



Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Issues Paper

June 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canowindra is a historic town on the banks of the Belubula River in the Central West of NSW, approximately 300 kilometres west of Sydney and less than one hours' drive from Cowra and Orange.

The township has a resident population of around 2,259 people and is a service centre for the surrounding farming district, which is regarded as one of NSW's most productive regions. Canowindra has played host to a variety of events, including hot air balloon festivals as well as other high quality community events such as Big Little Histories.

Canowindra is home to 360 million year old fish fossils, exhibited at the Age of Fishes Museum. Sir David Attenborough visited Canowindra in 2013 and declared the fossils world class specimens.

Canowindra's unique 'bendy' Mainstreet, Gaskill Street, is listed by the NSW National Heritage Trust, and is becoming a popular destination for a range of visitors. The Canowindra Business Chamber and Progress Association hosts Xmas in July and foster pride in all manner of shop window displays and competitions during the year. Residents continue to assist Council in maintaining parts of the public realm with volunteer labour and expertise, such as the local parks.

Cabonne Shire Council and the Canowindra Business Chamber and Progress Association wish to contribute to the appearance and functionality of the public domain in Canowindra's Mainstreet by developing an urban design plan for the precinct. This plan aims to engage with local community groups and individuals to develop new ideas and projects to make Gaskill Street an even more inviting and attractive place for a range of stakeholders.

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

Without these investments, Canowindra's Mainstreet may not reach its full potential as an important shopping centre and meeting place for locals and visitors.



ROYAL HOTEL

nab

DAVID

Green Book Agency

Ray White

1. INTRODUCTION

Canowindra's Mainstreet has been identified as a key investment area in recent community consultation work undertaken on behalf of the Canowindra Business Chamber and Progress Association as part of their formulation of a Masterplan for the whole of Canowindra.

Cabonne Shire Council and the Canowindra Business Chamber and Progress Association are interested in working with other stakeholders to explore sympathetic enhancement options for Canowindra's Mainstreet, Gaskill Street.

At this early stage there are no set ideas about what is proposed in the Mainstreet, other than to suggest that the future of Canowindra would benefit from a coordinated approach to shape the next steps in the development of Gaskill Street. It is also likely that improvements will focus on the public domain (road environment, footpaths, street furniture, landscaping and signage) as well as the restoration of historic buildings fronting Gaskill Street and important linkages to other key attractors outside the commercial centre that support Mainstreet objectives.

Cabonne Shire Council values the unique position Canowindra holds in the Central West of NSW and wishes to grow the town's full potential as a service centre for both locals and visitor markets. The Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Issues Paper has been prepared as a precursor to the preparation of the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct 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 Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan.

Public exhibition of the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Issues Paper and consideration of feedback will be directly followed by the preparation of the draft Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan, which will explore in more detail a number of sympathetic enhancement options for the precinct with interested members of the community.

2. PLAN MAKING APPROACH

The Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan will be undertaken in the following stages:

1 Canowindra Masterplan Consultation

On 13 November 2019 the Canowindra Business Chamber and Progress Association hosted a community workshop with the purposes of capturing community insight and input to develop a Masterplan for the whole of Canowindra. Following on from this successful workshop, an online survey was distributed across social media to further inform the preparation of the draft Canowindra Masterplan. The majority of respondents suggested the Mainstreet as Canowindra's greatest asset and a precinct worthy of more detailed analysis, planning and investment. Cabonne Shire Council and the Canowindra Business Chamber and Progress Association have agreed to fast-track the formulation of the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan, starting with the drafting of an Issues Paper.

2 Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Issues Paper

The public exhibition of the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Issues Paper is the first official step in realising the possibilities and opportunities for the precinct through an urban designed 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 Enquiry-by-Design Workshops.

3 Enquiry-by-Design Workshops

Enquiry-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 Canowindra's Mainstreet. The findings of the workshops will help the Project Team prepare the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan.

4 Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan

The Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan will provide an urban design plan for Gaskill Street as well as other key sites that underpin Mainstreet objectives. The new Precinct Plan will document the main tasks that Council proposes to undertake in the Precinct. It may also include projects proposed to be undertaken by other groups in Canowindra. 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.

3. VISION & OPPORTUNITY

Much of the appeal of Canowindra is its unique 'bendy' Mainstreet and inter-war period architecture, with many outstanding examples of shopfronts in the art deco style and earlier buildings with traditional verandahs over footpaths.

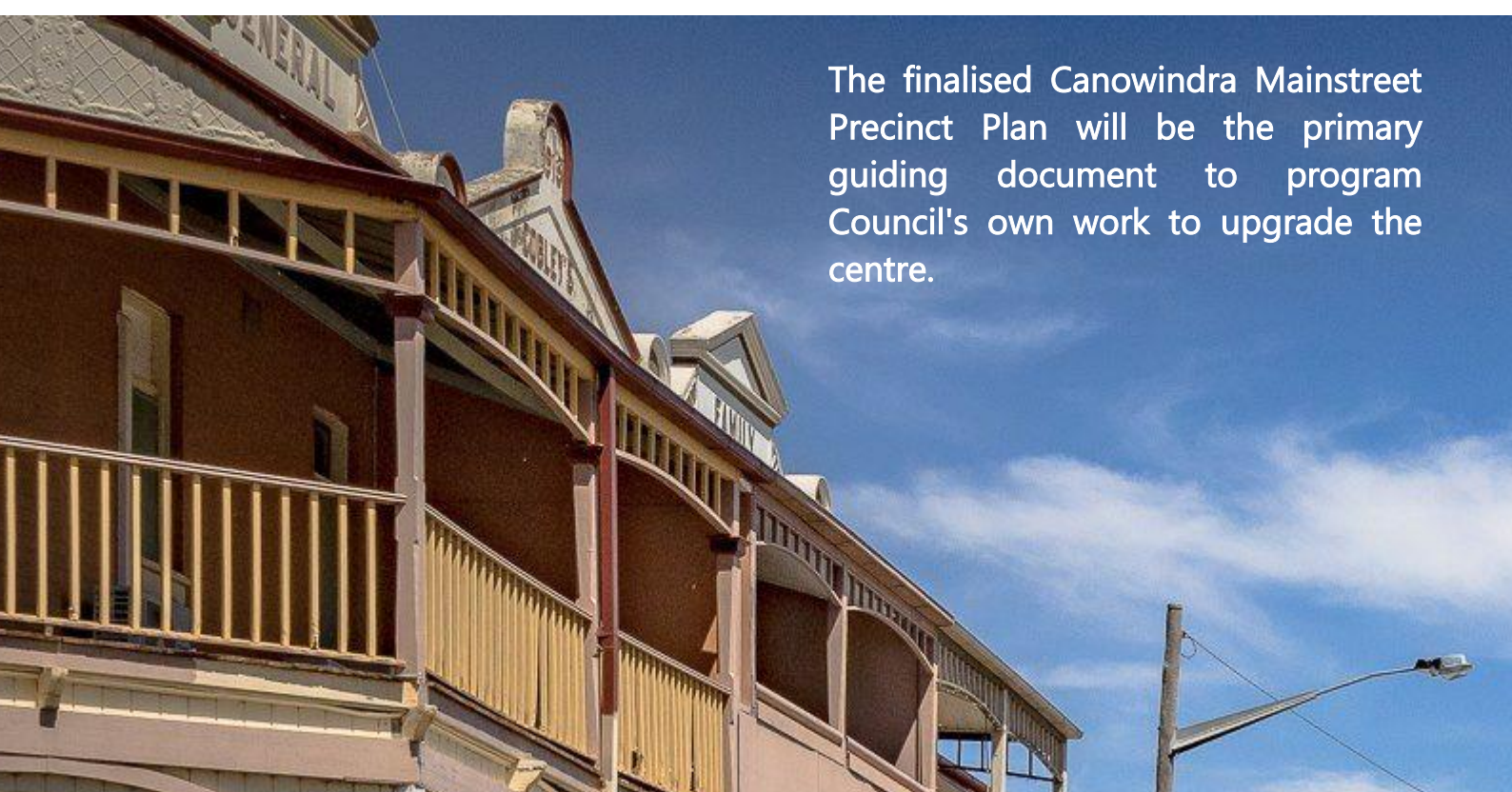
A wide range of people are attracted to Gaskill Street, either for regular shopping and access to commercial services, as a day or weekend visit and even to set up new businesses and residences in the centre.

There is opportunity for Canowindra's Mainstreet to continue to grow into a creative business and tourist hub, set amidst its historic village atmosphere and natural river setting.

The vision for the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan could be:

"Canowindra's Mainstreet, Gaskill Street, is a special place that is in balance with work, life, nature and our unique and colourful history. The Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan fosters preservation, perpetuation and celebration of Canowindra through community collaboration and commitment on agreed projects and initiatives.

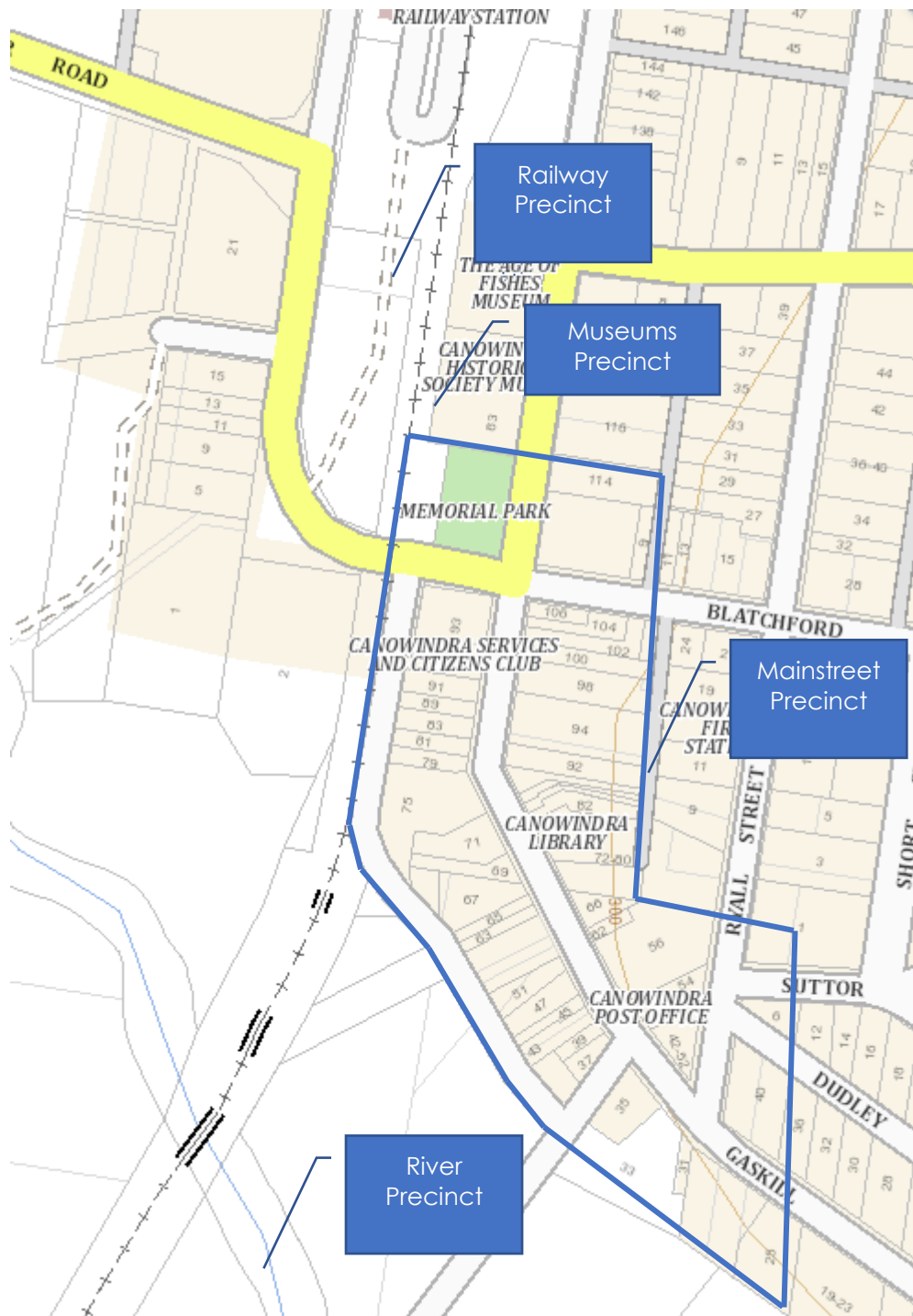
The Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan will focus on a number of urban designed projects involving partnerships possibly between Cabonne Shire Council, the Canowindra Business Chamber and Progress Association, local businesses, local Landcare groups, community groups, State government agencies and other interested members of the community. These projects will be aimed at making the commercial centre even more appealing to residents and visitors.



The finalised Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan will be the primary guiding document to program Council's own work to upgrade the centre.

4. MAINSTREET ANALYSIS

Canowindra's Mainstreet is unique in terms of its layout, character and functioning. Greater understanding of the constraints and opportunities of the Mainstreet can assist in formulating new plans for the future. This section briefly analyses some of the key elements of Gaskill Street. The following map shows the general extent of the study area for the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan:



4.1 Mainstreet Layout

Canowindra was first a crossing point of the Belubula River, with the town's main thoroughfare, Gaskill Street, expanding along a bullock track from the river that wound around early settlement blocks. As a result, Gaskill Street (or 'Bendy Street' as it is known to locals) has a unique alignment and provides opportunities for exploring by visitors and chance meetings between locals. Lot layouts are also in a variety of shapes and orientations, which has influenced the design of many interesting buildings and intimate spaces in the Mainstreet.

4.2 Extent of the Mainstreet

Business activity in Canowindra is roughly contained within a relatively small commercial precinct above the floodplain of the Belubula River. Commercial activity is generally along Gaskill Street, between Ryall Street and Blatchford Street. A museums precinct is located to the north of the Blatchford Street in Gaskill Street that contains several businesses.

4.3 Flooding

Some properties fronting the southern side of Gaskill Street are subject to flooding of the Belubula River. Flood peak heights in the Belubula River at Canowindra have been recorded since 1916, with floods occurring in 1952, 1990, 2001 and 2012.

The first flood study was undertaken in 1998 by the Snowy Hydro Corporation as part of the construction of the John Grant Bridge in 1995 over the Belubula River. A further Canowindra Flood Study was undertaken in 2004.

As a consequence of flood studies informing improvements to drainage and infrastructure affected by the flooding of the Belubula River, the extent of flood damage in Canowindra's Mainstreet is generally manageable, with only the rear yards of commercial properties south-west of the Mainstreet being inundated in times of flood.

4.4 Mainstreet Approaches

Canowindra's Mainstreet is mainly approached from the Canowindra Road (south), Belubula Way (east) and Nangar Road (west). A detailed description of the approaches to Gaskill Street is provided below:

Southern Approach

The approach to the Mainstreet from the south starts from turning left off the Canowindra Road into Gaskill Street. Clearer Way-finding material advising motorists of opportunities to turn off the main road and visit Canowindra's Mainstreet would be beneficial at this approach.

The route along Gaskill Street is characterised by the Belubula River on the south-western (low) side of the street and quality interwar style houses lining the northern side of Gaskill Street. Travelling approximately 350 metres west along Gaskill Street you have entered the Mainstreet, boasting a mix of historic two-storied and single storey commercial buildings. The Junction Hotel on the eastern corner of the intersection of Gaskill Street and Ryall Street has had its verandah removed and the southern approach is influenced by the current condition of this building.

Driving through the main shopping centre, views of the Mainstreet are intimate and appealing, including active shop fronts, timbered verandahs, awnings, parallel parked cars, street furniture and lighting. Vehicle parking appears at a premium, which contributes to a feeling of activity in the centre. Driving to northern extent of the Mainstreet, at the corner of Gaskill and Blatchford Streets, you are presented with views of the Canowindra Hotel, Memorial Park, Museums Precinct and the railway as well as main road signage to either Parkes (west) or Orange (north-east).



Eastern Approach

The approach to the Canowindra Mainstreet from the east / north starts at the intersection of Ferguson and Tilga Streets. At this intersection, motorists can proceed along Ferguson Street to the Mainstreet via the Museums Precinct or via Tilga Street and then onto Blatchford Street. Navigating this approach to the Mainstreet is not straight forward and there is limited Way-finding material advising motorists of opportunities to stop and visit Canowindra's town centre.

Driving through Gaskill Street, motorists are presented with an intimate view of historic buildings. Urban infrastructure, such as light poles, overhead power lines and street furniture are incongruous from this view. Car and long vehicle parking appears at a premium and there is limited parking for cars and long vehicles.

Western Approach

The approach from the west along Nangar Road winds around the railway and several industrial premises until its intersection with Gaskill Street. Navigating this approach to the Mainstreet is again not straight forward and there is limited Way-finding material that advises motorists of opportunities to stop and visit Canowindra's Mainstreet along this route.

Turning into Gaskill Street, motorists are presented with an intimate view of historic buildings. Urban infrastructure, such as light poles, overhead power lines and street furniture are incongruous from this view. Car and long vehicle parking appears at a premium. There is limited parking for cars and long vehicles.



4.5 Mainstreet Precincts

Canowindra's Mainstreet is comprised of several sub-precincts. There are other precincts that adjoin Gaskill Street that support Mainstreet objectives. A brief description of these precincts is as follows:

CBD Precinct - the length of Gaskill Street, between Ryall and Blatchford Streets, is the central business district of Canowindra. It is the commercial core or heart of the town.



Outer CBD Precinct - the laneway running parallel to the rear boundaries of commercial properties fronting the southern side of Gaskill Street is the main service corridor for the commercial centre. The laneway is used for car parking, deliveries and unloading of bulky goods.



Museums Precinct - comprises the Memorial Park, The Canowindra Museum, Age of Fishes Museum and Visitor Centre. This precinct is also characterised by several isolated commercial premises, including the Canowindra Hotel, Canowindra Country Bakehouse, Canowindra Bottle Shop and Chris Williams Rural Supplies.



Railway Precinct - comprises disused historic railway assets / corridor, including a railway station, long grain shed, silos, goods store and loading ramp. The precinct hosted the successful Big Little Histories of Canowindra in 2018.



River Precinct - includes the Belubula River, swinging bridge and a new concrete walkway as well as open pastures / flood prone rural lands.



4.6 Land-use

The Canowindra Mainstreet is primarily zoned B2 Local Centre, which supports a wide variety of commercial land-use activities. A variety of retail and office style land-uses are located both sides of Gaskill Street, between Ryall Street and Blatchford Street. The main commercial land-uses include a supermarket, various food shops, specialty retail stores selling clothing, shoes and other personalised products, chemist, accountant, medical practices, real estate office, post office, newsagency and banking. A number of hotels and the Canowindra Services Club are all located in the Mainstreet Precinct.

The following map is an extract from the Cabonne Local Environmental Plan 2012 and shows the current zoning applying to Canowindra Mainstreet and immediate surrounds.



Cabonne Local Environmental Plan 2012

Land Zoning Map - Sheet LZN_003C

Zone

- B2 Local Centre
- B5 Business Development
- E1 National Parks and Nature Reserves
- E2 Environmental Conservation
- IN1 General Industrial
- IN2 Light Industrial
- R1 General Residential
- R5 Large Lot Residential
- RE1 Public Recreation
- RE2 Private Recreation
- RU1 Primary Production
- RU2 Rural Landscape
- RU3 Forestry
- RU5 Village
- SP2 Infrastructure
- W1 Natural Waterways

Cadastr

Cadastr 30/05/2011 © Land & Property Information (LPI)



The river plain directly south and south-west of Gaskill Street is zoned RU1 Primary Production, largely as a means of limiting development along this section of town which is flood prone. The Belubula River is located approximately 200 metres south of Gaskill Street. This riparian area provides significant green space relief to the elevated built-up areas of town. A long straight concrete walkway to the Swinging Bridge over the Belubula River has been recently constructed by Council, and needs further work to complement the surrounding riparian landscape.

Land to the north and east is zoned R1 General Residential and comprises a mix of older style housing and some commercial accommodation services. Residential dwellings border parts of the Canowindra Mainstreet and provide interest, passive surveillance and activity in and around the centre. A number of interwar period houses along the eastern end of Gaskill Street are prominent buildings in the streetscape and add to the character of the adjoining commercial centre.

The R1 General Residential zone also supports the Canowindra Museum, Age of Fishes Museum and historic railway assets, which all form part of special precincts to the north of the commercial core.

The Canowindra Museum uses a former school building (circa 1970), Railway Cottage (1910) and several sheds to display local history items and machinery. Highlights of the Museum are the shepherd's hut circa 1828, Harold Boyd's complete dental surgery, a wedding gown collection from 1881-1982, a reconstructed wool shed, wheat harvesters collection from 1843, photo collection and the Pioneers Wall.

The Age of Fishes Museum was designed by internationally renowned architect, John Andrews and houses a significant collection of Devonian fish fossils found in the Canowindra area. The museum has two permanent exhibitions, an education program, visitor centre, gift shop, accessible facilities, and geological time-walk in the picnic ground and a free barbecue.

Memorial Park is located at the northern end of Gaskill Street. The park commemorates those who have served in conflicts in which Australia has been involved. The park is well maintained and has clean toilet facilities and a quality playground.

There are numerous clubs, playing fields and other attractors in the wider Canowindra area, such as the Golf Club, Showground and sporting fields.



4.7 Traffic and Parking

A description of parking available in the Canowindra Mainstreet is provided below. Further investigation of parking locations and pedestrian flow paths would assist in understanding traffic and parking issues.

Car Parking

The mainstay of parking in Canowindra's commercial zone is currently provided as public parallel parking either side of Gaskill Street. Provision is made for both short and long term stays to be accommodated in the centre. Other side streets and lanes are also used by motorists for parking and to access the town centre. Parking would be in demand during busy times, such as Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings and during events.



Disabled Parking

Limited disabled parking spaces are currently located in Gaskill Street. There is no disabled parking readily visible within off-street parking areas / car parks on private land.

Long Vehicle Parking

There is no dedicated long vehicle parking in the Canowindra Mainstreet, nor is it likely justified given the priority for parallel parking of cars to meet parking. Unloading and long vehicle parking occurs in side streets and lanes.

4.8 Footpaths and Pavement

Footpath pavements are generally in good condition along Gaskill Street. They generally comprise a textured / weathered concrete surface.

The traditional textured concrete finish is in character with the streetscape. There are limited crossing points and kerb ramps for pedestrians to connect to both sides of the Mainstreet. A relatively new crossing point has been created in Gaskill Street and needs further work to complement the surrounding streetscape.



Retention of concrete and footpath furniture, such as old grates provides interest and helps tell the story of Canowindra's history.



Many buildings have steps to the public footpath, which makes access difficult for access impaired persons. Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs) are generally absent from intersections in the centre, except for a small section of TGSIs at Memorial Park which is lifting at edges. Some attempts to achieve disability access have been undertaken, such as the access ramps to the Post Office, which



have impacted on streetscape and heritage values.

4.9 Street Furniture

Street Lights

The street lights installed in Canowindra Mainstreet are 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 commercial precinct. Lower to the ground pedestrian lights are generally not installed in Gaskill Street, other than under-awning lights on some buildings. The addition of pedestrian lights, particularly at road crossing points, would provide greater luminance at pedestrian level and increase safety along the street network.

Lighting from the underside of awnings and verandahs was an original part of Gaskill Street. Many of the under-awning lights attached to commercial buildings have been removed or no longer working. Refurbishment of existing under-awning lights and fitting of replacement lighting of the correct period would increase pedestrian safety and add to the appeal of the Mainstreet at night. External lighting of other key features of historic buildings could also be designed to help illuminate the footpath / roadway area and be in keeping with the character of the Mainstreet, such as low key lighting to facades from verandahs and awnings.

Street Trees

Gaskill Street does not currently have avenues of street trees and it appears they were never a feature in the Mainstreet. The awnings and verandahs alone provided shade and protection from the weather conditions. The Mainstreet today does not appear to be suffering from an absence of a green canopy. The centre does not appear hot or barren, largely due to the shade and shelter provided from building verandahs and awnings. There may be opportunities for small pockets of new trees and vegetation at strategic locations in the Mainstreet.

Street Furniture

A range of styles and forms of seats, litter bins, planter boxes, bollards and signs are found throughout the Canowindra Mainstreet. In general, street furniture complements the historic streetscape, but most furniture is showing signs of age and deterioration.

Services and Infrastructure

Overhead powerlines are installed along the southern side of Gaskill Street. At some stage in the future it would be worthwhile to install power underground to reduce visual

clutter along the streetscape. Water mains, sewerage mains, stormwater pipes and telecommunications are located underground within the footpath areas.

Public Art

There is a general absence of public artwork in the Canowindra Mainstreet. There are a number of activity / character areas in the centre where public artwork could be incorporated to create an even stronger sense of place.

4.10 Buildings

Canowindra Mainstreet exhibits a mix of architectural styles, including a number of Victorian and interwar era buildings that make significant positive contributions to the streetscape. A number of prominent buildings retain timbered verandahs and there is an array of quality shop fronts from the Art Deco period.

Almost every building in the Mainstreet contributes positively to the character of the centre, possibly with the exception of the Canowindra Post Office which was the subject of façade changes (circa 1980) and ramps that intrude into the footpath area. With the retention of most verandahs and awnings along the Mainstreet, there are good opportunities for shopping, talking and relaxing along this shady / sheltered commercial strip.

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



Commercial buildings on both sides of Gaskill Street provide a richness of built form and character.



Access to premises continues to be an issue for a large number of commercial premises and shops along Gaskill Street where there are steps between shop floors and footpath / road levels.



The Art Deco shopfronts along Gaskill Street are particularly significant and have great appeal to visitor markets. Sensitive maintenance and repairs of historic buildings would contribute significantly to the appeal of the Mainstreet Precinct.



5. KEY ISSUES

The commercial core of Canowindra is well contained in Gaskill Street, and above the floodplain of the Belubula River. The entire commercial precinct has been classified as a Heritage Preservation Area by the NSW National Trust and a draft Main Street Heritage Study has been completed by Council. Community workshops held in November 2019 as part of the development of a Masterplan for the whole of Canowindra confirms the Mainstreet Precinct is an important place deserving of more detailed analysis, planning and investment. This section explores the key issues underpinning the future planning of Canowindra's Mainstreet. 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 complement the precinct.

5.1 Public Realm Improvements

Canowindra's Mainstreet has historically comprised a dominant mix of commercial premises, some residential accommodation and a smaller number of civic buildings, all of which contributes to a vibrant and less formal 'village' atmosphere. The following points are worthy of consideration when planning the next steps in the development of roads, footpaths and other public spaces in the Mainstreet:

Working to your Strengths

Canowindra's Mainstreet is a rarity. Where most towns in the Central West of NSW are laid out in a grid pattern, Gaskill Street follows the winding route of an historic bullock track. The entire commercial precinct has been classified as a Heritage Preservation Area by the NSW National Trust, which could be expanded into a much clearer 'brand', such as what is happening in Broken Hill where the entire city has National Heritage

Listing and supported by a strategic led framework focusing on smart communities, heritage, strategic land-use and tourism development.

Defining the Activity Centre

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.

Defining the heart of the 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 Canowindra Mainstreet. It should contain a mix of activities that allows for activation over extended periods (throughout the day and into the evening). Activities must be appropriate to the core and build on each other – retail, entertainment, lifestyle, necessary amenities and services, dining and short stay functions are some of the 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 Canowindra.

Land-use Planning

Land-use planning under the Cabonne Local Environmental Plan 2012 reinforces Canowindra's Mainstreet as the principal area of retail activity, which is appropriate given the current competition pressures from other nearby commercial centres.

Creation of new commercial precincts outside of the Canowindra Mainstreet is not recommended in the current context. However, strategies that encourage residential uses, bed and breakfast accommodation, professional consulting services and businesses normally related to home occupations and industries, such as micro-breweries, may be worthy of consideration in Gaskill Street. More residents and small businesses in the town centre have potential to generate a micro-economy for products and services.

To achieve a more vibrant and active town centre may require more enterprising and flexible planning and real estate guidelines to encourage new business activity in currently un-used / under-used building floor spaces, such as cellars and storage areas.

Supporting the Built Form

The property investment sector underpins Canowindra's Mainstreet and is potentially one of the main drivers of change for a more active and attractive centre.

Strategies that encourage the enhancement of building façades and shop windows as well as appropriate outdoor advertising signage that makes strong / positive contributions to the Mainstreet as a whole are worthy of consideration. This could include new grant schemes (both large and small grants) for building restoration projects, including painting with appropriate colours, polishing glass and leadlight in the windows, polishing the brass surrounds of the windows and replacing damaged tiles. Prominent vistas of the Mainstreet could also be identified and options investigated for enhancement, including building restoration works and iconic outdoor advertising signage or public art. For example, there is evidence that advertisements were originally painted on the side walls of some buildings and there may be merit in investigating options to refurbish / introduce historic side wall signage to permit a nostalgic glance back in time.

Commercial facilities and services that cater to the visitor market also need to be clearly identified and sign-posted. This will allow visitors unfamiliar with centre to gain greater access to all of the shops, services and the amenities available in the Mainstreet during their short stay. A signage plan could be developed outlining the signs required for tourist attractions, parking areas, public amenities and unauthorised sites if required.

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.

Canowindra's bendy historic Mainstreet located close to the Belubula River, Museums and Railway Precinct encourages people to explore, reflect on the events of the past and contemplate how life can be approached differently into the future. Activities that support / enhance such reflections may prove highly valuable in encouraging greater visitations and events into the town.

Providing access to parking and easy access along well travelled pedestrian routes are important for everyone who visits the centre. Providing gateways, interpretative signage and Way-finding signage to parking areas (including long vehicle parking) as well as parklands and public toilets are also important for meeting expectations of new markets.

Potential Mainstreet Projects

Mainstreet improvements should be sympathetic to the heritage values of the precinct, such as the following:

- Removal of public asset elements which detract from the character and significance of the Mainstreet Precinct.
- Retention and restoration of traditional kerb and guttering and replacement only where required using coloured concrete similar to the earlier system.
- Additional kerb ramps between footpath and street levels.
- Review of options for improving the accessibility into Gaskill Street premises without detracting from the heritage character and fabric of the buildings, including feathered ramps in the footpath and portable proprietary ramps for placing on the footpath in front of the entrance as / when required.
- Provision of consistent footpath pavement (in traditional finish) that facilitates disabled access into commercial buildings, eliminates trip hazards and is in keeping with the heritage values of the centre.
- Pedestrian scale lighting in key areas / crossing points, in addition to the existing street lights.
- Street furniture appropriate for Gaskill Street to ensure that the design is a traditional style in steel / cast and timber and not replica or aluminium.

5.2 Private Sector Building Improvements

Whilst Council and other service authorities 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 floor 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 Canowindra Mainstreet 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 Canowindra Mainstreet appear to be largely driven by maintenance issues and tenancy requests. There are few existing premises currently undergoing major refurbishments. Restoration of Finns Old Store in Gaskill Street provides a good example of sympathetic / quality restoration. 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.



Defining Heritage Values

A draft Gaskill Street: Main Street Heritage Study has been completed by David Scobie Architects. Council proposes to distribute Heritage Inventory forms for the Gaskill Street properties to owners and seek their views on the proposed recommendations in the study, including proposed heritage listings and restoration and conservation works.

Providing Advice and Incentives

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 along the Mainstreet.

There are many maintenance jobs and minor works that can be undertaken by landowners and shop owners to buildings within Gaskill Street. Cabonne Shire Council provides heritage advisory services and incentive funding for building restoration projects. This type of support could be further expanded through the Town Improvement Fund and/or from other alternate funding schemes.

Potential Mainstreet Projects

Mainstreet building improvements should be sympathetic to the heritage values of the precinct. Suitable projects include:

- Reinstate missing items indicated in early photographs such as signs, parapets, copings, under-awning lights, finials and flashings.
- Removal of elements which detract from their character and significance.
- Providing appropriate traditional light fittings within shopfronts in order that the interiors and retail presentation are well presented to the footpath.
- Restore shopfronts, including leadlight glazing, replacing aluminium screen entry doors with traditional screen doors, restoring / reinstating missing traditional gloss ceramic tiles.
- Providing heritage / architectural advice on external paint colour schemes and signage.
- Providing heritage / architectural advice on the use of traditional light fittings beneath verandahs and awnings as ambient light to complement the character of historic buildings and streetscape.
- Replace contemporary signs which detract from the heritage significance of the Mainstreet with traditional signs in appropriate graphics.

5.3 Landmark Building Projects

There may be opportunities for the community to work together on larger projects that play a significant role in defining the character of Gaskill Street.

Landmark sites with historic buildings may qualify for greater attention and support funding, as they provide the greatest benefits for the Mainstreet as a whole. Such projects may include verandah reinstatements or replacement of suspended awnings with traditional post supported verandahs.



5.4 Access Improvements

'Walkability' defines the commercial heart of the town centre, so it follows that pedestrian facilities should facilitate movement across both sides of Gaskill Street and to other sub-precincts adjoining the Mainstreet.

Gaskill Street can be difficult to cross for more vulnerable pedestrians, due to the height of kerbs and there being few kerb ramps in the street. Many historic commercial premises have steps into their front entries, which makes wheel chair access particularly difficult.

There is a need to eliminate trip hazards, increase ramps between paths and street levels as well as provide incentives for disabled access into premises. Council intends to review options for improving the accessibility throughout Gaskill Street without detracting from the heritage character and fabric of the historic Mainstreet / buildings. Footpath crossing opportunities need to be investigated, particularly near primary attractors such as the Canowindra Medical Centre, Foodworks through to Bennett & Keogh and to ATM facilities. Options such as feathered ramps in the footpath and portable ramps for placing on the footpath in front of the entrance as / when required will be investigated. The photograph below shows a simple rubber ramp that is cut to size to suit individual premises.



5.5 Mainstreet Approach and Wayfinding Improvements

As part of the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan, there may be merit in preparing specific planting layouts for the main town entrances.

There is a need to review Way-finding signage and landscaping along the main approaches and gateways to the Mainstreet, including:

- Gaskill Street.
- Memorial Park amenities.
- Outer CBD Precinct.
- Museums / Railway Precinct.
- Belubula River Precinct.

There is merit in undertaking a much more comprehensive and sophisticated signage strategy that interprets the interesting stories of events and activities of these spaces. Signage could share facts about Canowindra, such as the origin of the “Bend in the Road” as there are many interpretations out there. An example of interesting pedestrian scale signage is shown below:



5.6 Support Infrastructure Improvements

To support the existing community and cater for future growth, continued investment in maintaining existing services and infrastructure is required as well as continued planning for new and improved facilities. Funding for new projects continue to be limited, so targeted planning is critical to ensure that new investments provide maximum benefits.

Further improving internet connectivity and telecommunications infrastructure is vital to all businesses in Canowindra being able to successfully compete and interact with other businesses throughout the world. The roll out of high speed uninterrupted NBN is critical in making Canowindra an even better place to live, work, play and invest.

At some stage in the future it would be beneficial to relocate existing overhead powerlines in Gaskill Street into the underground network. Enquiries could be made with Essential Energy to see if they would be prepared to program such works in the future.



5.7 Marketing

Canowindra benefits from a wide range of visitors, including tourists attending balloon events, overland travellers (touring groups and individuals), visitors from other nearby areas, people visiting friends and relatives and people invited to attend special events (equestrian, swap meets, concerts, sports and weddings).

While the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan must primarily serve the needs of the local community, there is merit in marketing the appeal of Gaskill Street to the burgeoning inland visitor market, which in turn could support existing / new local businesses.

Key to marketing is the need for Canowindra 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. It is important that Gaskill Street forms a dominant theme for the towns marketing approach for the following markets:

- Hot air ballooning – already well established.
- Weekend Visits – where residents from the wider region make a special trip to visit the centre, or to catch-up with friends / 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 Canowindra a destination / stop-over, as part of their touring holiday.
- Adventure tourism – leveraging off hot air ballooning, horse riding events, golf, bushwalking, fishing as well as road bike and MTB.
- Specific catered visitations – such as scheduled bus visits to restaurants.

5.8 Consideration of Additional Mainstreet Improvements

Street Trees

Tree planning within the central portion of Gaskill Street is not suggested on the basis that it would detract from the heritage significance of the built form. Street and avenue style planting is supported along approach route streets in the vicinity of Gaskill Street, using traditional species and spacing evident in the adjoining residential area.

Public Art

Sculpture has been discussed in relation to the social and cultural character of Canowindra. The use of sculpture and murals has formed a key activity within many rural towns in regional Victoria and NSW. These projects work well when implemented against a blank canvas and in the absence of other notable assets.

Canowindra has the benefit of a major streetscape of State level significance due to the integrity of the buildings and the layout of Gaskill Street. Other rare examples include Beechworth, Broken Hill, Carcoar and Morpeth. These examples have managed to retain their integrity while accommodating new forms of public art expression.

It is suggested that sculpture and light projection may provide the best results in locations where there will be no conflict with the historic character and visual integrity of Gaskill Street. Broken Hill is undertaking a sophisticated lighting project of mainstreet buildings and parkland spaces. Similar projects could be explored for the Railway Precinct and in the vicinity of the swinging bridge. The following image of ancient 'Grossi' fish was projected into the Belubula River by Artist Craig Walsh as part of National Science Week 2015.



5.9 Using the Mainstreet Night & Day

There are opportunities for some businesses to extend their operations into evening and weekend periods to service residents, tourists and other visitors to the Town Centre. The 100 mile dinner that has been held in Gaskill Street, provides a good example of night time activities that add to the local economy and social capital in the area.

Night-time land-uses include hotels, clubs, restaurants, cafes, entertainment, theatre, festivals, music, community events, pop-up shops and food stalls, markets, art / culture and some retail stores. These types of land-uses could be explored to determine if they are viable in the Canowindra Mainstreet.

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 Gaskill Street and other adjoining sub-precincts as well as lighting of events and character areas could support the growth of the night-time economy. Lighting projection and interpretation could also be explored.



6. NEXT STEPS

Following the exhibition of the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct 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 Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan. This section introduces the Enquiry-by-Design Workshops intended to be run in 2020.

Charter for the Enquiry-by-Design Workshops

At the core of the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan will be a series of Enquiry-by-Design Workshops. These community workshops will be assisted by an urban designer to explore ideas and options that could make the town centre even more vibrant and appealing. The main aims of the Enquiry-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 Canowindra context.
- Explore and develop ideas, solutions and outcomes to redesign public spaces.

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

- Everyone is welcome to participate.
- No idea is a bad idea.
- Every idea must be reasonable 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 Enquiry-by-Design process, a suite of recommendations will be visualised and available in the Canowindra Mainstreet Precinct Plan. While actual sites in the Canowindra Mainstreet will be examined and real issues will be faced, the outcomes of the Enquiry-by-Design Workshops are not necessarily binding.



