City of Boroondara response to the Australian Government issues papers

A sustainable population for Australia

Our Cities - building a productive, sustainable and liveable future
Table of contents

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................... 1
2. Profile of Boroondara ............................................................................................ 1
3. The Boroondara community vision ........................................................................ 2
4. Council policy ....................................................................................................... 3
5. Community wellbeing ............................................................................................ 4
   5.1. Our community vision ................................................................................. 4
   5.2. City of Boroondara significant issues ......................................................... 4
   5.3. Community wellbeing - discussion ............................................................. 5
   5.4. Community wellbeing - initiatives ............................................................... 5
6. Sustainable transport ............................................................................................ 5
   6.1. Our community vision ................................................................................. 5
   6.2. City of Boroondara significant issues ......................................................... 6
   6.3. Congestion - discussion .............................................................................. 6
   6.4. Public transport - discussion ...................................................................... 6
   6.5. Congestion and public transport - initiatives ............................................. 7
7. A sustainable environment ..................................................................................... 7
   7.1. Our community vision ................................................................................. 7
   7.2. City of Boroondara significant issues ......................................................... 8
   7.3. Water conservation - discussion .................................................................. 8
   7.4. Water conservation - initiatives ................................................................... 8
   7.5. Climate change and carbon emissions - discussion .................................... 9
   7.6. Climate change and carbon emissions - initiatives .................................... 9
   7.7. Biodiversity - discussion .......................................................................... 10
   7.8. Biodiversity - initiatives ............................................................................. 10
8. The built environment ........................................................................................... 10
   8.1. Our community vision ................................................................................. 10
   8.2. City of Boroondara significant issues ......................................................... 10
   8.3. Infrastructure planning - discussion ............................................................ 10
   8.4. Infrastructure planning - initiatives ............................................................. 11
   8.5. Sustainable buildings and design - discussion .......................................... 11
   8.6. Sustainable buildings and design - initiatives .......................................... 12
   8.7. Housing affordability and diversity - discussion ....................................... 13
   8.8. Housing affordability and diversity - initiatives ....................................... 14
9. The economy ......................................................................................................... 14
9.1. Community vision
9.2. City of Boroondara significant issues
9.3. The economy - discussion
9.4. The economy - initiatives

10. Planning and governance ................................................ 15
10.1. Community vision 15
10.2. City of Boroondara significant issues 16
10.3. Planning and governance - discussion 16
10.4. Planning and governance - initiatives 16

11. Indicators ........................................................................... 17

12. Conclusions ...................................................................... 20

References............................................................................... 21
1. Introduction

This report forms the response from the City of Boroondara to two Australian Government issues papers:

- A sustainable population strategy for Australia
- Our Cities - building a productive, sustainable and liveable future

The City of Boroondara has prepared a combined response to both issues papers, as the key themes in the papers are inter-related. This response has been informed by cross-Council consultation and existing Council policies and strategies, which were developed following extensive community and other stakeholder consultation.

The information included in the issues papers and the associated panel reports and research paper is consistent with many issues and priorities for the City of Boroondara. Issues related to sustainability, the built and natural environment, transport, community wellbeing and an ageing population are common themes. The City of Boroondara acknowledges the work and directions developed by the Australian Government to address these key issues of population sustainability and urban design.

The City of Boroondara's response has been developed using the following format:

- Sections on key issues including community wellbeing, transport, environment, built environment and the economy were identified.
- For each key issue the City of Boroondara's 20-year community vision is described.
- Significant issues and initiatives are raised for consideration in the development of the National Urban Policy and the Sustainable Population Strategy.

In addition, a section about indicators is included for consideration.

2. Profile of Boroondara

The City of Boroondara is located between five and ten kilometers east of the Melbourne central business district. It encompasses a total land area of about 60 square kilometers and includes the suburbs of Ashburton, Balwyn, Balwyn North, Camberwell, Canterbury, Deepdene, Hawthorn, Hawthorn East, Kew and Kew East, and parts of Glen Iris and Surrey Hills.

The City has an estimated resident population of 168,090 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2010a), who value the dynamic and diverse neighbourhoods, where people feel safe and supported regardless of age, background or abilities. Much of the in-migration to the City of Boroondara is accounted for by tertiary students in their late teens and early twenties and families with school-aged children buying their second or third homes who are attracted to the housing stock, residential amenity and attractiveness of the area (.id 2011). Among those moving to Boroondara are skilled overseas migrants, who numbered 531 people in 2010 (Settlement Reporting Facility Database 2011), the majority being young
adults from China, India and Malaysia. Population loss from the City is attributed largely to young adults leaving home or completing tertiary courses, the retirement of older adults and reduced housing affordability (.id 2011).

Boroondara has an older population than Metropolitan Melbourne, and a population which is ageing. Boroondara has the second largest population of people aged 85 years and over of all Victorian local government areas (after Greater Geelong) (ABS 2010b). The age group predicted to have the largest absolute growth, as well as the largest proportional increase (relative to its population size) by 2021 is 70-74 year olds, who are forecast to increase by 56.8%, or roughly 2,200 people, to 7,192 people by 2021. The next highest increases are in the 65 to 69 and 75 to 80 age groups (.id 2011). Population ageing will present challenges (eg skills shortages and aged service provision) and opportunities (eg contributions to the community through means other than paid employment) for Boroondara in the future.

The Boroondara community has become increasingly diverse. Three in ten residents were born overseas and, in addition to English, 122 languages were spoken by residents who represent 152 countries of origin (2006 Census).

At the 2006 Census, one quarter of Boroondara’s employed residents worked within the municipality. Although income levels in Boroondara continued to exceed the metropolitan Melbourne average, 13% of all households were considered low income households, earning less than $500 per week.

Boroondara is proud to be known as an education hub. Our City is home to 59 secondary, primary and special education schools as well as Swinburne University, Swinburne TAFE, two University of Melbourne campuses, and a University of the Third Age. The City of Boroondara has 10 neighbourhood and community houses where residents can obtain accredited training or complete a short course.

3. The Boroondara community vision
In 2008, the City of Boroondara developed a community vision for the next 20 years. Our Boroondara - Our City Our Future was adopted by Council in 2008.

The vision statement includes goals for the social, economic and physical environment and provides a reference point for Council and other stakeholders by defining the roles, strategies and actions to achieve the desired outcomes. The development of this vision involved extensive community consultation with over 2000 people. Four key strategic directions were identified during the consultation:

- Vision theme 1: Community Wellbeing
- Vision theme 2: Managing a Sustainable Environment
- Vision theme 3: Planning a Well-Designed and Sustainable City
- Vision theme 4: Connecting Our City

Our Boroondara sets out the community's aspirations and priorities and how progress towards the vision will be measured through a set of community wellbeing indicators.
A key focus of *Our Boroondara* is the importance of local community. This is expressed through a sense of community connection. It is also expressed through a sense of place and the physical environment and residential amenity that contributes towards this. Reference to *Our Boroondara* is made throughout this response document.

4. **Council policy**

A number of Council strategies, plans and policies were drawn on in developing this response:

- Our Boroondara: Our City Our Future
- Economic Development Strategy 2009-16
- Integrated Transport Strategy
- Boroondara Bicycle Strategy
- Boroondara Water Strategy
- Stormwater Environmental Management Plan
- Sustainable Buildings Policy 2010
- Our Low Carbon Future - City of Boroondara Strategy
- Boroondara Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-13
- Cultural Diversity Plan 2009-13
- Disability Access and Inclusion Policy 2008-2012
- Creating an Age Friendly Boroondara 2009-2014
- Arts and Culture Strategy 2008-2013
- Biodiversity Corridors Plan
- Biodiversity Strategy
- Social Housing Policy 2008-11
- Library Services Future Directions Strategy 2004-14
- Tree Development and Management Policy
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- Neighbourhood House Plan
- Asset Management Plan for Buildings and Other Structures
- Asset Management Plan for Drainage
- Asset Management Plan for Paths in Road Reserves and Parks
- Asset Management Plan for Road Base, Surface, Kerb and Channel.
5. Community wellbeing

5.1. Our community vision

A key theme of Our Boroondara is community wellbeing:

_The sense of community within Boroondara is the essence of what makes our City a great place. We value our dynamic and diverse neighbourhoods, where people feel safe and supported regardless of age, background or abilities. Our residents enjoy the rewards of assisting and connecting with others and making a positive difference through volunteering._

_We are proud of our vibrant culture that promotes an array of artistic, sporting, recreation and lifelong learning opportunities. Living in Boroondara means we have access to a variety of services, activities, clubs, cultural and recreational facilities._

_Our City is recognised as a leader in encouraging fresh ideas and innovation in technology, culture and education. Residents in Boroondara feel encouraged and supported in their efforts to achieve an active and healthy lifestyle._

5.2. City of Boroondara significant issues

The City of Boroondara confirms the relevance of the issues raised in the Australian Government issues papers and particularly highlights the following:

- Community inclusion is an important issue to achieve health and wellbeing. The City of Boroondara and all stakeholders are actively engaged in collaborating to address social isolation particularly for older people, families with young children, international students, culturally and linguistically diverse residents and people with disabilities.
- The importance of promoting opportunities for participation in learning, health and wellbeing opportunities and connecting people and services.
- Strengthening community living and spirit and developing community spaces, services, programs and events to connect people together. Working with the community to develop accessible, user-friendly hubs that accommodate wellbeing, health, recreation and disability services.
- The provision of appropriate services and programs to support the emotional wellbeing and mental health and wellbeing of our community.
- Celebrating and recognising diversity of age, background and ability.
- Recognising and responding to the connection between ‘feeling safe’ and community wellbeing.
- Supporting and encouraging Boroondara to be a well-informed and learning community through innovative customer service, use of technology and education.

Working in partnership with community-based organisations, education institutions and industry to establish Boroondara as the leading ‘learning community’ in Australia.
5.3. Community wellbeing - discussion
Governments at all levels face challenges in planning for housing, health care, transport and social services as the Australian population ages. Strategies currently in development, such as health and hospital reform, are important contributors to addressing these issues locally.

Promoting social connectedness presents new challenges in this age of technology and remote communication. The City of Boroondara supports the 'need to ensure that neighbourhoods and centres in our cities encourage social interaction, provide opportunities for activity and exercise and can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities' (Department of Infrastructure and Transport 2010a, p 47).

The 2006 Census showed that more than one quarter of the population of Boroondara was born overseas, with the majority coming from a non-English speaking background. Between the 2001 and 2006 Censuses there was a large increase in the number of residents born in China and India, and more residents were speaking a Chinese language, an Indian language or Vietnamese at home. This creates important opportunities as well as specific issues for the community. The importance of social inclusion and participation for migrants, students and refugees is acknowledged through a range of actions connected to skill development and education, access to services and activities, community capacity building and advocacy. A diverse and inclusive community is part of the vision of Our Boroondara.

5.4. Community wellbeing - initiatives
Some of the initiatives which may deliver improvements in the area of community wellbeing are:
- Continuing health reforms and major health promotion initiatives.
- Sustainable population growth to support health, wellbeing and sustainability and enhancing the lives of new members to our community.
- Developing the emergency management system in response to natural and other disasters.
- Infrastructure funding to support community inclusion and residential amenity.
- Promotion of lifelong education and learning for community participation.
- Planning for new technologies and an increasingly on-line life.

6. Sustainable transport

6.1. Our community vision
The provision of attractive and well-patronised public transport alternatives and effective road networks are essential for economic viability and sustainable communities. Our Boroondara identified the theme of 'connecting our city' as part of the vision to create a truly vibrant and inclusive community:

*The City will be safe, accessible and with sustainable transport solutions including not dependent on cars and embracing other environmentally sustainable transport options, including cycling, walking, public transport and community transport.*
6.2. City of Boroondara significant issues

The City of Boroondara has train, tram and bus routes but there are still areas in the municipality that do not have access to public transport and reliant on private vehicles. Our sustainable transport pathways continue to expand with over 56km of on-road cycling paths located on both arterial and local roads. The City also offers 32km of shared paths across an array of major trails.

The City of Boroondara confirms the relevance of the following significant areas raised in the Australian Government issues papers:

- Dependence on private motor vehicle use, especially in outer 'dormitory suburbs' and the impact this has on other areas across the City.
- Congestion and increased journey times (and the economic, social and environmental impacts of this).
- Noise and pollution.
- Lack of frequent, affordable, fast and integrated public transport.
- Overcrowding on peak hour public transport.
- Lack of adequate walking and cycling infrastructure.

6.3. Congestion - discussion

Congestion detracts from the liveability of our suburbs, reduces the reliability of travel, increases transport costs and adversely impacts the economy through the imposition of additional costs. Road congestion not only impacts on people in cars, it also affects the reliability of on-road public transport services and the capacity of businesses to move freight. By 2020, the total freight kilometers travelled in Victoria by freight vehicles is forecast to increase by 77% (Department of Transport 2008). Fast, efficient, high capacity transport links are required to facilitate the thousands of truck movements between warehousing, distribution and retail outlets in Melbourne’s regional and metropolitan areas. This is critical to the maintenance of local employment opportunities. Unconstrained growth in road travel is unsustainable and the provision of attractive and well-patronised public transport alternatives is important to future liveability in an urban environment.

6.4. Public transport - discussion

A population increase of 1 million in Melbourne by 2036 has been proposed in some discussions. This would have significant implications for Melbourne’s transport network, including; 3.2 million extra car trips per day, 400,000 extra public transport trips per day and 200,000 extra walking and cycling trips per day (State Government of Victoria 2008).

The need for significant improvement to Melbourne’s public transportation network is urgent. In addition to economic factors, Melbournians are increasingly experiencing serious social and amenity issues as a consequence of current growth. Patronage on Melbourne’s public transport network is at capacity with patronage on trains up by 39% from 2004-05 to 2007-08 (State Government of Victoria 2008). Information provided by the former metropolitan train service provider Connex, indicated there was an increase of 12% in rail use at Boroondara’s rail stations between 2006 and 2008.
6.5. Congestion and public transport - initiatives

Because public transport patronage and congestion are so closely linked, initiatives to increase public transport patronage and reduce congestion are listed together below:

- A strategic transport investment plan to 2060.
- Greater integration between land use and transport activities, eg shops close to, and accessible from, residential areas.
- An urban environment that prioritises pedestrians and cyclists and provides clear, legible and well-connected movement networks (eg integrated bicycle/pedestrian trails, open space networks and dedicated on-road bicycle lanes that link across the road network). This includes providing resources for extensions and upgrades that link to network use, key destinations and density increases.
- Provision of an affordable, efficient, frequent and safe public transport system across Melbourne.
- Increased integration of passenger and active transport modes for better connectivity of public transport services (eg facilities for transporting bicycles on public transport).
- End of trip facilities - such as showers and lockers.
- Park and ride facilities.
- Expansion of existing bus network and in particular services in outer metropolitan Melbourne.
- Introduction of tax incentives for employees to use public transport, car pool or ride or walk to work.
- Introduction of high frequency community transport around activity centres.
- Managed car parking requirements (consistent across metropolitan areas), especially in principal activity centres (to encourage other modes of transport).
- Parking provision concessions for high density developments, particularly along transport corridors and around principal activity centres.
- Green car share schemes.

7. A sustainable environment

7.1. Our community vision

Our community values our parks and gardens, open spaces for walking and play, bike paths, tree-lined streets, and taking action to reduce waste. The Our Boroondara theme of 'managing a sustainable environment' vision includes:

Boroondara is an attractive and well-resourced place because of the quality of its urban and natural environments and its community’s commitment to sustainable living. Council and the people of Boroondara work together in responding to environmental and community needs. As a matter of priority, Council encourages sustainable environmental practices and participation through its services, advocacy and community education. The community’s knowledge and participation in conserving and enhancing the environment is exemplary.
7.2. City of Boroondara significant issues
The City of Boroondara confirms the relevance of significant areas raised in the Australian Government issues papers:

- water conservation
- climate change and carbon emissions
- biodiversity

The following sections on water conservation, climate change and carbon emissions and biodiversity raise a range of sustainability issues for consideration. Initiatives which may deliver improvements are suggested. Many will require substantial investment and so, in implementing initiatives to promote environmental sustainability, it will be important to protect those on low incomes (to avoid energy/water poverty).

7.3. Water conservation - discussion
Water management is crucial to the services and programs provided to communities through local government, and contributes to a range of activities and services that provide for health and wellbeing. Maintaining the current population and any future increase of population requires long-term planning and innovative responses.

Increasing demand on potable water supply is an important issue and action is needed to increase the supply and decrease the demand. Although they have been relaxed, the drought in eastern Australia resulted in restrictions on the watering of sportgrounds in Boroondara (prompting the conversion of many Boroondara sports ovals to warm season grasses). These grounds are a very important hub of social connectivity in our community and water shortages may result in loss of community assets such as heritage gardens and significant trees, and lead to outdoor activities becoming progressively difficult, reducing health and wellbeing. This will also add pressure to Boroondara’s already highly utilised parks and gardens and increase the importance of community access to other non-Council owned land for recreational purposes. Parks and gardens on Crown land and public authority land will also be increasingly threatened by continuing water shortages.

7.4. Water conservation - initiatives
The management of water should continue to be addressed by all levels of government despite the end of the drought in eastern Australia. Some of the initiatives which may deliver improvements in the area of water conservation are:

- Effective leadership and improved governance at Australian and state levels to progress sustainable management of water resources.
- Development of defined roles and funding to support implementation of strategies.
- Investment in waste/storm water recycling, rainwater capture and reuse and mandatory water efficiency of appliances and fittings.
- Increase minimum energy and water efficiency standards for new and existing buildings.
- Use of Crown land for Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) treatments (such as wetlands) to improve the quality of stormwater entering waterways.
• Artificial surfaces on sportsgrounds.

7.5. Climate change and carbon emissions - discussion
Climate change has an impact on infrastructure, human health (particularly with an ageing population) and the environment. Retention of vegetation is an important factor in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and it is important that existing tree cover is maintained and protected wherever possible. Crown land and public authority land includes areas of significant vegetation cover and has a high value for climate change mitigation as well as for biodiversity protection.

7.6. Climate change and carbon emissions - initiatives
Boroondara is committed to reducing its carbon emissions and supporting the community to reduce their ecological footprint. Some of the initiatives which could deliver improvements in the area of climate change are:

- Removal of subsidies for polluting industries, and factoring in the true cost of resource use (essential drivers of business innovation and reform).
- Strong investment in renewable energy and distributed/localised energy generation.
- A robustly implemented price on carbon (to drive down greenhouse gas emissions).
- Introduction of higher standards on design, material selection, construction techniques and waste management via the Building Code.
- Establishment of state 'Ecologically Sustainable Development' (ESD) planning policy to drive sustainable design in the built environment. The application of ESD across the built environment would mitigate the impacts of population growth.
- Removal of barriers to distributed/urban production of food, behaviour change relating to food waste and seasonal shopping.
- What is the next stage in community action on sustainability now that the basics are reasonably well established? What can governments do to support the community to further progress sustainability?

All levels of government, the community, business and industry need to be engaged to take action to reduce our resource consumption and waste disposal practices in the context of community expectation for maintaining a quality of life and wellbeing.

7.7. Biodiversity - discussion
Redevelopment and construction, environmental weeds, herbicides and lack of regeneration are all issues that lead to incremental loss of remnant indigenous vegetation. The land and waters encompassing metropolitan Melbourne were originally highly biodiverse. Protecting biodiversity values and remnant vegetation, such as Western Plains Grasslands and Red Gum Woodlands ecosystems, while accommodating metropolitan growth, presents a special challenge for public land managers and private land owners.

Most indigenous vegetation in the municipality has been lost. Remnants, including degraded remnants, are significant. Remnant indigenous vegetation on Crown land and public authority land is of value in its own right, but is also important as habitat supporting native
fauna. Crown land and public authority land has an important role to play in biodiversity preservation.

7.8. Biodiversity - initiatives
Some of the initiatives which may deliver improvements in the area of biodiversity are:

- investment in management, restoration and expansion of biodiversity corridors
- developing plans for Crown land and public authority land
- management and enforcement related to invasive species, pollution and fertiliser use.

8. The built environment

8.1. Our community vision
Our Boroondara identified a vision for our community where the built environment supports both environmental sustainability and also social connections contributing to health and wellbeing:

We encourage all new residential, mixed-use and commercial developments and renovations to meet the highest practical energy and water standards. We value and encourage design that supports rather than detracts from the heritage values of Boroondara. Our shopping places support our everyday needs and also provide a unique and interesting experience compared to the large shopping centres found elsewhere. Opportunities to mingle, meet and socialise for all are provided in an array of places and locations around the City. Our community facilities are accessible and safe, and this contributes to making shopping and leisure activities enjoyable social experiences for people of all ages and life stages.

8.2. City of Boroondara significant issues
The City of Boroondara recognises several challenges related to the built environment as outlined in the Issues papers:

- infrastructure planning
- sustainable buildings and design
- housing affordability and diversity.

8.3. Infrastructure planning - discussion
Melbourne's major infrastructure is ageing and its capacity to accommodate the growth in the Melbourne and metropolitan population has been exceeded. Reactive decision making will lead to poor outcomes for the future and wasted resources through strategies and plans that are not implemented.

As our population increases and space for new community facilities in established areas is diminished, the need for existing facilities to be used to maximum benefit will be increasingly important. Maximisation of community benefit through multiple use of venues is a direction developed in recent years. The City of Boroondara has developed a proactive asset renewal and capital works program to address issues of ageing infrastructure and community need.
Of concern also is the impact of extreme weather events and the likelihood of these events increasing. The cost of damaged infrastructure could lead to increased costs for local government. The consequences of damage to infrastructure, residents' homes and businesses can be significant. Recent flooding of Gardners Creek in Boroondara resulted in damage to homes and destruction of the Solway St Footbridge.

8.4. Infrastructure planning - initiatives

Some of the initiatives which may deliver improvements in the area of infrastructure planning are:

- Pro-active asset management of infrastructure to ensure efficient use of existing infrastructure and resources.
- Infrastructure and resources should respond to the desired use or service level. The planning of cities should include assessment of community need and translate this into infrastructure and resource requirements. Existing infrastructure may or may not meet future service demands.
- Promote and make use of major facilities (e.g., performance facilities or meeting spaces) across municipalities to increase the resources available to communities.
- Development of integrated services/hubs (including maternal and child health, dental, GP allied health, childcare), on same site as pre-prep to year 12 (one stop shop).

8.5. Sustainable buildings and design - discussion

At the 2006 Census, 63% of dwellings in Boroondara were low density and 37% were semi-detached, units and apartments. Council planned for additional housing growth by supporting sustainable mixed use development across its activity centres hierarchy, linked to the principal public transport network and social infrastructure. This approach enabled Council to plan for residential, commercial and retail growth while protecting the urban character and amenity of Boroondara’s low density residential areas.

With compact built form comes a loss of private open space which will place increased pressure on the existing public spaces as they increase in importance as places to meet, play, interact, and connect with nature. There will also be increasing competing demands on open spaces to provide infrastructure (such as water sensitive urban design infrastructure). There needs to be an adequate provision of high quality public space that is integrated into the built environment to cater for increased and competing uses. This requires sufficient resources to ensure quality and quantity of public space.

Further, with compact development, greening and street tree planting will be of greater importance to the functioning and amenity of our urban environments.

With coordinated design and planning there will be opportunities to improve liveability, environmental performance and the resilience of our urban places via the integration of traditional service infrastructure with green infrastructure (green spaces and water systems such as parks, open space, street trees and water sensitive urban design elements such as increased permeability, bio-retention systems and wetlands).
8.6. Sustainable buildings and design - initiatives

Some of the initiatives which may deliver improvements in the area of sustainable buildings and design are:

- The Building Code of Australia should be rapidly revised to set increasingly strong minimum performance standards, with standards to cover the building envelope as well as the energy efficiency of heating, cooling and lighting, water use, greenhouse gas emissions etc.

- Minimum energy performance standards for appliances should be rapidly raised and enforced.

- Establishment of adequate space in urban environments for tree growth (particularly for street tree planting) and long-term maintenance to ensure ongoing tree health.

- State-based reform to establish comprehensive sustainability requirements for all buildings in Victoria and for ESD outcomes to be integrated into the building regulations and planning system. In particular:
  - Victorian 5-star (moving to 6-star) energy standards for new homes, buildings and renovations need to be extended to cover not just energy efficiency of the building envelope, but also the energy used in heating, cooling and lighting; and other environmental issues including water use, stormwater quality, materials use and waste minimisation. These standards should also extend to cover multi-unit developments and commercial buildings.
  - Development controls must improve design standards to reduce energy and water use, maximise site orientation to take advantage of natural heating and cooling, allow for more natural ventilation and light, and increase stormwater capture and grey water use.

- Housing development should not be determined by 'densities' or by 'dwelling yields'. Rather, development should be the outcome of a comprehensive land use, urban design and economic analysis that establishes appropriate land use activity and built form outcomes. This includes the preferred land use activities for the site, the corresponding heights and setbacks for the new development and the best practice design outcomes that will ensure that new development enhances the built environment and remains sustainable over time.

- Medium and high density housing should be strategically located in highly accessible locations in accordance with endorsed state and/or local government strategic plans (produced with involvement of stakeholders and the community). This would provide transparency for the housing industry and the community while directing development to specified locations (thereby protecting locations unsuitable for high levels of change).

- Strong metropolitan wide building design standards should be introduced to ensure the design of new medium and high density housing contributes positively to the residential amenity and character of existing neighbourhoods. In addition, local and state governments should be resourced to:
  - Manage community infrastructure (such as land of environmental or heritage
significance, parks and community facilities) in and around areas targeted for housing growth to ensure current and future populations enjoy high standards of urban amenity.

- Implement incentive or regulatory schemes to achieve better environmental and heritage outcomes on private land.

- A coordinated approach and common agenda between authorities and levels of government to facilitate the urban form to function in new ways including, precinct-based water and energy capture, generation, quality and reuse systems. This requires planning, regulation and investment.

8.7. Housing affordability and diversity - discussion

Housing affordability has become a major issue in Boroondara. Lower income earners are facing rising rents and along with the average first-home buyer, difficulties in affording a home in the municipality. In addition, the ageing population is facing challenges related to a lack of affordable options for downsizing. Increased diversity of housing is required to promote both affordability and to supply the increasing demand for smaller and accessible accommodation. An emerging housing issue is the increase of vacant investment properties in the municipality. It is believed this is also contributing to the lack of housing affordability and availability.

While Boroondara residents are wealthier than the metropolitan Melbourne average, there are many lower income households in the municipality. The amount of social housing and housing which is affordable to lower income households does not meet current and predicted future demands and is in decline. Boroondara’s supply of social housing has been reduced by:

- closure of boarding, rooming and apartment houses
- insufficient public housing generally and particularly housing for older people and large families
- lack of supported accommodation options for people with high needs.

In 2006 the proportion of State Housing Authority and stock overseen by housing co-operatives in Boroondara was below the Melbourne average (1.9% compared to 3.5%).

Over the last decade or so, reduced investment in public housing by the Australian Government contributed to a reduced supply of low-cost rental housing. The Victorian Government also contributed to the housing shortage by selling surplus government land at market rates. Planning system complexity, uncertain timeframes, inconsistent planning requirements and a lack of adequate resources at the local government level are further planning barriers to achieving affordable and social housing. There are no statutory requirements or incentives for private industry to respond to need for housing diversity or affordability.

Apart from the policy issues raised above, 'community opposition to change in the type of dwellings to be constructed in certain locations' (Department of Infrastructure and Transport 2010b, p. 79) is a barrier to more compact and diverse residential developments. Poorly
designed developments have lead many members of the community fearful of change in their locality.

8.8. Housing affordability and diversity - initiatives
Some of the initiatives which may deliver improvements in the area of housing affordability are:

- Greater policy direction at the Australian and state level to achieve housing diversity and affordability.
- Implement appropriate controls over the built form to assist in overcoming community opposition to higher density development.
- Explore inclusionary zoning and other suitable statutory mechanisms to obtain developer contribution for community purposes (including affordable housing).
- Identify new methods to increase the amount of well located affordable housing as part of new developments eg regulation of land use, taxing/subsidy arrangements.
- Investigate the incidence of vacant investment properties and the impact of these vacancies on housing availability and affordability.

Any approach to address housing affordability issues will need to be holistic as a range of issues beyond planning, such as the price of labour and negative gearing are contributors to the increased cost of housing.

9. The economy

9.1. Community vision
The community vision identifies the importance of a diverse and creative community that leads innovation, with a focus on local shopping places that support everyday needs and provide a unique and interesting experience while also acting as a meeting place for the community. Learning and education also make significant contributions to the local community through the private schools and universities.

9.2. City of Boroondara significant issues
The City of Boroondara confirms the relevance of many issues raised in the Australian Government issues papers:

- The effects of the Global Financial Crisis are still being experienced by the retail sector and trade is significantly reduced in real terms.
- Skills shortages are occurring across most industries but with particular impact in the education sector (12.5% of jobs in Boroondara).
- The relative cost of business and retail floor space is increasing and businesses may not be able to afford retail rentals in some areas. Opportunities for new entrants to the business and retail sector may decrease and start up businesses may choose less expensive locations to establish. As a result the diversity and mix of product and services available to the local community may change, affecting cost and quality of living.
9.3. The economy - discussion
Boroondara has a strong retail/commercial sector, with much of the activity located within the primary activity centres at Camberwell Junction, Kew Junction and Glenferrie Road in Hawthorn.

Affordability is an issue for commercial spaces. Research commissioned by the City of Boroondara (The Loyalty Zone 2010) indicated that store variety is a key driver of customer loyalty. The increasing costs of commercial spaces (particularly in activity centres) can limit the type of businesses that can be established, therefore limiting the variety of goods that are available.

9.4. The economy - initiatives
Some of the initiatives which may deliver improvements in the economy are:

- Resources and supports to raise awareness and provide access to international markets.
- Develop strategies to address skills shortages through education and training and migration programs.
- Developing entrepreneurial spirit relative to competing economies.
- Provide the business community with good access to and support to compete through the uptake of the World Wide Web as the trading and communications environment increases.
- As yet unknown technology and science may dramatically shift settings and the capacity to be responsive is imperative.
- The City of Boroondara values its diverse community. Cultural diversity and language barriers can affect the functioning of the business sector if they are associated with a lack of awareness of the regulatory environment, compliance issues and systems.
- Private investment in infrastructure can be at odds with community interests. For example, investment in roads (express ways) can limit development of public transport.
- Reintroduce support and resources for the creation of business incubators (office and retail spaces at low cost).
- Availability of financial products suitable for the business sector. This includes appropriateness of products, services and resources eg banking hours/styles/technology/availability of funds post Global Financial Crisis (GFC).

10. Planning and governance

10.1. Community vision
Boroondara's vision document Our Boroondara states:

Like other municipalities, a challenge ahead will be to maintain the standards of our current environment amidst the impacts of climate change, water shortages, increased pollution and development. Council must work with the people of
Advocating for more weight to be given to local planning and the importance of development reflecting the highly valued character of Boroondara were important community issues raised during the development of the community vision. This is also an important reflection of local democracy.

10.2. City of Boroondara significant issues
The City of Boroondara confirms the relevance of many issues raised in the Australian Government issues papers and particularly raises the following:

- ensuring the character of the built and natural environment
- integrated planning
- funding and implementation
- local planning and community involvement
- urban consolidation and retention of housing diversity
- planning areas.

10.3. Planning and governance - discussion
Planning requires a coordinated, whole of government approach, including policy development and implementation plans. For example, an integrated approach to ageing infrastructure with clear roles responsibilities and funding strategies.

Planning for larger than municipal areas should be considered to achieve more integrated approaches and increase the outcomes for the community. Regional planning has been undertaken previously, eg Regional Housing Statements. For a regional planning approach to be effective systems need to be developed to enable integrated planning and action to occur.

Population growth requires additional housing. An urban growth boundary means that this increase must be accommodated largely within established areas. The ageing of the population will lead to increased need for facilities and diverse housing options to support residents to 'age in place'. An increase in mid-rise buildings in the urban landscape and demolition of traditional building stock has occurred with negative impacts including traffic congestion and loss of local character.

10.4. Planning and governance - initiatives
Some of the initiatives which may deliver improvements in planning and governance are:

- Ensure that integrated whole of government planning approaches are developed and undertaken. This includes roles and responsibilities that reflect the appropriate level of government responsibility and leadership.

- Planning strategies should meet specified objectives, relevant legislative requirements
and community involvement and be a pre-condition for Australian Government infrastructure funding where planning strategies are required.

- Local government authorities need increased autonomy over local planning matters. The role of local government means it is best placed to know and respond to the needs of local communities informed by state government strategic planning.

- Strategic planning for cities is not limited to local government boundaries. Planning areas should be determined according to the planning required eg regional or inner city, and undertaken by the appropriate level of government. For example, infrastructure planning requires a geographical focus, such as a region, with appropriate roles and whole of government planning processes.

- Planning for a growing population requires strategies to ensure local communities are able to create and express their own culture and sense of place, and as a result, contribute to health and wellbeing and community connections.

- The City of Boroondara also supports the development of sustainable regional areas. This provides for population growth and recognises the constraints of an increasing urban population on limited infrastructure, housing affordability, residential amenity, open space and health and wellbeing of local communities. Increased regional development will contribute to the liveability of cities both urban and regional.

- Research including a review of international best practice planning systems, should be undertaken and consulted on with the sector. This will contribute to national planning models. This should include models for community consultation and developer involvement to ensure that vested interests of stakeholders are afforded fair representation.

- Review the role of state government planning and administrative bodies such as the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and Planning Panels Victoria. The role of authorities involved in reviewing local government decisions, such as VCAT, should be to apply local planning policy rather than simply considering it. These bodies should not make decisions that undermine local planning policy or create new policy.

- A clearly defined urban growth boundary is required to protect ecologically significant and productive agricultural land on the urban fringe.

11. Indicators

The sustainable population strategy issues paper states 'to ensure we are making sound decisions which contribute to sustainable outcomes, the Australian Government will develop a set of key sustainability indicators' (p. 6). The City of Boroondara has identified indicators of environmental sustainability, a sustainable economy, and community wellbeing, as listed below.
A. Key indicators of environmental sustainability include:

- maintenance of existing biodiversity (diversity of local flora and fauna)
- health of soil and ecosystem services (e.g., carbon sequestered etc)
- health of waterways and marine ecosystems (e.g., pollution levels etc)
- greenhouse gas emissions (per capita and aggregate)
- proportion of grid electricity supplied by renewable energy
- potable water use / efficiency (per capita and aggregate)
- volume of water allocated for environmental flows (in non-urbanised catchment areas)
- volume of waste to landfill (per capita and aggregate).

B. Key indicators of a flourishing and sustainable economy include:

- growth in net expenditure per capita
- household wealth and gross product of the local economy
- decrease in local unemployment level
- increase in lifespan of businesses in the local economy.

C. Key indicators of community wellbeing (as identified in a current review of the community wellbeing indicators included in *Our Boroondara*) include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Community Outcome</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision theme - Community wellbeing</td>
<td>Self reported health</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Subjective wellbeing – how good residents think their life is</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Life expectancy</td>
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<td>Personal health and wellbeing</td>
<td>Fruit and vegetable consumption</td>
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<td>Obesity</td>
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<td>Smoking status</td>
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<td>Risky alcohol consumption</td>
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<td>Illicit drug use</td>
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<td>Psychological distress</td>
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<td>Culturally vibrant community</td>
<td>Opportunities for and participation in arts and cultural activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposed Community Outcome</td>
<td>Indicators</td>
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<tr>
<td>A physically active community</td>
<td>Opportunities for and participation in sporting and recreational activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>A learning community</td>
<td>Opportunities for participation in lifelong learning activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>A democratic and engaged community</td>
<td>Opportunities to have a say on important local issues</td>
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<td>A safe community</td>
<td>Crime rates</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Perceptions of safety</td>
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<td>Rates of domestic violence</td>
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<td>A caring, inclusive and supportive community</td>
<td>Feeling part of the community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Volunteering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Access to social support</td>
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<tr>
<td>A diverse community</td>
<td>Diverse socio-economic status of residents</td>
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<td>Acceptance of diverse cultures</td>
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**Vision theme - managing a sustainable environment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainable water use</th>
<th>Quality of storm water</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable energy use</td>
<td>Use of renewable energy sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green house gas emissions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Energy consumption of residential and commercial buildings and Council facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable waste management</td>
<td>Levels of waste to landfill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained biodiversity</td>
<td>Biodiversity across the LGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A clean Yarra River, creeks and waterways</td>
<td>Condition of natural streams and waterways</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Vision theme - Planning a well designed and sustainable city**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affordable housing</th>
<th>Housing affordability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desirable place to live</td>
<td>Satisfaction with the look and feel of Boroondara</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vibrant villages</td>
<td>Feeling part of the community</td>
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<td>Volunteering</td>
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<td>Retention of heritage buildings</td>
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<td>Open space</td>
<td>Access to areas of open space</td>
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<td>Appearance of public space</td>
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**Vision theme - Connecting our city**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Community Outcome</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessible transport</td>
<td>Transport limitations</td>
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<td>Public transport patronage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction with roads and footpaths</td>
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<td>Provision of and usage rates for community transport</td>
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12. Conclusions

The key issues outlined in this response provide the City of Boroondara’s perspectives on the two Australian Government issues papers about the development of a Sustainable Population Strategy and a National Urban Policy. They also demonstrate the consistency of issues at the local and national level.

An overarching issue emerging through the review of the issues papers and their connection to local perspectives and experiences is that of leadership. Leadership is required to address key community issues and collaboration is required to achieve this. Strategies to address major community issues such as housing, transport, hospital and health reform, infrastructure and sustainability can be impacted by the changing political context, leaving the needs of communities ‘at the mercy’ of the electoral cycle.

The development of plans and strategies should be managed to achieve maximum support and commitment by all relevant stakeholders. This requires whole of government coordination and cooperation, and defined roles, responsibilities and resources that enable the process of implementation. Coordinated and integrated approaches also need to be accompanied by a commitment to implementation over the long-term.

The concurrent development of urban and regional cities along the lines suggested in this response will also contribute to sustainable growth, support the development of diversity and contribute to community health and wellbeing.
References


Department of Infrastructure and Transport 2010a, *Our cities - building a productive, sustainable and liveable future*, Department of Infrastructure and Transport, Canberra.

Department of Infrastructure and Transport 2010b, *Our cities - the challenge of change*, Department of Infrastructure and Transport, Canberra.


The Loyalty Zone 2010, 'Customer survey results', unpublished research report, City of Boroondara.