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BALLARAT CBD – Regenerating and boosting the inner city

The Ask

\$47.6 million for four fully-scoped projects ready for delivery over four years:

1. Mair Street (\$39 million) three components:

- Stage 2 Mair Street upgrade - (\$23 million)
- CBD Flood Mitigation Project - (\$10 million) - use Mair Street upgrade as the opportunity to install a major underground drainage scheme, addressing Gnarr Creek and CBD flooding issues; this will significantly reduce risks to business owners and minimise disruption during rainfall events
- underground power - between Humffray Street and Dawson Street to facilitate development (\$6 million)

2. Bakery Hill Master Plan early works package – including verandah reinstatement and return of heritage features to help stimulate the retail sector - (\$3.9 million)

3. Ballarat Underground – a new, innovative tourism experience - (\$1.3 million)

4. Regeneration of greenspaces (\$3.4 million)

Why these projects are important

Investment in any or all of these projects is supported by the Ballarat community, evidenced through City of Ballarat's 'CBD Strategy'. These projects will ensure the CBD keeps pace with changing needs and dynamics driven by the municipality's significant population growth.

Ballarat's role as the Capital of Western Victoria means residents from surrounding municipalities regularly travel

to the city to access government, health, education and business services and to pursue recreational and cultural interests.

Context

Ballarat's CBD is home to 4,300 workers and approximately 400 residents; by 2025 the City of Ballarat wants it to be home to an additional 5000 residents.

1. Mair Street (\$39 million)

To fully leverage the private sector investment potential of \$375 million, an additional \$39 million is required to complete the upgrade of Mair Street's arterial section (\$7 million allocated), including transport capacity and safety upgrades, underground power and flood mitigation works.

The project will be a partnership between VicRoads, City of Ballarat and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.

Key issues

Powerlines

Removal of existing high voltage power supply infrastructure on Mair Street's north side is not currently within VicRoad's proposed project scope. However, powerline removal has significant amenity benefits and vastly reduces redevelopment costs in this corridor.

Flood mitigation

Flood mitigation for GovHub, Market Street, Lydiard Street and the CBD requires a large capacity drain under Mair Street; the pipe will significantly reduce the impact of Gnarr Creek flooding, which has repeatedly impacted on the CBD.

Flooding risk removal dramatically reduces redevelopment costs in this core area; it also enables architects to design more attractive facades - current flooding risk requires flood gates, no direct entrances and raised flood levels.

Funding

\$7 million has already been fully funded for roadworks (due to commence 2018), however the VicRoads business case calls for a further \$23 million to complete the roadworks. This amount is far short of the infrastructure investment required to gain the wider benefits of upgrading Mair Street, in turn leading to CBD renewal and reinvestment.

2. Bakery Hill Master Plan early works package – including verandah reinstatement and return of heritage features (\$3.9 million)

This represents a targeted conservation outreach package to partner with property owners to reinstate historic verandahs and building facades in key CBD heritage areas, leveraging private sector investment of approximately \$5 million.

Verandahs were removed as part of a road safety initiative in the 1960's and 70's. Their demolition was a retrograde step - reducing weather protection, negatively impacting overall character, compromising heritage integrity and degrading streetscapes.

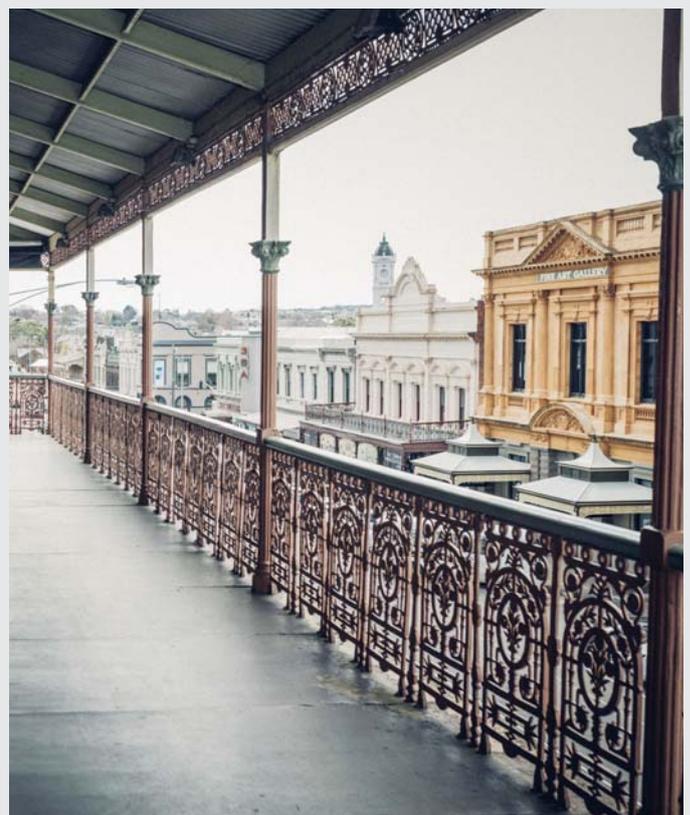
Context

Ballarat CBD's changing dynamic requires a premium retail and entertainment experience to support existing businesses, attract new ones and drive pedestrian traffic; given Ballarat's inclement weather and windy conditions, shelter is very important.

There is a push from the wider region for key Goldfields locations to be given World Heritage consideration; this is a major opportunity for Ballarat to reinstate heritage features in the core heritage precinct area around Lydiard Street and Sturt Street (including Bridge Mall).

Investment in verandah restoration on iconic sites would:

- attract more tourists to enjoy a higher quality and more intact heritage experience
- align with Ballarat's 'point of difference' as a vibrant, cosmopolitan heritage city
- provide more outdoor dining and trading areas; and more public art and creative expression opportunities
- generate more employment through direct city renewal investment
- offer opportunity for partnership between government and private sector (building owners) to reinvest in CBD property – as a pilot for a new model of co-investment and rolling program of upgrades – (\$1.3 million per annum for three years)
- provide opportunity to leverage GovHub investment in surrounding area and create beautiful spaces for workers to linger, shop and feel welcome in our community



3. Ballarat Underground

(\$1.3 million)

A demonstration project which includes capital works to develop underground dining and a tourism product showcasing the Ballarat CBD's unique stories, character and subterranean architecture.

This pilot initiative will embrace better use of existing buildings, and be used as a case study on how to overcome the significant building, planning and other relevant regulations which makes reuse of these spaces problematic and expensive for the building owner.

It is an opportunity for government to partner with private sector to invest in existing heritage buildings.

A partnership opportunity is being explored with the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute - a highly prominent site - which is primed for a pilot for re-activating underground spaces. This project has high levels of community support.

4. New green spaces in the CBD

(\$3.4 million)

Planting 500 new street trees and the conversion of four asphalt acres to public green space to encourage longer stays in the retail and hospitality heart.

This initiative provides heat stress protection and creates more places for workers and visitors to rest and relax.

Context

Apart from the Sturt Street centre median, Ballarat's CBD has very limited parkland and green spaces. This initiative will see the amount of green public space scattered through the CBD increase by the equivalent of a football field.

Currently the core CBD canopy cover is less than 5%, far below the 40% canopy cover target adopted by Council in 2016 as the city's optimum.

Benefits

- revitalising the CBD retail experience
- building Ballarat's momentum as one of Australia's great regional tourism destinations
- acting as an important higher land values catalyst to support inner city living and associated vibrancy
- health and wellbeing benefits of living and working in a greener environment

'Greening' is an important part of a city renewal program that drives more residents, jobs and investment into the CBD.

Problem we are trying to solve

For the State:

- Alleviate growth pressure on metropolitan Melbourne
- Achieves shared vision within the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan, which positions Ballarat as the Central Highlands region service centre and economic driver
- Transport infrastructure improvements meet State aspirations for Ballarat to maintain its regional centre points of difference
- Important enabler to removing private sector investment barriers, particularly relevant in a city in which car use is dominant

For Ballarat:

An estimated 15,000 new jobs will be required over the next 15 years to meet Ballarat's growing population, however limited new CBD investment is compromising Ballarat's ability to reach its full potential:

- Outdated and underused public and private infrastructure has reduced Ballarat's competitiveness
- the CBD is not providing a niche and desirable visitor experience, which limits capacity to attract spending
- an underdeveloped business services sector is resulting in leaked expenditure
- need to de-risk key CBD development sites to stimulate investor confidence and act as a commercial development catalyst

The implementation of these projects is crucial in driving vibrancy and activation in the heart of Ballarat.

Strategic Alignment

Council

- Council Plan 2017–2021
- Making Ballarat Central CBD Strategy 2011
- CBD Action Plan 2017–2021
- Economic Program 2015–2019 » CBD Activation Platform for Growth, Building Capacity from Within (Retail, Business Services, Tourism)
- Ballarat Strategy 2015 - » Productive Ballarat 1.7–1.11

Regional

- Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan
- RDA Grampians Regional Plan State
- Creative State
- Jobs Victoria
- Victorian Visitor Economy
- Regional Infrastructure Fund
- DEDJTR Strategic Plan



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