Scheme contains a number of neighbourhood strategies that are ‘hard edged’ however interaction occurs across neighbourhood boundaries. The subject land is one such area. It lies within the Meadow Heights and Broadmeadows Neighbourhood, however there is a cross boundary relationship with the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre which under the Planning Scheme is in the Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park Neighbourhood. The subject site is also adjacent to and impacted by the Somerton Neighbourhood.

Part of the reasoning behind Somerton Road splitting neighbourhoods is historical in the Somerton Road once was the boundary between the former City of Broadmeadows and the Shire of Bulla. However the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre now straddles Somerton Road. The need to reinforce an integrated approach to planning the whole of the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre and its relationship to surrounding areas and the proposed railway station, was recognised in the interim policy that was adopted as part of Amendment C6.
The Amendment C6 interim policy is as follows:

"The Roxburgh Park Sub-Regional Shopping Centre shall be developed as a focus of retail and commercial facilities. Priority will be given to the development of conventional retailing activities within the sub-regional shopping centre. Any development within the Business 4 Zoned land on the southern side of Somerton Road must compliment conventional retailing located in the sub-regional shopping centre".

The proposed amendments to the Hume Planning Scheme, which is the subject of Amendment C21 will:-

- Directly affect the subject land plus
- Relate the surrounding neighbourhoods to the subject land, as well as
- Provide for a basic Roxburgh Park Activity Centre Strategy.

9.2 Integration Actions

The modified Amendment C21 proposes to rezone the land referred at Lots 2, 4, 5 and S3 Reservoir Road, Somerton and highlighted at Attachment 1 from Public Use Zone 1 to Business 4 Zone.

To facilitate strategic directions sought for the land the following amendments to the MSS and local policies are proposed:-

9.3 Clause 21.03-1: Broadmeadows and Meadow Heights Neighbourhood

9.3.1 Under "Opportunities and Constraints"

The recommended variations to the Amendment include the following to be added as the forth dot to serve as an introduction to the subject site in the Scheme:-

- 'The Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre is located across Somerton Road to the north and the former reservoir site on the south side presents an opportunity to expand the activity centre by adding complimentary services'.
9.3.2 Under “Strategies”

Dot 11 which refers to the need to ‘identify appropriate uses for the subject site should read as follows:-

- ‘Promote development of the former reservoir site located on the south-east corner of Somerton and Pascoe Vale Roads as part of the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre including:
  - encouragement to restricted retailing, other forms of ‘highway retailing’ and offices on Somerton Road;
  - services such as an hotel, motel, restaurants(s), conference meeting and reception facilities, medical consultancies, offices and associated uses along Pascoe Vale Road and eastward; and
  - supporting well-presented industries and/or warehouses to the southeast.

9.3.3 After the ‘Broadmeadows District Centre’ section

Provide a link to the Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park Neighbourhood Strategies in section 21.03-2 by inserting the subheading, ‘Integration of Roxburgh Park Activity Centre’ and the following text:

- ‘In the Business 4 Zone in the north-west corner of this neighbourhood, comply with the strategy for the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre in the Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park neighbourhood strategy.

- On the approaches to and adjoining the Business 4 Zone encourage development and land use which effectively integrates with the above strategy.

9.3.4 The Map

A rectangular symbol, straddling Somerton Road is added, with the caption “Roxburgh Park Activity Centre”.
9.4 Clause 21.03-2: Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park Neighbourhood

9.4.1 Objectives

An extra objective should be added:

- 'To promote development of the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre and integrate it into a well-planned activity centre covering land on the north as well as the south side of Somerton Road'.

9.4.2 Opportunities and Constraints

The following should be inserted after dot 7:

- 'The proposed railway stations Roxburgh Park offer opportunities to provide a public transport node and create a major community focal point for Roxburgh Park.'

9.4.3 Strategies

After dot 8, it is proposed to add:

- 'Encourage development of the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre and plan its integration into a wider activity centre and transport modal interchange.'

At the end the 'Strategies' section it is proposed to add a new sub-section under the heading 'Roxburgh Park Activities Centre' to provide strategies for the activity centre as a whole.

It is proposed to add the following:-

**Roxburgh Park Activity Centre**

- Foster a 'sense of arrival' on approaches to the Centre and 'sense of place' and cohesiveness within it.
- Encourage the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre's development as a major sub-regional asset for the surrounding communities that considers:-
  - The central role of the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre;
  - The Business 4 Zone south of Somerton Road;
  - The proposed Roxburgh Park Railway Station as part of a key modal interchange point;
The development of land in the Industrial 1 Zone, east of the proposed station, including the south-east corner of Somerton Road and the rail lines.
- The interfaces of the above areas with those around them;
- The integration of the above components of the Activity Centre, including use of strong ‘gateway’ elements, taking full advantage of the proposed rail overpass, key architectural and landscape themes, vehicle access and internal traffic circulation, well-planned bus access and internal traffic circulation, well-planned bus access arrangements and safe, direct, convenient pedestrian and cycle access and circulation systems.

9.4.4 Planning Scheme Response

Within the Planning Scheme Responses section it is proposed to amend dot 6 to recognise that the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre is established and part of a larger activity centre. It is proposed to amend dot point 6 to read:

- “Zone existing activity centres and the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre component of the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre to Business 1”.

9.4.5 Map

The map should also be amended to show the Activity Centre.

9.5 Clause 21.03-7: Somerton Neighbourhood

9.5.1 Objectives

It is proposed to extend the second objective to read:

- “To promote the neighbourhood as a gateway to the City and Melbourne and Somerton Road as a gateway to the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre and Residential areas to the west.”

(The words after ‘Melbourne’ are added.)

9.5.2 Opportunities and Constraints

After dot 7 insert:
9.5.3 Strategies

Introduce a strategy for planning along Somerton Road as follows, after dot 6:

- 'Plan and promote development along Somerton Road and the road reserve itself to reflect its function as part of a major east-west link and gateway to the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre and adjacent residential communities and to the Somerton employment area.'

Following the list of strategies, add the sub-heading 'Integration of Roxburgh Park Activity Centre' and add the following text:

- Activities in the Public Use Zone 4 and Industrial 1 Zones immediately east of the Melbourne-Sydney Railway on either side of Somerton Road, should comply with the strategy for the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre in the Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park neighbourhood strategy.

9.6 New Clause 22.15 Policy for the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre – South of Somerton Road.

It is proposed to add a new local policy to the Scheme. Adding a local policy is consistent with the method applied in the Hume Planning Scheme to address planning issues as specific locations. While arguments can be made as to the value of applying alternative controls such as adding a Design and Development Overlay (DDO), this would be inconsistent with the approach previously taken.

This policy applies to land zoned Business 4 at the south-east corner of Somerton Road and Pascoe Vale Road, Coolaro, being Lots 1 - 7 inclusive and Lot S3 on Plan of Subdivision 422330A.

9.6.1 Policy Basis

It is proposed to add under 'Policy Basis' the following:

The land comprising the former Melbourne Water reservoir site at Coolaroo is a key development site of approximately 18.566 hectares that warrants clear strategic direction and guidance as to its future use and development.
The land is surrounded by a diverse range of land use and built forms, including the established residential subdivisions of Meadow Heights to the west, the Melbourne-Sydney rail corridor and large-scale industry beyond to the east, the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre to the north and the land zoned Special Use 3 to the south.

The land is well positioned to provide for a range of uses and development opportunities including restricted retailing, smaller scale office type uses and light industry incorporating service components.

The site's proximity to the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre requires future use and development of the site to complement the core retail role of the Shopping Centre.

It is important for Council to facilitate an appropriate mix of land uses and high quality development that is respectful of the residential interface to the west and which capitalises on the excellent exposure to Somerton Road and Pascoe Vale Road, while also being suitably buffered from any potential off-site amenity impacts from industry to the east.

9.6.2 Objectives

It is proposed to add under the heading "Objectives", the following:-

To facilitate the provision of a range of commercial and light industrial activities compatible with surrounding land use.

To achieve land use and development that complements the core retail function of the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre.

To achieve land use and development that is respectful of residential amenity on the west side of Pascoe Vale Road and which forms an appropriate transition in terms of building scale, height, appearance and setbacks.

To ensure land use and development is not adversely affected by off-site impacts of existing industrial land use on the east side of the Melbourne-Sydney corridor.

To achieve quality development outcomes and high urban design standards.
9.6.3 Policy

It is proposed to add as ‘Policy’, the following:–

It is policy to:

- consider land use and development proposals in relation to the conceptual land use pattern generally as shown on Map 5 in the report titled ‘Somerton Road and Reservoir Drive, Coolaroo Strategic Analysis Report September 2003’.

- Require that development proposals for restricted retailing with floor areas less than 1,000 square metres are accompanied by an assessment that demonstrates how the use will not undermine the core convenience retail role of the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre.

- Require all applications for land use and development with frontage or sideage to Pascoe Vale Road be accompanied by an assessment that demonstrates there will be no unreasonable loss of amenity arising from such use or development on adjacent residential properties on the west side of Pascoe Vale Road.

- Require a site analysis and design response be prepared in advance of any design and submitted as part of all planning permit applications other than for minor extensions to existing buildings.

- Make maximum use of shared car parking facilities between developments as appropriate.

- Make maximum use of front building setback areas for landscaping purposes.

- Where practicable, ensure all buildings should be setback the following distances:
  - 25 metres from Pascoe Vale Road;
  - metres from Somerton Road;
  - metres from Reservoir Drive.

- Locate land use and development that may be impacted upon by existing industrial development east of the Melbourne-Sydney rail corridor on those parts of the site where such impacts are negligible.

Architecture

- Ensure all development is of a high standard of architectural design and development on Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 visually address Pascoe Vale Road and Somerton Road respectively.
• Achieve a high standard of design for all buildings proposed for each site.

• Ensure outbuildings and/or ancillary installations are compatible with the design theme established by the primary buildings on each site.

• Ensure that plant and equipment is to be concealed or, in the case of freestanding structures, appropriately screened from view.

**Building materials and finishes**

• Encourage the construction of buildings proposed for each site in masonry or other material suited to the type of building and its use.

• Require that office buildings be constructed primarily of masonry with appropriate use of glazing.

• Encourage that external walls be painted or finished with a quality textured coating except, where face brickwork is integral to the overall design and appearance of the building.

• Discourage the use of timber as a dominant building material.

• Encourage those parts of buildings having any frontage to a road to be constructed of concrete, masonry, glass or other high grade construction materials.

**Fencing**

• Discourage the construction of fences along the frontage to each site. In the event, that fencing is required for security purposes, it is to be designed to have a high degree of transparency and be located beyond/behind the front landscape setback.

• Achieve fence and gate design that is integral to the design of buildings proposed for the site.

• Encourage side and rear boundary fences constructed of black plastic coated cyclone wire.

• Ensure that high security or screen fencing is setback from street frontages where possible, and screened with planting.
External lighting

- Ensure all premises provide external lighting to ensure adequate site security.

- Provide all car parking areas with suitable lighting to ensure safety and security of users after dark.

- Ensure all lighting is located, directed and baffled to limit light spill beyond the site boundaries.

Parking and loading

- Encourage the provision of landscape islands that allow the planting of shade trees and shrubs in large areas set aside for car parking.

- Ensure land uses generating regular truck movements provide designated truck parking in addition to spaces provided within loading bays.

- Encourage where possible, the design of loading and servicing areas as an integral part of the development on each site. It is preferable that loading bays be entirely contained within buildings. Where it is not possible to internalise loading and servicing areas, external loading and servicing areas are to be adequately screened from view from the road.

Landscaping

- Require an application to construct a building or construct or carry out works to be accompanied by a landscape plan which:

  - recognises the themes already established in the major roads and open space;
  - contributes to the creation of an attractive business environment;
  - visually reduces the bulk of new development and enhances the appearance of new buildings;
  - provides summer shade and windbreaks to areas used by pedestrians or occupied by car parking;
  - minimises surface run-off; and
  - is practical to implement and maintain.
• Ensure that where buildings are not built to side or rear property boundaries, provision is to be made for a landscape screen to be established along these boundaries.

• Pay particular attention to achieving a very high quality and appropriately scaled landscape in the front setback that extends the themes established in the streetscapes.

• Ensure the provision of automated watering systems to landscaped areas in the front setback and encourage their use in all other landscaped areas.

• Ensure that the location and choice of vegetation should take account of the existing landscape theme, as well as local soil conditions and prevailing weather.

• Encourage the selection of species to minimise long-term watering requirements.

• Encourage the use of fast growing screening species between properties (along side boundaries). However, species having a reputation for short lifespan, unstable structure or unruly habit are discouraged.

• Encourage the massed planting of single species rather than a mixture of various species.

**Directional signage**

• Ensure each business provides appropriate directional signage to assist within the movement of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. In general, this signage should explain:
  - site entries and exits;
  - staff and visitor car parking;
  - goods delivery and pick-up; and
  - reception/office areas.

Directional signage should be of a consistent type and style throughout the site.

**Business signage**

• Encourage business signs that are sensitive to the style, scale and type of development. Visual clutter, created by too many or inappropriate sign types, is strongly discouraged.

• Ensure business signs fit within architectural forms and be integrated with building design. Logo, or corporate style signage is favoured.
• Ensure that where signs are intended or required to be illuminated, illumination should be concealed or integral with the sign by neon, or internally lit box or by sensitively designed spot-lighting.

Storage and disposal of waste

• Require that goods and materials, including waste material and refuse, are stored in areas specifically designed for this purpose and are not visible from the front of the site.

• Where possible, achieve the provision of storage areas for waste materials and refuse as an integral part of the design of buildings.

• Encourage the screening and design of storage areas that are external to buildings to prevent the proliferation of litter and other material within and beyond the site.

• Ensure that effective stormwater management is considered as part of new development proposals.

9.6.4 Policy Reference

• The report ‘Somerton Road and Reservoir Drive, Coolaroc Strategic Analysis Report’ dated September 2003.
ATTACHMENT 1
PLAN 1 EXISTING ZONING MAP
ATTACHMENT 2
MAP 2 – SUBDIVISION OF SUBJECT LAND
ATTACHMENT 3
ATTACHMENT 4
PLANNING EVIDENCE PREPARED BY
COOMES CONSULTING GROUP IN
RESPECT OF AMENDMENT C6 TO THE
HUME PLANNING SCHEME
Amendment C6

Hume Planning Scheme

Planning Evidence

Prepared for Best Hooper, solicitors

18 October 2000
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1.0 Introduction

I have been asked by Best Hooper, solicitors, acting on behalf of the City of Hume to review the planning merits of a proposed amendment to the Hume Planning Scheme to rezone land on the south east corner of Pascoe Vale Road and Somerton Roads, Coolaroo.

The site, comprising approximately 18.5ha of essentially flat and featureless land is currently zoned Public Use. Approximately 5ha of the land, immediately adjacent to the intersection of the primary arterial roads would be zoned Business 2. The balance of the land would be rezoned Business 4. The zone boundaries would be defined by a recently constructed internal access road.

This report is based upon a review of:

- the Hume Planning Scheme
- the proposed amendment and supporting documentation
- relevant planning policy documents, strategies and guidelines
- an inspection and evaluation of the site
- my broader appreciation of metropolitan and retail planning policy development.

The report is structured to respond to the two critical issues in this matter.

- Is the proposal strategically appropriate?
- Are the proposed zones appropriate to manage the intended outcome?

2.0 The proposal

I understand that:

- The Melbourne Water Corporation owned the land, and sold it to the Urban Land Corporation, having no further use for the land.
- The land has no further role in a public use or ownership.
- The land proposed to be zoned Business 2 and 4 might respectively accommodate approximately 20,000m² and 50,000m² of commercial development.

I have sighted a development plan, not forming part of the amendment, that shows part of the Business 4 land to be developed for 7 bulk goods outlets and a fast food outlet.
The bulky goods outlets would range in size between 316m2 and 2,970m2 (total floor area 7,840m2).

The fast food outlet would be sited adjacent to the intersection of the internal road and Somerton Road. The development would contain and have an outlook onto a consolidated central car park, also located adjacent to the above intersection.

I understand that a planning permit has already issued for a hotel on the site.

The fast food outlet is the subject of an Application for Review before the Tribunal.

3.0 The strategic merits of the proposal

3.1 Overview

The context for the assessment of the business and retail proposals is provided by both the State and Local Planning Policy Framework of the Hume Planning Scheme and the 1989 Retail Development Guidelines.

While the intended locational and sectoral expectations of the Municipal Strategic Statement of the Hume Planning Scheme have a significant bearing on the suitability of the proposal it is important to not loose sight of the intent of State, retail and activity centre policy, articulated in the report of the Retail Development Policy Review Panel (1994).

"Land use policy should seek to regulate development for the benefit of a broader community, but should not resist change or stifle competition.

It should intervene through regulation and evaluation only to the extent necessary to ensure adequate retail services to the community; to preserve amenity and investment in public and private assets; and to respond to the community's social and environmental concerns."

And

"The Panel is strongly supportive of the principle of aggregation of uses into activity centres, coupled with the provision of more walking distance convenience and weekly shopping facilities. The Panel considers this to be in the interests of infrastructure efficiency, equitable access, environmental concerns, and the creation of a healthy sense of community."
And

The fundamental test of any retail development must be whether it benefits the broader community."

3.2 The site in the Hume Policy Context

The site is located 4.1km north of Broadmeadows District Centre, at the interface between the developing and emerging Merri Growth Corridor to the north and the established suburbs of Meadow Heights and Broadmeadows.

The Merri Growth Corridor and Sunbury will accommodate most new population growth in the municipality over the next 25 years. The Merri Growth Corridor is expected to accommodate 80,000-90,000. The population of the established areas are predicted to remain stable or decline during the same time period (Municipal Strategic Statement Clause 21.01-5).

Rapid population growth needs to be matched by physical, community and social infrastructure. While acknowledging the established activity and employment centres the Municipal Strategic Statement notes that several new activity centres are planned for the Merri Growth Area (page 6 of 8) and that the development of activity centres is a key issue affecting the city (Clause 21.01-6).

The broad planning objectives for the city include the following relevant consideration (Clause 21.02-4).

- "The cost effective and orderly management of urban growth in a way that achieves the greatest social benefits to the community, but does not diminish the unique character and identity of the city.

- The generation of new job opportunities that meet the needs of a growing population and that stimulate greater employment sustainability in the region, and improved access of local residents to local jobs.

- A rational hierarchy of attractive and accessible activity centres that maximises resident spending within the city and provides for a range of retail, community and entertainment services and facilities."

In specifically addressing the matter of activity centres the Strategic Framework Plan notes at Clause 21.02-5.
"A rational hierarchy of activity centres which provides a wide range of shopping, entertainment and community services accessible to the local and wider community. The hierarchy will support the continued growth of the Broadmeadows District Centre and the Sunbury Town Centre, Craigieburn Shopping Centre and the Campbellfield Shopping Centre as sub-regional order activity centres. The development of new activity centres will also be encouraged to service the needs of existing and future residents of Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park."

The strategic statement does not specifically address or distinguish between bulky goods retailing and the more conventional convenience and comparison shopping centres.

The intended role, function and composition of Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn as activity centres is expressed in the broadest of terms at (Clause 21.03-2).

"To provide for a high quality residential development, vibrant and accessible activity centres in Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park, neighbourhoods that offer a wide range of retail, commercial, community and cultural facilities and services, a comprehensive transport network attractive open spaces and access to a range of employment opportunities."

The intended development of the activity centres is vested in local structure plans, although with regard to Craigieburn the MSS is more specific.

"Encourage the development of a regional order activity centre and employment area at the intersection of Craigieburn Road west with the proposed E14 arterial road to provide a focal point for the area and ensure maximum accessibility to a range of retail, office, education, recreation, entertainment, cultural and open space services and facilities."

To appreciate the role and relationship of the subject site to the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre it is necessary to cross reference the MSS with the Roxburgh Park Local Structure Plan. The Local Structure Plan was prepared for the land owned by the Urban Land Corporation and covered the development of the residential estates as well as siting the sub-regional and neighbourhood shopping centres. It did not seek to provide a structure plan for the whole of the Roxburgh Park Activity Centre.
The MSS explicitly left the future role, use and development of the subject site open for further and later resolution in the strategies for the Broadmeadows and Meadow Heights precinct (Clause 21.03-1).

"Identify appropriate uses for the former reservoir site located on the south east corner of Somerton and Pascoe Vale Roads as part of the General Plan review and implement the findings of this in the first review of the Planning Scheme."

The draft of the General Plan Review, undertaken by GHD in 1998-1999 recommended that the site be recognised for commercial/light industrial purposes that do not detract from the Broadmeadows District Centre. The final draft of the plan has yet to be considered by Council.

The Roxburgh Park Local Structure Plan did not consider the future role of the subject site because its purpose was specifically limited to addressing the use and development of land north of Somerton Road. Since 1994 (and in subsequent drafts) the LSP has identified the land to the immediate north of the subject site and bounded by David Munroe Drive, Somerton Road and the railway as the location for a sub-regional shopping centre comprising 19,000m2 of retail floor space including a discount department store, supermarket, a mini-major and approximately 35 retail specialty shops and personal services. The first stage of this centre including two freestanding take away food premises and a petrol station have been completed.

The Municipal Strategic Statement is silent on the spatial extent and specific location of activity centres. Apart from a schematic representation of the location of the Broadmeadows District Centre there is no plan to show the preferred site or location of new activity centres. The subject site is explicitly shown as "future urban development site".

From a policy perspective I conclude that there is positive support to consider the site for use intended by the Amendment. In particular I rely upon the following:

- The site reinforces both State and local policy to aggregate retail activity in established and identified activity centres.
- It reinforces local employment policy objectives in a location where considerable social benefits to the community might be achieved by the co-location with other retail/business services and by its centrality to both the established and emerging suburbs of the municipality.
• It provides for the orderly management of urban growth.
• It offers the prospect of maximising resident spending within the city.
• It offers a high level of accessibility with the prospect of effective use of existing infrastructure, particularly public transport.

3.3 Peripheral retailing and big box use policy


At the time it noted that these uses provided the most compelling reason to review retail policy.

The terms big box and peripheral sales refer to retail uses that generally require in excess of 1,000m² of floor space and are difficult to integrate in established centres because of their substantial site requirements and their relatively low turnover per square metre of floor area, making it difficult to command “town centre”, sites.

Historically the uses emerged in a haphazard manner, strung along main arterial roads and highways or scattered in high exposure industrial estates. In more recent times and in the context of policy influence there has been a more focussed and orderly approach to this manner of use with particular mention warranted for the “homemaker” centres that have emerged adjacent to a number of higher order centres such as at Fountain Gate/Narre Warren, Highpoint West, Knox and Northlands. These centres, offering a broad range of bulky household lifestyle products, have established adjacent to existing shopping centres, but as in the case of the subject site separated by a road. Patrons of these facilities tend to be car bound and benefit from the aggregation retail of uses. They are destinations in their own right as well as part of a broader retail experience.

To a degree the Broadmeadows District Centre exhibits these characteristics with peripheral sales outlets including Bunnings located at the northern extreme of this centre. Approximately 1.5ha of land is available land for further development. A permit for its use has expired.

The Review Panel concluded that peripheral uses should be assessed against adequate criteria in relation to community benefits, amenity, traffic and other off-site impacts, as well as in relation to any strategic plans for the area under consideration.
It noted:

"huge peripheral sales stores have the potential to significantly distort the retail hierarchy and significantly change shopping patterns."

"Councils need to either direct such uses to the edge of an existing retail precinct or set up a newly zoned area for this purpose, perhaps where they wish to rationalise existing development remote from retail centres."

It recommended a regional approach to planning for these uses placing the following priority for big boxes and similar developments as follows:

- favour sites in the centre (ie in existing built-up areas)
- if no central sites, accept locations on the outskirts
- if no sites on the outskirts, accept locations on the periphery controlled by access conditions (parking and public transport provision).

In my opinion the proposal is consistent with this policy intent. On one view it satisfies the first, above priority. It is to be noted that the policy does not constrain the co-location to District Centres but clearly the benefits will be greater with sites adjacent to higher order centres.

3.4 A regional perspective and alternative locations

Both the above policy and the 1989 Retail Development Guidelines challenge the planning authority to take a regional approach to the siting of peripheral sales and big box facilities and consider the merits of alternative locations.

In my opinion the subject site is sustainable in this context. The Merri Corridor is a major committed growth area in which a substantial number of new households will establish, seeking access to acquire the spectrum of household products generally associated with peripheral sales and big box retailers.

- Indoor and outdoor furniture
- Floor coverings
- Lighting
- Whitegoods and household appliances
- Bicycles
- Lifestyle products.

The notable established centres of these services are either highly dissipated, such as along the Hume Highway through Broadmeadows to Somerton or in relatively distant centres
such as Highpoint West (15.2km), Northlands (14.2km), Wintergardens on the Melton Highway (15.1km) or Epping Plaza (13.1km).

The Broadmeadows District Centre while proximate cannot be held to offer either the range of services or land necessary to serve this emerging market.

In establishing a new focus of peripheral sales to serve this emerging market, and discounting the Broadmeadows District Centre as having a meaningful greater role in this regard, two options are immediately apparent, the Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn sub-regional activity centres.

The Craigieburn Local Structure Plan is schematic and relies on information drafted in 1992. It is anticipated 55,000m2 of retail floor space will be established including peripheral sales.

Roxburgh Park has both locational and timing advantages. It is located more centrally within the corridor, able to serve both the under provided established areas and the emerging areas to the north.

It is already established as a retail node and surrounded by residential estates that are ready to support and have a need for the range of services that these sites might offer.

Craigieburn is both more distant to the market, the shopping centre is not established, and it is located on the metropolitan fringe. Its locational merit and accessibility is in part dependant upon the construction of the E14 Freeway. In the short to medium term it has poorer north-south access, nor does it have immediate access to fixed rail in the manner offered by Roxburgh Park.

Roxburgh Park's location on Pascoe Vale Road, reinforces links with the Broadmeadows District Centre, enabling trips by residents in the corridor to the latter, to be combined with the purchase of goods associated with big box and peripheral sales outlets.

3.5 Site and locational attributes

The broader strategic and regional attributes of the site are reinforced by the site's constraints and opportunities.

- The site is highly accessible, with frontage to north-south and east-west arterial routes, bus services and proximity to the proposed Roxburgh/Somerton Railway Station.
The site has the potential to enjoy high exposure, essential to the proposed manner of retail and commercial development.

- The site is adjacent to the Roxburgh Park sub-regional centre but part of the activity centre.
- The site, use and development have the potential to serve the "gateway" function foreshadowed by Pascoe Vale Road in the local policy (Clause 21.03-1).
- The site is large, flat and featureless, essential prerequisites for the proposed use.
- The site is integrated into the local network by signalised intersections, enabling orderly vehicle movement, and safe pedestrian passage between the adjacent residential areas and shopping centre.
- The site is separated from the adjacent residential areas by Pascoe Vale Road, providing a buffer to offset any potential off-site amenity impacts.
- The use and development would serve an appropriate transitional zone between the residential areas to the west and the industrial areas to the east.
- The site is relatively isolated from residential areas, separated by arterial roads and the railway line. From an amenity and integration perspective it is not particularly suited to a residential role.

In conclusion from a strategic perspective there is little if anything constraining its use in the manner proposed and a lot to commend it.

3.6 The site and an office role

As Section 4.0 of this report details the Business 2 zone foreshadows development for offices and associated commercial uses.

From my awareness of the region and appreciation of the metropolitan office market, Coolaroo is unlikely to emerge as a notable focus of office activity.

The suburban office market has not favoured the northern suburbs, with the major focuses of significant suburban office use being in the eastern and southern suburbs. Where larger offices have been established outside these preferred locations they have tended to be led by and dependant upon 1 or more public sector tenants, with the decentralisation of the Australian Taxation office to Dandenong, Box Hill, Cheltenham and Moonee Ponds being the outstanding example.

Historically Broadmeadows has struggled to perform a major office role and within this context ought to be the preferred or priority focus for this manner of use.
Coolaroo is not a recognised business address and in my opinion it would require a significant project and the creation of a special environment (along the lines of the Tally Ho Business Park in the eastern suburbs) to have any real attraction. The prospect of that manner of development, investment and outcome is improbable.

For the above reasons peripheral sales, commercial uses and some small scale office based activity serving the adjacent local market and needs are a more probable development outcome.

This is explored in greater detail in the next section of this report.

4.0 The appropriateness of the proposed zoning

4.1 Background

Section 2.0 of this report has outlined the terms of the proposed amendment as they apply to the zoning of the land.

The purposes of the Business 2 land (approximately 5ha to be located at the apex of Pascoe Vale Road and Somerton Road) are stated as:

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To encourage the development of offices and associated commercial uses.

Within the zone, office is a permitted use, retail premises and a shop are discretionary uses and innominate discretionary uses potentially cover a range of other commercial activities.

The purpose of the Business 4 zone is:

To encourage the development of a mix of bulky goods retailing and manufacturing industry and their associated commercial services.

Within this zone the following uses are permitted:

- industry
- restricted retail premises
- other nominated peripheral sales style uses
- a service station
- warehouse.
Leisure and recreation uses, office, place of assembly, retail premises are discretionary uses and a shop is prohibited, in the zone.

Concern has been expressed by a submitter to the amendment that:

- there is no strategic basis in the planning scheme for the proposed zone given the size of the site
- conventional retail should be restricted or precluded on the site due to the proximity and role of the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre.

4.2 The strategic basis of the amendment

The first part of this report has identified a strategic basis for the amendment. I have reviewed an economic appraisal of the amendment prepared by Macroplan on behalf of the proponent and concur with the broad conclusions drawn in that report.

The site is substantial and as I have noted above some doubt must be held for the prospect of establishing a substantial office component on the site.

Despite this I am not troubled by the extent of land to be rezoned. The site and location are in a strong and strategic location and should be perceived as a major regional resource and focus for bulky goods and commercial activity.

I would anticipate that the land might be developed in a series of stages and over an extended time period as the residential catchment grows.

The proposed uses tend to be land extensive with substantial areas of at grade car park and landscaping accounting for large tracts of the space.

Given the exposure of the site it might also attract uses such as:

- car and boat sales
- plant nurseries and garden centres
- light industrial uses, perhaps with a retail or manufacturing sales component.

There would be no material community disadvantage if the market could not sustain the development of the whole site in the immediate future. As previously noted the site is on one view an island site on which other uses such as residential are inappropriate. It is appropriate to ‘land bank’ for the longer term rather than have to create additional dispersed sites later.
The retail and bulky goods market has shown considerable growth and dynamism over the last decade. There is no reason to conclude that this trend will stagnate and therefore it is appropriate to maintain land and a degree of flexibility to allow the market to adapt and change within an agreed planning framework. Too much prescription in the past has culminated in retail planning being more an exercise in 'catch up' rather than leadership.

4.3 Conventional retailing

The concern that the site may be used for the establishment of conventional smaller scale retail activities that duplicate and compete with the Roxburgh Park Shopping Centre is in my opinion more of a theoretical rather real threat.

In the event that the amendment is approved as gazetted the Roxburgh Park activity centre would comprise and be structured into three distinct entities differentiated by zone types and purposes.

The Business 1 zone that applies to the shopping centre would have the purpose of:

To encourage the intensive development of business centres for retailing and other complementary, commercial, entertainment and community uses.

Within the zone, shop is a permitted use. This is to be contrasted with the Business 2 and 4 zones where the use is respectively discretionary and prohibited.

This provides a clear statutory and strategic distinction between locational preferences and priorities. Within the spirit of the above commentary on dynamism and flexibility, it is sound planning within an activity centre to retain some discretion over retail uses that may require smaller floor space but which have a greater synergy with uses established in the Business 2 or 4 zone than in the Business 1 zone.

While I do not consider it warranted, if greater strategic direction was required rather than impose arbitrary and prescriptive controls in the schedule to the zones a preferable approach would be to insert a short paragraph into the Municipal Strategic Statement at Clause 21.03-1 and/or 21.03-2 to the following effect.

"The Roxburgh Park sub-regional activity centre shall be developed as a focus of retail and community facilities, with a priority upon
5.0 Conclusions

Based on my analysis and commentary above I draw the following conclusions about the proposed amendment.

The proposal offers the prospect of significant community benefits in terms of:

- excellent access to a greater choice of a retail and commercial services
- a diversified and consolidated activity centre at Roxburgh Park
- no significant environmental implications
- efficient use of existing infrastructure
- significant local economic opportunities measured in job creation and retention of spending within the community
- short and long term commercial development opportunities
- no detrimental amenity impacts
- effective use of vacant urban land.

For the above reasons I consider the amendment should be supported as exhibited.

Rob Milner
Coomes Consulting Group
ATTACHMENT 5
MAP 4 – LOCATION OF OTHER RESTRICTED RETAIL CENTRES
MAP 4: Location of Other Restricted Retail Centres
ATTACHMENT 6
MAP 5 – CONCEPTUAL LAND USE PATTERN