



MOLONG TOWN CENTRE ISSUES PAPER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	2
Why a New Plan?	3
Plan Making Approach	4
Vision & Opportunity	5
Evolution of Molong Town Centre	6
Regional Snapshot	10
Stakeholders	12
Policy Framework	14
Service Authorities	15
Town Centre Analysis	16
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats	25
Key Issues	27
Designing the Public Domain	35
Maintaining the Public Domain	41
Adopting Simple Urban Design Principles	42
Taking the Next Steps	43

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To experience the charm of Molong you must visit everything in its town centre, from restaurants, cafes, shops, galleries and pubs. Everyone is welcome.

Situated in the rich Macquarie Range, Molong is renowned for its fine wines, wool, beef cattle and fat lambs. Set against an easterly vista of Molong Creek and rolling hills above, Molong's Main-street (Bank Street) showcases this productive landscape and is a streetscape of considerable historic and architectural significance.

Council has committed funding to develop the Molong Town Centre Plan. This plan aims to engage with stakeholders to develop new ideas and urban renewal projects to make the centre more attractive to a range of stakeholders.

Following the public exhibition of the Molong Town Centre Issues Paper and consideration of issues raised, Council intends to engage an urban designer to work with interested members of the community to design meaningful / beneficial improvements as part of the development of the Molong Town Centre Plan.

Without these investments Molong's Town Centre will continue to be challenged by other nearby centres for shopping and services, which could lead to deterioration of town centre assets and appeal.

Public exhibition of the Molong Town Centre Issues Paper and consideration of feedback will be directly followed by the preparation of the draft Molong Town Centre Plan.



1. INTRODUCTION

Cabonne Shire Council and the Molong Advancement Group agree that it is time to plan for the next phase of the development of the Molong Town Centre.

Similar to its establishment, railway development and post war phases, Molong Town Centre is facing significant challenges, borne about by our inextricably connected world which is changing the way we communicate, work, travel, shop and seek enjoyment in life.

Town planning is placing more emphasis on centres that serve both local and visitor markets. This is particularly important in regional NSW where resident populations are relatively stable and attracting new markets is a challenge.

To grow the economy in Molong Town Centre requires consideration of the needs of the existing and emerging markets as well as an emphasis on features that clearly identifies the centre and maximises its appeal.

Fortunately, Molong Town Centre is rich with appeal and it may only be a matter of slight upgrades to the Main-street to capture the essence of Molong - its history as well as where it is going into the future.

Council has committed funding to develop the Molong Town Centre Plan. The Molong Town Centre Issues Paper has been prepared as a precursor to a Molong Town Centre Plan. The aim of the issues paper is to explore the relevant issues that need to be considered with community members, so as to better inform the development of the Molong Town Centre Plan.

Public exhibition of the Molong Town Centre Issues Paper and consideration of feedback will be directly followed by the preparation of the draft Molong Town Centre Plan.



2. WHY A NEW PLAN?

Australia's retailers continue to work through the 2019-20 financial year under challenging conditions. Some of the pressures faced by local businesses in Molong include:

- Growing access to private motor vehicles and improvements to vehicle comfort continues to influence people's appetite to travel to access goods and services.
- Growing access to on-line shopping services such as EBAY is offering cheaper and quicker retailing to customers all over Australia.
- Shrinking market share to larger commercial centres such as Orange and Dubbo that offer higher order goods and services to customers.
- Rising operating costs (rents, wages, electricity and other overhead costs).
- Just-in-time freight services, favouring larger scale companies and franchises that take out the middle service provider, which would traditionally have operated at Molong.
- Reduced revenue base, as regular customers continue to limit discretionary spending in town as they work through a drought.
- Reduced dependence on physical stores due to online marketing and direct freight services.

While the value of commercial property in Molong provides a measure of support for some businesses to 'weather' the downturns, not all businesses in town own their premises. Strategies are required to sustain Molong Town Centre as a whole, which will largely be achieved by securing a resilient customer base through all circumstances.

Any significant increases in the customer base at Molong will likely have to come from new markets, such as visitors from nearby centres as well as people travelling through the region or visiting friends and family or to attend an event.

To support future commercial growth and activity in Molong will therefore require greater consideration of the key issues that influence these new markets to turn their attention to Molong Town Centre.

Part of the appeal of Molong Town Centre is its rich architectural heritage. Many of the buildings in Bank Street (the town's Main-street) date back to the 1870s and help tell the incredibly interesting story of early settlement in the area. Combined with easy-to-negotiate roads, footpaths, parking and commercial premises, the Molong Town Centre has potential to serve a much larger customer base.

A new plan that focuses on urban renewal, place making, parking and wayfinding projects are worthwhile investments for Cabonne Shire Council and the wider community. These projects should aim to improve the attraction, amenity and ease of access throughout Molong Town Centre. They will benefit existing residents and businesses as well as new and emerging markets.

3. PLAN MAKING APPROACH

The Molong Town Centre Plan will be undertaken in the following stages:

1

Molong Town Centre Issues Paper

The public exhibition of the Molong Town Centre Issues Paper is the first official step in realising the possibilities and opportunities of the centre through an urban renewal approach. Feedback from the exhibition of the Issues Paper will be used to inform subsequent stages and brief an urban designer to assist with the Inquiry-by-Design Workshops.

2

Inquiry-by-Design Workshops

Inquiry-by-Design Workshops will be organised by Council to identify potential projects and programs. The workshops will be facilitated by an urban designer with experience in Town Centre planning. The aim of the workshops will be to explore ways to create more attractive public spaces in Molong Town Centre. The findings of the workshops will help the Project Team prepare the Molong Town Centre Plan.

3

Molong Town Centre Plan

The Molong Town Centre Plan will provide an urban design plan for Bank Street, as well as other key sites that underpin Town Centre objectives. The Molong Town Centre Plan will document the tasks and projects proposed to be tackled over the next 10 year period. It is in this document that a number of tangible actions (new projects and programs) will be decided upon. The Plan will be placed on public exhibition to gain important feedback on proposed actions.



4. VISION & OPPORTUNITY

Cabonne Shire Vision

Molong is at the centre of a strong agricultural region. In recent community engagement processes, Cabonne Shire Council and community members have come together to determine the vision for the shire and to map-out the framework for achieving this vision.

The Cabonne Community Strategic Plan 2022 identifies the following key future directions that are relevant to the Molong Town Centre Plan:

1. Connect Cabonne to each other and the world
2. Build business and generate employment
3. Provide and develop community facilities
4. Grow Cabonne's culture and community
5. Manage our natural resources

Molong Town Centre could become a key destination for friends and family to catch-up on weekends or as part of a touring holiday through the region. The challenge is to build on the good elements of Molong Town Centre and the unique opportunities it affords in a manner that meets the needs of the local community as well as visitors and tourists.

Molong Town Centre Vision

The vision for the Molong Town Centre Plan could be:

“Molong Town Centre is a place to relax and recharge your batteries, with its beautiful heritage buildings, quality footpaths, easy parking servicing and an attractive array of active street frontages and colourful spaces.”

The Molong Town Centre Plan will focus on a number of urban renewal projects, involving partnerships possibly between Cabonne Shire Council, State government agencies, Molong Advancement Group, local businesses and interested members of the community. These projects will be aimed at improving the attraction, amenity and growth potential of Molong Town Centre. They will benefit existing residents and businesses and are also aimed at appealing to new and emerging markets such as visitors to the centre, markets and events.

It is intended that the finalised Molong Town Centre Plan will be the primary guiding document to programme Council's own work to upgrade the centre of Molong.

5. EVOLUTION OF MOLONG TOWN CENTRE

Molong Town Centre has a rich history. A snapshot of the history of the Molong is provided in this section.

Pre-written history

The Wiradjuri Tribe inhabits the region. The name 'Molong' is derived from the Wiradjuri language meaning 'all rocks'. The site of present day Molong is situated on the Molong Creek and is bordered by hills to the east and west. In pre-contact times the area would have been ideal for Wiradjuri people to hunt and gather food along the creek flats and camp on the higher ground.

1800 - Settlement and trade

1819 - The first European William Lee drives cattle into the district.

1822 - A government stockade is established east of the present day Molong. It provides an important stopover for travellers en-route to the convict station at Wellington.

1826 - A military and police outpost is established.

1828 - The explorer Charles Sturt visits the area.

1832 - Surveyor-General Major Thomas Mitchell passes through the region, from Bathurst to Wellington. The first land grant in the area is recorded to William Lee, followed by Marsden, Kite, Betts and Robarts.

1846 - The first metal (copper) mine in NSW commences operating north of Molong. New government land regulations permit more permanent settlement.



1849 - Molong is gazetted as a township. The first town plan is superimposed over established stock routes. Work to clear trees and stumps along Bank Street is started to make way for new development.

1850 - The Freemason's Hotel (single storied structure) is built at 1 Bank Street, Molong. Major Mitchell's Aboriginal guide Yuranigh is killed east of Molong.

1851 - The discovery of gold at Ophir draws people from Molong to the Rush. Discovery of gold in other areas (Bathurst, Forbes, Parkes and Young) slows settlement growth in Molong.

1856 - The first land sales take place in Molong. The Golden Fleece Hotel starts trading in Riddle Street.

1858 - The Methodist Chapel is built.

1864 - The Molong Court House is built.

1866 - The Presbyterian Church is built.

1870 - A Cobb & Co "Coach House" is built and used as stables by the transport company.

1872 - The Post Office Hotel is built at 34 Bank Street, Molong. It is also used as the Government Savings Bank. It is converted to the Rural Lands Protection Board in future years.

1875 - Large areas of Molong are made available for free selection. Settlers start arriving in the district and there is more demand for local goods and services.

1876 - The Molong School of Arts is opened by Sir Henry Parkes.

1877 - The Royal Hotel is built. The 'Australian Stores' and 'Glassgow Stores' are operating along Bank Street. The town's first Catholic Church is also built around the same time.

1878 - The municipality of Molong is constituted. Council starts removing tree stumps from Bank Street. The first issue of the Molong Express is published. The School of Arts at 78 Bank Street opens.

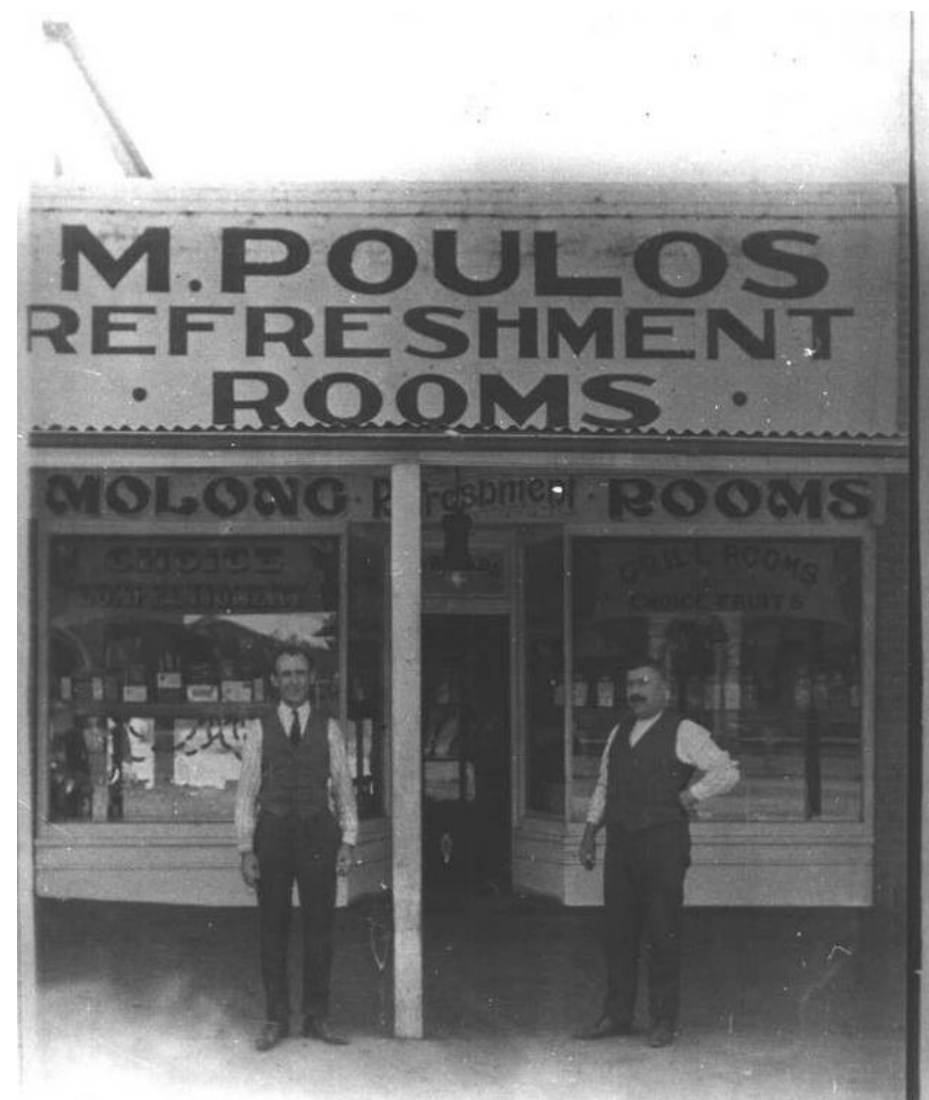
1880 - The Molong Post Office opens for business. The Telegraph Hotel, opposite the Post Office at 53 Bank Street is built around the same time.

1881 - The government's decision to connect Molong to the burgeoning railway system is announced and further construction follows - National Bank building and the CBC Bank (1883), Railway Station (1886), Town Hall (1888) and multiple houses and shops.

1883 - Council upgrades Bank Street with road base and kerb and gutter from locally quarried limestone.

1886 - The railway arrives at Molong and the Railway Station is opened. Molong becomes the terminus of the main western line from Sydney.

1887 - The foundation stone for Molong Hospital is laid by Sir Henry Parkes. The Molong Golf Club and a new school are established around the same time.



1900 - Passing trade

1900 - White Cedar trees and street gas lights are progressively established in Molong Town Centre.

1902 - Drought affects Molong and slows growth and development.

1904 to 1912 - Molong has a growth spurt, with the population rising from 1,100 people to 1,670.

1915 - Motor vehicles frequent the Main-street. Overhead power lines and the telegraph are installed. Many established trees are removed.

1914 to 1918 - War in Europe impacts the Molong community and the Town Centre, with the loss of many lives. Monuments and new buildings are erected and street trees planted in the post war era. Returned Servicemen are offered land under the Soldiers Settlement Act and low cost loans to build new homes in Molong, which increases the demand for household goods and services.

1920 - Utz's and Fletcher's stores in Bank Street are centres of commercial activity.

1925 - The railway is extended from Molong to Dubbo. Most commercial activity is located in Bank Street, below Gidley Street, to be close to railway activity.

1922 - The foundation stone for a new front façade to the Town Hall is laid, as a memorial to those from the district who served in World War One. The servicing of motor vehicles brings new commerce and industry to town – Leary's Garage and a Ford Dealership.

1928 - Borenore Creek dam is complete and town water is available.

1930 -The Molong community feels the impacts of the great depression. Despite slow growth, the Molong Theatre is built and opens in 1931.

1938 - Fairbridge Farm School is established and continues operating until 1973.

1939 to 1945 -Army uniforms frequent Molong's Town Centre.



Post War to present

1969 - The Historical Society acquires their museum site with help from the Molong Shire Council.

1972 - Yarn Market Association Ltd opens for trading back at the Yarn Market College.

1982 - Random breath testing (RBT) is introduced in NSW. While significantly reducing road fatalities, RBT also has an effect on the night-time economy in the Main-street.

2005 - Molong Town Centre is affected by flooding of the Molong Creek.

2010 - Cafes and coffee shops gain greater importance in the CBD, with a number of premises being established / refurbished.

2019 - Upgrades are planned for Molong Community Hall to create a new library and learning centre.



6. REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

Central NSW Region

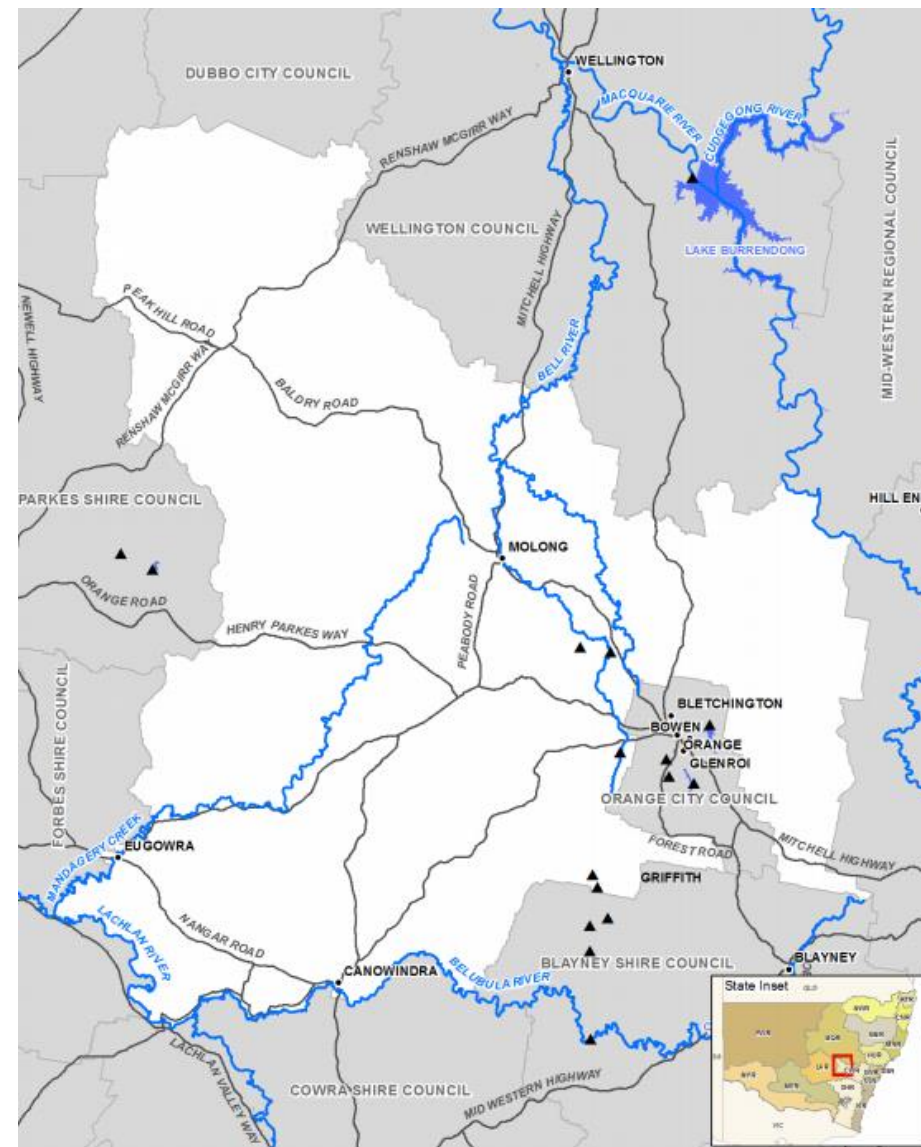
The Cabonne Shire is located in the Central West Region of NSW, which has a regional population of approximately 273,000. The Central West is a major agricultural, industrial and commercial region that is rich in natural resources. It also has strong road and rail connections across the country.

The region has a number of large centres including Orange (41,500), Dubbo (41,600), Bathurst (41,700) and Lithgow (21,000). Other large towns in the region are Condobolin, Cowra, Forbes, Molong, Mudgee, Parkes and Wellington. The rest of the population is spread across many smaller towns and settlements. This lends itself to travel patterns that are dispersed across the region.

Approximately 93% of all trips in the region, including work travel, are by private vehicle. Walking and cycling comprises approximately 6% of all trips, while public transport use is less than 1%. Poor access to public transport contributes to social disadvantage and accessibility issues in some sections of the community.

Much of the region's economic activity occurs within the larger regional centres of Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange. As well as having the highest proportion of population, these centres are hubs for higher order shopping and trade services, health and education.

The population of the Central West region is expected to experience slower growth over the next 20 years than regions closer to Sydney. The region's population is ageing, with the only age group forecast to increase in proportion being the 65 and over group.



Cabonne Shire

The Cabonne Shire has a population of around 13,860 people, spread over a relatively large area of 6,026 square kilometres. The Shire is crossed by the Mitchell Highway and the Broken Hill railway line. The Shire is located approximately 290 kilometres west of Sydney, 770 kilometres north of Melbourne, 945 kilometres south of Brisbane and 270 kilometres north of Canberra.

Within the Shire are the towns of villages of Canowindra, Cargo, Cudal, Cumnock, Eugowra, Manildra, Molong and Yeoval. The largest population is concentrated at Molong, with the balance residing in the smaller towns and rural areas. The community is predominately an adult population. The median age is 41 years compared to 37 for Australia. 89.6 % of the population are born in Australia and 2.3 % are Indigenous persons.

Cabonne Shire is renowned as Australia's food basket, for its varied agricultural products. The mainstay of the economy continues to be agriculture, with more people employed in this sector than any other industry type. Main industries are sheep, beef cattle and grain farming, education, health, local government and grain milling and cereal production.

Travel patterns are dispersed across the shire with the majority of activity tending to interact with the main road routes (Mitchell Highway, The Escort Way and the Henry Parkes Way). The community is considered to have high car dependency for both work and leisure.

Molong Township

The town of Molong is the largest urban centre in the Cabonne Shire, with a population of approximately 1,674 people.

Bank Street Molong is the main shopping precinct for the local area and provides for all household essentials (food and beverages, rural supplies, fuel and mechanical services) as well as some higher order services (library, banks, restaurants, cafés, retail shops, hotels).

Outside Bank Street, employment is generated at isolated facilities such as health and aged care facilities (Molong Health Service, Prunus Lodge and Molong Lodge) and educational centres (Molong Central School, St Joseph's Primary School and Molong Early Learning Centre).

Molong Town Centre has a Regional Catchment Area (RCA) of approximately 30 kilometres radius around town, which takes in nearby Cumnock, Manildra and rural farming properties. Molong RCA is strongly influenced by Orange, which has many of the big discount department stores and franchise chains commonly associated with regional centres.

The visitor market is growing for Molong, with regional residents attracted to the town centre for its unique shopping / dining experience and appeal. Recreational Vehicle (RV) visitations are also an emerging market for Molong.

7. STAKEHOLDERS

The Molong Town Centre Plan is aimed at stakeholders involved in the planning, designing, developing and maintaining the Molong Town Centre. Equally important, the process is aimed at property owners, shop proprietors and real estate agents.

More than ever, the local community is encouraged to partner with the public sector in setting a new direction for the Molong Town Centre – one that will create new markets to drive business opportunities and confidence in town. It is considered essential that the public sector and the private sector work under a strong partnership to explore the issues underpinning the growth and development of Molong and visualise exciting new projects for the centre.

Users of the public spaces in Molong are also important stakeholders. It is therefore important that a good cross section of views and ideas are obtained from the wider community to develop the Molong Town Centre Issues Paper and finalise ‘the scope’ of the Molong Town Centre Plan.

Other government authorities, community groups and individuals may also find the Issues Paper useful in determining whether they wish to help fund or become involved in the Molong Town Centre Plan.

Input is being encouraged from the following stakeholders:

Molong Business Sector

- Molong Advancement Group
- Property owners
- Small Business owners
- Hoteliers and club management

Traders

- Shop owners and operators
- Staff (seeking parking or to take a break)
- Footpath traders (street stalls, buskers, people that volunteer for raffle drives and sausage sizzles, pop-up shops.)

Customers

- Molong shoppers seeking goods and services
- Farmers seeking long / large loads of produce
- Truck drivers taking a break and buying food or a drink as they pass through town
- Locals just being people (celebrating, relaxing, serious, sad, bored, talking, looking)
- More vulnerable pedestrians (aged, children, people with a disability)

Tourists & Visitors

- Motorists, including RV owners
- Tourists as pedestrians
- People visiting friends and relatives
- People involved in celebrations such as weddings, markets and festivals
- People attending sporting events

Motorists

- Travelling past the Town Centre to other destinations
- Seeking a parking spot
- Service vehicles using loading and unloading facilities
- Truck drivers and farmers with heavy vehicle plant seeking motorist services, parking and clear routes through town
- RV motorists looking for a long park, information or a place for an overnight stay
- Bus operators
- Just cruising

Cabonne Shire Council

- Elected representatives
- Senior Management
- Town Planners
- Health and Building Surveyors
- Maintenance Supervisors and Crews
- Engineers
- Parks and Gardens Crews

Other Government & Service Authorities

- Electricity and telecommunications providers
- RMS (funding of roads, pedestrian and cycling projects)
- OEH (funding of heritage restoration projects)

Law Enforcement

- NSW Police
- Rangers
- Building Compliance Inspectors
- Food shop inspectors



8. POLICY FRAMEWORK

Legislation has been passed by various tiers of government that affects Molong. It is important that this legislative framework is reviewed to ensure it is appropriate in the Molong context and is not causing any unnecessary barriers to development in the Town Centre.

Supporting Policies

Several studies and plans have already been prepared that have helped to shape Molong and its Town Centre. These documents provide important background information to help develop the Molong Town Centre Plan. They include:

- Skateboards on Footpaths – Bank Street Molong Policy.
- Street and Stream Signage Policy.
- Footpaths – Use for Outdoor Eating Areas.
- Street Tree Master Plan.
- Cabonne Settlement Strategy.
- Cabonne Local Environmental Plan.

It is not necessary to replicate the substantial body of research work that is available to inform the Molong Town Centre Issues Paper. This work will be used as reference material where required.

New and Emerging Policies

Cabonne Shire Council is progressing the Molong Town Centre Plan in the 2019/20 Financial Year, including the preparation of this Issues Paper.

Following public exhibition of the Molong Town Centre Issues Paper and consideration of all feedback given during this preliminary engagement phase, it is intended that Inquiry-by-Design workshops will be held in Molong to allow community members the opportunity to work with an urban designer to further develop ideas for consideration in the preparation of the Molong Town Centre Plan.

9. SERVICE AUTHORITIES

There are a number of government authorities and incorporated organisations that have a service role in Molong. The main service authorities are:

- NSW Roads and Maritime Services - road design stakeholder.
- Cabonne Shire Council - road authority, trade waste authority, consent authority for new developments, appropriate regulatory authority for pollution matters, companion animals regulator and approvals body for various local government permits, certificates and approvals.
- Essential Energy - manager of the regional electricity distribution network, including maintenance, augmentation upgrades, and design oversight of new developments / upgrades.
- Telstra - builder and operator of the telecommunications networks, including mobile, internet access and pay television products and services.
- NSW Police - emergency and crime services from the Molong Police Station and Molong.
- Fire and Rescue NSW - first responder to fires and other emergency situations.
- St John Ambulance - lead first aid service provider.

It is important that all service authorities have input into the Molong Town Centre Plan to ensure their work and interests are taken into account. It is also important that these service authorities ensure their levels of service and work practices in Molong's Town Centre are consistent with the goals and aspirations of the local community and other stakeholders.



10. TOWN CENTRE ANALYSIS

Molong Town Centre is unique in terms of its layout and functioning. Greater understanding of the constraints and opportunities of this 'footprint' can assist in formulating new plans for the future.

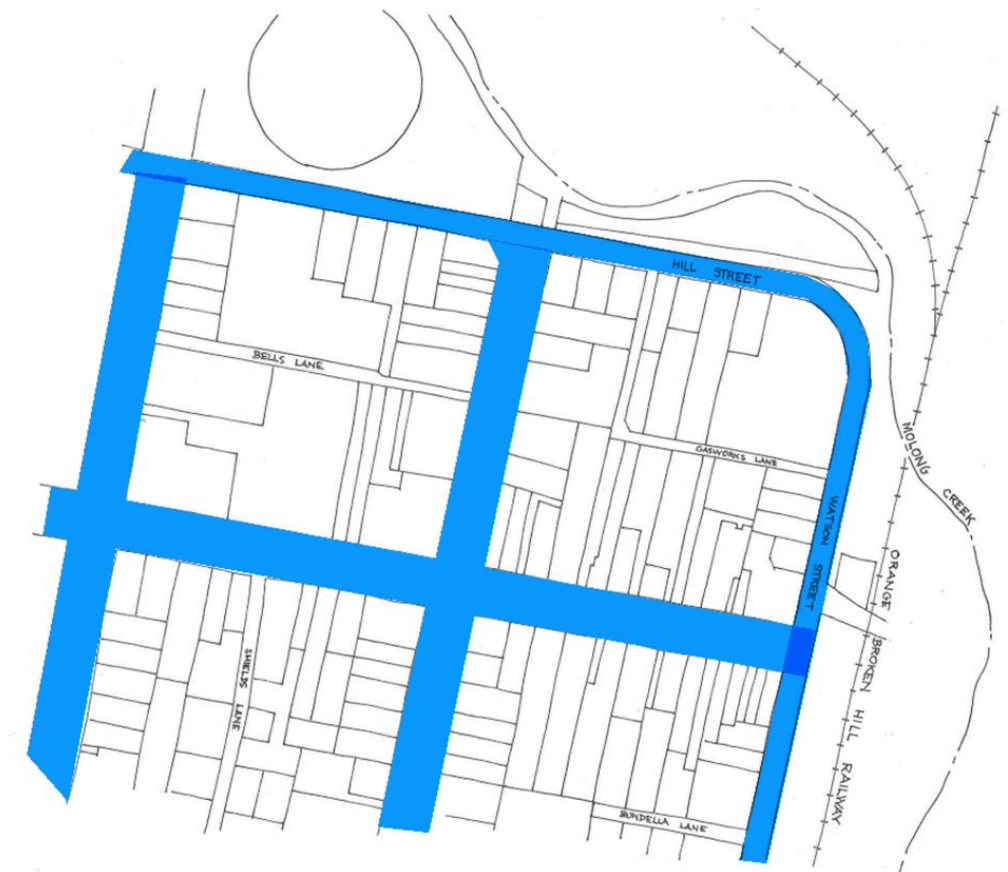
This section briefly analyses some of the key elements of the town centre.

Molong Town Centre Street Layout

Molong township benefits from a traditional urban grid pattern (largely rectangular blocks and right angle intersections) which aids traffic circulation and produces focal areas and distinct character areas between street blocks.

Bank Street is the Main-street in Molong Town Centre, and runs in an east-west direction.

When asked where the centre of town is, most people have indicated east of the Post Office in Bank Street. This area comprises the mainstay of retail activity in town.



Extent of the Molong Town Centre

Business activity in Molong is roughly contained within a relatively small precinct along Bank Street, bordered by Edward Street to the west and the Mitchell Highway to the east.



Approaches to Molong Town Centre

Molong's Town Centre Bank Street is mainly approached from the Mitchell Highway, north-west and south-east. The town centre can also be approach from Edward Street.

A detailed description of the approaches to Bank Street Molong is provided below:

Northern Approach

The approach to the Molong's Town Centre from the north starts from the approach to town along the Mitchell Highway.

At the intersection of Edward Street and the Mitchell Highway, you have entered the Molong urban area, boasting a mix of commercial, residential and open space land-use. There is no clear Way-finding material advising motorists of opportunities to stop and visit Molong Town Centre at this intersection.

Driving further east / south-east, the Molong Creek, Railway Station and commercial land-uses are present (motels, service station, café and caravan park).

The intersection of Bank Street and the Mitchell Highway is the gateway to Molong Town Centre. There is no clear Way-finding material advising motorists of opportunities to stop and visit the centre at this intersection.

Driving past the intersection, motorists are presented with a brief glimpse of a vibrant commercial centre with historic two-storied and single storey buildings and established street trees. Urban infrastructure, such as light poles, overhead power lines and street furniture are incongruous from this view. Car parking appears limited and there are few opportunities to stop, particularly for long vehicles.

Driving past the shopping precinct, grain storage silos and the railway are on the left and dwellings and isolated commercial / industrial land-use is on the right (west).

Southern Approach

The approach to the Molong Town Centre from the south starts along the Mitchell Highway as Molong Township is approached.

Land-use in Molong Town Centre

The Town Centre of Molong is made up of a number of land-uses, which all contribute to the attraction and character of the centre. The following map shows the land-uses that currently exist in and around Molong town centre. A description of the land-uses that comprise Molong town centre is provided below:

COMMERCIAL

A variety of commercial land-uses are located in Molong Town Centre, largely centred around the eastern section of Bank Street, between Mitchell Highway and Gidley Street (shown blue on map). The main commercial land-uses include a supermarket, various food shops, specialty retail stores selling clothing, shoes and other personalised products, newsagency, banks and hotels. Wider afield to the north of the centre are motels, rural supplies, caravan park, fuel and mechanical services. Community facilities and public open space are located towards the western end of the centre.

SIGNIFICANT OPEN SPACE

The Molong Village Green is the only public open space in Molong Town Centre. This public green space is located on the corner of Bank and Gidley Streets.

The Molong Caravan Park is directly north-east of Molong Town Centre and locates visitors right in the heart of the town centre.

The Molong Creek is located on the urban fringe of town, approximately 100-200 metres north and east of the town centre. This riparian area provides significant green space relief to the built-up areas of town, and opportunity for passive and structured recreation.

Dr Ross Memorial Recreation Ground and the Molong Swimming Pool are located north of Molong Town Centre, fronting the Mitchell Highway. To the east of the Mitchell Highway is the Molong Bowling Club. These facilities are attractors for community events and public recreation activities.

SURROUNDING RESIDENTIAL

Residential dwellings (shown in pink on the map) form part of Molong Town Centre and provide interest, passive surveillance and activity in and around the town centre.



Traffic and Parking

The mainstay of parking in Molong town centre is currently provided as public parking within Bank Street via reverse angle parking either side of the road.

A detailed description of parking available in the Molong town centre is provided below:

Car Parking

Public car parking is available along Bank Street and other side streets. Provision is made for both short and long term stays to be accommodated in the Town Centre.

Parking appears adequate for daily needs of staff and visitors. Parking would be in demand during busy times, such as Saturday mornings and at events.

There are limited off-street parking facilities. An area north of Bank Street is used as an informal car park.

Disabled Parking

Limited disabled parking spaces are currently located in the Town Centre of Molong. There is no disabled parking readily visible within off-street parking areas.

Long Vehicle Parking

There is no dedicated long vehicle parking in the Molong town centre. Trucks and long recreational vehicles tend to park along Mitchell Street and side streets.

There are limited sign-posted loading zones for retail and commercial services in Bank Street. Informal loading and unloading activities must occur in the absence of loading areas in the Town Centre to meet the needs of local businesses.

Pedestrian Movement and Pavements

The Molong Town Centre has two main pavement types; concrete on most footpaths and limited paving and bitumen seal on streets, laneways and some footpaths.

Footpath pavements are generally in good condition along streets. Evidence of footpath surface failure (particularly lifting of paved edges and large cracks) can be observed along some street sections. All these surfaces need to be maintained to high standards to provide safe and hardwearing surface conditions for all pedestrians in all weather conditions and at all times of the day.

Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs) are generally absent from intersections in the town centre. Incorporating TGSIs at the main intersection used by pedestrians to navigate the Town Centre would deliver greater mobility / accessibility both sides of Molong Town Centre.

There are limited crossing points of Bank Street to connect both sides of the Main-street. The addition of more pedestrian crossing points would provide greater for less abled and more vulnerable pedestrians (generally older residents, children or a person with a disability), which is important to achieve safe road conditions and an inclusive centre.

Street Assets

Street Lights

The street lights installed in Molong Town Centre are generally all designed for motor vehicle drivers travelling along the road environment, rather than for pedestrians. These lights are quite tall and provide general luminance throughout the Town Centre.

Lower to the ground pedestrian lights are generally not installed in urban streets around the town centre. The addition of pedestrian lights would provide greater luminance at pedestrian level, which is important for increasing actual and perceived safety along the street network.

Street Trees

Molong is well endowed with street trees. The Town Centre appears less barren than other centres in the region where street trees are not well established.

Facing hotter climate conditions, it may be timely to introduce additional trees at key locations in the Town Centre; species that complements existing street trees and provides more cooling shade and green spaces in summer months.

Street furniture

A range of styles and forms of seats, litter bins, planter boxes, bollards, and signs are found throughout the Molong Town Centre. There is no consistency of appearance in street furniture and the style of most furniture is dated in appearance.

The different styles of planter boxes and seating tend to differentiate along different areas of the Town Centre. Seating varies between modern metal street seating and older wooden style seating. There is additional colourful table and chair sets on the street seating supplied by local cafes.

Services and Infrastructure

Streets in town have overhead power lines either side of the road. Bank Street has underground power and the streetscape remains uncluttered with overhead lines. Water mains, sewerage mains, stormwater pipes and telecommunications are also located underground within the footpath areas.

Public Art

There is a general absence of public artwork in the Molong Town Centre. There are a number of activity / character areas in the centre where the surrounding built form lacks interest or is showing signs of deterioration. Public artwork could be incorporated in a variety of forms in these areas to create a strong and inviting sense of place. It would be a good opportunity to showcase the skill of local talent, further developing the strong identity within Molong.



Built Form

Molong Town Centre exhibits a mix of architectural styles that portray the evolution of the town since its early settlement. Commercial buildings on both sides of Bank Street provide a richness of built form in the centre.

There are a number of Victorian and interwar era buildings that make significant positive contributions to the streetscape. Several buildings retain timbered verandahs, which positively influence the character of the Main-street as well as provide opportunities for shade, shelter, bicycle parking and outdoor dining.

The Freemason Hotel is a dominant and easily identifiable building at the eastern end of the Town Centre, fronting both Bank Street and the Mitchell Highway. This landmark building is two storeys with a long timber verandah.

Larger scale commercial stores, such as Big-W and Coles are not established in Molong. These large-scale stores generally have bland facades that would be conspicuously inconsistent with the older built form character of Molong. As a result Molong Town Centre maintains its classic country town character.

A heritage incentive scheme and heritage advisory service has been established by Council to assist with small-scale built form restoration projects.



Activity Generators

Molong Town Centre generates the most activity in town. It is where locals and visitors come to collect daily provisions, eat and drink at the club, pubs and cafes as well as attend events and utilise community facilities.

Dr Ross Memorial Recreation Ground and the Molong Swimming Pool, located directly north of the town centre, also attract significant patrons at certain times, including weekend markets and during structured sporting activities.

Other facilities that border the town centre, such as the Cabonne Council Administration Centre and Town Library, the Molong Caravan Park, motels and various churches and community facilities also attract visitors and contribute to the vibrancy of the centre.

Schools and other employment generators, such as the Molong Health Service, are not large enough to function as major activity generators. However, they are critical services to the local community.

Event areas, such as the Ross Memorial Recreation Ground, can generate high levels of activity.



Flooding

The Town Centre of Molong is subject to flooding of the Molong Creek. The approximate extent of the highest recorded flood is shown on the following map.



11. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

Strengths of Molong Town Centre

- Historic Town Centre, with an interesting history.
- Victorian era buildings occupy key landmark sites.
- Molong Creek provides green / cool border to urban centre.
- Visitor activities / facilities (caravan park, motels, open space, pool, service station etc) are located close to town centre.
- Adequate car parking for resident needs.
- Molong Markets.
- Significant open space in and around centre.
- Established street trees provide character.
- Quality food and beverage options available.
- Relatively cool climate in summer.
- Safe, friendly and relaxing vibe.
- Close to the larger resident base of Orange.
- Close to regional traffic route (Mitchell Highway).

Weaknesses of Molong Town Centre

- Small retail catchment area, dominated by Orange.
- Relatively small resident population base.
- No clear sense of arrival to the town centre.
- Lack of crossing points in Bank Street discourages pedestrian movement either side of street, particularly for more vulnerable road users.
- Cold climate in winter has a bearing on the potential for outdoor activities during colder months.
- Street furniture inconsistent / out-dated.
- No dominant focal point / green spaces in the town centre.
- There is minimal incentive / opportunity for regional traffic to stop / take a break and visit town centre.
- There is a general lack of Way-finding signage to assist visitors to navigate the town centre and find parking areas and end-of-trip facilities.
- Lack of maintenance of some buildings.

Opportunities

- The potential for Molong Town Centre to expand its visitor markets (Orange / regional visitors, RV tourism).
- Improved Way-finding and end-of-trip facilities that caters to visitor markets, could encourage short term visitations into the centre.
- Streetscape improvements to Town Centre approaches (outside the commercial precinct where pedestrian facilities should be provided) could entice more visitations from regional traffic.
- Providing for long vehicle parking (trucks, caravans and campervans) could encourage short visitations into the centre.
- The planting of larger 'signature' trees in the town green and at certain intersections could enhance the character of the Town Centre, which could in turn increase the appeal, comfort and attraction of the area.
- More vibrant lighting throughout the Town Centre to showcase the centre at night, could encourage more patronage of night time venues such as clubs, pubs and dining facilities, particularly during the spring and summer months.
- Improvements to the quality of footpaths in the centre with new street furniture, lighting, gardens and tree plantings, public art, outdoor dining etc.
- Further improvements to building appearance could increase the attraction and appeal of the Town Centre and property values.
- An expanded heritage incentive funding scheme could encourage revitalisation of building facades.
- Unused floor spaces could be used for new activities and businesses.

Threats

- Flooding of town centre and resultant building / asset damage.
- Climate change may create even hotter and dryer conditions in Molong Town Centre.
- Increases in traffic could lead to changes in Town Centre pedestrian safety, and more segregation of commercial land-use either side of Bank Street.
- Nearby commercial town centres offer greater services and appeal which takes more market share away from Molong Town Centre.
- Fire, flood or other emergency events.
- Poor construction and maintenance standards lead to loss of appeal and attraction in the Town Centre.
- Lack of interest from the business community to improve the built form leads to deterioration of buildings and a loss of appeal, attraction and property values.
- Increased competition from on-line purchases.

12. KEY ISSUES

This section explores the key issues underpinning the future growth and prosperity of Molong Town Centre. It also introduces fundamental town planning principles that need to be understood to arrive at the right mix of options that have the greatest potential to optimally position the centre.

Minimising Flood Risk

The town of Molong is built on a floodplain of the Molong Creek. Part of the Molong Town Centre is affected by flooding of the creek. Major flooding has occurred in 1956, 1990 and 2005.

Until the impacts of creek and stormwater flooding are robustly addressed, there could be expected a diminished appetite for upgrades to flood affected building and spaces.

A Molong Floodplain Management Study has been prepared, with a range of possible measures examined to find those most suited to Molong, based on economic, technical, social and environmental criteria, and the likely level of community support for each measure.

Flood management options and solutions may need to be revisited by experienced and practical engineers as part of the Molong Town Centre Plan.

Maintaining the Built Environment

The majority of buildings in the Molong town centre were built in the Victorian era or the interwar period. While these older style buildings provide interest and appeal in the Main-street, they also present some challenges due to their age, condition and compliance with building code and disability access matters.

Managing heritage buildings throughout Australia has often been seen as a sensitive issue. Today, best practice management focuses on efforts to ensure heritage buildings are maintained over time, while allowing changes necessary to adapt buildings to new uses.

Incentive funding for building restoration and access to premises are important initiatives to stimulate investment in the built form.

Property owners, real estate agents, architects, heritage advisors, planners and builders appear to be working closely on some projects to ensure heritage buildings continue to make strong contributions to the Molong Town Centre. Recent building awning upgrades in Molong Main-street provide positive examples of this being achieved.



Stimulating Property Investment

The property investment sector underpins the Molong Town Centre and is potentially one of the main drivers of change for a more active and attractive centre.

Whilst Council can undertake improvements to the public domain, it is the cumulative effect of the built form that often creates the strongest impression of the wealth and vitality of the Town Centre. Shop proprietors can make significant improvements to their signage and internal spaces, but the property owner has control over much of the appearance of the external façade of the building.

A significant proportion of real estate in the Molong Town Centre is owned by private investors and not large corporations. Major refurbishments of existing premises are big decisions for these property owners and are largely governed by their confidence on a return on investment.

At present, decisions to upgrade premises in the Molong Town Centre appear to be largely driven by maintenance issues and tenancy requests. There are few existing premises currently undergoing major refurbishments. These types of initiatives should be supported by the wider community, as they provide leadership for other property owners to upgrade their properties. In time they should also demonstrate the benefits of extra expenditure in lifting rents and property values.

Greater focus on government policies that increase appetite for property owners and businesses to invest in building refurbishments and maintenance is considered vital in the current context. Council can play a particularly important role in encouraging property reinvestment, as the authority responsible for administering most of the regularly framework relating to planning, building regulation, heritage and footpath trading in the Town Centre.

Resolution of the flooding issues in lower Bank Street should be a priority for the Molong Town Centre Plan. Additional Main-street beautification works could also act as a catalyst for private sector building upgrades.



Consolidating Activity & Land-use

The Molong Town Centre has historically comprised a mix of commercial and residential accommodation.

To create a successful town centre, activity needs to be contained in such a manner that opportunities for exchange are promoted, pedestrian movement is easy and a sense of conviviality is harnessed.

Activity is achieved through:

- A connected centre; one that is comfortable to walk throughout.
- Active building frontages and general business vitality.
- Creating environmentally attractive / comfortable streets and public spaces.
- Providing appropriate amenities and infrastructure.

Land-use planning should reinforce Molong Town Centre as the principal area of retail activity.

Strategies that encourage residential uses, bed and breakfast accommodation and businesses normally related to home occupations and industries, such as micro-breweries, may be worthy of consideration. More residents and small businesses in the Town Centre have potential to generate a micro-economy for products and services.

To achieve a vibrant / active town centre may require more enterprising and flexible planning guidelines and possibly a real estate sector interested in maximising floor space usage.



Source: City of Kalamundra

Defining the Activity Centre

Key to providing a cohesive activity centre is to define its core. The core is the centre of action, the central meeting place and the area people are naturally drawn to. It will be the magnet of activity in the Molong Town Centre. It should contain a mix of activities that allows for activation over extended periods (throughout the day and into the evening).

Activities must therefore be appropriate to the core and build on each other – retail, entertainment, lifestyle, necessary services, dining and short stay functions are some activities appropriate to town cores.

The built form within the core must also have orientation and character that promotes activity – in this way the core is defined, easily recognisable and the logical heart of Molong.

Commercial facilities and services that cater to the visitor market need to be clearly identified / sign-posted. This will allow visitors to access the central shopping precinct and amenities of the town. A signage plan could be developed outlining the signs required for tourist attractions, parking, public amenities and unauthorised sites if required.

Bridging the Gap

Molong's Town Centre can be difficult to cross when traffic is busy.

Molong Township is already challenged by nearby regional centres offering more variety and competitive goods and services. It is critical that Molong's Main-street becomes more cohesive, and businesses both sides of Bank Street become more physically connected.

Actions that connect both sides of the Molong Town Centre for pedestrians (especially more vulnerable pedestrians) are important to the viability of the centre. 'Walkability' defines the commercial heart of the town centre, so it follows that pedestrian facilities should facilitate movement across both sides of the Main-street.



Providing the Right Support Services

Choosing the right facilities to support target markets is essential to ensure that public and community investments will pay dividends.

Providing gateways and Way-finding signage to the main destination points and providing long vehicle parking, clean toilets in the Town Centre are important for meeting expectations of new markets.

For local and visitor markets, the following projects may have merit:

- Public car parks around the periphery of the Bank Street retail core.
- Disabled car parking spaces near the retail core and specific land-uses such as Council Administration Centre, Library, pharmacies etc.
- Long vehicle parking for parking of caravans, boats and longer vehicles which are otherwise difficult to accommodate. Parking spaces need to line-marked and located in areas providing easy access to the town shopping precinct and amenities.
- Amenities - clean public toilets providing for all users.
- Directional signage - both for motorists and pedestrians.

Supporting Existing Markets

Molong is becoming renowned for its higher order tourism appeal, such as quality food and wine, accommodation, markets and other urban attractions. Increasing the visitor appeal of Molong could increase visitors into the centre.

There is a need to get the message out to the wider tourism market about the appeal of Molong. Strategies could include the following:

- Marketing the appeal of the wider region.
- Way-finding signage to key destinations.
- Marketing in tourism brochures, special events information and signage at the approaches to the Town Centre and further afield.

It is important that the Molong Town Centre forms a dominant theme for the new marketing approach. Tourist and visitor markets choose to experience distinct and inviting centres. Convenience, comfort and safety are also key ingredients in catering to visitor markets. A major challenge for Molong is to inject purpose, quality and art into the public spaces and the built form to make the centre as interesting and attractive as possible.

Key to marketing is the need for Molong to have its own unique identity, showcasing its positive characteristics and ensuring that local businesses are able to adopt / support this brand into the future. Molong's shopping precinct is characteristic and an appealing / comfortable environment for new activity. So too are the community markets and other events at Dr Ross Memorial Recreation Ground and the Molong Swimming Pool.



Exploring New Markets

When population and household growth are not expected to significantly increase in the medium term, the challenge for commercial centres to remain strong and viable is to look for other potential markets, innovations and / or business models.

The strongest potential markets for Molong's Town Centre are visitors to town. Exploring opportunities to attract more visitors to Molong should be a high priority. Likely visitor markets are:

- Weekend Visits – where residents from the surrounding region make a special trip to visit the centre to catch-up with friends and / or relatives over a coffee or meal.
- Events Tourism – where visitors are invited / encouraged to attend town events, recreational activities and festivals.
- RV Travelling Tourism – where improvements are made to encourage RV travellers to make Molong a destination / stop-over, as part of their touring holiday.

'Baby Boomers' will reach their peak by 2021 and the RV market will continue to grow as travelling tourism is a very popular retirement activity. Tapping into the RV travelling market has potential for Molong, given its close proximity to established north-south touring routes.

The burgeoning Gippsland to Queensland route via Cooma, Cowra and Molong is worthy of further exploration. RV motorists travelling between Victoria, NSW and Qld tend to choose the quieter driving routes over the Newell Highway. Centrally located places that allow RV travellers to restock with water, dump sewage tanks and experience clean showers and toilet facilities are popular with RV travellers. Utilising appropriate communication channels, such as the CMCA website, can assist in promoting the RV facilities.



Using the Town Centre Night & Day

There are opportunities for some businesses to extend their operations into evening periods to service residents, tourists and other visitors to the Town Centre. Night-time land-uses include hotels, clubs, restaurants, cafes, entertainment, theatre, festivals, music, pop-up shops and food stalls, markets, art / culture and some retail stores.

Local support of night time traders is vital to creating sustainable night-time economies, especially in off-peak periods where there are few tourists and visitors.

Improvements to night-time lighting in the Town Centre and lighting of events and character areas could support the growth of the night-time economy.



13. DESIGNING THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Cabonne Shire Council is a major player in the management of the public domain (roads, footpaths, open spaces).

One of the fundamental reasons why local governments invest in upgrades to Main-street assets is to send a strong message to the wider community that the centre is worthy of further investment. This in turn encourages private sector building upgrades and more visitations to the town centre.

Due to limited funds, any investment in Molong Town Centre needs to be targeted.

There are a number of variables that need to be carefully managed to ensure that public spaces meet the expectations of businesses and customers in the town centre, as follows:

Place Making

The notion that a place can have a quantifiable value as a consequence of its identity provides a useful basis for discussion of place making in the Molong Town Centre. The challenge is to create distinct and inviting spaces in the centre that are valued by residents and visitors, which in turn encourages return patronage.

Many communities are embracing the use of artwork to make centres more unique, interesting and attractive. Appropriate high quality public art can be used to provide focus and interest for key areas.

Management of public art is critical in achieving high quality public artwork that complements the key purpose and function of particular areas.



Embracing Innovation

The old adage 'work smarter not harder' is the foundation of the discussion of business innovation in the Molong Town Centre. It is a broad term used to describe changes in the approach of doing business and does not necessarily mean advances in technology. Some successful innovations can be very simple and cost effective. Ideas for innovations in the Molong context might include:

- On-line sales using the internet.
- Just-in-time distribution of goods to wider markets through improved freight systems and technologies.
- Place-making through urban design.
- Improved signage, destination marketing and Way-finding.
- Extending hours of operation.
- Introducing new products and services.
- New marketing focus and techniques.
- Night-time lighting.

New approaches to business can be successful in bringing new customers into the centre and opening up new markets.

Creating more Environmental Resilience

There is opportunity to create more comfortable environmental conditions in the Molong Town Centre, especially in the hot summer months. Cooler conditions would entice tourists and travellers to use the town as place to rest and recover along their journey. Other tourists and visitors may also be attracted to the centre to enjoy the inviting cool conditions and the local cuisine.



CPTED

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is an important initiative where Council Town Planners and Police evaluate development proposals to ensure they are designed as safe places. Continued application of the CPTED principles in the Molong Town Centre will ensure new developments are safer by design. CPTED however, does not apply to existing situations where there may be places of safety concern.

There are particular safety challenges posed by encouraging more night-time trading in the Molong Town Centre, including management of potential anti-social behaviour so that it does not cause physical or emotional harm which, in turn, could damage Molong's reputation as a safe town. Part of the Molong Town Centre Plan should be a review of spaces within the town centre that are raised as areas of perceived / actual safety concern by Police or other stakeholders.

Roads

It is important roads are built for their intended purposes.

The Mitchell Highway at Molong is a State road and is required to be designed and built to meet strict design standards to deliver efficient and safe movement corridors for motorists as well as other users, such as cyclists and pedestrians. Any road upgrades along the Mitchell Highway (intersection work, signage) needs RMS approval.



Bank Street forms part of the local road network and Council is the road authority. Bank Street works well for motorists but at the expense of pedestrian amenity. Investigation of pedestrian crossing facilities at selected locations along Bank Street needs further exploration.



Footpaths

There is growing appreciation of the need to create safe / easy to negotiate places for all users of the public domain, including access impaired persons, families with young children, teenagers, young professional adults and an increasingly older demographic. All these people need to move completely unencumbered from the car space or car park via footpaths to any commercial or retail premises and avail themselves of any services including hospitality, professional services, medical care and retail.

While vehicular traffic and parking are critical features of a successful Town Centre, more consideration needs to be given to the needs of pedestrians. This is particularly important for an aging demographic such as Molong, where less able pedestrians will need to cross roads and intersections in the future. Parents with young families and prams as well as youth may also appreciate safer road conditions in the Town Centre. Consideration of footpath extensions at intersections and centre medians are potential projects that would help reduce vehicle speed and provide safer pedestrian conditions.

Ideally, footpaths should provide a generous width of unobstructed passage, from the building frontage out. Part of the Molong Town Centre Plan should be a review of the pedestrian spaces within the centre that are assessed as not meeting minimum standards. Important aspects that should feature in such a review include:

- Flush, level or ramped access from shops onto the footpath, wherever possible
- Footpaths must be level and free of trip hazards and obstructions where possible
- Long sections of footpaths with excessive cross grades (in excess of 1 in 40) can be extremely difficult for mobility impaired users to negotiate.
- Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSi) must be properly installed, however not overused. TGSi areas include busy footpath environments, road crossings, stairs and hazards.
- Pavement materials must avoid surfaces that are too slippery when wet, fail grading tests and / or are confusing for sight impaired pedestrians or too difficult for people using prams and wheelchairs.

A framework of legislation and policy advice has been established to guide new footpath designs and development in the town centre. Footpaths are required to be designed and built to meet minimum dimension requirements. Design elements of footpaths include width, gradient, slip resistance, type of kerb and adequate setback distance of the footpath from the roadway.



Street Trees

Street trees are the most cost effective improvement that can be introduced into a town centre such as the Molong Town Centre. Street trees provide shade and shelter from the elements. They also inject character into the Town Centre and help to soften the built form. An advanced tree can be purchased for \$500 and with the right preparation and care it can grow into a magnificent feature that can transform a place and make it immensely valuable and attractive.

Additional street tree planting is considered necessary to improve the appearance and amenity of the approaches to the Molong Town Centre.



Street Furniture

There is a huge variety of Main-street furniture that can be purchased 'off-the-shelf' or made to order from contemporary designs. Consideration needs to be given to furniture that fits the local context. A number of factors need to be considered in the street furniture selection process, including comfort, character, on-going maintenance and cost.

There may be merit in Council developing a Main-street Materials Palette Guide to deliver consistent, sustainable and contemporary style materials and furniture.

14. MAINTAINING THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

As the centre of highest traffic and pedestrian activity in Molong, Bank Street should be the centre of activity for urban renewal and maintenance crews.

The street, laneway and footpath network in the centre needs to be of the highest standards possible in the Cabonne Shire context. Road surfaces need to be maintained to provide hardwearing surface conditions for all users - motor vehicles, service delivery trucks, pedestrians, parents with prams, people with a disability, aged persons and cyclists. Bank Street needs to be maintained to provide level road surfaces, underground drainage, lighting and provision for shade from new street tree plantings, so as to address the following:

- Clear sightlines, safe sight clearances and good visibility.
- Prevention of vegetation intrusion into pedestrian operating space.
- Management of tree root damage to footpaths and as trip hazards.
- Passive surveillance and promotion of an open / easy supervised environment.
- Management of weeds and litter.

The development of a comprehensive Town Centre maintenance program, which identifies key tasks and frequency of works, is an important part of raising standards in the Molong Town Centre. A review of asset management, hazard reporting systems and customer action requests should be undertaken to ensure that the maintenance of the Molong Town Centre is given high priority.

Underground services are significant design factors in the planning of any new developments in the Molong Town Centre. For example they can significantly increase the cost of footpath works, should the age / condition of these assets warrant their replacement.

15. ADOPTING SIMPLE URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Attractive urban design should not be something only seen in major cities. There are basic urban design principles that are equally relevant in the Molong context. Guiding principles that may provide focus on new urban design initiatives are suggested below:

- Provide a variety of services in the Molong Town Centre.
- Promote localisation, sustainability and an adaptable Town Centre.
- Protect and enhance existing heritage buildings and streetscape elements and character.
- Focus urban renewal around the main activity generators and / or areas that offer place making appeal.
- Celebrate the 'stories' of the evolution of the Molong Town Centre.
- Provide for all ages and stages of life.
- Design the Molong Town Centre to be pedestrian friendly and accessible by all users.
- Provide for long vehicle parking.
- Create a sense of place with high quality street tree plantings and engaging urban design.

16. TAKING THE NEXT STEPS

Following the Molong Town Centre Issues Paper, it is intended to run a number of workshops to explore ideas and urban design concepts that may assist the aims and objectives of the Molong Town Centre Plan. This section introduces the Inquiry-by-Design Workshops intended to be run in 2020.

Charter for the Inquiry-by-Design Workshops

At the core of the Molong Town Centre Plan will be a series of Inquiry-by-Design Workshops. These community workshops will be assisted by an urban designer to explore ideas and options that could make the town centre more vibrant. The main aims of the Inquiry-by-Design Workshops are:

- Raise awareness of the principles of best practice urban design.
- Explore and demonstrate how urban design techniques can be applied in the Molong context.
- Explore and develop ideas, solutions and outcomes to redesign public spaces.

The rules applying to the Inquiry-by-Design workshops are simple, as follows:

- Everyone is welcome to participate.
- No idea is a bad idea.
- Every idea must be actionable in the Cabonne context.
- A good idea or design concept does not guarantee its implementation.
- Council need to program what is actionable.

At the end of the Inquiry-by-Design process, a suite of recommendations will be visualised and available in the Molong Town Centre Plan. While actual sites in the Molong Town Centre will be examined and real issues will be faced, the outcomes of the Inquiry-by-Design Workshops are not necessarily binding.

