

## LOOKING ABOVE AND BEYOND - SKYLINES FOR THE FUTURE



The City of Mandurah looking ahead to the Year 2020 and beyond.

As Mandurah continues to attract new residents and visitors to the area, City officers are dedicated to ensuring that the natural beauty for which the City is renowned is not only retained, but improved in the growth process.

The City centre is the natural vibrant hub of any land development and Mandurah's waterfront location was the obvious choice for those before us that built the City on the calm idyllic waters of Mandjar Bay.

Recognised in the late 1800's for its large catches of seafood, sunny disposition and the large expanse of pristine coastline, Mandurah has continued to attract visitors and permanent residents to its shores.

As Mandurah has expanded, City leaders have maintained, throughout its growth, strict policies on inner city developments. As we now look toward 2000 and beyond, this foresight is the basis for further planning developments in shaping a new face for the City of Mandurah.

The plan is about providing choices, like inner city living opportunities, which will add to the diverse lifestyle choices already available in Mandurah.

The development and adoption of a Skyline Policy will stimulate city planning and urban design, becoming a benchmark for sustainable urban design and the blending of environmental and economic issues within the CBD.

"The rejuvenation of the Eastern Foreshore and an ongoing public art program has seen a resurgence of life back into our City centre and major issues need to be addressed if the precinct is to reach its potential to grow," he said. "Included in the process is the need to examine; parking, the Brighton Hotel super block, the City's streetscape and a Solar Skyline Policy," said CEO Stephen Goode.

At the September Full Council Meeting, Councillors adopted a recommendation to endorse an integrated approach to formulating policies for the Mainstream Mandurah precinct.

The objective; to achieve a coordinated approach to the long term rejuvenation of the precinct so it reaches its potential to be a vital retail and recreation focus while maintaining environmental and economic viability.

### THE VISION

One of the main issues addressing the City in future, is the need to expand. Height regulations are a major consideration when examining the CBD rejuvenation.

A blend of urban and solar design will not only make maximum use of City views, but will determine height and setback guidelines for the Cityscape and beyond.

A tiered development system is currently under examination by Council officers to determine a "rights to the sun" approach, which would see every roof in the City centre having access to the sun. This will maximise solar design and allow for the introduction of solar technology in the future.

"Tiering the City will not only maximise views and allow solar access, but will also place guidelines on height restrictions throughout the inner city precinct," said Mr Goode.

Currently the City enjoys a "human scale" approach to building structures. When taking a stroll along the City's retail developments, people are not dwarfed by high rise buildings, stark mirrored facing and heavy shadowing often experienced in other cities.

These factors combined with heavy traffic flow and dense parking creates environmental and social impacts in cities. Increased vehicle emissions and traffic congestion can reduce economic activity in central business districts, and result in the long-term fragmentation of cities.

Promoting walkability in our City and surrounding suburbs is a simple solution to solving some of these problems. By ensuring that most daily services are within walking or cycling distance or are located with public transport access in mind, we can not only shape a new face for our City, but create a vibrant community.

This opens up a whole new development phase and introduces a new concept to Mandurah, the harmonious blend of commercial and residential development that is seen in most of the world's major cities.

Careful and innovative planning could see the City of Mandurah accepting a new model in Cityscaping. One such theory is to "theme" the City streets to accommodate the range of services necessary not only for the day to day living of residents, but to maximise tourism potential through the planning process.

Theming areas or streets could see the unique cluster of services that complement the landscape and take full advantage of the blend of commercial and residential requirements as the City takes on a new, fresh life in the CBD.

It is hoped that the tiering method could see commercial developments on a ground level with residential accommodation being absorbed in second and third tiers with setbacks being determined to build residential density away from street frontage while maintaining inner city lifestyles.

The emergence of inner city living is fast becoming a sought-after lifestyle and generates large economic benefits. Demands on existing daily services would increase and new service providers would be required to accommodate the daily needs of permanent residents.

Also under discussion, is the location of specific areas for specialised services. By encouraging the formation of service clusters, a coordinated planning approach would be reflected throughout the precinct, assisting in creating a vibrancy throughout the City and maximising economic gains for commercial and retail service providers.

Separate nodes co-located with complementary uses eg. Offices and commercial service retail, or tourist retail and cafes and restaurants would not only form a unique city plan but also offer the potential to provide an exciting activity hub, attracting new customers and economic benefits.

An interim report presented to the City of Mandurah by consultants Baverstock Murphy and Associates, highlighted the need to carefully assemble the components of the built environment.

"Addressing these issues can avoid destroying fragile or important natural locations, create attractive, economically sustainable focus areas and provide walkable, sociable neighbourhoods," the report said.

Carefully planned urban structures not only breathe life into an area, but also have the added benefits of creating safer and environmentally friendly communities.

The report also set out objectives for cities of the future, which will provide:

- Designs to optimise energy - more efficient heating cooling and energy conservation.
- Better urban and open space design and reservation of urban cultural values.
- Increased urban densities and reduced costs of urban expansion.
- Improved public transport and infrastructure - reduced use of car and greater fuel economy.
- Reduction in waste and increased recycling.

It is imperative that traffic patterns and parking policies in Mandurah are also considered when planning ahead for the year 2020.

Officers are examining the suggestion for the provision of centrally located off-street parking courts to reduce street parking. This would enable better road planning and the introduction of more street trees, paved and grassed areas for pedestrians which would, in turn promote the use of alfresco style cafes, general food premises and specialised retail shops to cater for increasing tourism and city residents.

"The interim report recently presented to the City of Mandurah by the consultants certainly fits in with the outcomes of the Community Charter developed through extensive community consultation," said Mr Goode.

"General height restrictions and setback guidelines may be difficult for some developers and current property owners to accept; however it must be stressed that we are in the planning stages for a 20 year goal and there are enormous benefits from a solar efficient city," he said.

The report said up to 18% of greenhouse gases could be saved by shaping a city on the sun.

### SO WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Council is soon to be presented with key policy documents for the future of the town centre. These are about parking and the solar/skyline policy and will incorporate streetscape for inner City development.

Consultants specialising in this field, Baverstock Murphy and Associates, have been working with Council officers on developing a plan that will possibly see a national first in inner city structure planning.

"Like all pioneers, the journey is not an easy one. Being the first in Australia to officially adopt a skyline policy that cannot be compared to anything else Australia has seen, will require a combination of incentives from Council and support from property owners and business proprietors if the vision is to be accomplished," said Stephen Goode.

It is hoped that a long term approach to achieving a shared vision over the next two decades with parking, solar skyline and streetscape issues will incorporate integrated incentives that will assist in reaching goals over a period of time.

The commercial world will also undergo changes. Our businesses no longer compete with others within Mandurah or nearby centres like Rockingham or Fremantle. Increasingly they will have to compete with the world as the impact of retailing over the internet hits harder. Before then it is vital that we work together to maximise the competitive advantages that will help our businesses thrive. This will take a new way of looking at business for many.

In a paper presented at the recent Planning for Sustainable Futures National Conference, CEO Stephen Goode quoted a very poignant Greek proverb "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in."