



# Wollert Precinct Structure Plan – 360 Craigieburn Rd & 390 Vearings Rd, Wollert

Statement of Town Planning Evidence

November 2015



# 1 Introduction

1. My name is Stuart Andrew McGurn and I am a Planning Director at Urbis Pty Ltd which conducts its business at Level 12, 120 Collins Street, Melbourne. My qualifications and experience are described in Appendix A.
2. I have been requested by Norton Rose Fulbright Australia on behalf of The Boglis Family who owns land at 340-360 Craigieburn Road and 390 Vearings Road, Wollert to prepare a town planning assessment in relation to exhibited Amendment C187 to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. Specifically, I have been instructed to review the exhibited amendment documents associated with Amendment C187 and prepare an expert report.
3. Specifically, I have been requested to consider as part of my assessment the appropriateness of the South-West Local Town Centre as exhibited in the PSP and an alternative layout for the town centre which is proposed by the Boglis Family. I am instructed that this alternative layout has been circulated to Council and the MPL in November 2015.
4. Amendment C187 applies to approximately 1454 hectares of land located within Melbourne's northern growth corridor and proposes to incorporate the "Wollert Precinct Structure Plan, April 2015" and the "Wollert Development Contributions Plan, April 2015" into the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.
5. The amendment also seeks to rezone the precinct to Urban Growth Zone Schedule 5 (UGZ5) with some areas of Rural Conservation Zone and Special Use Zone 10 and make other changes to the planning scheme to implement the two strategic documents.
6. In undertaking my assessment I have inspected the site and surrounding area and have considered various documents relating to the proposed rezoning including the "Northern Growth Corridor Plan", the "Wollert Precinct Structure Plan" (PSP) and the "Wollert Development Contributions Plan" (DCP).
7. A summary of my opinions with respect to the proposal is as follows:
  - The proposed Future Urban Structure at Plan 2 of the exhibited "Wollert Precinct Structure Plan" represents an acceptable planning outcome;
  - The alterations proposed to the Proposed Future Urban Structure which relocates the Town Centre and schools also represents an acceptable planning outcome as it:
  - Is generally in accordance with the exhibited Structure Plan; and
  - Will continue to meet the strategic intent of the Wollert PSP.
8. I declare that I have made all the enquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have, to my knowledge, been withheld from the Panel.

## 2 Subject Site and Surrounds

9. Amendment C187 to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme applies to land generally north of Craigieburn Road and is bound by the proposed E6 transit corridor to the east, Curly Sedge Creek to the west and Summerhill Road to the north.
10. Craigieburn Road is the major east west physical connection across this part of the northern growth corridor and provides key links to the Craigieburn Bypass to the west and Epping Road to the east.
11. 360 Craigieburn Road and 390 Vearings Road, Wollert are located within the western portion of the precinct and form part of the area currently identified for a future local town centre. The Property Specific Land Use Budget identifies 360 Craigieburn Road as Property 6 and 390 Vearings Road as Property 9.
12. The majority of the surrounding area is undeveloped.
13. Vearings Road is a north-south road which is currently unsealed.
14. Property 6 is located at the north-east corner of Craigieburn Road and Vearings Road with a frontage to Craigieburn Road of approximately 195m and a frontage to Vearings Road of approximately 413m. The total site area of Property 6 is approximately 8.2 hectares.
15. Property 6 consists of significant native vegetation and this is identified in the Wollert PSP as part of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) area. A small portion of this land is considered developable.
16. Property 9 is located at the northern end of Vearings Road and is rectangular in shape. This property is approximately 40 hectares, largely void of significant vegetation and relatively flat. The majority of this parcel is considered developable.
17. A gas transmission easement traverses the north-eastern corner of the land at 390 Vearings Road and a dry stone wall is shown to be present on this land on the Precinct Features Plan within the PSP document.

### 3 Amendment C187 to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme

18. The amendment proposes to incorporate two documents into the Whittlesea Planning Scheme titled “Wollert Precinct Structure Plan, April 2015” and “Wollert Development Contributions Plan, April 2015”.
19. The amendment also seeks to rezone the majority of the land in the precinct to Urban Growth Zone Schedule 5 and make various other changes to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to facilitate the development of the land. Specifically, the amendment involves updates to the MSS, local policies, introduction of a Public Acquisition Overlay to Craigieburn Road and a new Schedule 16 to the Development Contributions Plan Overlay.
20. The amendment introduces planning provisions to implement the State Planning Policy Framework with regard to the growth of Melbourne by facilitating new urban development, associated infrastructure provision, conservation and open space outcomes.
21. The purpose of the Urban Growth Zone is to:
  - *To manage the transition of non-urban land into urban land in accordance with a precinct structure plan.*
  - *To provide for a range of uses and the development of land generally in accordance with a precinct structure plan.*
  - *To contain urban use and development to areas identified for urban development in a precinct structure plan.*
  - *To provide for the continued non-urban use of the land until urban development in accordance with a precinct structure plan occurs.*
  - *To ensure that, before a precinct structure plan is applied, the use and development of land does not prejudice the future urban use and development of the land.*
22. Schedule 5 to the Urban Growth Zone establishes the applied zones for the various areas of the PSP and the relevant permit triggers for use.
23. Guidance is provided within the schedule in relation to office, shop and supermarket floor area.
24. The schedule also establishes requirements specifically relevant to particular sites and other specific provisions.
25. Other elements of the proposed amendment include but are not limited to:
  - Parts of the precinct are proposed to be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone;
  - The amendment deletes ESO schedules 1, 4 and 5 and introduces the Incorporated Plan Overlay with new Schedule 4 and 5 to the conservation areas within the precinct;
  - Special use Zone Schedule 10 is to be inserted into the Planning Scheme in relation to the existing gas pipeline easement;
  - Introduction of a Public Acquisition Overlay to Craigieburn Road
  - Amendment to the schedule to Clause 52.01 in relation to passive open space contributions; and
  - Amend the Schedule to Clause 81.01 to include the documents titled, “Wollert Precinct Structure Plan, April 2015” and the “Wollert Development Contributions Plan, April 2015”.

## 4 Wollert Precinct Structure Plan

26. The Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) sets the long term vision and guidance for the future development of land within the precinct.
27. The Future Urban Structure as illustrated on Plan 2 identifies a number of major land uses that will ultimately establish within the precinct.
28. Located along the eastern side of the plan area is a significant employment area which will be able to accommodate approximately 7,500 jobs for the local community
29. The Wollert Major Town Centre is located centrally within the plan area and is able to be accessed from all directions.
30. Other key components include significant areas retained for biodiversity values, a major transmission easement, active open space reserves, schools and other supporting community facilities to meet the need of the growing population.
31. It is estimated the total plan area will eventually be home to over 38,000 residents in approximately 13,500 dwellings.
32. Ultimately, five schools will be required to service the educational need of the Wollert community and are to be located relatively central to the residential catchment.
33. Of the five schools, three will be Government schools and two will be non-Government schools. The PSP shows the future schools generally co-located with the town centres.
34. The PSP establishes requirements and guidelines relating to the following elements of the future urban structure. These are:
  - Town Centres
  - Employment area
  - Community Facilities and Education
  - Open Space
  - Biodiversity conservation and bushfire management
  - Transport
  - Water and energy
35. In relation to town centres, the PSP establishes requirements and guidelines which include:
  - *East-west main street to provide a high quality, pedestrian-focused centre promoting activity and safe connections between the schools/community facilities and retail core in a low-speed environment.*
  - *Community centre to provide a prominent built form to address the main street and serve as a civic landmark entrance into local town centre.*
  - *Centrally located public space adjacent entry to anchor retail performs as central meeting place for the town centre.*
  - *Diverse housing opportunities provided above commercial (retail and office), at the edges of the centre, and potentially above community uses.*
  - *Parking and loading bays to be located behind retail and mixed use components with no direct vehicle access from the main street.*



- *Feature planting along the main street to reinforce local character.*
- *East-west and north-south connector streets to incorporate streetscape elements that create a sense of arrival to the centre.*
- *Vearings Road to provide activation, passive surveillance and form a principal place making opportunity into the centre and extended as lineal open space between the schools. Dry stone walls and cycle paths to be incorporated.*
- *School buildings should be oriented to the main street and Vearings Road.*
- *Design of housing along the southern side of the main street opposite the future non-government school should continue an active built form presence to continue the rhythm of the main street.*

36. The Wollert PSP guidelines for schools and community facilities include the following at Page 37:

- *School sites should be provided with three street frontages where practicable (G80)*
- *Any educational or community infrastructure not shown on Plan 2 should be located within or proximate to a major town centre, local town centre or an existing community hub, as appropriate and to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority (G81)*
- *Design of community facilities should maximise land use efficiency through multi-storey building formats.*
- *Any private childcare, medical centre, or similar facility should be located proximate to the Major Town Centre, any Local Town Centre, Local Convenience Centres, or nominated community hub, as appropriate.*
- *Community facilities which are located in, or adjacent to, a town centre should be designed to maximise efficiency of land use through the sharing and overall reduction of car parking.*
- *Community facilities, schools and sporting reserves which are co-located should be designed to maximise efficiencies through the sharing of car parking and other complimentary infrastructure (G85)*
- *All community and educational facilities should be of high architectural quality with active facades where built form fronts the street.*

37. Specifically, the Wollert PSP shows a Town Centre with two school sites located opposite to the north with a linear park running between the school sites. Please refer to Appendix B.

38. Alternatively, the revised school and town centre location shows the Town Centre and schools located to the south of the east-west connector road. Please refer to Appendix C.

## 5 North Growth Corridor Plan

39. The North Growth Corridor Plan (North GCP) applies to the land.
40. The North GCP identifies the land use within the Wollert precinct as largely residential land which includes a designated area of employment on the eastern boundary bordered by the 'E6 Road Reserve'. Utilities transmission easements (electricity and gas) traverse the precinct with the Principal Public Transport Network identified along Craigieburn and Epping Roads. Large areas of land are set aside for 'biodiversity values' in the western end of the precinct. A major town centre is identified near the intersection of Boundary and Bodycoats Roads.
41. The North Growth Corridor Plan seeks to ensure that in the context of population growth and the evolution of the economic functioning of the northern corridor that the corridor can be an attractive location for businesses and households. This is to be achieved by:
- *preserving and enhancing the natural features of the Growth Corridor, including the significant landscape and biodiversity values. New communities will benefit from an integrated open space network that provides a distinctive character and amenity, and existing biodiversity values will be preserved and enhanced;*
  - *provide an enhanced public transport network comprising new rail stations along the Sydney-Melbourne rail line supported by a series of high capacity public transport services which will connect substantial parts of the corridor to higher order town centres and to stations along the heavy rail corridor;*
  - *extend the northern region's public transport and arterial road networks into the Growth Corridor so that future residents and workers will enjoy a similar level of accessibility to those living and working in established parts of the north;*
  - *create new town centres and employment areas that contribute to the ongoing diversification and growth of the northern region's economy. New Town Centres will be planned to complement the significant role of the Broadmeadows CAA for Melbourne's north. These town centres have been located on the public transport networks to maximise accessibility; and*
  - *provide for a variety of housing choices that can meet the needs of the new communities not only on initial development but also as the community matures and changes over time.*
42. The North GCP considers landscape and open space, biodiversity, drainage, character and identity, community and health services, employment, transport and other infrastructure.



## 6 Assessment

43. As outlined earlier in my evidence, the scope of my instructions are limited to one aspect of the proposed amendment and the Wollert PSP, ie. the relocation of the South-West Town Centre and particularly the consequential change to the location of the Government and non-Government schools.
44. I am instructed that the relocation of the Town Centre and Schools (shown on Appendix 2) has been developed through a collaborative effort between the Boglis Family, Villawood and Evolve.
45. In relation to the South-West Local Town Centre, the exhibited PSP urban structure identifies a town centre at the south-west corner of the intersection of Vearings Road and a proposed east-west connector road. Two schools and a community centre are shown on the northern side of the proposed east-west connector Road central to the catchment.
46. Both the Town Centre and the schools would be able to be accessed via public transport as the connector road is sufficiently wide enough to accommodate local bus routes.
47. The exhibited layout at Figure 6 of the PSP includes shared paths along both Vearings Road and the two proposed connector streets. However, within this layout, Vearings Road is proposed to terminate at the schools to facilitate a linear park. The shared path is shown continuing along the linear park.
48. This design accords with the principle of co-locating land uses through integrated precinct design and represents an appropriate urban structure to guide future development approvals. The exhibited urban structure also responds appropriately to the North GCP in relation to providing new town centres and managing various land use and development considerations.
49. It achieves the requirements of the PSP in relation to town centres and schools and community facilities as it shows buildings fronting the streets, car parking areas sleeved behind buildings, provision for a town square and the co-location of the various uses to maximise efficiencies in relation to car parking and other infrastructure.
50. The exhibited urban structure also responds appropriately to the North GCP in relation to providing new town centres and managing various land use and development considerations.
51. In terms of the alternative layout, the east-west connector street continues to provide the appropriate access to the Town Centre and the school sites. However, the school sites are located on the southern side of the connector road. This connector road is altered at the western end to continue in a south westerly direction towards an alternative location for the South-West Local Town Centre with access further south directly onto Craigieburn Road.
52. Issues of road layout and traffic flow will be dealt with by Mr Gnanakone in his evidence. Suffice to say that overall the Town Centre and School Precinct appear to be as equally accessible in the alternative layout and can be easily serviced by public transport.
53. The amended layout which shows the school sites relocated to the south of the east-west connector road, continues to co-locate the Government and non-Government schools and provide for the same level of access to the schools. The contiguous siting of the schools facilitates the sharing and co-location of facilities between the two schools and the broader community.
54. Further, the location of the school sites south of the connector road provides for appropriate road frontage to allow for sufficient access and minimises potential negative amenity impacts to adjacent residential properties in the pick-up and drop-off periods.
55. The alternative layout also includes a linear park along the Vearings Road alignment between the two schools. In this scenario, a road would need to be constructed to the south or east of the Government school to facilitate a third street frontage.

56. The alternative layout locates all land uses on the southern side of the east-west connector road rather than positioning some to the north and some to the south. This is addressed by the altered alignment of the connector road which continues in a south-west direction which places the town centre, community centre and non-Government school within close proximity of one another with the potential for an internal road between the town centre and the school.
57. This layout is appropriate in relation to co-location of uses. The layout also achieves the requirements of the PSP and responds appropriately to the North GCP.
58. If the Town Centre and the non-Government school are to be relocated to the south of the east-west connector road, it would be equally appropriate to also relocate the Government School to enable the co-location of the two schools.
59. As can be seen by the above, both locations and layouts are, in planning terms, acceptable and provide for an appropriate outcome.
60. Specifically with respect to the applicable key design elements, both layouts have the capacity to provide a high quality pedestrian environment, and are proximate to and facilitate safe connections between the schools and the Town Centre. . Both outcomes meet the strategic interest of the Wollert PSP.

## 7 Conclusion

61. In conclusion, I consider that both the exhibited and the proposed urban frameworks for the South-West Local Town Centre represent an acceptable planning outcome, and would appropriately guide the development of the centre and schools.
62. A summary of my opinions with respect to the proposal is as follows:
- The proposed Future Urban Structure at Plan 2 of the exhibited "Wollert Precinct Structure Plan" represents an acceptable planning outcome;
  - The alterations proposed to the Proposed Future Urban Structure which relocates the Town Centre and schools also represents an acceptable planning outcome as it:
    - Is generally in accordance with the exhibited Structure Plan; and
    - Will continue to meet the strategic intent of the Wollert PSP.



Stuart McGurn  
**Urbis Pty Ltd**



## Appendix A

## Statement of Qualifications

## **STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE**

1. Name and Professional Address of Expert:

Stuart Andrew McGurn  
Director  
Urbis Pty Ltd  
Level 12, 120 Collins Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

2. Qualifications and Experience:

I hold a Bachelor of Arts (1984) and a Graduate Diploma in Urban Planning (1986).

Professional experience is as listed below:

- Current Position: Director, Urbis Pty Ltd
- 2010 – 2015: Partner, Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd
- 1998 – 2010: Director, Fulcrum Town Planners Pty Ltd
- 1986 – 1998: Town Planner in local government  
– Cities of Broadmeadows and Melbourne,  
including role as Principal Planner – City of Melbourne

3. Area of expertise includes:

- Statutory and strategic planning for local and state government on a range of residential, commercial and industrial issues.
- Consulting advice to a wide range of commercial and local government clients addressing the management of urban development and the statutory planning process.
- Extensive planning advice to architects, project managers and other professionals involved in a range of projects and the built form and visual impact issues associated with the development of land.

4. Expertise to prepare this report:

Professional qualifications and expertise in town planning, both in the public and private sectors.

5. Instructions received in relation to this matter:

My instructions required me to undertake a town planning assessment and review the merits of the proposal. In so doing, I have relied upon those matters set down below.



6. Facts, Matters and Assumptions relied upon

I have relied upon the following in the preparation of this report:

- Inspection of the subject site and surrounds
- Review of Amendment C187
- Review of the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan
- Review of the North Growth Corridor Plan

7. Identity of persons undertaking the work:

Stuart McGurn assisted by Genevieve Pool, Consultant.

8. Summary of opinion:

A summary of my opinions in relation to this matter is included at paragraph no. 7 of my evidence.

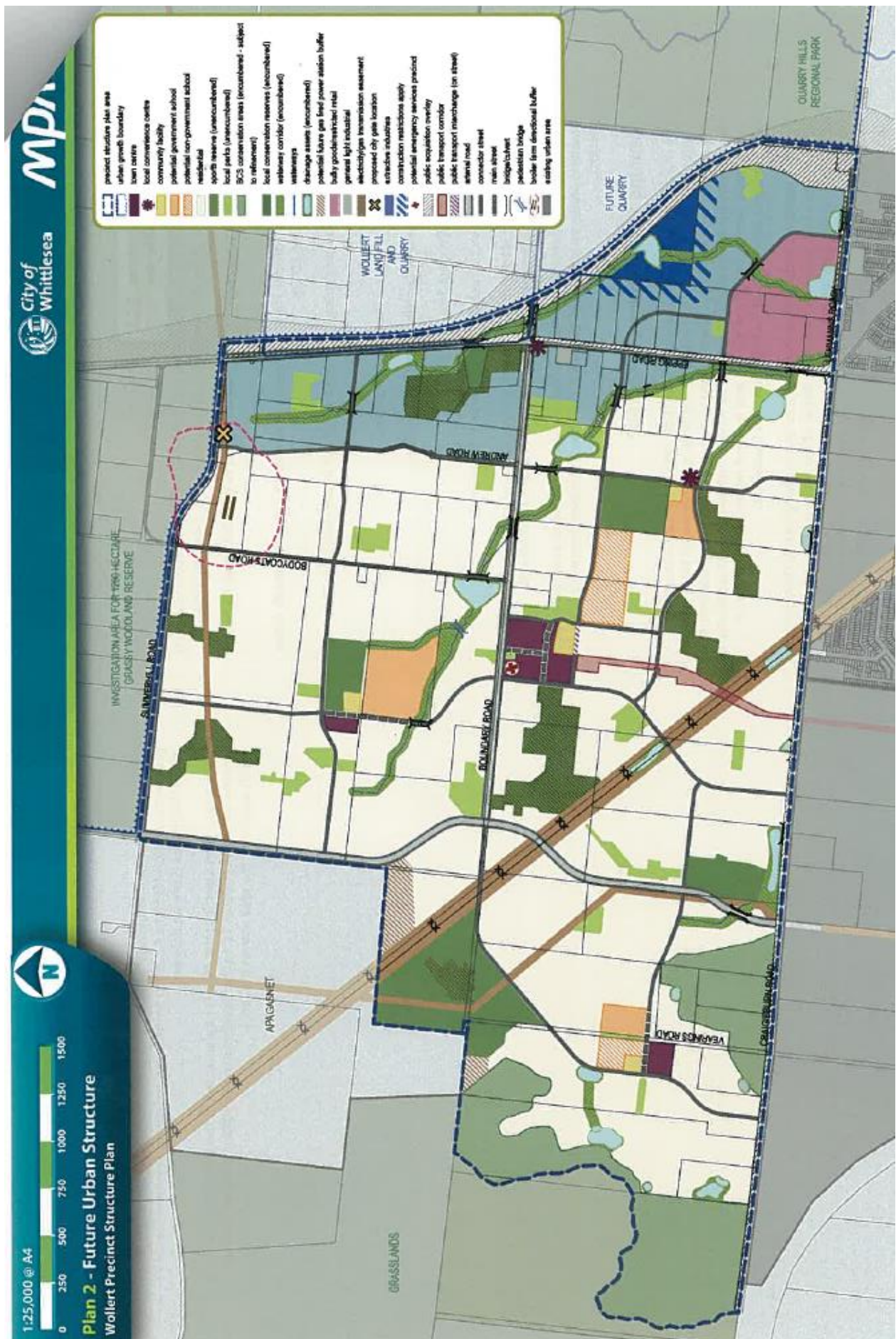
I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.



Stuart McGurn  
Director, Urbis Pty Ltd

## Appendix B

## Wollert PSP – Plan 2 – Future Urban Structure



## Appendix C

## Alternative layout





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