

St Arnaud Civic Precinct Plan

Shire of North Grampians
April 2014



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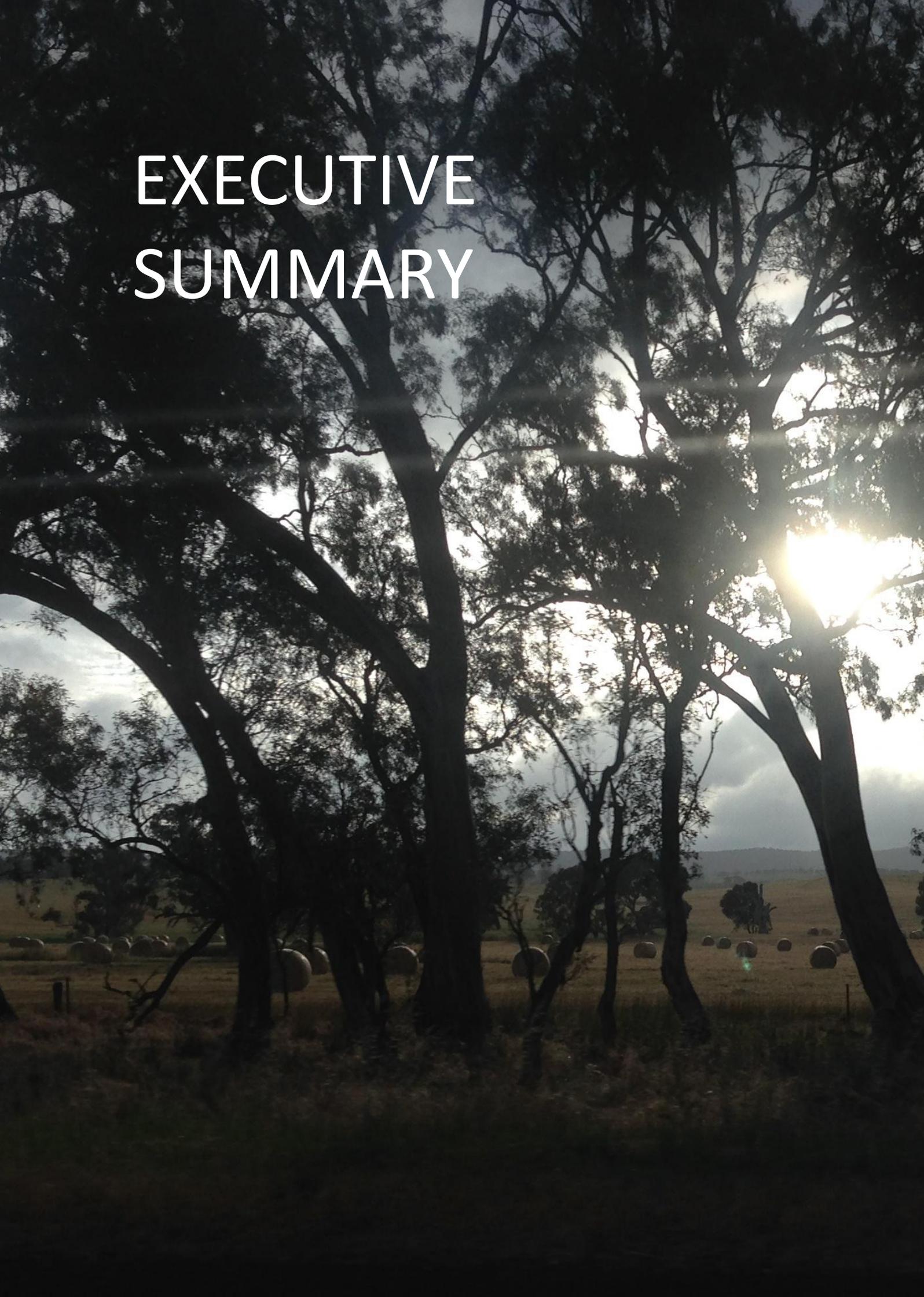
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out an audit of, and recommendations for, investment in the built form and social life of the St Arnaud Civic Precinct, running from the Historical Precinct at the southern entrance of the town to the Bible Museum at the northern intersection of Napier and Mills Streets (Figure 1).

Investing in a strong Civic Precinct for St Arnaud will bring good results for the community and businesses in the town. Regional towns are in constant competition for visitors, and to attract and retain skilled, permanent populations. Meeting the needs of St Arnaud's existing population, while strengthening key attractions, creating beauty and interest in the streetscapes and continually working to make St Arnaud events the best and brightest in the region will support a vibrant town life and, in turn, attract more people to this experience. New visitors to St Arnaud mean more investment in the region, more business opportunities, more local jobs and a greater sense of civic optimism and opportunity.

St Arnaud is blessed with strong heritage values in its buildings, gardens, shop fronts and verandas, as well as the stories that have been carefully preserved by the local community. A plan for better presentation, restoration and utilisation of these assets is needed, along with increased accessibility for community groups to these assets.

This Civic Precinct Plan described in this report is much more than a list of street works: it works towards a vision for St Arnaud, articulating a plan for investment and project delivery in line with community needs and expectations. It includes actions that will support St Arnaud to communicate its values and history more widely, involve a wide range of the community, and act as an invitation to visitors to experience the town. It aims to make St Arnaud a destination. Identification of strategic investment opportunities, including private and government investment will assist in harnessing the community spirit for the longer-term project of re-imagining a future for St Arnaud based on its creative and cultural heritage.

FIGURE 1 ST ARNAUD CIVIC PRECINCT AND CIVIC SPINE



Source: MvS Architects 2014

Key proposals

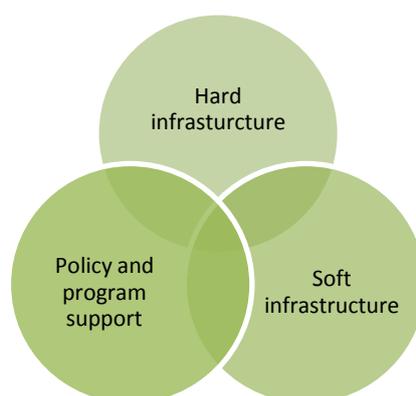
This report sets out a series of recommendations to capture and build upon St Arnaud’s existing strengths, as well as invest in new initiatives that will serve the local community, and enhance the visitor experience in St Arnaud.

Through consultation with the St Arnaud residents and businesses, it was understood that while there is no lack of energy or commitment to St Arnaud, there is lack of consensus and disquiet around a number of issues.

For this reason, it is recommended that any investment in the physical fabric of the town works in tandem with policies and programs that help build community, and help the residents and businesses unite to reach shared goals.

As such, recommendations for the Civic Precinct Plan are set out as three overlapping areas of action:

- Hard infrastructure investment
- Soft infrastructure investment
- Supportive Council planning and policy.



Key proposal under these areas include:

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF KEY INITIATIVES FOR THE ST ARNAUD CIVIC PRECINCT PLAN

Hard infrastructure investment	Soft Infrastructure	Planning and policy support
Town Hall upgrade: Perry Room Community Hub	St Arnaud Online	Supporting aged services hub business case
Town Library seating and signage	Marketing Strategy	Implementing recommendations in the Heritage Study.
Expansion of the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens	Artist-in-residence program	Expansion and promotion of the Heritage support loan fund
Market Gardens upgrade	University-link up	Strict heritage controls for the St Arnaud expanded Civic Precinct
Old St Arnaud Swimming Pool (Pioneer Park Lake) works	Events Calendar	Local business support
Wayfinding and street signage strategies		St Arnaud Development Corporation and Community Steering Group
Streetscape and local amenity improvements		
Heritage and culture works		
Contemporary art installations, including an Art Wall		

These recommendations are detailed in full in the following report, followed by a discussion on the key challenges and next steps towards realising this vision for St Arnaud. Diagrams setting out these proposals are in the appendices to this report.

Project team

This project was coordinated by a consultant team with a unique combination of skills and experience in building long term cultural and economic benefit through the development of cultural heritage. This team included Jan van Schaik of MvS Architects, renowned curator and gallery director, Maudie Palmer, and urban planner and policy consultant, Mitra Anderson-Oliver from SGS Economics and Planning.

Report Structure

Chapter 1 introduces the project and sets out the scope of the investigation, as well as providing a brief summary of the historical features and St Arnaud, and current economic pressures.

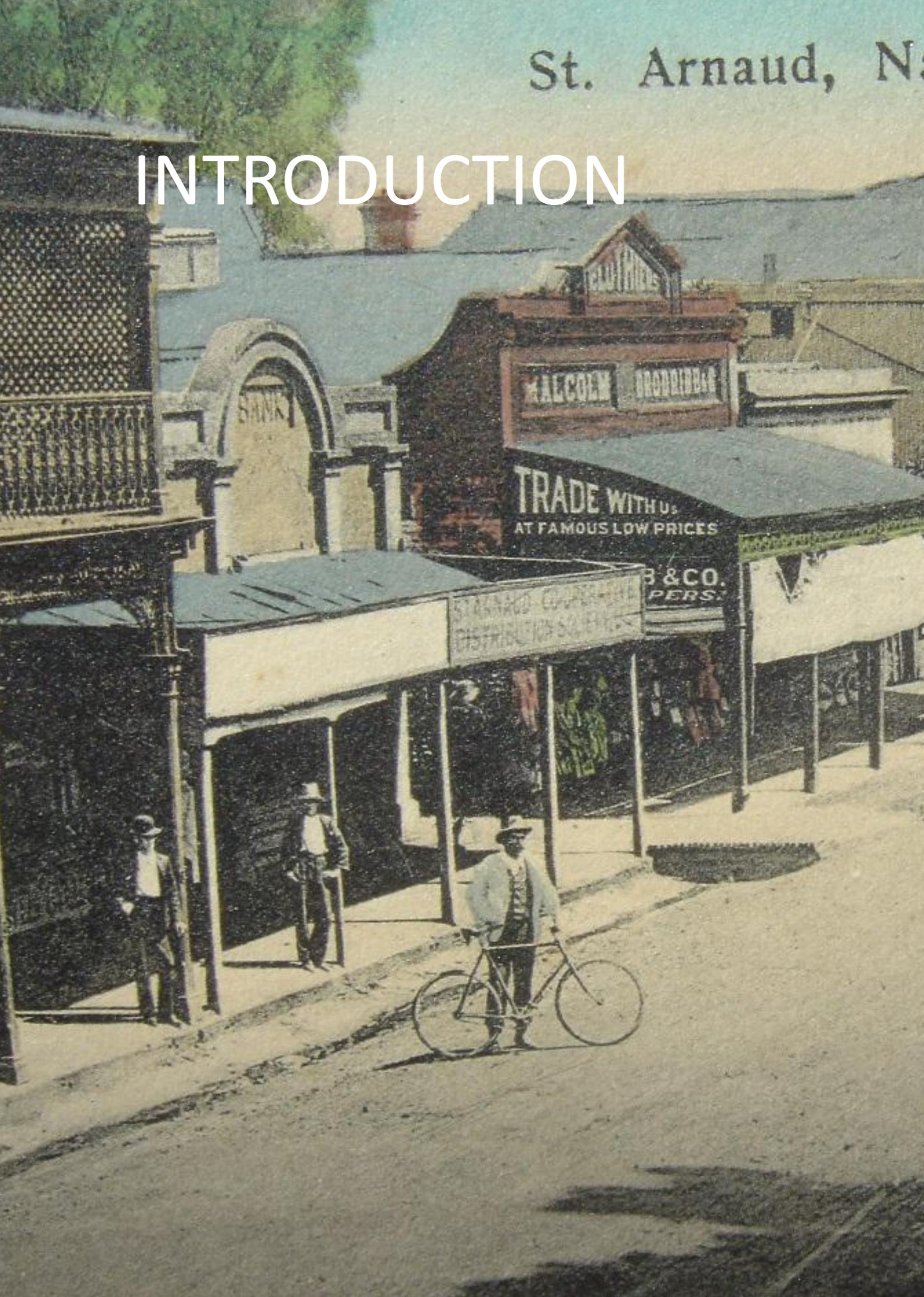
Chapter 2 reports on the study done by the project team of the existing physical and cultural conditions of St Arnaud. This study was informed by site visits, consultation with the community, and research into previous reports and historical works undertaken on St Arnaud. This chapter reports back on consultation with the community in terms of high priority needs and vision for the town.

Chapter 3 sets out the Civic Precinct Plan, articulated within the framework of three spheres of action: hard infrastructure, soft infrastructure and supportive policies and programs. An audit is made of key attractions and facilities in the town, with recommendations for enhancement, preservation and modification to better meet the needs of the town, and create an enticing place for visitors to explore.

Chapter 4 concludes the reports and outlines the next steps.

St. Arnaud, N

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the history and economic challenges facing St Arnaud, and provides a background to the development of the Civic Precinct Plan.

1.1 History of St Arnaud

St Arnaud is a former gold mining town in the Wimmeria region with significant built and natural heritage. A well-planned town, St Arnaud features a relatively coherent length of late 19th to early and mid 20th century buildings lining its main street, as well as several large and well-preserved civic buildings. Many of these buildings feature wide verandas and ornate cast-iron lacework. The town's historic precinct, along Napier Street between Millett Street and Inkerman Street, features the old post office (built in 1866), court house (1866) and Victoria's oldest fire station (1883) now a fire brigade museum.

There are a number of gardens in and around St Arnaud's town centre, including the beautiful Queen Mary Botanic Gardens, and the Market Square gardens adjacent to the council offices. Pioneer Park to the east of the town centre is the only known public park designed by the famous Australian landscape architect, Edna Walling, and is sited next to the impressive Old St Arnaud Swimming Pool. The Lord Nelson Park offers a range of sporting and recreational facilities. The town's last mine, the Lord Nelson, operated within these parks and there is a lookout atop Wilsons Hill which is honeycombed with mine shafts (see Table 2 for selected key attractions and historical sites in St Arnaud).

St Arnaud holds particular importance in the history and heritage of the wider Shire of North Grampians region, with the 2004 Heritage Study of the region listing 267 sites of heritage significance in St Arnaud, 9 of these of State significance and 208 of local significance. This is second only to Stawell, the significantly larger main township, with 432 sites of significance, 14 of which are of State significance and 204 of local significance.

Four of only ten 'Heritage Precincts' identified across the Shire are located in St Arnaud. While all Heritage Precincts identified in the study were recommended for inclusion onto the Northern Grampians Planning Scheme, only one of these sites - the Old Civic Heritage Precinct in St Arnaud – was recommended for the Victorian Heritage Register.

St Arnaud is named after French marshal Jacques Leroy de Saint Arnaud, and the food and wine strengths of the region offer significant opportunity to increase cultural ties to this French heritage and celebrate the town's distinctive character.

This rich cultural heritage and built fabric demands preservation and celebration, and complementary investment and vision to harness the contemporary creative energy of the region into new and exciting projects.

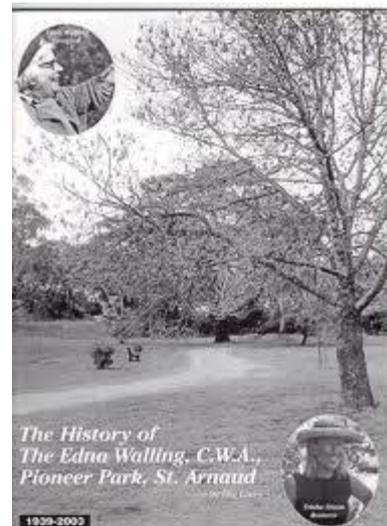


TABLE 2. SELECTED HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS OF ST ARNAUD

Historic Buildings	Local Attractions	Parks and Gardens	Local services and amenities
Historic Town Hall	Local Wineries	Queen Mary Botanical Gardens	Cinema
Hotel St Arnaud	Country Museum	Market Square Gardens (adjacent to the council offices)	Town Library
Convent	Bible Museum		Bowling Club and green
Law courts	Show grounds	Pioneer Park (Australia's only remaining public park designed by Edna Walling)	Olympic Swimming Pool
Historic train station	Race track		School of Dance (x2)
Original Fire Station	Farmers Market		Angling Club
Manchester Arms Hotel	State forest		Kara Kara Restaurant
Commonwealth Hotel (still features original verandas)			Tourist Information Centre
Original Post Office			Tennis Courts
Botanical Hotel			Air field
			Lord Nelson Park, Sport and Recreation Club
			St Arnaud Racecourse

1.2 Economic development challenges

As with rural townships across Australia, St Arnaud faces the challenges of an aging population and associated declining rates base with which to invest in local infrastructure, along with competition from other, larger and better serviced regional centres.

The population of St Arnaud – and the Shire more broadly – is expected to grow only slightly in the coming two decades, with an annual growth rate of 0.3%. Many key economic development drivers are under pressure, including the loss of new skills through youth leaving the town for urban centres (particularly Melbourne), loss of local income through services and key businesses increasingly locating in other regional centres, an increasing percentage of the local population in retirement, and a lack of local leadership, with key Council offices located in Stawell.

The contemporary push to urbanisation means that it is more important than ever for small rural towns to create and promote their distinctive character, to act as a draw card to local and international visitors, and encourage vibrant community spirit and connection.

St Arnaud as a destination

Holiday-makers and locals want to visit places that are lively, beautiful, full of opportunities for entertainment and exploration as well as to relax and appreciate the small details. Tourists are, in the end, just locals on holiday. They look for the same attractions that we do every day – a good coffee, a delicious meal, somewhere to sit and enjoy a view, as well as that extra depth of commitment, which marks a place as truly special. A town that believes in itself, that values and invests in its built and cultural heritage, which embraces contemporary life and offers something, is a town worth living in and travelling to.

The promise of a beautiful, historic township, with inviting picnicking areas, entertainment for everyone, attractive accommodation, ample overnight caravan parking spaces, and a clear sense of place and purpose will put St Arnaud on the ‘must see’ list, along with other Victorian towns which have made the most of their assets and strategically invested in new attractions.

There is a need for a vision to be developed for the future development of St Arnaud, in order to target investment and develop a coherent narrative about the district. This will help to attract new visitors to the town, as well as support the community to maintain and promote a clear and visible identity.

1.3 Project brief: A Civic Precinct Plan for St Arnaud

This project arose out of the identified need to strengthen core civic facilities in St Arnaud, and involved a thorough audit and review of the St Arnaud Town Hall building and other buildings that are located in the zone currently known as 'The Precinct'. This Precinct is at the heart of St Arnaud and currently comprises the Town Hall, library, council offices, public amenities and other attached buildings. The project included a rigorous examination and rationalisation of the current and future opportunities in the Precinct that will inform investment in the area.

The Civic Precinct is placed at the centre of what can be understood as the 'Civic Spine' of St Arnaud, the main thoroughfare through St Arnaud, beginning with the Heritage Precinct and Queen Mary Botanic Gardens to the south, travelling through the CBD and ending at the northern intersection of Napier and Mill Streets, just past the Bible Museum.

As such, this project necessitated a broad, strategic inquiry into the functionality of the Civic Spine and the town as a whole. Additionally, the Precinct Plan needed to engage deeply with the current challenges facing St Arnaud and its future development potential, the needs of the local community, and methods by which to attract new investment in the town and build a viable future for St Arnaud.

The key questions that were bought to this project were:

- How can the existing potential of St Arnaud be harnessed?
- How can St Arnaud capitalise on its strengths?
- What is needed to help grow St Arnaud into a regional hub?
- What new and existing projects could be run in the town that will attract investment, and encourage more people to live in, visit and invest in St Arnaud?
- How can the locals of St Arnaud, the long timers and the fresh faces, be supported to stay in St Arnaud, invest and create community?

Through this investigation a plan for investment in the Civic Precinct and surrounding area has been developed that captures the spirit of the town and provides impetus for community involvement, action and investment. Through the development of a strong, community-centred Civic Precinct, a momentum will be created upon which other projects can build.

1.4 Study area

The study area for this report includes the Civic Precinct area, bounded by Napier, Walker, Market and Dundas Streets as well as the Civic Spine which includes Napier Street, and all frontages to it, between Millet and Mill Streets (see map below at Figure 2). The expansion is designed to acknowledge the role that a main street plays in the civic experience of towns.

FIGURE 2 ST ARNAUD CIVIC PRECINCT AND CIVIC SPINE



Source: MvS Architects 2014

Showcasing St Arnaud's Historic Precinct

The Old Civic Heritage Precinct, along with the Queen Mary Gardens at the entrance to Napier Street make a memorable and unique introduction to the civic heart of Napier Street like no other experience in Regional Victoria. This precinct provides the perfect introduction to the later larger Victorian, Edwardian and Art Deco buildings, beginning with the well-preserved Botanical Hotel on the corner as you proceed up the main street.

There is a general consensus that the Historical Precinct is currently functioning well. The Information Centre is well-positioned to receive incoming traffic, and complemented by a nearby coffee shop, historic court house, museum and historical society and the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens.

The local community has a strong representation of individuals who are committed to seeing the heritage features of the town maintained. There is however disagreement as to where amenities necessary for the community and visitor's enjoyment and relaxation, especially the location of toilets, playgrounds and barbecues, and what new if any architectural or artistic features should be introduced. These views have been taken into account in preparing the recommendations in this report, along with the recommendations in previous studies.

1.5 Study team

This project was coordinated by a consultant team with a unique combination of skills and experience in building long term cultural and economic benefit through the development of cultural heritage. This team included Jan van Schaik of MvS Architects, renowned curator and gallery director, Maudie Palmer, and urban planner and policy consultant, Mitra Anderson-Oliver from SGS Economics and Planning.

Jan is currently the Chair of Creative Spaces at the City of Melbourne, a director at MvS Architects and a researcher and design tutor at RMIT University's School of Architecture & Design. He has been involved in the design of the Victorian College for the Arts Centre of Ideas, Australian Wildlife Health Centre, Healesville Sanctuary and Edithvale Seaford Wetlands Discovery Centre, two of which are recipients of the Premier's Design Award. He has extensive experience in the governance of community based arts organisations and has also collaborated with a number of curators and artists on projects in the public realm and major galleries in Melbourne, South Australian and New South Wales.

Maudie has significant first-hand experience from setting up the Heide Museum of Modern Art and the TarraWarra Museum of Art both of which have brought significant social and economic benefit to their respective locals. She specializes in preparing visions for projects and briefs for public buildings, working as a project director, conceptualisation of new cultural facilities, and has ongoing involvement in the development of sculpture gardens. She has considerable experience in managing festivals and has been involved in many public art projects most recently for Major Projects as the art consultant on the AAMI Park Stadium which features the amazing Alexander Knox light installation against the sky line.

Mitra is an urban policy analyst with experience working across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. She provides advice to state and local government departments on the development and management of creative facilities and precincts, including preparation of business cases, assessment of supply and demand of creative space and analysis of the underlying conditions for supporting creative industries to thrive. She has undertaken economic development strategies for local governments, and business case guidance and evaluation for investment in new community facilities. Mitra is also a skilled consultant, with experience coordinating and facilitating consultations with leaders from across government and diverse local communities. Mitra chairs the Board of the Melbourne-based Schoolhouse Studios and tutors into the University of Melbourne Environments and Master of Urban Planning programs.

Together this project team has worked closely with the Shire officers and local community members to propose new strategies to harness opportunities for St Arnaud's long term growth and development.

1.6 Previous work

Significant previous work has been undertaken in St Arnaud to explore and document the heritage values of the town, and to put forward recommendations for improvement, restoration and

conservation. Additionally, a Business Plan and marketing strategy has been prepared, along with a Community Plan.

These works have been drawn upon to inform this Precinct Plan.

Relevant documents include:

Walsh, K. (1995). *Conservation and Landscape Recommendations for St Arnaud's Queen Mary Botanical Gardens*, prepared for the North Grampians Shire Council. July 1995.

Jacobs, W., V. Johnson, D. Rowe, P. Taylor. (2004) *North Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Stage 2*.

Village Well (2005) *St Arnaud Business/Marketing Plan 2005 – 2007*. Prepared for the Shire of North Grampians by Village Well, Melbourne.

2 COMMUNITY NEEDS REVIEW

This chapter summarises the consultation findings and community needs review undertaken by the project team.

2.1 Consultation

Harnessing the input and gathering the stories of the community was recognised as vital to the success of the mapping and development of the Civic Precinct.

St Arnaud has a long history of civic engagement and local volunteering which holds promise for the ability of the town to collectively work towards a positive future. Strengthening these social networks, business networks and relationships with local and state government institutions will help to direct community effort toward a shared vision.

As such, consultation sessions were held with individuals, community groups and businesses in St Arnaud in order to:

- Identify the rational boundary and key elements of the Civic Precinct.
- Engage the local St Arnaud community in development of the precinct plan.
- Increase levels of project momentum, inspiration and visionary thinking amongst community, stakeholders and investors and alumni.
- Improve visibility for St Arnaud in the consciousness of a broad geography and demographic.
- Gather of local knowledge, cultural and geographical history.

During the conversations, stakeholders were asked to give feedback on:

- Their role in the community
- Their vision for St Arnaud
- Their opinion on the needs of the civic precinct
- History of community and local government activity in St Arnaud
- Sites of significance to them.

This consultation was taken together with the understanding of the strengths and opportunities in St Arnaud, to develop proposals for the civic precinct plan and beyond.

2.2 Initial consultation and data collection: summary of feedback

Consultation revealed a long history of community advocacy for investment in local service provision, and a keen sense of the needs of an aging population, as well as the youth of the town.

However, it was also clear that there is a lack of a coherent community vision for investment, with many groups working simultaneously to advocate for separate and at times conflicting investments.

An action and investment plan is needed to harness the obvious community energy, and answer some long held requests.

Key assets and attractions of the town are at risk of relocating to other regional centres. For example, it is possible that the Bible Museum may move to Bendigo if appropriate accommodation is found, due to the need for higher standard facilities.

Several members of the community and community groups have long advocated for a heated pool for St Arnaud, which, despite not being a part of the civic precinct per se, remains an issue that requires attention and resolution.

Investment in 'new' initiatives needs to be tempered with a commitment to bettering and furthering past policies and investments, and a clear narrative regarding the future potential and existing cultural heritage of St Arnaud needs to be demonstrated. This will help the community to organise around a shared vision. It is our view that to achieve this, any future investment in St Arnaud should meet the following, overlapping objectives:

- provide additional services to the local community
- improve the amenity of the town
- increase opportunities for community cohesion, support and collective action
- improve St Arnaud as a destination for external residents and to visitors of the town.

Below is a summary of the key needs that emerged from consultation with the community. The community was asked to identify their key concerns broadly, in order that the proposals articulated through this project might be better integrated within the broader township, and considerate of long-standing needs.

Needs of the town

The key needs of the township were identified as:

- Appropriate and adaptable community spaces
- Provision for the needs of the youth (in terms of entertainment and opportunity) as well as the aging population
- Improved accessibility of community facilities and areas generally, including need to develop a town-wide accessibility strategy
- Preservation and investment in heritage values of the town and its key attractions
- Attracting visitors and new residents.

Needs of visitors

St Arnaud is a popular stopping point for travellers in the region, typically couples or families taking caravan tours. Visitors to the town are serviced with an information centre, a caravan park, good information about the significant sites in town through the Historical Society, as well as use of the parks and gardens for recreation.

However, there are a limited number of food outlets, cafes and high end dining, and there is no obvious 'gateway' into the town, with key sites of interest within the town not clearly signposted.

Key needs and attractors of visitors identified by small business and community members were:

- Better quality hospitality offer
- More visible 'place making' strategy (including, for example, community initiatives to foster pride in major attractions)
- Coherent, historical streetscape and signage
- Sense of vibrancy and liveliness.

Quick wins

The following emerged as ‘quick wins’ that should be acted upon in the short term to improve the amenity of the town for residents and visitors:

- Appropriate signage and entryways to the town
- Streetscape policy that emphasises preservation and ‘re-enactment’ of heritage values.
- Forward-looking public art and design offer (i.e. not always looking to the past but leveraging off the natural values of St Arnaud)
- Coordinated information/tourism campaign which highlights the locational advantages, historical importance, and amenity offer of the town
- Proposed key events for community participation and enhancement of visitor experience.

2.3 Community presentation of draft strategy

Key initiatives proposed in this plan were taken to community consultation before the preparation of the final report and recommendations.

Feedback received has been incorporated into many of the recommendations of this report. Key areas of community concern included:

- ensuring that business interests are met and businesses are encouraged to invest in St Arnaud and hold conferences
- the need to install barbeque facilities in St Arnaud to serve both the local population and visitors
- the long term struggle for investment in a heated pool for St Arnaud, and the understanding that this civic precinct plan would include scope for such a pool
- the popularity of the existing Heritage Precinct (adjacent to the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens) and the need to ensure that this is strengthened and supported
- insufficient shade, shelter and services for caravans visiting the town
- the need to update the basic facilities in the Town Hall rooms as soon as possible to make them functional, including air conditioning, audio visual equipment, and accessibility to the disabled and elderly
- the need to address eroding heritage values in the main street through insensitive renovations
- the preservation and enhancement of the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens as a major attraction in St Arnaud
- better access for people with disabilities.

CIVIC PRECINCT PLAN



3 CIVIC PRECINCT PLAN

Key initiatives proposed for the Civic Precinct and along the length of the Civic Spine are set out in this chapter. The logic of the proposals is established, with an emphasis on investing not only in the built environment, but also in the social and policy supports that will lead to longer-term revitalisation and investment in St Arnaud.

3.1 Three circles of action

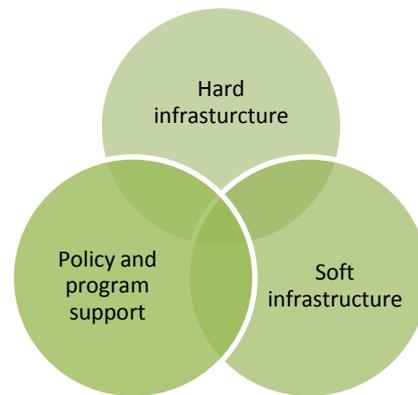
St Arnaud has a bounty of heritage and community infrastructure, including, as noted in the previous chapters, an impressive range of federation and art-deco public buildings, established public gardens, as well as community facilities such as the Town Hall, and other community halls and venues.

Consultation with the community, along with exploration of the site found that there is a need for improved better presentation, restoration and utilisation of these assets, increased accessibility and linking community groups with these assets, and through them, to each other.

It is essential that any investment in the physical fabric of the town works in tandem with policies and programs that help build community, and to help the community unite to reach shared goals.

To be successful, and to integrate with a wider strategy for St Arnaud, it is useful to articulate the Civic Precinct plan as three overlapping areas of action:

- Hard infrastructure investment
- Soft infrastructure investment
- Supportive Council planning and policies.



Recommendations for St Arnaud are set out below under these three headings.

3.2 Hard infrastructure investment

Key recommended projects for infrastructure investment are listed below. Selected areas and features along the Civic Spine have been particularly focused on, due to their importance in St Arnaud's identity, as well as their potential to act as a catalyst for further positive community development and increased visitation to the town.

PRECINCT-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

St Arnaud's historic values should be protected and celebrated through purposeful heritage protection, as well as ongoing investment in street works and beautification.

St Arnaud has a well-laid out urban form, historical buildings, and an obvious 'civic precinct'. These assets of the town should be capitalised upon and invested in – including Council-led advocacy for heritage protection and reinvestment to avoid further degradation, and to signal to the local community and visitors that these are valued aspects of the town. Council should invest in the historical and contemporary values of the street character. The prettiness of the town is a draw for local and interstate visitors, and key works would assist in furthering this character, and increasing accessibility.

St. Arnaud's civic infrastructure is currently underutilised due to a combination of maintenance issues, accessibility issues, and 'awareness issues'. The initiatives below work to support greater understanding of the richness of St Arnaud's heritage and contemporary potential by the local community and visitors alike.

St Arnaud main street beautification

The Civic Spine has three focal points: the entry and exit at either end of Napier Street and the civic precinct at the centre of the spine. Upgrades to street furniture and street lighting along the spine and in the precinct will improve the use and perception of them, as will the added incentives to make use of low interest heritage restoration loans.

Heritage works

Napier Street is the primary heritage area in St Arnaud and opportunities to restore and enhance this streetscape should be realized. The visual coherence of the town needs to be enhanced and preserved. This will build community pride, as well as the touristic attraction of the town.

Heritage works should include not only the facades, verandas, windows, entrances and paintwork, but planting of appropriate trees, installation of new street furniture and lights as required, making curbing and parking accessible where essential and introducing consistency in signage.

Key issues include:

- Ensuring iron lacework is preserved
- Enactment of advised heritage overlays
- Promoting a take-up of the heritage works fund
- Removal of redundant signs and replacement with visually consistent signage.
- Heritage reproduction gas lamps should be progressively reinstalled.

Upgraded and improved signage

The historical and social importance of these sites needs to be more clearly articulated and displayed within the town, as well as in communications materials in order to build an understanding of their value.

This can include upgraded street signage indicating the key attractions of St Arnaud (including signs directing towards the pool, convent and Pioneer Park on the streets intersecting Napier Street) as well as the significance of particular areas, such as the history behind a street name, or the date of establishment of an historical hotel.

Caravan parking

Caravan accessibility to the car park next to the Tourist Information Centre, and the Market Square car park was raised as needing attention. Caravans often scrape as they are entering the car parks, and remediation works should be carried out as soon as possible.

Kerbing upgrades

It is noted that the previous Urban Design Framework for St Arnaud recommended extensive works on kerb and channel relocation, and relaying the pedestrian path in Napier Street. The Shire has already investment more than \$1 million on kerb, drainage, traffic treatment, and replacement of the footpath, with a street block still to be completed. It is recommended that this work be completed. However, given the high cost of this work, it will need to be prioritised in light of the other recommendations in this report.

Accessibility improvements and kerbing upgrades

Kerbing and shop front entrances also impact on the accessibility of the streets to the elderly and people with disabilities.

Throughout the Civic Precinct there should be an audit of existing kerbs and improvements need to be made to maximise accessibility, and rationalise disability parking and access points.

Other suggested works include:

- Disability parking and access outside Council offices (using the current Mayor’s parking area for disability parking would provide safe drop off pick up for disabled and elderly)
- Provide small ramps for the disabled to be able to negotiate Edwardian entrances into shops that would mean that they could become open again.

St Arnaud town walks

St Arnaud is a walkable town. It takes only eight minutes to walk from the St Arnaud Caravan Park to the Market Gardens and the Town Hall Precinct, ten minutes to walk from Market Gardens to the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens and fifteen minutes to walk from there all the way to the Bible Museum at the northern end of the Civic Precinct- even at the most leisurely pace.

These distances, routes and attractions should be signed for the public and advertised at the information centre for locals and to encourage visitors to stretch their legs after long drives. The same can be done for cycling routes.

The example below is taken from the “Walk Raleigh” campaign, undertaken by local community members using cardboard signs and QR codes. 27 signs were placed at three intersections around Raleigh that pointed to a local landmark (like Raleigh City Cemetery) and said how long it would take to walk there, along with a QR code that could be scanned for easy directions.

FIGURE 3 EXAMPLE OF WALKING STRATEGY – “WALK RALEIGH”



Source: Walk Raleigh, 2013

Street furniture

A consistent design language for street furniture should be implemented.

Street furniture should be strategically invested in to enhance the public realm, to create spaces for gathering, and generally invite people into the town, to sit and linger, people watch, meet friends, etc. Provision for umbrellas and shade should be made, in addition to the planting of appropriate trees for this heritage precinct.

Street Tree planting

The current street tree planting should be continued, and extended to the streets

extending off the Civic Precinct. Shade will be essential during drought, and contributes to the beauty of the street.

The image below shows the effect that large tree planting can have on creating a more intimate, cool and attractive main street environment.

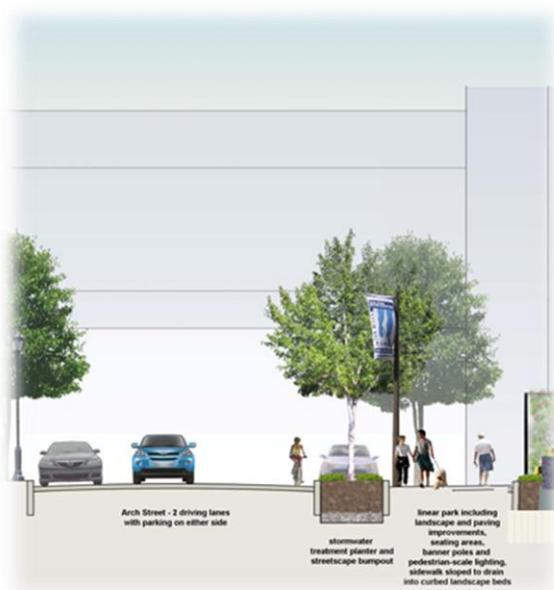
It is noted that grape vine plantings have been begun at the northern end of Napier Street and have now become established. This has been generally well received and adds to the character of the street.

FIGURE 4 STREET TREE VISUALISATION



However, it is a key concern that shade trees be promoted for planting in the street, given their ability to create cool microclimates and enhance the perception of the street as a main thoroughfare and boulevard. This is a departure from the current St Arnaud Urban Design Framework, which discourages shade trees midblock.

FIGURE 5 CROSS SECTION OF EXAMPLE STREET PLANTING PLAN



Source: Clancy and Ishii, 2008

CREATING A COMMUNITY HUB FOR ST ARNAUD

The Town Hall facilities should be upgraded to support a range of community and business enterprise uses. This will enhance the role of the Town Hall as the 'centre' of St Arnaud community life, as well as open up further opportunities to businesses through conference facilities, time-share workstations and occasional office-hire.

Community groups have long called for a 'community hub', and while this hub has different forms and purposes, a common element was the need for a well-equipped facility which could be used for 'community' as well as business purposes and which could act as a conference centre and meeting place for various groups.

The Town Hall is currently underutilised, with many empty rooms that are inaccessible to the elderly and disabled as well as inadequate public facilities such as toilets and change rooms for parents with small children. However, it has a sound built fabric, and, in lying at the geographic 'heart' of St Arnaud, is ideal for adaptive reuse as a community hub facility. As part of this process of renovation and conversion power sources should be reviewed and alternative energy sources should be explored as well as the conservation of water.

The first priority should be a retrofit of the 'Perry Room' as a multi-purpose community space. Key aspects of this retrofit are listed below.

The Perry Centre

The Perry Room should be upgraded into a fully-functional community and conference facility to support a range of community and business activities.

Making opportunities for business to use or locate in the rooms of the Town Hall was a priority of many who attended the consultation. The facilities need to be adaptable for both the purposes of the community groups as well as potential business visitors who could use the rooms as conference facilities.

The Perry Room is conveniently located to the left of the entrance to the Council officers, and at the edge of the Town Hall Building. It is already a well-utilized community facility, available to both Council and community members as a meeting room.

It should be upgraded and expanded into a full community and business facility.

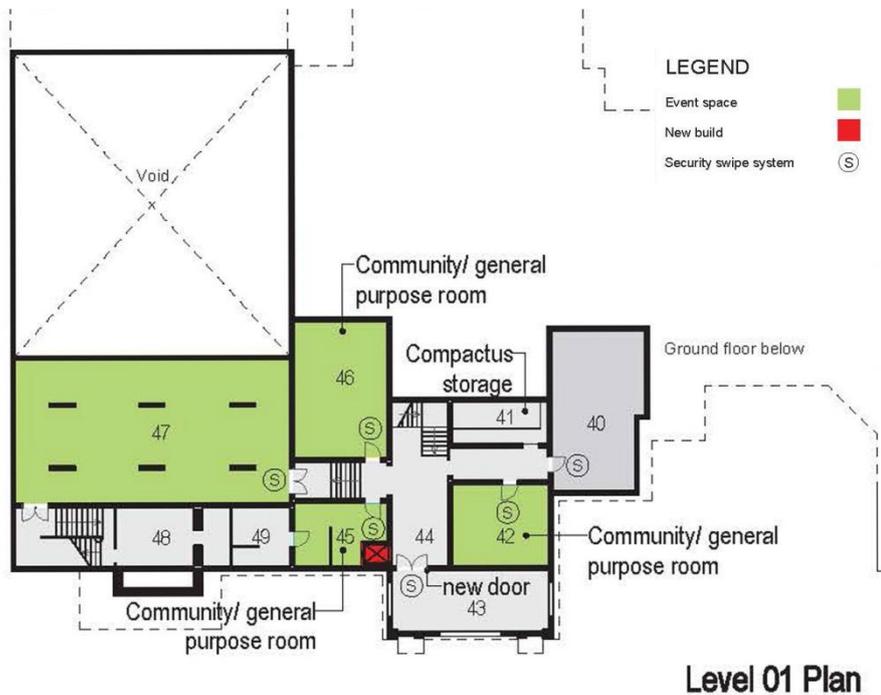
Key components of this upgrade are:

- Upgrade of air conditioning system
- Upgrade of audio visual equipment
- Increase storage capacity
- Multi-purpose room with appropriate environment control
- Community kitchen
- Retrofit of old Council chambers and offices to allow for occasional or permanent use by small business and community groups (including, for example, youth services, childcare providers, small home businesses, physio and massage therapists)
- Disability access improvements, including a new ramp and entry into the building.
- Toilets and baby change areas.

This would expand the scope of the Community Hub, in being able to provide occasional room hire. The artist-in-residency program and University-Link up program could also utilise office space here.

In addition the Mayor’s Room and Council Chambers rooms should be restored and maintained in order to accommodate a range of uses and formalities. They could be made available for booking.

FIGURE 7 TOWN HALL UPPER FLOOR PLAN - RECOMMENDATIONS



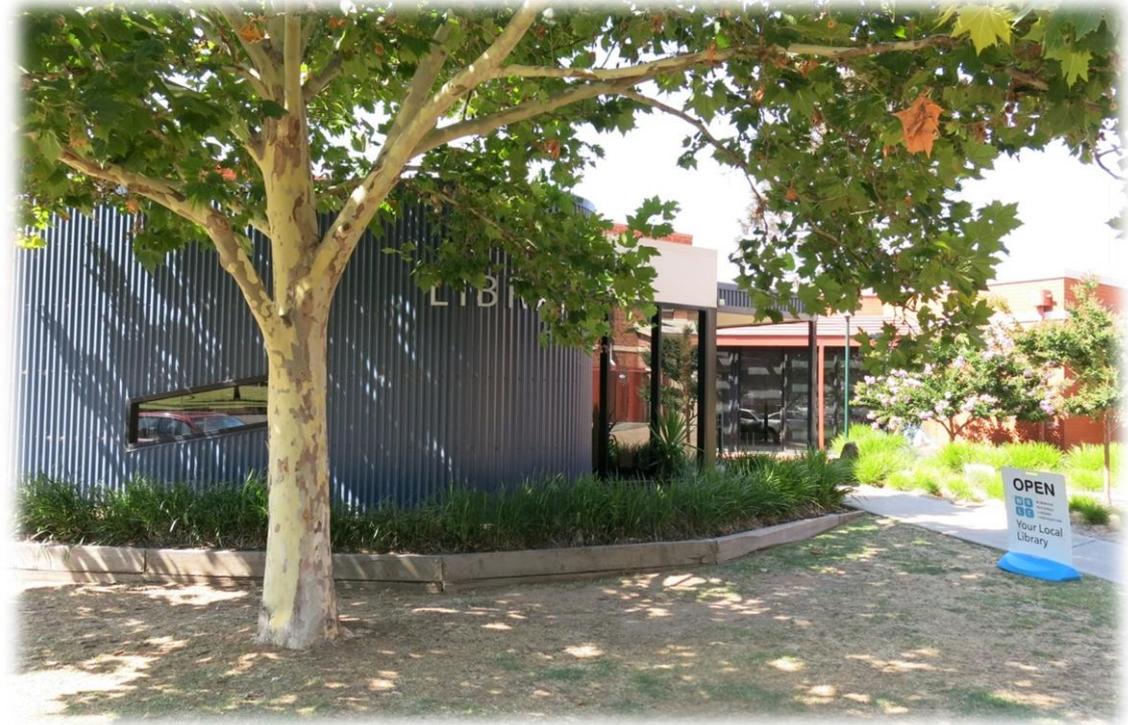
Source: MvS Architects, 2014

Town Library seating and signage

Seating should be installed outside the St Arnaud Library, the preferred seating being a circular seat round the Plane tree at the front of the library. This will create an inviting area to sit outside of the Library, for patrons to use if they are waiting for the Library to open as well as for general members of the public, in particular the elderly when they need to rest.

Further, signage both to the library and nearby toilets is inadequate. Signs blow over in the wind, and there is no clear signage from the side streets. Fixed signage should be invested in to remedy this issue.

FIGURE 8. SEATING TO BE INCLUDED AROUND PLANE TREE, LIBRARY, ST ARNAUD



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2014

IMAGINING THE ST ARNAUD ARTS PRECINCT

With the renovation of the historical Hotel St Arnaud and the proposal by the incoming owners to invest in a regional gallery space in the hotel, there is an opportunity to create a broader vision for this section of the Civic Spine, as a vibrant, contemporary arts precinct.

Artists-in-residence or University workshops could contribute or alternatively the current project team could assist in the design and project coordination. There is a need to meet with private owners individually to discuss opportunities for financing of private works.

The following initiatives will support the evolution of this area into a recognisable arts precinct:

Footpath widening and partial road closure at the Hotel St Arnaud

To support the realisation of a visible arts precinct, we recommend the partial closure, and raising of the road surface road surface level of Market Street between Napier and the entry to the Market Square car park. Outdoor dining should be encouraged here, along with public art and sculpture installations. A master plan should be developed for this area to guide street works, plantings and ensure that the area is developed in a coherent manner. The image below (Figure 9) shows a visualisation of this proposal, noting the closure of only one side of the road to allow for traffic circulation, but showing the value to pedestrians and the improvement in civic amenity caused by these changes.

FIGURE 9 RECOMMENDATION - FOOTPATH WIDENING AROUND HOTEL ST ARNAUD



Art Wall

The plain brick walls of the IGA liquor store and supermarket could provide an ideal back drop for an artwork where the local history could be transformed into images and installed in either ceramic, laser-cut steel or laser-cut stone.

This would transform this area as an aesthetic complement to the town hall complex on the opposite side of the street and create an opportunity for a contemporary acknowledgement of the history of the town, its environs and people and the promise of its future.

FIGURE 10 EXISTING IGA WALL



FIGURE 11 EXAMPLE OF ART WALL – MIRKA MORA MURAL, FLINDERS STREET STATION



Painted recycled furniture – Street exhibition

A small initiative that could be undertaken immediately to create liveliness and spontaneity in the streets is the painting of single items of old found furniture to be placed in the disused or unattractive shop fronts. There is already an artist in St Arnaud who paints timber boxes and would be an ideal person to help with this project. It could be undertaken by local youth with supervision and negotiated with the shop owners at little cost to them.

CELEBRATING ST ARNAUD'S PARKS AND GARDENS

'We are not inclined to be beaten by a youthful place like Charlton, where people are making preparations to ornament the surrounds of their town'
- Editorial on the Botanic Gardens proposal, *The Mercury*, St Arnaud, July 1884.

'Although small, the Public Gardens in the near future will be a beauty spot in the heart of St Arnaud, and a delight to the people.'
- Letters, *The Mercury*, St Arnaud, July 1901.

Queen Mary Botanic Gardens Expansion

The Queen Mary gardens should be expanded and celebrated as a true botanic garden. All expansion should respect the formal planting guidelines of botanic gardens and work to preserve the prestige and special character of this designation of garden.

Importance of the Botanic Gardens

The Queen Mary Botanic Gardens are a significant asset of St Arnaud, located at the entrance to St Arnaud and opposite the historic town centre. Together the historic buildings, including the Court House, the old Post Office, Fire Station, historic office of the Shire of Kara Kara and the Crown Lands Office) and the gardens make an ideal entrance and welcome to the town.

In order for the Botanic gardens to be recognised and maintained as an important feature of St Arnaud, it is essential that future works do not further degrade or take away from its botanic garden status.

Future use of the bowling green

The disused bowling green is currently the first sight to incoming visitors from the south (see image at Figure 13). The closing of the bowling green and the handing of the land back to the Shire represents an opportunity to extend and enhance these gardens.

FIGURE 12 NORTH ENTRANCE GATES, QUEEN MARY BOTANIC GARDENS, ST ARNAUD



FIGURE 13 VACANT BOWLING GREEN, QUEEN MARY BOTANIC GARDENS, ST ARNAUD



There are differing views on the future use of the bowling green, in particular, whether additional structures should be built (including barbeques, bus shelters and new toilets) or whether the existing gardens should be expanded following the original pattern.

While there is a need for barbeque facilities and additional picnicking and recreation facilities in St Arnaud, there is a strong risk the developing additional builds and structures within the garden will detract from its natural beauty, and reduce it to a standard park, rather than a celebrated botanic gardens.

Restored, preserved and enhanced the Botanical Gardens would be an extremely significant asset proving a beautiful entrance to the town as well as the greater heritage precinct of Napier Street.

With this in mind, key recommendations include:

Expand the Botanic Gardens

The bowling green should be renovated into an extension of the existing planting in the gardens. An arboretum should be established, including ground covers to larger shade trees with a focus upon drought resistant native plants.

The Shire should cooperate with the Botanic Gardens committee, an architect and horticultural advisor to develop a plan for the extension of the botanic gardens into the bowling green in a manner that respects the original intent and plan for the gardens, whilst responding to new climate conditions and contemporary forms.

It is important that the values of a Botanic Gardens are enriched and extended in this garden, in order that it maintain its coherence, and attraction as a specially designated garden typology.

Furthermore, willow trees around the pond should be replanted to enhance the integrity of the gardens (see diagram at Figure 15).

Arboretum

There is great potential for a prominent 'entrance' to be built at the southern end of the old greens, announcing the 'arrival' into St Arnaud, as well as welcoming visitors into the garden itself.

It is proposed that this structure should commence as a walk winding through an arboretum and conclude close to the public toilets. It could be a contemporary design informed by heritage considerations, the timber structures from the gold mining days and the Edna Walling motif with a gravel path.

An echo of the architectural elements in the new arboretum could be installed on the roundabout at the western end of Napier Street to provide continuity.

An example of an arbour-structure is below at Figure 14. While style of arbour is unlikely to be suitable for the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens in style, it demonstrates the beauty of such a structure, and its potential to act as a formal entranceway and shading device in the gardens.

FIGURE 14 ARBOUR, SOUTH BANK GARDENS, BRISBANE, QLD



Source: eGuide Travel, 2004

Continue implementing recommendations from the Walsh Report

A full report was completed on 'Conservation and Landscape Recommendations for St Arnaud's Queen Mary Botanic Gardens' by Kevin Walsh in 1995. While many of the recommendations in this report have been undertaken, the garden needs attention and there are still outstanding recommendations from the Walsh report that need to be addressed.

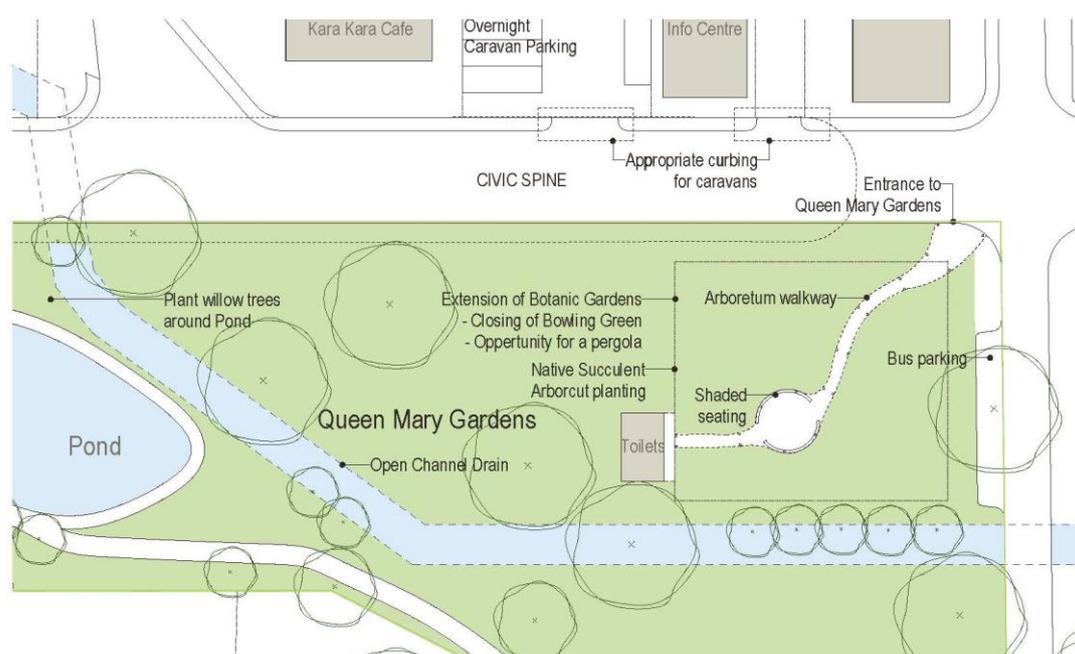
In particular, given the physical impact upon the gardens the playground should be relocated to an alternative park (Market Gardens – see proposal following), closer to shops and facilities. As noted in the Walsh Report, the placement of the equipment is likely to compact the soil over time, which will lead to tree decline. It is an intrusion on the main path through the Gardens and not in keeping with the spirit of a Botanic Garden.

Further recommendations of the 1995 study should be implemented, including:

- Registration on the National Estate (which will make the gardens eligible for National Estate Grants)
- Enactment of Heritage Overlay (The park is zoned PPRZ-1 'Public Park and Recreation Zone' with no overlay).
- Inclusion within future 'Historic Precinct'
- Maintenance of consistent style for furniture and fittings (dark green), coach lights and fittings.
- Relocation of play equipment to an alternative park (with the addition of shade cloth). This is essential to improve safety and to avoid further compaction of the soil. This relocation should be accompanied by a development of a new play area for children, shaded, and fenced for safety. The ideal location for this would be at the rear of the community hub)
- Relocation of the public toilets (and signposting of alternative toilets behind Kara Kara offices).

In line with recommendations of the report, barbeques, additional toilets and play equipment should not be developed *within* the gardens. It is noted that the only classified tree (the Bunya Bunya Pine) is in close proximity to the Bowling Green and should be carefully protected.

FIGURE 15 QUEEN MARY BOTANIC GARDENS - RECOMMENDATIONS



Source: MvS Architects, 2014

“Market Gardens”

The Market Gardens already contain many attractions – including the performance bowl, skate park, playground and seating around trees – that together make the gardens an ideal site for further investment and attraction. The Gardens should be upgraded to include barbeques and additional shade structures, to provide a welcoming destination for local families and picnickers, as well as holiday-makers and tourists.

As a midpoint between many Victorian destinations, St Arnaud is a popular stopping point for travellers with caravans and camping trailers.

In the holiday season there is often a relatively heavy flow of traffic through St Arnaud, typically involving visitors first having a stop at the information centre in the Historic precinct, grabbing a snack or coffee at the nearby café, and a walk around the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens.

The Historic Precinct should be supported to maintain its place as the first port of call for visitors, to help guide them through the history and sights of the town, and to provide them with the necessary information to future explore St Arnaud.

However, caravans and holiday makers also often park behind the town hall in 'Market Square' (see Figure 16), where there is a good sized playground, skate park, trees and benches good for picnicking. This area is only eight minutes walk from the caravan park sited on the hill near the sporting club.

To complement this, and further enrich the town, further investment in 'Market Gardens' is proposed. This can be developed to draw on all of its locational benefits to provide travellers and St Arnaud locals with a beautiful, spacious area to hold picnics and barbeques, small functions and large events.

Surveying the existing park, there are already many investments that have been made that can be brought together. Mature trees are spaced at good intervals, providing shade but also room for kids to run around. Installation of barbeques and additional benches will invite families to come into town to picnic, visit the planned museum next door, catch a film and shop in the town CBD.

FIGURE 16 CARAVANS IN MARKET SQUARE CAR PARK, ST ARNAUD



Key additions to this park should include:

Barbeque and picnic facilities

The community expressed a strong need for barbecue facilities for community and visitor enjoyment. These should be incorporated in the Market Gardens and more strategically placed in relation to the Swimming pool, the proposed heated pool, the kindergarten, the Town Hall Hub, Library, public toilets, skate park and existing out door band stand (that requires a sound shell to be built around it).

Performance space

The soft cover previously installed on the performance area was destroyed. A more durable material should be used for the cover, or alternatively, rigging installed to allow for easy assembly of the shading by people using the space.

Potential uses are:

- Outdoor concerts and performances
- Awards ceremonies
- Outdoor cinema/exhibitions
- St Arnaud festival events
- Wedding ceremonies (once landscaping is established)
- Special events and celebrations

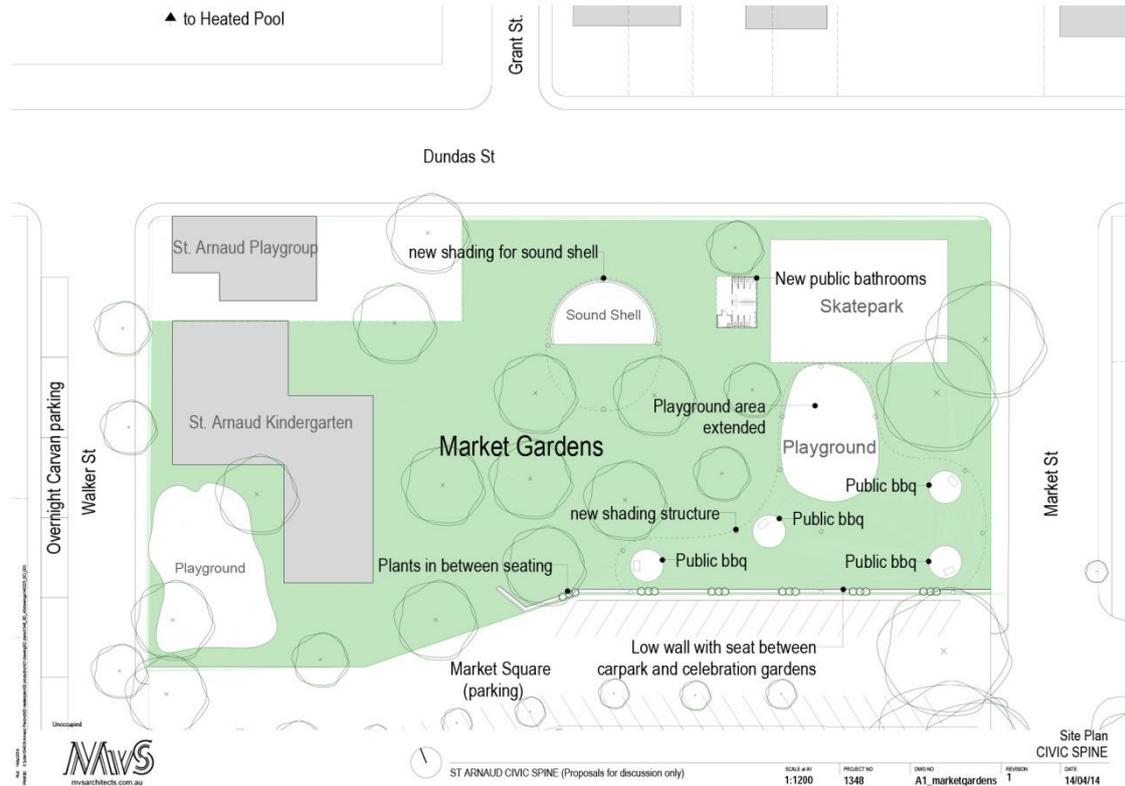
Shade structures and improved children's playground

Shade structures need to be incorporated, including over the children’s play area. This is essential for the play grounds to be ‘sun-safe’ during the hot summer months.

Caravan parking

Provision should be made for new caravan bays in the existing car park in between Dundas Street and the St Arnaud Public Pool, bookended by Grant Street and Dunstan Street. This proposed caravan parking area is conveniently located next to the Market Gardens, as well as in between the Market Gardens and the swimming pool. These parking bays could be made available for overnight stays.

FIGURE 17 MARKET GARDENS – PROPOSAL FOR DISCUSSION



Source: MvS Architects, 2014

Old St Arnaud Swimming Pool (“Pioneer Park Lake”)

The Old St Arnaud Swimming Pool, next to Pioneer Park, should be upgraded better utilise this historic site and create more opportunities for recreation and relaxation.

The Old St Arnaud Swimming Pool is a dramatically underutilised asset in St Arnaud. It is not only a significant historical attraction, but also a rare body of water in a drought-prone climate. The established trees can provide ready shade, and, once redeveloped, it will be a beautiful complement to the nearby Edna Walling-designed gardens, Pioneer Park, and the neighbouring caravan park.

This upgrade activity is another key opportunity to draw together input from local community groups, as well as local school children and local and visiting artists-in-residence to achieve a result that both increases the beauty of St Arnaud, whilst investing in and providing opportunities for the local community. An artist should be selected to work with hydrology experts and local schools to ensure that the project meets these key objectives.

It is suggested that the pool be renamed “Pioneer Park Lake”, to link the water body with the adjacent Pioneer Park, and to capture the vision of the revitalised pool as a recreation and relaxation destination.

Key recommendations for this upgrade include (see full diagram at Figure 19):

Redesign of pool perimeter

We recommend that its perimeter be re-worked to allow for public access, including paths, shading, and toilets.

Improved signage and walkways to nearby attractions

It has been advised that it is unlikely that the pool will be fit for swimming in the future, due to the heavy metal contamination. Public access to swimming facilities at the newer St Arnaud Olympic pool should be signposted.

In addition, well marked pathways and walking trails should be developed connecting to the main street, to encourage pedestrians to take a tour of the Market Gardens, public pool, Edna Walling gardens, caravan park look out and the sports club.

New shade and seating structures

A new structure could be developed at the south eastern end of the lake, jutting into the lake and including tables and seating. A new path should be developed around the lake to allow for visitors to walk around the lake and enjoy the views.

Development of biofiltration system

We recommend that options for biofiltration be investigated, to begin to ameliorate the current pollution levels in the lake. Biofiltration systems are chemical-free systems that circulate water through rooted aquatic plants and a fine-mesh filters that help break down contaminants in the water. Beneficial microorganisms keep down algae and harmful bacteria.

We recommend that this project commence by involving the local high school students in a study of the lake, and potential options for biofiltration. This exercise could then be extended to university studio groups, and visiting artists to assist the Council to

FIGURE 18 EXAMPLE BIOFILTRATION SYSTEM

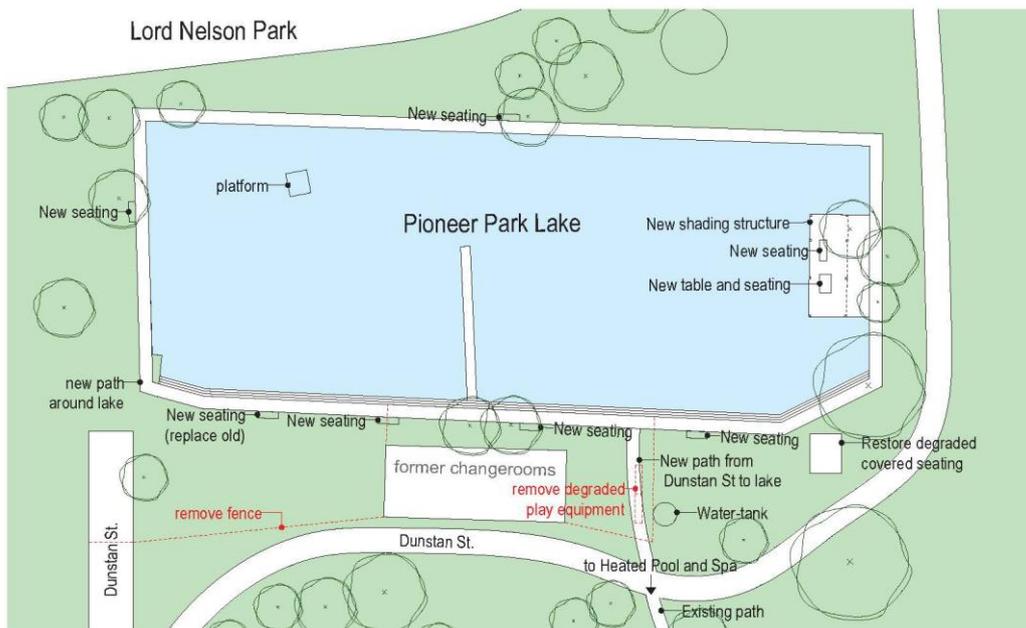


develop cost effective solutions to the filtration of the lake that are at once practical and of high visual amenity.

Renaming “Pioneer Park Lake”

It is suggested that the pool be renamed “Pioneer Park Lake”, to link the water body with the adjacent Pioneer Park, and to capture the vision of the revitalised pool as a recreation and relaxation destination.

FIGURE 19 OLD ST ARNAUD SWIMMING POOL – “PIONEER PARK LAKE”
RECOMMENDATIONS



Source: MvS Architects, 2014

3.3 Soft Infrastructure

St Arnaud Connect.

A web portal should be developed to aid community and visitors to communicate with each other about happenings in the town, available spaces, new projects and upcoming events.

Communication between local people, community groups and visitors to the town will be key to the success of many of the actions proposed in this Civic Precinct Plan. The St Arnaud community, as well as visitors, would benefit from a communication channel that is accessible to all, and where announcements, offers and opportunities can be quickly shared.

Current ways of finding out information about what is going on in the town, proposals and opportunities include the local paper, leafleting, community group newsletters (limited circulation) and posting signs in local shop windows. While there are other, more informal means of getting the word out, these are the most reliable and well-used.

Solutions to this challenge are as easy as a facebook group, or as in-depth as a purpose built community hub website, with an online notice board. This will need a community champion to begin, but will build its own momentum once started.

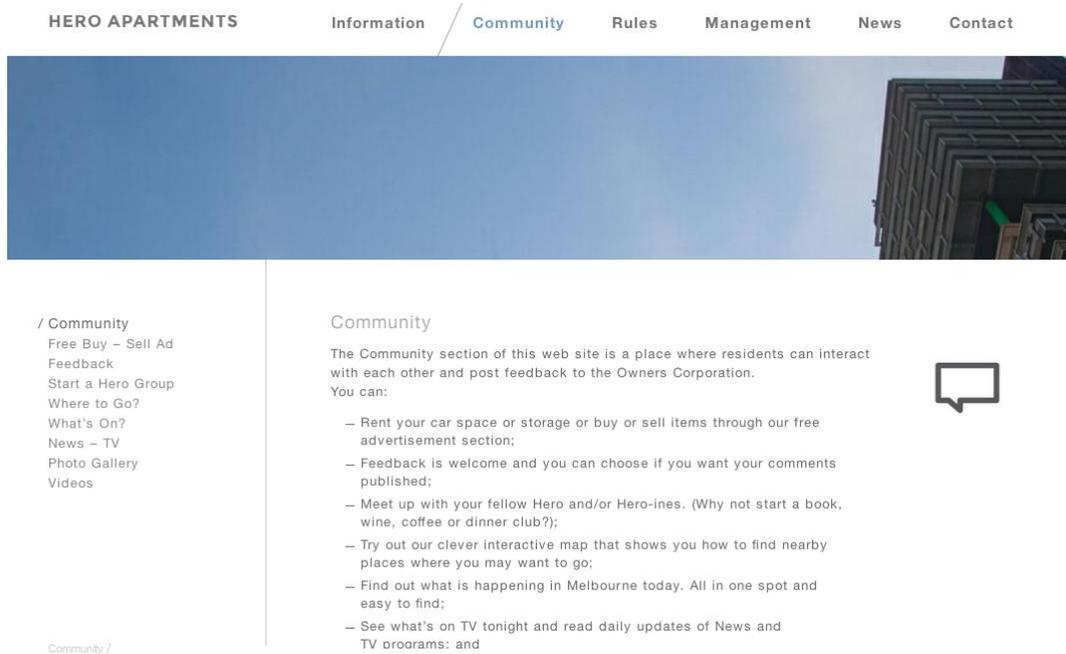
In time, it is advised that a purpose built website be developed that could either host a community forum, or link to the facebook group, and that could also be used as a promotional tool (see Marketing Strategy below) for the town. The website should contain visitor information, detail on local events and features, businesses and town history and culture.

In particular, the website should contain:

- Catalogue of hireable and vacant community spaces
- Online notice board
- Community 'meeting room' spaces.
- Event and festival guide

One example of such a project is the 'Hero Apartments' community website (see example webpage at Figure 20 below). The Hero Apartments in Melbourne had a proactive body corporate who foresaw the potential in creating community and reciprocity within the apartment building through communicating online. A purpose built website was developed, which both promoted the values of the apartment complex to visitors, as well as provided space for residents to communicate with each other. The website has good functionality and is easy to use and navigate. It requires resources to moderate it and for on-going updates and maintenance.

FIGURE 20 EXAMPLE COMMUNITY WEBSITE - HERO APARTMENTS



Events Calendar

A full events calendar should be developed, building on existing successes and further enriching St Arnaud as a destination.

There are a variety of community activities already occurring in St Arnaud, including:

- Farmer's Market
- Uncle Bob's Market
- St Arnaud Festival
- St Arnaud Country Music Festival.
- Country Music club (second Sunday of the month)

These should be built upon through the development of a program of events within St Arnaud and the surrounding region. This program should draw upon the cultural and economic strengths of the region, promote existing festivals and events, and look to broader regional marketing strategies and opportunities to invest in thriving local industries (i.e. food and wine businesses).

Any new entertainment events must not diminish the existing festivals, but could be used to enhance and support the existing events.

There are a number of festivals and community events that could be proposed not least of which could be one that would concentrate on the French theme.

Suggestions for additional festivals include:

French Film Festival (Winter)

This could be week long and held during school holidays with day movies especially directed at a younger audience.

Blue Moose Festival (Summer)

The Blue Moose youth festival should be revived in the Christmas to New Year period. Council should support St Arnaud youth groups, coordinated externally or through the schools, to curate and run this festival.

Youth Film Festival

Youth should be supported to hold a film festival at the cinema. This will help to bring additional patronage to the cinema, as well as to attract local communities to the town, and provide entertainment for the young population. As well as showing mainstream films, this festival could incorporate a short film competition, with youth from St Arnaud and surrounding towns submitting films, to be shown and judged at the film festival.

Heritage events for the Festival of St Arnaud (early Summer)

The Festival of St Arnaud, held in early November, closes off Napier Street and includes stalls, children’s activities and various food outlets. Local businesses participate and a gala dinner and performance are held in the Town Hall. Heritage celebrations and events could be incorporated within the Festival to highlight the importance of this element of St Arnaud, and encourage building owners and businesses to invest in upgrades and renovations.

Heritage events held as part of this Festival could include Heritage Awards, open houses, open gardens and open doors to behind the scenes in public buildings as well as full tours of towns (potentially horse drawn). The announcement of the Heritage Award could be included within the gala dinner ceremony, in recognition of work undertaken by local building and shop owners to enhance or celebrate the heritage values of St Arnaud (Note: St Arnaud has previously been a recipient of the National Trust Heritage Award).

FIGURE 21 FESTIVAL OF ST ARNAUD



Source: St Arnaud Festival, 2013

St Arnaud Piano competition (time to be confirmed)

St Arnaud is home to a Yamaha concert grand piano housed in the Town Hall. A Piano Competition could be launched to take place over a weekend to enable this instrument to be enjoyed by a wider range of people to the advantage of St Arnaud.

COMPETITION OUTLINE

In order to build upon the story of St Arnaud and connection to the story of the Crimean War, there could be a requirement for each competitor to play one work by a French composer (for e.g., Leclair and Ravel). There could be 6 competitors under 30 years of age and a high profile judge would be required who might also be a patron of the event. Performance heats would take place on the Saturday and there would be a grand dinner on the Saturday night. Semi finals would be held on the Sunday morning with the two finalists performing in the afternoon. The

prize for the winner would be a minimum of \$5000 with a second prize set at half of the winning award. While this Competition would be aimed at outstanding tertiary students from Melbourne and regional campuses, there would be an opportunity for local musicians to participate in the opening concert.

Audience members would include local and interstate visitors (with promotion directed at the Melbourne audience). Suitable accommodation would need to be available in St Arnaud to meet the requirements of the visitors. Local hospitality outlets could be supported and promoted through this event, through, for example, meals being provided as part of the ticket price.

St Arnaud Marketing Strategy

A marketing strategy should be developed to showcase the special heritage qualities and opportunities in St Arnaud.

The key driver of a regional economy is its capacity to generate inter-regional export sales, that is, income injections from sales of goods and services to customers outside the region, whether these customers are located elsewhere in rural Victoria, Victoria, Australia or overseas.

St Arnaud is rich in cultural, built heritage and natural assets. The Edna Walling public park, botanic gardens, gold-rush history, heritage streetscape, significant historical buildings and surrounding natural environment combined, are a promising package to communicate to the visitors of the town.

There is an opportunity for the Shire to proactively market this rich story and develop understanding and respect both within St Arnaud and to visitors of the legacy of the town and its regional significance.

The 2005/2007 Business/Marketing Plan by consultants Village Well should be used as a guide to this, to ensure that work is not duplicated.

The story of gold in St Arnaud

The story of the discovery of gold in this area and the cross-cultural interest that currently makes gold mining a popular story needs to be investigated and developed.

Doing this in association with Sovereign Hill could be explored, as part of a wider Grampians Visitor Touring Route.

Celebrate St Arnaud

While St Arnaud is named after French marshal Jacques Leroy de Saint Arnaud, this historical narrative has not been emphasised in the township, with a single statue commemorating the soldier. Given the regional food and wine strengths, as well as the naming history of the town, there is a great opportunity to embrace this connection to France and French culture.

Connecting-in with St Arnaud

St Arnaud can benefit from the energy and talent of visitors to the town by hosting artist in residence programs, university and school link ups. This will develop the social and cultural capital of the town, encourage new visitors, and support the youth of St Arnaud to identify opportunities.

Artist-in-residence program

St Arnaud should host an artist-in-residence program, as a way in which to activate unused shops and houses in the civic precinct and facilitate cultural investment in the town.

The program would involve the Shire forming a formal lease arrangement with one of the vacant two-storey 'shop houses' in the Civic Precinct for a three month period, for the use of the residency program. There would be a presentation and exhibition of the resident artists' work at the end of the term. These lease agreements would be similar to those used in the popular 'Renew Newcastle' urban revitalisation model, where businesses enter into 'meanwhile' leases for a significantly reduced or free rental amount, in recognition of the benefit of activating shop fronts and promoting the local area.

This will create an attraction in the town, enable external linkages, promote interest in St Arnaud, enliven the shop-front streetscape, and create opportunity and excitement.

An example of a project that could be understood by a resident artists includes working with local sporting and youth clubs to develop projects which connect with local sporting activities and histories.

This project team can facilitate the necessary institutional links and leasing and contract support needed to support this program.

University-link up

St Arnaud should partner with a Melbourne-based University to facilitate knowledge transfer between regional and urban communities

Such University link ups have been shown to provide an avenue for the youth of regional towns to access much-needed educational, entertainment and cultural opportunities.

It is proposed that St Arnaud host a multi-disciplinary Masters-level studio focused on regional revitalisation strategies. Involving Masters of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning students, such a studio can be a two-way exchange of knowledge and expertise, providing momentum and inspiration to the vision for St Arnaud, as well as allowing university students to experience and address first-hand the issues facing rural communities.

School and youth programs

Schools and youth should be actively engaged in the development of the artistic, festival and cultural programmes proposed in this report.

Schools in St Arnaud already have various programs that support a deeper engagement with the cultural history of the town (for example, teaching French classes). Further development of existing programs is suggested in order to further engage the youth of the town and support them to hold activities and events. Such activities could include:

- Artists could be engaged to work with students on mosaics, or garden pathways built from recycled and found materials
- The existing dance events could be promoted and developed with the assistance of dance school teachers
- School children could practice piano on the Concert grand piano paid for with funds from the community
- Photographic exhibitions could be mounted from photos taken with disposable cameras and also collected from family albums
- Plays can be written with a writer in residence and performed by youth drama groups with the help of a drama director in residence.

These activities can align with the university link-up and artist-in-residency programs above, laying out an integrated foundation for investment in the town by the youth, as well as bringing in outside energy and inspiration.

3.4 Planning and policy support

Heated Pool business case

Council should support the development of a business case for the St Arnaud Heated Pool.

There has been strong and vocal support for a heated therapy pool in St Arnaud for many years. This need was raised consistently during consultation with community groups including the St Arnaud Heated Pool Committee and St Arnaud Community Hub Committee, with proposals including a full heated pool that could be used, for example, for swimming lessons, to a smaller 'therapy' pool, used for physiotherapy and aged and disability rehabilitation work.

The Council should support the community in this cause by contributing funding for a business case for the therapy pool.

Although council lacks the resourcing to build this facility, it can however assist the community to link up with relevant health and community agencies, as well as private businesses to demonstrate that the Shire has listened to and responded to the long-term community wish for this facility.

There is an opportunity in this proposal to expand the vision for the therapy pool beyond a single-use facility. For example, the therapy pool could be co-located with a day-spa, allowing for a sharing of plant equipment, and synergies with a leisure and lifestyle business. This option should be investigated in the business case.

COMMUNITY WORDS: THE HEATED POOL PROJECT

The Heated Pool Project came about from a local demand for a heated pool by the water aerobics group and others who were travelling long distances to access heated pool facilities in Stawell or Maraborough (80 kms). According to the community groups, the impetus for a heated pool in St Arnaud has been present for a long time, with stops and starts in the advocacy process. A petition was created and attached to the super market notice board other shops and businesses around the town. It attracted over 700 form a population of less than 3,000, indicating the strong community desire for a heated pool.

At first the group received significant community support - financially and from others who wanted to be stakeholders. The group researches the type of building with local Draftsperson David Glen Who drew up plans and advised on how to lower the costs (i.e. by building a shed-type structure). Different pool sizes were considered, including 20m X 9m, 25m X 20m and 25m X 15m, and comparisons made against other heated pools (Swan Hill at 25m X 13m and costed at \$4 million; Gisborne at 25 m X 6 lanes, Port Fairy at 25 M X 4 lanes).

St Arnaud is well-placed well to attract populations from other smaller towns in the region to come and use the pool. If community buses were used, this could potentially bring groups into the town. There is a fitness group in town which is well patronised and those users, along with sporting groups there could use the heated pool for training.

Implement recommendations in the Heritage Study

Recommendations in the Heritage Study should continue to be implemented.

A thorough heritage study has been undertaken on St Arnaud (Jacobs *et al*) with a series of recommendations for the further preservation of the town. The following Heritage Study recommendations should be adopted:

Enact strict heritage controls for the St Arnaud expanded Civic Precinct

The heritage streetscape is one of St Arnaud's greatest assets. Ensuring that there is no further degradation of the heritage values of the town should be a priority for the Shire.

Napier Street is the primary heritage area in St Arnaud and opportunities to restore and enhance this streetscape should be realized. The recommendations within the Jacobc et al heritage study should be implemented, and work continued to secure heritage protection for the area within St Arnaud Civic Spine.

Expand and promote the Heritage support loan fund

The low-interest heritage upgrade loan program for heritage veranda and other upgrades should be maintained and further promoted. This is a positive program, which, at low to no cost for Council, could result in significant streetscape improvements in the long-term.

Original Entrances

Original entrances to buildings have in some places been closed, with new doors inserted. This diminished the heritage values of the street. The original entrances should be reopened and adjusted to improve accessibility.

Supporting Local Businesses to invest in St Arnaud

Council should actively pursue policies and program to ensure that businesses feel welcomed in St Arnaud, and be provided with incentives to set up and remain in the town.

The Council should be identifying opportunities to provide support to new businesses, including linking up with venues, assisting with permits and facility upgrades, and identifying funding and sponsorship opportunities. This will show that investment is welcome in St Arnaud.

Key actions in support of this include:

Supporting new businesses to locate in St Arnaud

Support should be offered to new businesses bringing investment into the town. Council should consider waiving permit application fees for new businesses in the St Arnaud Civic Precinct.

Consultation with new businesses in the community revealed challenges in finding venues for new programs, as well as limited funding opportunities. Council has a role to play in supporting new businesses to access venues. The upgrade of the Perry Centre and opening up of un-used ex-Council offices in the Town Hall is an immediate step that can be taken.

Extended Trading hours

The Council should review trading hours for shops and determine whether to promote longer trading hours after hours or on weekends to support increased visitation in the town.

Foot path dining

Council should review its pavement trading and liquor licensing to ensure that hospitality offers and footpath dining are supported. This is key to enhancing the amenity of the street and building a vibrant atmosphere. The success of this approach is visible across Melbourne, where changes to footpath dining and trading restrictions have resulted in a much celebrated, vibrant street culture.

Shop front improvements

Existing businesses with shop fronts on the main street should be encouraged and supported by the Council to utilise their display areas to better effect. Simple charming displays should be incorporated.

Support the Bible Museum

The Bible Museum is a leading attraction in St Arnaud, however is facing the dual challenges of the costs of running their facilities as is, as well as their current facilities being inadequate to house rare collections on loan from other museums or collectors. The Bible Museum could be assisted with acquisition of a environmentally controlled display case, as well as support from Council to find subsidised facilities. The Bible Museum has also been undertaking a butterfly breeding program. Council could support this by prioritising the planting of street trees and shrubs that will support the butterfly population.

St Arnaud Development Corporation and Steering Group

The Council should work with existing community groups to assist them to establish a locally-based development corporation that can work to achieve investment in local initiatives.

Local development corporations in regional towns in Victoria have been successful in creating and implementing strategies for the development of their regional economies. They work with local businesses and industries to future develop on areas of identified economic strengths, and also work to attract new businesses, industries and investments into their regions.

Examples of such organisations include the Mildura Development Corporation, and the Committee for Geelong.

A steering group could be coordinated to assist in the early planning of a similar development corporation for the St Arnaud or wider area, with representation sought from across the community, and should include business owners, farmers, youth, elderly, people with disabilities and young parents,.

This entity will assist St Arnaud to achieve a necessary level of self-governance and community leadership, particularly in light of Council functions being largely centralised in Stawell.

CASE STUDY: THE MILDURA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mildura Development Corporation became an independent incorporated entity in April 2009. Prior to this date it was Sunraysia Mallee Economic Development Board (SMEDB) - a Section 86 Committee of Mildura Rural City Council.

SMEDB was funded by all businesses and enterprises in the municipality of Mildura Rural City through contributions to the economic development differential rate and by grants received from the State and Federal Government.

Mildura Development Corporation is now funded by Mildura Rural City Council's general revenue, and maintains an independent status from Mildura Rural City Council.

Mildura Development Corporation's Board of Directors comprises nine business and industry leaders from the local region, and the office consists of four staff members.

The core function of the MDC is to create and implements strategies for the development of the Mildura regional economy. They develop annual strategic plans which outline how they will work with local businesses and industries to further develop = economy, and also work to attract new businesses, industries and investments into their region.

Source: Mildura Development Corporation (<http://www.milduraregion.com.au/About-MDC.aspx>)

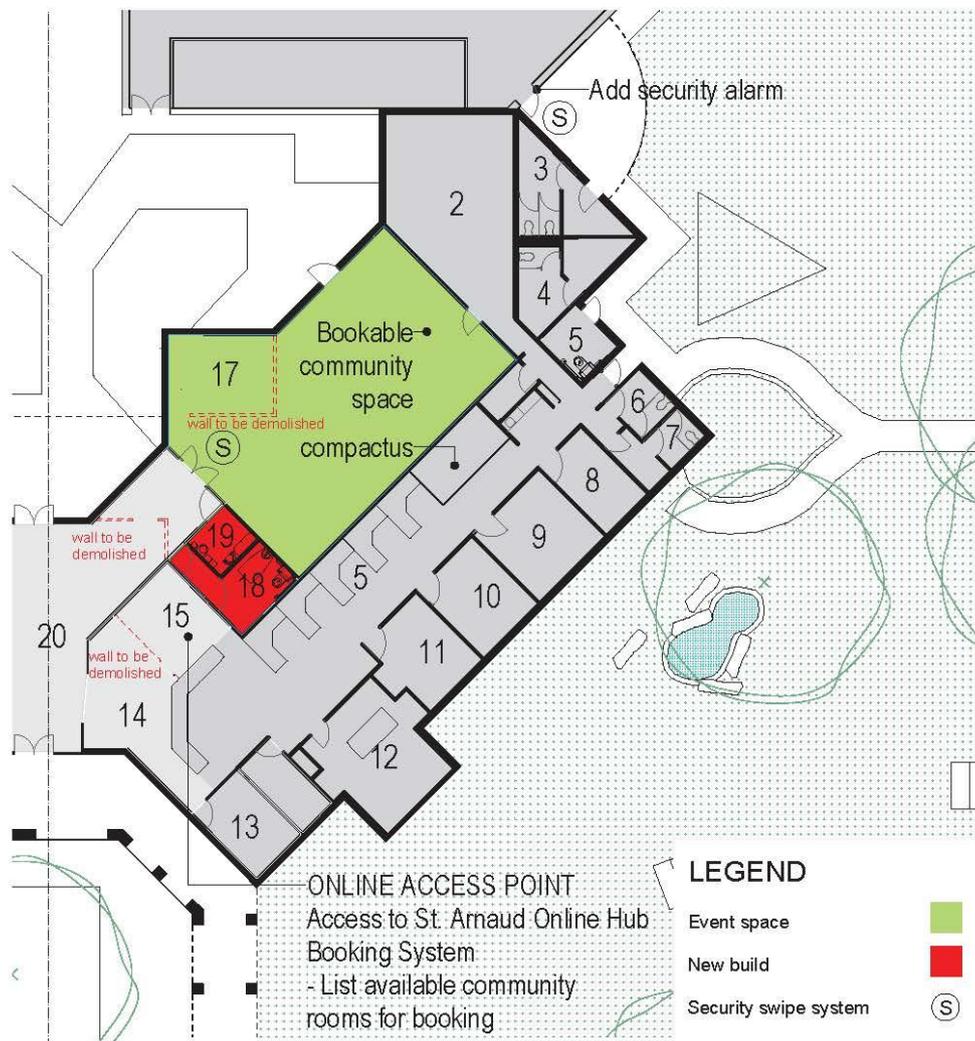
3.5 Existing initiatives

Proposed Council office renovation

Plans have previously been drawn up for the proposed renovation of the current Council offices.

In this renovation we recommend the inclusion of a disability accessible toilet, parent’s room and an Online Access Point in the adjacent facilities.

FIGURE 22 ST ARNAUD TOWN HALL COUNCIL OFFICES – RECOMMENDATIONS



Source: Shire of North Grampians, 2013.

4 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This Civic Precinct Plan has recommended a series of interventions and initiatives aimed at strengthening the civic pride of St Arnaud, and developing St Arnaud further as a destination for new visitors. This involves ensuring that the current, strong heritage and cultural assets of the town are recognised and valued, as well as looking at what new, contemporary interventions can be made that will provide fresh inspiration and excitement in the town.

Significant work will now need to be undertaken to take these recommendations from ideas to implementation. This includes working with the community to work up and refine the proposals, and engagement of design and development professionals to further elaborate on the built-form and program proposals.

It is essential that the community volunteering spirit and drive be harnessed to support these new developments and it is noted that there are already many groups within St Arnaud and beyond investing in the built environment and cultural development of St Arnaud.

As noted, the Civic Precinct of St Arnaud as understood by the community extends well beyond the Town Hall buildings. It is better understood as a Civic Spine – a coherent avenue that guides visitors and residents through the heart of the town to key destinations and attractions, which tells the story of the town and continually evolves with new investment and opportunities.

Extending out from this is the link between St Arnaud and its neighbouring towns, the role that St Arnaud plays in the larger region, and how it can contribute to the network of Shires in Victoria. This understanding of the relationship between St Arnaud and its surrounds requires further development, but if carefully planned and considered, has the potential to radically improve the profile of St Arnaud and the confidence the community has in their township.

TABLE 3. SUMMARY OF KEY INITIATIVES FOR THE ST ARNAUD CIVIC PRECINCT PLAN

Hard infrastructure investment	Soft Infrastructure	Planning and policy support
Town Hall upgrade: Perry Room Community Hub	St Arnaud Online	Support aged services hub business case
Town Library seating and signage	Marketing Strategy	Implement recommendations in the Heritage Study.
Expansion of the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens	Artist-in-residence program	Expand and promote the Heritage support loan fund
Market Gardens upgrade	University-link up	Enact strict heritage controls for the St Arnaud expanded Civic Precinct
Old St Arnaud Swimming Pool – “Pioneer Park Lake” - works	Events Calendar - Heritage Festival - Piano Festival	Local business support
Wayfinding and street signage strategies		St Arnaud Development Corporation and Community Steering Group
Streetscape and local amenity improvements		
Heritage and culture works		
Contemporary art installations, including an Art Wall		

4.1 Next steps

This project has attracted much interest in St Arnaud and it is essential that momentum is maintained. The most important part of the work is the conversation that has arisen from it. It is these conversations and actions that will ultimately empower the community to take matters into their own hands in a decisive and consensual way. The strength of this conversation lies in making tangible the potential it promises and, to this end, immediate action is required in key areas.

In early 2014 the project team responsible for this report will participate in a community discussion on the Precinct Plan proposals St Arnaud. At this meeting it is expected that progress reports will be given by Council officers and the project team on the following:

- Prioritising of all participation, cultural development and event-based recommendations. These will be the main drivers of demand, and provide material and the evidence base for funding applications for other recommendations
- Commissioning of scoping and design of all Town Hall complex upgrades
- Undertaking of scoping of Market Garden shaded BBQ dining area, shaded performance stage and playground upgrades
- Upgrading of the delineated caravan parking areas in St Arnaud
- Undertaking of scoping of on-line booking system and register for all available space in St Arnaud
- Commissioning of business plan for heated pool and associated businesses
- Undertaking of scoping for Market Street partial closure and support for Hotel St Arnaud Arts Precinct
- Undertaking of detailed design, planning and marketing of St Arnaud Civic Spine
- Undertaking scoping for Old St Arnaud Swimming Pool – “Pioneer Park Lake” - upgrade
- Undertaking of detailed design of Queen Mary Botanic Gardens extension
- Undertaking of re-branding and marketing exercise utilising this piece of work to help re-frame St Arnaud in the eyes of the general public to Victorian, Australia and international markets.
- Clarity on sources for further funding and investment.

4.2 Comment and feedback

Comment and feedback from the public on the detail of the proposals put forward in this report is welcomed. Correspondence can be directed to:

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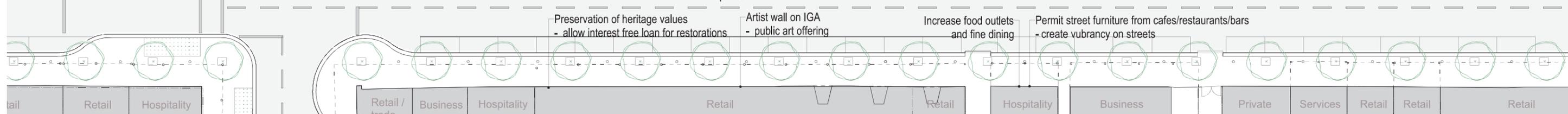
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APPENDICIES

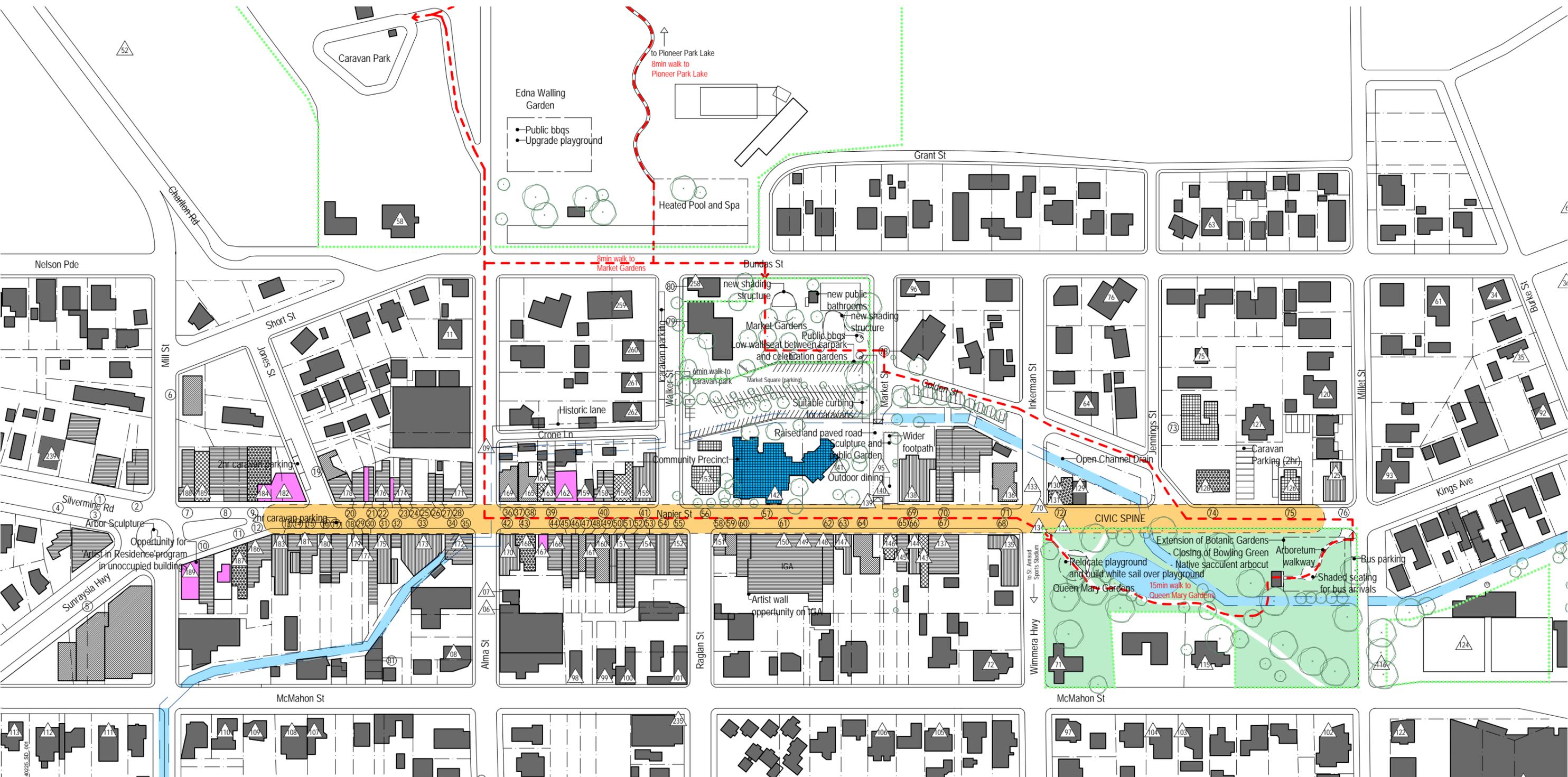
The following diagrams are provided as attachments:

- Diagram 1: St Arnaud Civic Precinct
- Diagram 2: St Arnaud Civic Spine
- Diagram 3 Overview of St Arnaud



LEGEND		PROPOSED PROGRAM		
1. Library	11. Meeting room	21. Perry room	31. Ladies bathroom	41. Storage
2. Library	12. Mayors office	22. Kitchen	32. Men's bathroom	42. Gaming Parlour
3. Ladies bathroom	13. Online Access room	23. Foyer	33. Store	43. Balcony
4. Men's bathroom	14. Foyer	24. Stage	34. Main Kitchen	44. Upper foyer
5. Disabled toilet	15. Vic Roads room	25. Mc Donald Hall	35. Change rooms	45. Quiggin Room
6. Ladies bathroom	16. Library	26. Green room	36. Proposed Lift	46. L.J.T Grigg Room
7. Men's bathroom	17. Office	27. Storage	37. Stage	47. Balcony
8. Office	18. Baby Change room	28. Info Centre	38. James Stewart Hall	48. Bio-Box
9. Office	19. Disabled toilet	29. Foyer	39. Foyer	49. Ladies
10. Office	20. Foyer	30. Store	40. Council Chambers	





- EXISTING PROGRAM**
- Retail (Goods and Services)
 - Hospitality
 - Government
 - Business
 - Education
 - Private / unknown
 - Unoccupied

1. Gas supplier
2. Tyre service
3. Service station & mechanic
4. Car wash
5. Agricultural equipment sales & manufacture
6. Equipment store
7. Business services
8. Charity shop
9. Dance studio
10. Agricultural supplies
11. Bible museum
12. Tyre and battery service
13. Motel
14. Travel agent
15. Computer service
16. Menswear
17. Sports equipment
18. Toy store
19. Legal services
20. Optometrist
21. Hairdresser
22. Dry cleaning service
23. Bakery
24. Electrical
25. Car sales
26. Womenswear
27. Handicrafts store
28. Pharmacy
29. Footwear
30. Frutier
31. Take away cafe
32. Bottle shop
33. Commonwealth Hotel
34. Florist
35. \$2 shop
36. ANZ Bank
37. Real estate & Livestock
38. Real estate
39. Butcher
40. Furniture retailer
41. Royal Hotel
42. Manchester Arms
43. Community Resource Centre
44. Mobility supplies
45. Clothing store
46. Toy shop
47. Electrical services
48. Real estate
49. Antique & collectibles
50. Commonwealth Bank
51. Cafe
52. Electronics retailer
53. Homewares & hardware
54. Bakery & cafe
55. Newsagent & general store
56. Post office
57. St Arnaud Town Hall
58. Plumbing & paint supply
59. Real estate
60. Menswear

61. Supermarket
62. Thrift shop
63. Take away cafe
64. NAB Bank
65. Laundrette
66. Take away cafe
67. Hardware & agriculture supplies
68. Botanic Hotel
69. St Arnaud Hotel
70. Storage service
71. Legal services
72. Historic fire station
73. Police station
74. Historic house
75. Tourist Information Centre

- PROPOSED PROGRAM**
- Civic Spine
 - Community facilities
 - Botanic Gardens
 - Pedestrian trajectory/
potential cycling route



ST ARNAUD CIVIC SPINE Recommendations

Site Plan
CIVIC SPINE

SCALE at A1
1:2500

PROJECT NO
1348

DWG NO
Civic Spine

REVISION
1

DATE
14/04/14

STARN
HOTEL

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