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## **INFRASTRUCTURE AUSTRALIA**

### **Introduction**

The review of infrastructure in Australia is timely for the City of Mount Gambier (SA) as it coincides with its own local review of infrastructure. The local review is being undertaken with the aim of initiating actions with national significance.

Major road, rail, airport and seaport consideration is subject to a regional submission to your office from the Limestone Coast Regional Development Board so will not be repeated in this submission.

The City of Mount Gambier is ideally located geographically, equi-distance from Adelaide and Melbourne. It has the major benefit of good climate and water supplies. It is South Australia's second largest city, home to a major workforce which supports production, processing & service industries being;

Agriculture;  
Forestry;  
Fishing;  
Horticulture;  
Viticulture;  
Transport.

Major expansions are being considered particularly in;  
Aquaculture;  
Forestry (Blue Gum);  
Alternative energy (Wind and Wave Power);  
Food Processing;  
Tourism;  
Education.

The Council has developed an infrastructure based vision for Mount Gambier – Towards 2015.

Council is developing and fostering an environment in which infrastructure spending decisions can maximise their effectiveness in delivering on economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives.

Council's decision to invest unprecedented resources to achieve its vision does so with a plan to involve other spheres of government and private investment. Council planning and investment will not only provide highest standard environmental facilities, it is also being seen as a leader to draw in public investment in new complementary building construction and refurbishment.

## **Towards 2015**

The City of Mount Gambier must expand its social, community, economic, cultural and social infrastructure through a range of revitalisation and development projects.

A City needs to have a comprehensive suite of facilities and services to attract and retain people, people needed for the fast growing industries in and around Mount Gambier and of the greater region. Medical and educational services are being improved. The Region (based on Mount Gambier) needs special project support to continue the progress Towards 2015 which include;

### **New Mount Gambier Library/Community Centre**

Over the past few years, libraries have become much more than a place to borrow books. They have evolved to a place where people come to sit and read, listen to music, research, socialize and connect. Libraries have developed into places that are a focus of community activity.

Since 2005, the Mount Gambier Library has taken this approach by implementing many community-based initiatives and programs and patronage has increased over 1,000 visits per month.

It is appropriate and desirable that the first stage of Mount Gambier's redevelopment is centred around a new library and community centre – a vital component of the overall revitalisation of Mount Gambier and of the City Centre.

The current public library in Mount Gambier is located beneath the Council and the Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre – a building within a building that suffers from accessibility issues and an extreme lack of space to expand the library and its resources as a true community asset.

The Mount Gambier Library and Community Centre development will be much more than a physical redevelopment. It will challenge perceptions of what a library is and what a library can be. The new development will revitalise many of the community services offered by the City of Mount Gambier, delivering an innovative suite of services and programs, onsite, online and throughout the wider Mount Gambier region.

Alongside this project, Council will undertake refurbishment and improvement works to the Civic Centre, Plaza and the existing Library and will provide increased car parking facilities to allow for maximum patronage to both the new Library and Civic Centre/Theatre.

The Mount Gambier Library and Community Centre will be a key community site, a place of social contact where individual and community learning has a distinct and valued role.

The Mount Gambier Library and Community Centre will facilitate innovation and creativity and make a significant contribution to the community development of the greater region.

The Mount Gambier Library and Community Centre will support and lead in the capture and preservation of Mount Gambier's cultural and documentary heritage.

The Centre will be equipped with lounges, coffee tables and casual seating that will be strategically positioned to allow customers to read in a comfortable informal setting. The integrated café with indoor and outdoor seating options will provide members of the community with a central meeting point for library use or simply to engage in the company of others.

The Mount Gambier Library and Community Centre development will also boast many different educational and meeting rooms. These include local history room, learning lounge, group room, meeting room, a multipurpose room which can be divided in two, an activity room, study rooms and a parenting/nursing room.

The Centre will offer a neutral place for all ages, individuals and groups to engage with all members of the community and participate in society through the vast number of community programs on offer.

### **Railway Lands Community/Commercial Redevelopment**

The Railway Land Community Project, involving 4.0 ha of Mount Gambier Railway Station Land, presents a remarkable opportunity to create a defining inner city urban community space that is unlike any other – a space that is uniquely reflective of the character, history, community and vibrant future of Mount Gambier.

The vision for this space is for it to be part active and part reflective; part philanthropic and part commercial; part cultural and part historic, part visual and part artistic, part individual and part social, part local and part regional.

The Railway Lands is a site of significant importance for the continued community and commercial growth of the City and in particular the ongoing viability of the City Centre.

The site will be a major focus for Mount Gambier that enriches the cultural life of the community with activities, buildings and spaces.

There will be limited commercial development. The site will interpret, embrace and promote the Railway Lands rich cultural heritage.

The site will be a viable, dynamic and sustainable community asset by including a range of community use spaces and some supporting commercial activities to create a sense of substantial community ownership to ensure its long term viability.

A 'Market Square' will act as a community gathering space for special events, markets, performances and festivals. It will create a 'destination' for locals and visitors.

The site will showcase environmentally sustainable design principles in the form of storm water retention ponds, recycled materials and sympathetic buildings.

### **Cultural & Heritage Precinct Development centred on our "Main Corner"**

The first element of the "Main Corner" Cultural and Heritage Precinct Development is the demolition of building at 1 Bay Road to allow for an extension of the Cave Garden to the corner of Commercial Street and Bay Road (our "Main Corner")

This will provide the centre of the City with an attractive community area, open up its use for a wide range of cultural and social activities and enable better linkages to the Riddoch Art Gallery, Old Town Hall/Institute, City Hall and restaurants and coffee shops near this precinct as well as the adjacent Civic Centre/Theatre and new Library and Community Centre.

The next element of the "Main Corner" Cultural and Heritage Precinct Development is to fully redevelop the existing Riddoch Art Gallery.

The Riddoch Art Gallery will gain a substantially enhanced new façade and new western entry, incorporating the coffee shop, sales area and improved loading and unloading areas.

The first floor of the Gallery will be refurbished to extend the building's potential as a multifunctional space to include larger gallery spaces, multi-media and conference facilities and internally linked to the Institute Building and City Hall.

The redeveloped Cultural and Heritage Precinct will maintain artistic culture and arts in the region on an ongoing basis.

The development of the "Main Corner" Cultural and Heritage Precinct will provide Mount Gambier with an area that can accommodate future programs, festivals and maintain high class exhibitions.

## **Two Regional Waste Landfill Developments (North & South of the Greater Region)**

The South East of South Australia has undertaken a number of regional studies over the past 5 - 6 years to identify the most environmentally and economically sustainable way to deliver waste management services to their respective communities.

Reports prepared indicate that the most efficient and effective solution for the Region is the provision of two fully 'engineered' landfills that meet all stringent environmental requirements (as specified by the South Australian Environment Protection Authority).

The area currently has one such landfill at Caroline - a facility owned and operated by the City of Mount Gambier (to service the southern areas of the region). A second, and yet to be constructed facility is required to the west of Naracoorte (to service the northern areas of the region).

This submission relates specifically to the Caroline Landfill owned by the City of Mount Gambier.

The Caroline Landfill is currently moving from a single user facility to a regional facility and this transition will require significant capital input as it will require the construction of a new landfill cell (estimated cost \$2.0million) and the early closure of existing cells (due to increased volume due to regionalisation) - estimated cost \$1.5million.

Provision of this funding will ensure that the region is serviced with a state of the art landfill and ongoing gate revenues will ensure its long term financial sustainability.

Landfills are still an essential element of life but the upfront capital cost is difficult to fund with a relatively low population base. Increased environmental requirements add significantly to both capital and operational costs and Council is seeking financial assistance to enlarge the facility to cater for increased volumes as a result of the enforced closure of many small, un-engineered regional landfills.

Assistance with funding the regional upgrade will ensure that the South East of South Australia has at least one fully operational landfill which will provide significant environmental benefit to the region.

Planning for a second regional facility to be located to service the needs of the northern areas of the region needs to commence now to be able to cater for the emerging population growth as Mount Gambier and its surrounding areas becomes a major food basket producer to serve Australia.

## Regional Recreation Centre

The City of Mount Gambier is well served with some high quality outdoor sport and recreation facilities. The facilities cater for a wide range of outdoor sport and recreation activities and are considered to be “better than average”.

However, the greater region does not have an Indoor Recreation Centre or Indoor Aquatic Centre, both being much needed in a relatively cool and wet environment. Apart from small, privately owned swimming centres and motel type pools, swimming/water recreation is only available for about 5 months over the spring/summer/autumn period. Council has a strategic objective of providing an indoor sports and recreation centre (to service the greater region) and incorporating:

- Indoor heated aquatics
- Health and fitness
- Sports stadium

Once completed, this facility will provide for a wide range of uses, including the ability to restructure sports away from the traditional ‘Saturday afternoon’ activity, and it is anticipated this will assist in encouraging more members of the community to take up some form of physical activity as well as providing more opportunities for those community members with busy working lives to better allocate their available spare time to recreational activities.

Council has completed a number of substantial studies into indoor recreation facilities and has concluded that a new facility incorporating the features listed above is the best option for this community (noting that such a facility will have a strong regional focus - particularly with heated indoor aquatics).

The Capital Cost of the facility proposed is \$12million and without significant external funding assistance this facility will not be possible for many years, yet the need is urgent.

### Cost Summary of Needed Infrastructure - Towards 2015

\$ 1M Renovations to Civic Plaza adjacent to New Library  
\$ 8M New Mount Gambier Library/Community Centre  
\$ 8M Railway Lands Community/Commercial Redevelopment  
\$ 5M Cultural & Heritage Precinct Development centred on our “Main Corner”  
\$ 6M Two Regional Waste Landfill Developments (North & South of the City)  
\$12M Regional Recreation Centre  
**\$40M Total.**

### Summary

The Council has undertaken a holistic review of the City of Mount Gambier infrastructure needs with the intent of attracting and retaining a workforce for expanding industry in the City and surrounding region. It is planning the development and redevelopment of needed infrastructure and also the ongoing asset management costs to ensure sustainability.

Climate Change is the driver behind this plan of major infrastructure development. The local climate and availability of water will be the factor in expanding the numerous major industries supplying much of Australia. Council investment together with support from the Federal and State governments will ensure positive economic, social, and environmental benefits to serve the national interest through this emerging food basket for Australia.

Already, the initiatives taken by Council are attracting interest from private investors, prepared to contribute to revitalisation of existing tiring infrastructure.