



MOONEE PONDS RATE LEVY ASSOCIATION **BUSINESS PLAN**

2019 – 2024

Acronyms

MPRLA	Moonee Ponds Rate Levy Association
MPTA	Moonee Ponds Traders Association
MVCC	Moonee Valley City Council
MPAC	Moonee Ponds Activity Centre
MVRC	Moonee Valley Racing Club
MAC	Major Activity Centre
MV2040	Moonee Valley City Council 2040 Strategy
ROI	Return on investment

Definitions

“the Precinct”

Moonee Ponds , including all rated areas as defined by the rate levy boundary, specifically Moonee Ponds Activity Centre

“the traders”

Moonee Ponds Rate Levy Association

“the Plan”

MPRLA Business Plan 2019-2024

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Executive Summary

The Moonee Ponds Activity Centre (MPAC) is currently subject to a special rate and charge by Moonee Valley City Council (MVCC). The purpose of the special rate and charge is to promote and support businesses and patronage within the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre.

The current special rate and charge is due to conclude on 30 June 2019 and Council has notified of its intentions to declare the special rate and charge for another five year period, commencing on 1 July 2019 and ending 30 June 2024.

Destination Yellow has been engaged by Moonee Ponds Rate Levy Association (MPRLA) to develop a strategic business plan for the "precinct". The purpose of this plan is to direct expenditure of the special rate proceeds over the five year period, (\$190,000 per year raising a total of \$1.05M over the five year period) ensuring the Plan fulfils the requirements of the Funding Agreement between Moonee Valley City Council and Moonee Ponds Rate Levy Association, and delivers effective marketing and business development strategies to maximise the benefits of the scheme to the entire precinct.

The Plan has been produced in-conjunction with MPRLA committee members, MVCC and key stakeholders. A key feature of this plan was the process by which it was developed. An extensive consultative approach was taken, to ensure the plan captured key insights and feedback from all stakeholders, particularly at the coalface, including customers, traders and residents.

Consultation included:

- MPRLA members (traders) online survey

- Customer intercept surveys (on the ground surveys before and after Xmas)
- Customer online surveys
- One on one trader interviews
- Trader workshops (three offered)
- Meetings with key stakeholders/ MVCC.

Data collected from surveys and consultations, both qualitative and quantitative, was used to formulate the basis of the plan. In addition to the above, a literature/desktop review was undertaken of all relevant plans, policies and research pertinent to this project.

MPRLA has approximately 558 members or rated businesses within the precinct. Based on information obtained from MPRLA database and the rated businesses within the precinct, the top three sectors are:

- Food and drink – 22%
- Services (Accountants, lawyers, real estates, etc) – 20%
- Medical & Health – 17%

A large concentration of these sectors highlight the need for further development of targeted marketing campaigns, increased investment in these areas and the needs perhaps to diversify product offerings and business mix to complement existing sectors.

The MPRLA is a volunteer based trader/business association represented by a committee of 15

local traders. Within the association, there is scope for a paid coordinator and this is currently serviced by X2Marketing.

The primary role of MPRLA is to market and promote the precinct. In its current format MPRLA delivers a range of marketing initiatives and activities.

Whilst the rate levy is intended to support/help the 'precinct' to market itself and drive marketing initiatives and activities, the consultative process has uncovered a strong/ deeper need for representation and advocacy on all precinct matters – not just marketing and promotion. The research conducted for the development of this plan has clearly highlighted the confusion amongst businesses as to what the role of MPRLA is and high expectations of what MPRLA should deliver, and in turn what they should do for traders in the precinct.

Research identified a number of key strengths for the Moonee Ponds precinct. Whilst some are already acknowledged strengths, emerging and underutilised strengths were also identified:

- One stop shop
- Atmosphere
- Easy to access – connected
- Food
- Niche products
- Events.

Research also identified a number

of areas for improvement in the precinct. Again some of these are already well-established and known; however they continue to hinder the growth and long-term prosperity of the precinct:

- Parking
- Fundamentals/Streetscape
- Welcome/Sense of arrival
- Congestion/Traffic flow
- Puckle St
- Disconnection of precincts
- Disconnection of precincts
- MPRLA – role/current offering
- Operators
- Perception
- Strategic partnerships
- Limiting factors/Barriers to growth
- Integration of events.

As with any destination opportunities present themselves at all times, however the challenge is to leverage off and harness the opportunity turning it into tangible, profitable results for all businesses.

Opportunities identified are:

- New residents/developments
- Population increase
- Activation of destination businesses
- Collaboration
- Social media
- Location/Hub – underutilised
- Economic advantage
- MVRC redevelopment.

As any area grows, it must adapt to meet future needs, however with growth inherently comes challenges. The precinct will face challenges over the coming years, and if well-prepared can plan to tackle these challenges with strategic solutions

rather than a reactive ad-hoc approach. A number of continued and future challenges are identified below.

- Development/Construction
- Parking
- Business mix
- Pedestrian movements/habits
- Changing demographics – meeting and exceeding customer expectations
- Competition
- Status Quo
- Market forces

Moving forward MPRLA has outlined a strong strategic direction with a clear and defined vision for the precinct.

VISION

- **To be the destination of choice for a unique shopping and dining experience in the West.**
- **To be a strong and connected precinct that harnesses the community spirit.**

MISSION

- **To support, advocate and represent all traders, providing a unified voice on all precinct matters.**
- **To partner with, and assist businesses to grow and prosper, improving skills and capability to deliver an outstanding experience to all customers.**

Based on all the research undertaken, four key focus areas have been

developed to underpin the strategic directions of this plan.

1. MARKETING

Continue to build on work that has been completed to date in this space. Grow digital platforms, integrate and expand brand, collaborate, focus on customer curated content and strong word of mouth referrals encouraging customers to become our marketers and ambassadors for the precinct.

2. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Support businesses to deliver an outstanding experience and exceed customers' expectations with a focus on fulfilling the complete customers experience – at all touch points. Encourage businesses to look inside first and value add their own experiences as each and every business is a key piece of the puzzle to improve the precinct and increase visitation!

3. DESTINATION/PLACE

The precinct lacks street appeal and is visually in need of invigoration. General beautification and presentation of the area is a key priority to restore pride in its citizens and encourage increased visitation. Support and guide works to improve the precinct to become a destination.

4. ADVOCACY/LEADERSHIP

MPRLA must evolve to meet the needs and expectations of current traders, and play a broader role than it has in the past. It must advocate for all businesses on all precinct matters and lead as one united voice.

In summary, with the proportional changes in sectors within the precinct reflecting an increased number of professional services and health and well-being businesses expectations of MPRLA to deliver in other areas such as advocacy, representation, business development and leadership must be considered.

Marketing and promotion of the precinct must remain a key focus of MPRLA; however there is a clear need to broaden the scope of MPRLA and its activities in the future to ensure representation of all traders within the rate boundary, delivering strong returns for the entire precinct.

THE STREETVIEW

RESTAURANT | CAFE | BAR

dmc
designer mens clothing

PUCKLE ST
WINE STORE

Cafe Boulton

& Brow Aesthetics

PHARMACY

END
49
AREA



3039 MOONEE PONDS

YOUR LOCAL
precinct

Introduction

The Moonee Ponds Activity Centre (MPAC) is currently subject to a special rate and charge by Moonee Valley City Council (MVCC). The purpose of the special rate and charge is to promote and support businesses and patronage within the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre.

The current special rate and charge is due to conclude on 30 June 2019 and Council has notified of its intentions to declare the special rate and charge for another five year period, commencing on 1 July 2019 and ending 30 June 2024.

Destination Yellow has been engaged by Moonee Ponds Rate

Levy Association (MPRLA) to develop a strategic business plan for the "precinct". The purpose of this plan is to direct expenditure of the special rate proceeds over the five year period, (\$190,000 per year raising a total of \$1.05M over the five year period) ensuring the Plan fulfils the requirements of the Funding

Agreement between Moonee Valley City Council and Moonee Ponds Rate Levy Association, and delivers effective marketing and business development strategies to maximise the benefits of the scheme to the entire precinct.

Methodology

The Plan, prepared by Destination Yellow, has been produced in-conjunction with MPRLA committee members, MVCC and key stakeholders.

A key feature of this plan was the process by which it was developed. An extensive consultative approach was taken, to ensure the plan captured key insights and feedback from all stakeholders, particularly at the coalface, including customers, traders and residents.

Consultation included (*See Appendix for full details*):

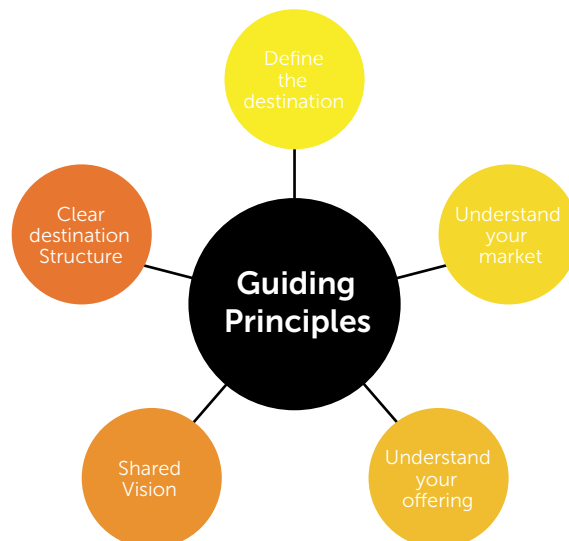
- MPRLA members (traders) online survey
- Customer intercept surveys (on the ground surveys before and after Xmas)
- Customer online surveys
- One on one trader interviews
- Trader workshops (three offered)
- Meetings with key stakeholders/MVCC.

Data collected from surveys and consultations, both qualitative and quantitative, was used to formulate the basis of the plan. In addition to the above, a literature/desktop review was undertaken of all relevant plans, policies and research pertinent to this project.

Principles

To further guide and develop the Plan, we used guiding destination principles adapted from the Federal Governments best practice Destination Management guide.

These principles align with our contemporary approach to focus on the whole customer experience, understanding their needs and a whole of community approach to the destination.



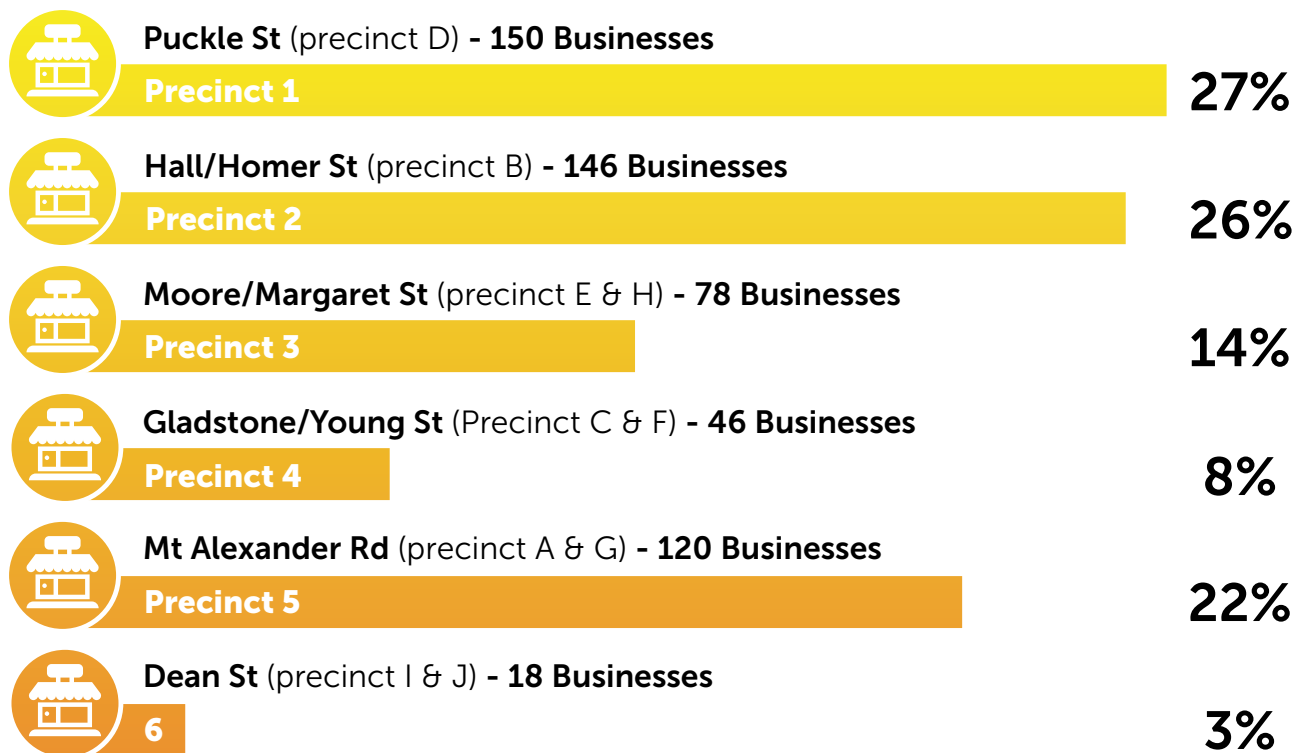
Background

MPRLA has approximately 558 members or rated businesses within the precinct. The precinct boundaries are highlighted in the map below and are comprised of the following areas:

- Puckle Street
- Hall/Homer precinct (including Everage Street, Aspen Street, Market Lane)
- Moore/Margaret precinct (including Holmes Road, Norwood Crescent)
- Gladstone/Young precinct (including Pratt Street, Shuter Street)
- Mt Alexander Road precinct (including Mt Road south of the Junction, Ascot Vale Road, Davies Street and Hinkins Street, Mt Road North of the Junction)
- Dean/Pascoe Vale precinct (including Alexandra Ave).



The map above has been taken from the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre Structure Plan as it represents the different precincts in the Moonee Ponds Special Rate boundary. These have been combined in the table on the following page to provide a clearer picture of where the highest concentration of members is derived from.

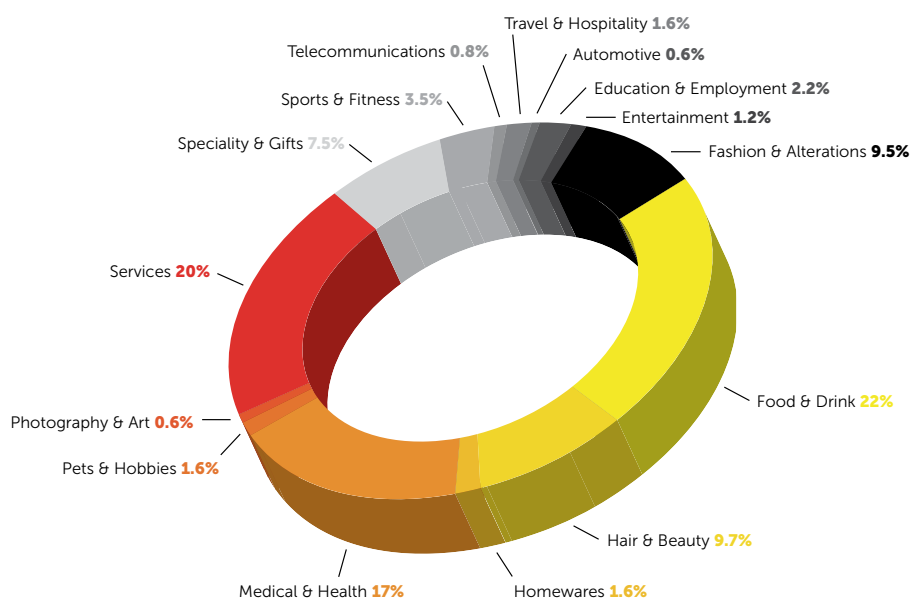


We can break this down even further to understand the current business mix and key sectors within the precinct and this is illustrated in the below chart.

Based on information obtained from MPRLA database and the rated businesses within the precinct, the top three sectors are:

- Food and drink – 22%
- Services (Accountants, lawyers, real estates, etc) – 20%
- Medical & Health – 17%

A large concentration of these sectors highlight the need for further development of targeted marketing campaigns, increased investment in these areas and the needs perhaps to diversify product offerings and business mix to complement existing sectors.



Role of MPRLA

The MPRLA is a volunteer based trader/business association represented by a committee of 15 local traders. Within the association, there is scope for a paid coordinator and this is currently serviced by X2Marketing.

The primary role of MPRLA is to market and promote the precinct. In its current format MPRLA delivers a range of marketing initiatives and activities such as:

- Website updates
- Rebrand
- Progressive Dinners
- Outdoor cinemas
- Trader promotions and offers
- Development of a Trader directory
- Building relationships and working with key stakeholders including; MVRC, Council, local community groups, schools, Moonee Ponds Central, Caydon, Police
- Spring carnival activities, laneway activations, Mother's Day, Easter, Xmas activations
- Development of communications and newsletters to traders
- Health and wellbeing festival
- Shop local campaign
- Working with traders on individual matters or issues
- Liaise with Chamber of Commerce
- Moonee Valley Winterfest - Ice skating rink (in conjunction with MVCC)
- Social media management – MooneePonds3039 website and FB page
- Digital media marketing campaigns.

Whilst the rate levy is intended to support the 'precinct' to market itself and drive marketing initiatives and activities, the consultative process has uncovered a strong/deeper need for representation and advocacy on all precinct matters – not just marketing and promotion. The research conducted for the development of this plan has clearly highlighted the confusion amongst businesses as to what the role of MPRLA is and high expectations of what MPRLA should deliver, and in turn what they should do for traders in the precinct. In its current format the MPRLA is not addressing all traders' needs; however is that the purpose of this association?

It is worth noting that the Moonee Ponds Chamber of Commerce is a separate body to the MPRLA and has traditionally taken on the role of advocacy for the precinct. Feedback indicated businesses generally were not open to paying both membership fees and were more inclined to expect greater action from MPRLA as the rate levy body with funds to expend.



MPRLA must meet the needs of the modern day trader, it can no longer be solely focused on marketing, it must adapt.

With a disconnect between what traders expect of MPRLA and what it can deliver in its current format, clarification on MPRLA's roles and responsibilities is sought and should be clearly articulated to all members.

	WE WILL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support your business Market and promote your business/precinct Provide information and tools to grow your business Facilitate opportunities to improve your business Advocate on behalf of your business and the precinct Provide collateral, education and raise awareness of precinct issues Support better shopping experiences in the precinct Deliver strong ROI for rate levy expenditure
	WE ARE NOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investors Infrastructure providers Developers Landlords Council Responsible for your business/making it profitable

With the proportional changes in sectors within the precinct reflecting an increased number of professional services and health and well-being businesses expectations of MPRLA to deliver in other areas such as advocacy, representation, business development and leadership must be considered.

Marketing and promotion of the precinct must remain a key focus of MPRLA; however there is a clear need to broaden the scope of MPRLA and its activities in the future.

NOW	TRADERS WANT	FUTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Events Promotion Partnerships Advocacy Insights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precinct improvements Parking improvements Streetscape improvements Business support – help with their business Move with the times/change with the times Innovation Focus on the complete customer experience Destination focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic partnerships Investment support Business development Professional development Industry development Research Place making Adaptable Innovative Leadership

The formation of MPRLA committee is made up of representatives from each 'sub-precinct' within the boundaries of the rate levy precinct. To support a more diverse, progressive and engaged committee a skills based representative board should be considered.

The paid resourcing currently has a strong focus on marketing and events. To adequately respond to trader needs and future directions of the association, the role will need to expand and diversify, with a greater emphasis on strategic thought, facilitation and engagement, and business development.

Strategic Context

Strategic objectives of MPRLA over the past few years have been to:

- 1 Create a 'Destination' and attract businesses to the precinct
- 2 Rejuvenate the night economy
- 3 Leverage from current developments in the precinct
- 4 Develop a roadmap for Greenspace and resting areas
- 5 Work closer with Council to develop a streetscape plan.

Traditionally Council is the key stakeholder and contributor for objectives four and five; however MPRLA still need to continue to advocate for and work in partnership with Council for these initiatives and drive the first three objectives.

The previous MPRLA Business Plan reviewed key insights and recommendations into the precinct, of which many still remain relevant today. Of note were:

- **A particular focus was to attract businesses to the precinct:** not primarily a MPRLA function, however opportunities to work with MVCC to encourage and support new investment should be a key focus moving forward
- **A strength noted was the high level of public transport access:** this advantage has not been tapped into and strategies to leverage this should be considered
- **Weaknesses include tired facades and lack of night time economy:** these are still areas of concern and work needs to be done to address these areas. Initially a key pillar of the MVCC Economic Development Strategy 2014, this strategy is outdated and has not been replaced
- **Place - Pride of Place strategy:** raised as a key focus in the action plan, still a significant concern for the precinct, this must be addressed in the immediate future
- **Status quo and competition:** identified as future challenges, they have never been more pertinent to the precinct as they are today.

In addition to the above, two key strategies were highlighted in the previous business plan:

- Rebranding and Reimagining Puckle Street Precinct
- Partnerships.

Work has been done in this space over the past few years, particularly around brand and the progression to an all-encompassing precinct brand, rather than just Puckle St. This reflects the changing nature of the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre and the need to market the rated area collectively. A Moonee Ponds3039 logo, website and associated social media handles has further enhanced the spread of the brand across digital portals. This has laid the foundation and is heading in the right direction, though further work around brand recognition and impact is required. Specifically the associated tagline of the brand 'your local precinct' raises the question of what the precinct wants to be known for and contradicts/dilutes a key objective to establish Moonee Ponds precinct as a destination, not just a local shopping precinct.

Although already identified in a number of plans, strategic partnerships with key stakeholders including community, government and businesses could be further improved to support stronger economic growth and opportunities within the precinct.

The omission of clear KPI's, measurement and analysis of the previous business plan and associated action plans has potentially contributed to a rather ad-hoc approach to initiatives and activities delivered by MPRLA over the past few years. Some actions/issues have not been addressed, others improved and some have even exacerbated. A clear, focused and prioritised plan will support MPRLA to direct expenditure wisely and deliver a strong ROI for all members.

Policy Context

Plan Melbourne recognises Moonee Ponds as a Major Activity Centre (MAC). The plan highlights the need for continued investment and strategic planning in the area to support a growing population and increased high density living.

As previously indicated currently MVCC do not have a dedicated economic development strategy, therefore the primary policy document guiding the precinct is the MVCC 2040 Strategy (the Strategy).

The Strategy is Moonee Valley City Council's long-term plan for improving the health, vibrancy and resilience of the city over the next two decades. It has been prepared to shape the type of city and neighbourhood's residents want to live in. It is underpinned by five key themes and building blocks for a healthy city:

- 1 FAIR: A fair city that values diversity, where everyone feels safe, is included, is healthy and has access to services and housing
- 1 **THRIVING: A thriving city with access to jobs, lifelong learning, vibrant and dynamic activity centres**
- 1 CONNECTED: A connected city of accessible, active and sustainable transport choices
- 1 GREEN: A green city that is ecologically healthy and environmentally responsible
- 1 BEAUTIFUL: A beautiful city that celebrates its identity, heritage and open spaces.

This framework will be delivered across 13 neighbourhoods (one of which is Moonee Ponds), which allow MVCC to identify local priorities and tailor responses to suit each neighbourhood, while improving the health and vibrancy of all parts of the city.

Council acknowledges the business community and its importance to the municipality specifically through theme two, **THRIVING**. The relevant strategic directions are:

Strategic direction 7 – A city that responds to a changing economic landscape

- 7.1 Enable new and emerging industries and work practices
- 7.2 Provide business support and remove obstacles to growth
- 7.3 Leverage and expand on current business opportunities

Target: Moonee Valley is a city where our economic environment facilitates thriving activity centres and new and emerging enterprise.

Strategic direction 8 – A city with things to see and do

- 8.2 Enhance our activity centres as places for entertainment and gathering

Target: Across Moonee Valley there is increased participation and value placed in the arts, sport, culture and local community-run events.

Although these strategic directions support growth and improvement in the activity centre (precinct), in recent times the absence of a dedicated economic development strategy and direction has not been conducive to business growth, improvement and innovation at both a high strategic and grass roots level.



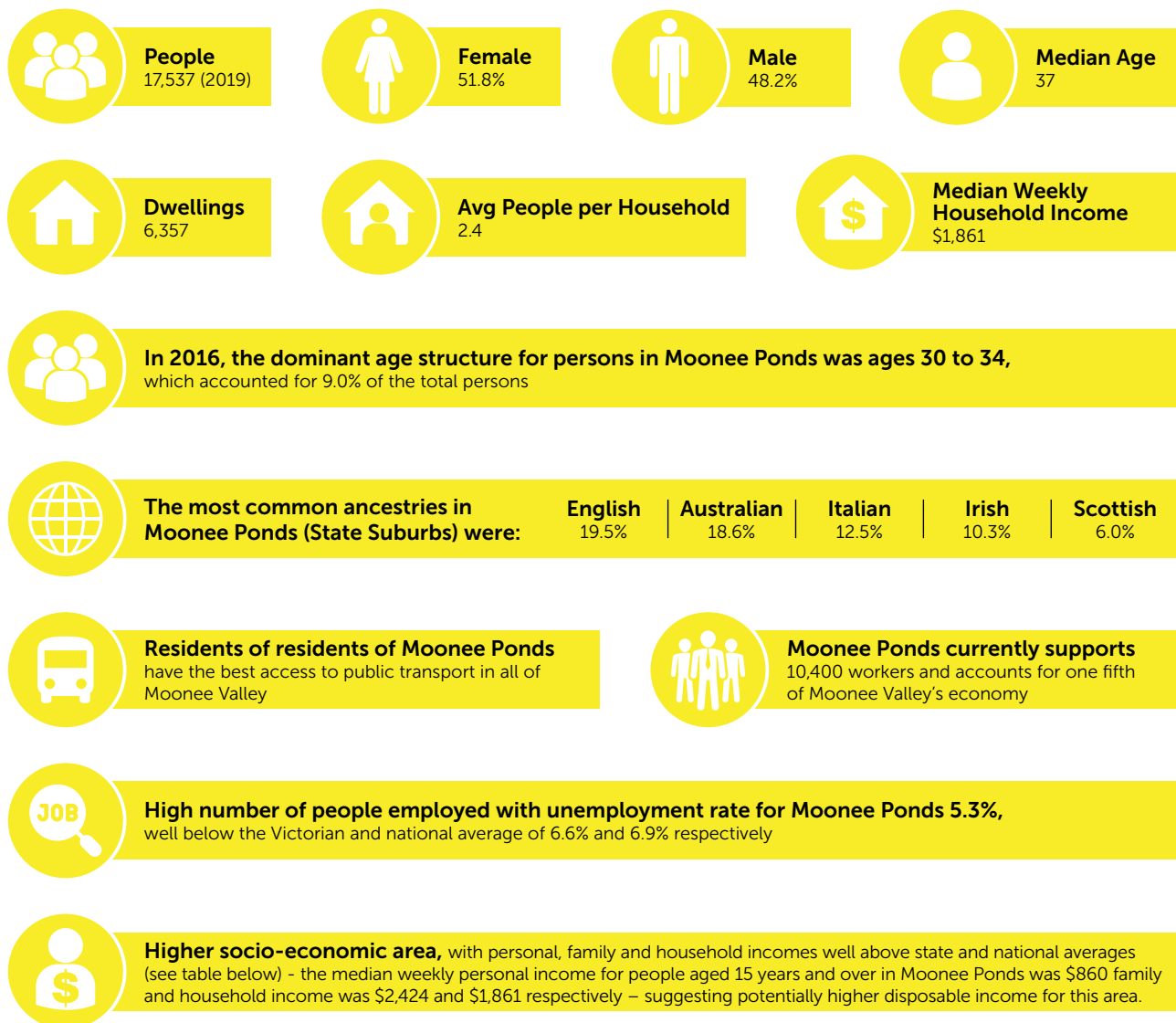
"Our activity centres will be entertainment precincts, providing vibrant hubs for residents and visitors that foster a sense of community and place."



Locality Context

Neighbourhood Profile

Snapshot/Fast Facts: Moonee Ponds Neighbourhood



FAST FACTS SOURCE:
http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC21730

TABLE SOURCE:
<https://economy.id.com.au/moonee-valley/market-characteristics>

Income	Moonee Ponds	State	National
Personal	\$860	\$644	\$662
Family	\$2,424	\$1,715	\$1,734
Household	\$1,861	\$1,419	\$1,438

Future/forecasts

Moonee Valley and specifically Moonee Ponds is a changing place. Growth is forecasted in all neighbourhoods for the municipality and it's ideally placed, if well planned for, to take advantage of the opportunities that present.



The City of Moonee Valley population forecast for 2019 is 130,265, and is forecast to grow to 177,029 by 2041, an increase of 35.90%.¹

2019 Population	2040 forecast population	% change (increase)
17,537	27,633	57.7%

Moonee Ponds Population (neighbourhood) ²

Population growth for Moonee Ponds is forecast to grow annually at around 3.2%-3.8% while Moonee Valley municipality anticipated growth is around 1.5%-1.9%. The largest increase in persons for Moonee Ponds between 2016 and 2026 is forecast to be in ages 30 to 34, which is expected to increase by 1,026 and account for 10.4% of the total persons. The largest five year age group in 2026 is forecast to be 30-34 years, with this trend expected to continue until 2041, with the 30-34 years still the most dominant age group.³



The greatest population change for Moonee Ponds is forecast for the period from 2017 to 2021, particularly 2019 and 2020, which is expected to have a net increase of 4,814 people.³

This highlights the neighbourhood's importance as an activity centre and the need to plan for these new residents. MVCC have identified Moonee Ponds and more specifically Puckle St as an 'anchor' for the Moonee Ponds neighbourhood. The anchors will be a key focus for Council's neighbourhood planning approach and acknowledges Moonee Ponds precinct as a key centre in the municipality.

An 'anchor' is a place where communities gather for activities, events, recreation and to socialise at the heart of the community. Some communities have more than one anchor or will use anchors of other neighbourhoods. **Puckle Street has been identified as the current anchor for the Moonee Ponds neighbourhood.** By 2040, the Moonee Valley Racecourse is expected to be home to a number of leisure and recreation opportunities, serving as an important asset to the community and as a second community anchor.

MVCC 2040 Strategy

¹ forecast.id.com.au/moonee-valley

² forecast.id.com.au/moonee-valley

³ forecast.id.com.au/moonee-valley

⁴ forecast.id.com.au/moonee-valley/components-of-population-change

Housing

Dominant groups currently residing in Moonee Ponds include young adults, families with children and group households. By 2040, Moonee Ponds is forecast to accommodate an increased number of young families and older families. An increase and change in population will bring many benefits to the vibrancy of the neighbourhood, but will also bring challenges.

Moonee Ponds is expected to undergo significant growth in the period to 2040. A large

proportion of the growth will be accommodated in the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre and the redeveloped Moonee Valley Racecourse. Development in these areas is expected to be in the form of higher-density apartments.

Outside these two growth locations, new housing is expected to be developed in a variety of ways, including medium-density infill development across the neighbourhood and pockets of higher-density development along Mt Alexander Road. More accessible

and smaller dwellings may be in strong demand to cater for the large increase in one-person and older-person households.⁵

By 2040 an 85% increase in one-person households in Moonee Ponds is forecast. Dwellings are expected to increase 4.2-4.8% pa from 6357 to approximately 11,950 – 12,750 in 2040. The municipal average increase is only 2.1-2.5%, again highlighting the significant growth expected in Moonee Ponds.

Neighbourhood Vision

Council has outlined their vision for Moonee Ponds in the future and is articulated below.

In 2040 Moonee Ponds will:

- be an attractive, cosmopolitan city centre that fosters creativity and imagination
- be a premier business, civic, cultural, creative and entertainment destination of the municipality
- enjoy high-quality public spaces for events and activities
- include a safe and accessible public transport interchange
- have a second anchor for the community through the redeveloped Moonee Valley Racecourse
- feature high-quality architecture and design in all new higher-density development
- connect with a naturalised and revitalised Moonee Ponds Creek
- provide a diversity of housing options for new and existing residents
- celebrate and protect its valued heritage
- support cycling and walking as preferred modes of transport
- include an excellent network of cycling and walking connections within and to other neighbourhoods, supporting an active and healthy community
- boast a variety of resilient and vibrant green spaces, including a new open space at Moonee Valley Racecourse.

⁵ MVCC 2040 Strategy



Catchments

Five primary market catchment areas have been identified for the Moonee Ponds precinct. A number of secondary and tertiary catchment areas exist, with emerging markets suggested further afield.

Primary or core catchment areas are all within a two-three km radius of the Moonee Ponds activity centre and majority are expected to have significant population growth in coming years. This catchment includes residents, homeowners and workers.

- Moonee ponds
- Ascot Vale
- Travancore
- Essendon/Essendon North
- Aberfeldie

Secondary catchment

- 10km radius
- Northern suburbs and further afield

Tertiary catchment

- West
- Melbourne and beyond – new markets/emerging markets



2019 Population	2019 Population – current	2041 projected population	% increase
Moonee Ponds	17,537	27,633	57.7%
Ascot Vale	16,297	29,501	81.02%
Essendon/Essendon North	26,708	38,611	44.56%
Travancore	11,523	14,761	28.10%
Aberfeldie	4,201	4,699	11.86%
TOTAL	76,266	115,205	51.05%

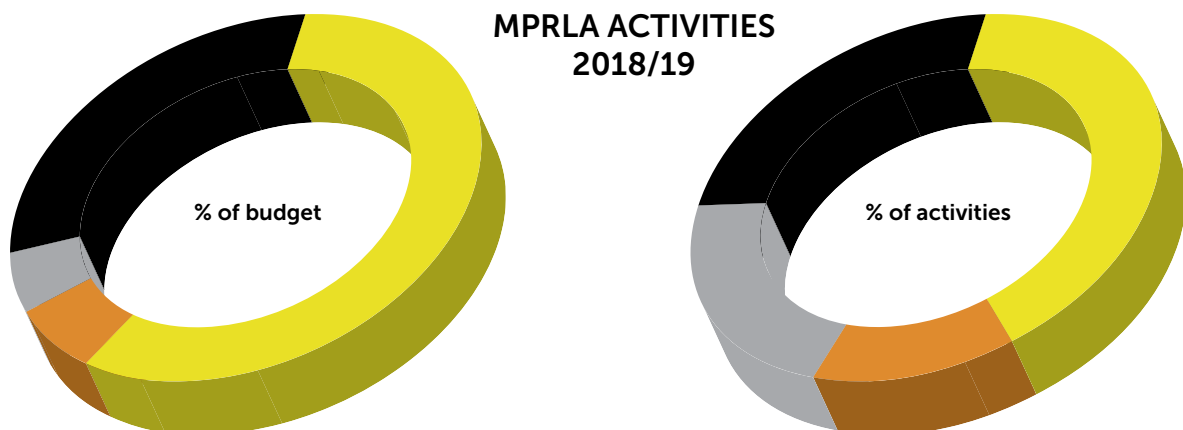
SOURCE: <https://forecast.id.com.au/moonee-valley>

Analysis

Current Activities & Expenditure

Many of the initiatives and activities implemented by MPRLA have focused primarily on marketing campaigns designed to drive customers to the precinct. They have laid a great foundation to be built upon, and to enable the best possible return on investment they should be supported to grow, develop and evolve for the future. If we take a closer look at all MPRLA activities it paints a clearer picture of just where and how resources are being spent and allocated.

Approximately 40% of all MPRLA activities were dedicated to events; however they take up a considerable amount of time, energy and resources to deliver accounting for nearly 60% of the entire MPRLA budget. If we break this down even further we can see exactly where funds are allocated and on which set of activities. Of the 28 key activities that MPRLA undertook this financial year (2018/19), events clearly dominate, with business development and advocacy activities getting little attention – which to be fair haven't been the key focus of the association in recent years, nor their primary purpose. Nearly 90% of the budget was spent on events and management fees.



ACTIVITY	Number of ACTIVITIES	% of ACTIVITIES	% of BUDGET
Events	11	40%	58%
Marketing	4	14%	7%
Digital & social media	6	21%	6%
Management/Admin	7	25%	29%
Business Development	0	0%	0%
Advocacy	0	0%	0%
TOTALS	28	100%	100%

Although the above figures reflect the direct financial costs of the association, they do not take into account supplier goodwill, in-kind support, committee in-kind support, volunteers and the immeasurable amount of hours that are contributed to MPRLA and the running of its activities.

Strengths

Research identified a number of key strengths for the Moonee Ponds precinct. Whilst some are already acknowledged strengths, emerging and underutilised strengths were also identified.

One stop shop

The precinct is well recognised by customers and traders as the place you can “get everything you need.” It has the essentials and provides a good variety of shops so that you really don’t need to leave or go elsewhere for your shopping needs. Considered the CBD of Moonee Valley, it does provide a total offer for shoppers including:

- Fashion
- Food
- Professional services
- General/essentials (banks, post office, etc)
- Franchise/big name tenants
- Supermarkets (the big three – Coles, Aldi and Woolworths); and
- Cinema (expected to open late 2019).

“Convenient, lots of variety, everything I need, local, great community vibe.”

“Am able to run most of my errands in the one stop.”

Atmosphere

Overwhelming feedback reinforced people’s love of the community feel that the precinct radiates and the way it makes people feel once they were there. Friendly and familiar faces are key attributes of this street precinct and the large village feel it projects is certainly a key strength for the area over and above larger soulless shopping centres.

“Supporting local traders and shops. Prefer street shopping over shopping centres.”

4

The top four things customers⁶ like most about Moonee Ponds precinct are::

Local/
Convenient

Variety of
shops

Atmosphere

Food/coffee

2

The top two reasons⁶ for visiting Moonee Ponds precinct are:

Shopping

Eating/
Dining

⁶ MPRLA Online and intercept customer surveys -2018 & 2019

Easy to access - connected

Conveniently located with well-developed infrastructure, the precinct is serviced by the three main public transport connectors – train, tram and bus, a key advantage over other urban precincts. Situated on a main thoroughfare and interchange, it's very well placed to take advantage of this prized, highly visible and highly connected location.

Food

The growing foodie scene and emergence of destination food offerings – both cafes and restaurants, is a key fundamental for the precinct as it seeks to serve a variety of markets including locals, residents, workers and new customers.

Niche products

The precinct has a number of unique shops or products that cannot be found elsewhere, i.e.: at the major shopping centres. This creates a positive point of difference to shoppers and should be further leveraged.

Events

The growing number of events held in recent years instigated by MPRLA and in-conjunction with Council have increased foot traffic and awareness of the precinct, particularly with families. Large events complemented by smaller events, activations or promotions have been quite successful and continue drive positive PR for the precinct.

Overall Moonee Ponds precinct has a number of recognised strengths. Research clearly supports the brand statement of the precinct, which is ***“to make it your ‘one stop destination’, the first place you think of for fashion, food and a shopping experience in the North West. To provide you with a boutique shopping and cafe culture vibe with an enjoyable, unique & high-end feel.”***



Areas for improvement

Research also identified a number of areas for improvement in the precinct. Again some of these are already well-established and known; however they continue to hinder the growth and long-term prosperity of the precinct.

Parking

The discontentment of both shoppers and traders over parking is palpable and may have been exacerbated by the large volume of recent development. It is a significant deterrent for the precinct. Clearly there is a need to address parking issues within the precinct around time constraints, lack of parking, staff parking, perceptions of no-where to park and lastly the attitude of traders which perpetuates the perception of parking issues in the precinct and has a negative impact on customers and their interactions with the precinct.



CASE STUDY: Taksim Square Turkish Restaurant

On numerous occasions during the evening, customers have actually cancelled bookings at the restaurant because they are unable to find a park after driving around and around several times. They have given up, called to cancel and gone elsewhere - resulting in loss of income, and the increased likelihood they will not return in future fuelling the perception/reputation of Moonee Ponds as a hard place to park.

Fundamentals / Streetscape

Streetscape of the precinct and housekeeping fundamentals of the area must be a priority moving forward. The visual appeal of the precinct is lacking – particularly in Holmes Rd, Margaret St and Mt Alexander Rd, and a strategic focus is required to address key concerns such as cleanliness, lighting, safety, footpaths, green space and seating. The area lacks a 'wow' factor to engage customers and entice them to meander, stay longer and spend more.

Council is currently drafting a Streetscape Plan for the precinct, **MPAC to 2040 – Moonee Ponds Activity Centre Local Plan**. It's a long term futuristic vision, driven by transport and traffic management solutions, including increased parking options. MPRLA must work with Council to support implementation of this plan as a high priority for the precinct.

"It must get the fundamentals right to become a destination, fix the basics first and build from there."

Welcome / Sense of arrival

An underwhelming sense of arrival with a lack of welcome to the precinct highlights the need for stronger destination branding on the ground. Welcome signage alerting customers to the precinct is limited and generally unappealing, doesn't align to brand or character of the precinct and is not supported at a business level.

Congestion / Traffic flow

Many of the precinct roads are in poor condition, which has only been heightened by the high level of development occurring throughout the precinct. Congestion has substantially grown in recent years and continues to be an issue for customers trying to navigate the precinct, particularly by car.

"The traffic flow in the area is the worst and takes too long to drive around the block with all the one way streets and the congestion. It's really the one frustrating factor about getting around this area."

Puckle St

Of all areas in the precinct, there is a sense that Puckle St has been neglected in recent years. It appears a little old, run-down, dirty, lacks atmosphere and with vacant shops not painting a pretty picture it certainly is not the Puckle St it once was famous for. The street is not visually appealing to the eye, lacks a concentration of destination shops and can be a ghost town on weekends.

Disconnection of Precincts

A disconnect, predominantly physical, between the sub-precincts discourages foot traffic and potential customers from exploring all areas of the precinct. At times as a disjointed precinct it can be hard to market and promote, whilst also proving difficult to represent each sub-precinct with their own specific needs and wants.

Mostly notably is the disconnection between the main activity centre and Moonee Valley Racecourse – both geographically and collaboratively. The sense of distance from the main areas prohibits potential customers and the lack of integration and cross promotion between the venue itself and operators further creates a divide between the two.

MPRLA – role/current offering

The rate levy association continues to market and promote the precinct with a variety of initiatives and activities designed to drive people to the precinct. In addition to these activities, some traders felt the association could play an even bigger role than just marketing as it just wasn't meeting their needs in the current format. A more inclusive approach and the need for business support and engagement at the coalface, along with understanding the full complement of business needs would ensure that the association meets the needs of all traders under one united voice.

In addition, a strong strategic vision and plan would allow better allocation of funds and resources, and guidance to limit random or ad-hoc approach to activities and initiatives undertaken by MPRLA.



Operators

Operators can make or break a customer experience, and research has demonstrated that some businesses are not delivering the complete experience, which is not only detrimental to their business, but the precinct overall. Some traders are demoralised and this can be reflected in their customer interactions – by way of bad service, bad attitude, not marketing their own business well, not adapting to change and their general capacity to run a successful business.

Not all traders are working cohesively and collaboratively nor are they taking advantage of opportunities presented to them – as a collective the precinct has more impact and opportunity to increase visitation and spend.

Perception

In recent years the positive perception of the area has decreased/declined – the narrative has become more negative. The perception is that the precinct is not inviting, has nothing to attract people, is not ‘what it used to be’ and is certainly not a destination in its own right. This highlights the need to build on the foundational brand work that has already begun and saturate the market with positive and inspiring stories of the precinct to change this current perception.

Building on the current Moonee Ponds digital brand, getting the basics right on the ground and delivering an outstanding customer experience will be a step in the right direction to changing customer perceptions of the precinct and enticing shoppers back to the area.

Strategic partnerships

Developing strategic partnerships with key stakeholders such as Council, developers, Moonee Valley Racecourse and the traders themselves need to continue to be a focus, with opportunities to develop stronger connections and create real tangible impact in the precinct.

Connecting the racecourse to the main activity centre, working with developers to capitalise on new residents, continuing to work with Council to support businesses rather than just regulatory concerns and providing information to the most important stakeholder – businesses is crucial to support future growth in the precinct.

Limiting Factors / Barriers to Growth

There are a number of factors that are not conducive to running successful businesses – they don’t support growth or innovation and are summarised below:

- High rents - expectations from landlords that traders will do well based on reputation of yesteryear – that is not always the case in current climate
- Some council laws are outdated, archaic and are not progressive or conducive to business innovation meaning modern day activities such as footpath trading are near impossible
- Council can implement things that are against the lifeblood of the district
- Appears no restrictions or regulations on buildings/ facades – old, run down, broken, no care shown to upkeep premises or activate if vacant
- Chaotic intersection – Mt Rd/Pascoe Vale Rd, Puckle St and Ascot vale Rd
- A lack of genuine interest and concern for local traders from Council. No defined economic development strategy or small business policy from Council, with a view that the ‘market’ will ensure development and growth – this is not the case.

These issues are outside of the control of MPRLA; however they are clearly having an impact on traders and could be improved to support traders to grow and develop.

BUSINESS SNAPSHOT:

Some businesses reported a steep decline in foot traffic to the precinct, as much as 25% year on year in some cases. A loss of a quarter of walk-in sales for some businesses is continuing to make it tough for small businesses to survive in the precinct. Other businesses reported steady sales, however 75% of survey respondents indicated business has not grown in the past 12 months.⁷

Foot traffic is down on many traditional High St shopping precincts - even the CBD is experiencing a down turn in retail foot traffic, as much as 12% in some months.⁸

⁷ MPRLA Business survey 2018-19

⁸ Financial Review article, January 2019

Integration of Events

Whilst a number of events are held both within and outside the precinct, there is a lack of integration between the event and traders to capitalise on the extra people coming into the area. Community events are not held in the main activity centres and local laws are restrictive to street activations, even on weekends. Any events or activations must engage with operators and provide opportunities to leverage off and connect even further with attendees.

Some of the key weaknesses are outside of the control of MPRLA and not necessarily the role of MPRLA to fix – however it is affecting the precinct; it is having an impact on businesses and trade, therefore as a trader representative association MPRLA must act. Advocate, lead, partner, support, teach, grow, develop – all for a thriving precinct.



"The area feels stale"

"I'd like more fashion shops"

"Customer service is hit and miss"

"I never go there; it's too hard to park"

"Decreased parking over the past few years - increasingly easier to go to Highpoint"

"Shop opening hours are too unpredictable"

"So many parking restrictions - too hard to get a park"

"Be good to have some high-end specialty shops in the area"

"Closes too early (when I want to grab something late at night)"

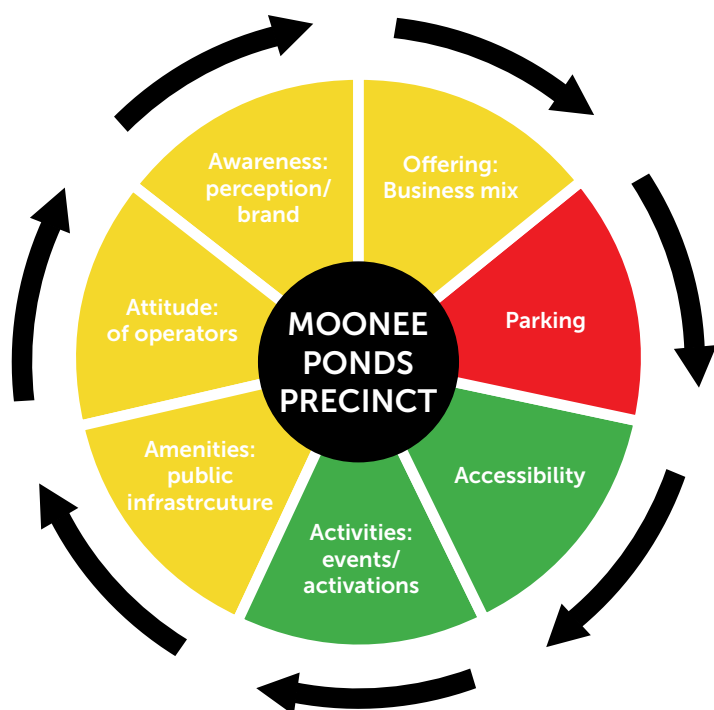
"Moonee Ponds is not compelling enough to entice visitors/customers from outside the immediate catchment area; we are not a destination, just a spot for locals."

"Worrying about getting parking fine and rushing to do a couple of things because of that it's easier to shop and eat elsewhere"



Drivers / Success Enablers

All vibrant, thriving and prosperous activity centres or precincts have commonalities and are underpinned by certain key elements. Research tells us successful destinations or precincts are performing well in all of these drivers or “success enablers”.



So, what are the enablers, what are our customers saying about our precinct, what do our customers want and how do we stack up against those precinct fundamentals?

Based on feedback received using the traffic light system, the diagram highlights how the precinct is tracking against those key elements.

Green indicates areas the precinct is doing well in; orange indicates area for improvement and red are areas of concern. Moonee Ponds is clearly an accessible destination and well serviced by all modes of transport as earlier indicated, however parking is a key concern and considering the majority of shoppers drive to the precinct⁹, cannot be overlooked. A few areas for improvement are highlighted which include pressure on public amenities and infrastructure, maintaining a strong diverse businesses mix, underwhelming perceptions of the precinct, brand, PR and business development activities. These should be a key focus for MPRLA moving forward.

Obviously the aim is to be completely green; however this is rarely achievable and this diagram only provides a high level overview of these success enablers. Moonee Ponds does however have the opportunity to restore some of its former glory by getting the fundamentals right.

⁹ MPRLA Online and intercept customer surveys -2018 & 2019



Opportunities

As with any destination opportunities present themselves at all times, however the challenge is to leverage off and harness the opportunity turning it into tangible, profitable results for all businesses.

New Residents / Developments

The number one opportunity for the precinct is undoubtedly the vast influx of new residents who will call the precinct home. It is anticipated that four to five thousand new residents will call Moonee Ponds precinct home in the future. A number of developments have already commenced with further to come to fruition in coming years. With the population for MPAC forecast to triple to more than 11,500 people by 2040, the following table is a list of developments occurring in Moonee Ponds currently or with planning permits to occur in the next few years.

Address	No. of Residences
687 Mt Alexander Road	220
28-30 Young Street	30
17-23 Puckle St	151
13-15 Norwood Crescent	16
343-349 Ascot Vale Road	TBC
31-43 Puckle Street	84
144 Pascoe Vale Road	22
173-177 Pascoe Vale Road	19
9 Shuter Street	67
8 Shuter Street	43
15 Everage Street	297
55 Homer Street	277
40 Hall Street	450
30-32 Holmes Rd	33
33 Dean St (MVRV)	TBC

This is unparalleled development for any urban municipality and presents a golden opportunity to capture thousands of new customers who will be seeking a whole new range of goods and services. These new residents will most likely have a higher disposable income, possibly a higher proportion of investor buyers rather than home owners which means more renters to the precinct. Traditionally renters are:

- A want it now generation
- Wanting to eat out
- Wanting to visit local bars
- Driven by entertainment
- Looking for easy/accessible/quick options
- Lazy/wanting convenience.

Opportunities exist to significantly activate the night-time economy which has long been on the agenda for the precinct. These once in a lifetime opportunity could help transform the precinct into a flourishing bustling thriving centre and inject additional customers and spend into all businesses.

"It's no surprise that higher density hubs are set to change suburban living expectations. These hubs deliver easy living through low maintenance and high convenience environments. As living density grows this will likely become the norm and reduce the need to travel to shopping centres. While the business types these strips house will vary based on location; being within walking distance of high density apartments will mean businesses that are complimentary to these potential customers will without doubt flourish."

Inside Retail

Population increase

As with all Melbourne metropolitan areas, Moonee Valley has experienced a spike in growth in recent years, and this trend is forecast to continue. In addition to population growth, demographics of the municipality will change. While the community is ageing, there will also be more young professionals and a regeneration of families. Similar to other Melbourne metropolitan areas, population growth is expected to continue and will come whether we plan for it or not.

Housing demand is forecast to be considerably high for the inner north market and strong demand is also predicted for sought after suburbs such as Moonee Ponds and Ascot Vale with suggested growth forecasts of 83.3% and 69% respectively.¹⁰

Activation of Destination Businesses!

Customer motivations and needs are slowly changing. The tide is turning and in recent years the trend is towards people wanting that physical and human interaction for their shopping experience and consideration of conscious shopping – more and more people are shopping where it aligns with their values, ethics and morals. Businesses should work together to improve their own individual business which will guard against considerable competition in the future – collectively be a 'destination' and a place people want to visit, stay and spend. This is where a high street precinct can have an advantage over the mass-produced shopping lands and work should focus on continuing to build on and attract these 'destination' or 'drawcard' businesses so that they become attractors in their own right and the precinct remains a competitive entity.

The expected opening of the Puckle St cinema in late 2019 is a welcome addition to the precinct and opportunities to promote, market and form strategic partnerships should be explored – all of which will only drive more traffic to the area.

Collaboration

Opportunities exist for traders to work more collaboratively and cohesively – for the betterment of not only the precinct, but their individual businesses. There is little evidence to suggest operators are thoroughly engaged and integrated with each other and in precinct marketing campaigns and local events. Operators have the chance to collaborate and leverage off the initiatives delivered by MPRLA to positively impact and influence their business.

Social media

Continue to leverage off opportunities provided by digital and social media. Work to date on these portals should be continued and built upon to really take advantage of the new demographics moving into the area, with targeted campaigns to drive traffic to the precinct and support customers to become advocates and ambassadors for the precinct.

Market leader Facebook was the first social network to surpass one billion registered accounts and currently sits at 2.27 billion monthly active users, however internet marketers agree that Instagram is the sweetheart of social media. The reasons are not far-fetched as it registers one billion active users monthly, with half of them following businesses. Instagram has evolved to become a powerful marketing tool for businesses that look to improve their visibility and presence.¹¹

Location/Hub – underutilised

The precinct is well-serviced by all modes of transport and attracts a large amount of through traffic – thus opportunities exist to capture more of this market. Leverage off the prized location and public transport hub/interchange – challenge is to get these people to stay in the precinct and not use it as a thoroughfare onwards to another destination/precinct, make it attractive for them to stop.

¹⁰ Nikki Gervasi Real Estate – Housing Forecasts

¹¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

In addition, opportunities exist to encourage greater use of public transport; it's certainly an underutilised asset and could assist with parking and congestion concerns which will continue in the immediate future.

Economic advantage

Moonee Ponds is situated in a high socio-economic area providing natural advantages to local businesses, which should capitalise on the typically high disposable income that households have to spend. The average family and household incomes are well above state and national averages – the median weekly income for a Moonee Ponds family was \$2,424, with the state and national average \$1715 and \$1734 respectively. Compared to lower socio-economic areas and municipalities, Moonee Ponds residents have a higher proportion of disposable income and this opportunity should never be taken for granted.

MVRC redevelopment

With the Redevelopment and the re-launch of Moonee Valley racecourse, opportunities exist to leverage off this unique and historic event. A new batch of residents, primarily owner/occupiers will call the precinct home and the racecourse will transform into a state of the art entertainment precinct providing a key competitive advantage for the area – shopping, dining and racing all in one.



Future Challenges

As any area grows, it must adapt to meet future needs, however with growth inherently comes challenges. The precinct will face challenges over the coming years, and if well-prepared can plan to tackle these challenges with strategic solutions rather than a reactive ad-hoc approach. A number of continued and future challenges are identified below.

Development / Construction

The single biggest challenge, whilst also the single biggest opportunity, is development - more specifically the level and number of developments for the precinct.

With such a high concentration of people moving in, there will be increased pressures on public infrastructure, amenities, transport, roads, etc, along with concern over integration of new residents and demographics with current residents.

The next five years will see the precinct remain a construction zone, with development front and centre – so it's imperative that strategies are put in place to support businesses through this phase, not just to survive, but to thrive and leverage off the uniqueness of the situation.

Naturally with an increased level of development come concerns around traffic flow, disruptions, congestion and even overcrowding at level crossings – all already acknowledged as key concerns for the precinct.

On the flip side the redevelopment of Moonee Valley Racecourse will see it close for approximately three years, so the challenge will be keeping this space active and connected during this phase.

Parking

Considered the biggest threat to the area in the next 12-24 months by traders surveyed¹², parking remains a hot topic. Whilst MPRLA cannot, and should not build additional carparks, solutions to support both customer and staff parking initiatives should be sought. Parking issues within the precinct see businesses losing customers to other centres, some businesses finding it difficult to attract and keep staff, are not supportive of encouraging shoppers to stay longer and spend more, while permit zones are at times to the detriment of customers.

"There is no all-day parking available for my staff or patrons. Construction is and has been consistently disruptive and detrimental to my business."

Paid parking has been raised by Council in recent times and it's worth noting that officers are in the process of distributing a notice advising that in order for Council to deal with increasing demands and appropriately plan for the future, more effective management of publicly available parking is required. Time based and resident exempt restrictions have been previously used to protect parking availability in residential areas, however it is now considered appropriate to implement paid parking in order to manage parking demands in specific areas and influence mode choice in line with the objectives of MV2040. Importantly, Council highlights that parking fees are principally designed to influence behaviour, and by implementing paid parking in the selected areas, the aim is to free up parking spaces for those who live and shop in the area and to encourage people to walk, ride or catch public transport, rather than drive.

¹² MPRLA Business survey 2018-19

The proposed sites affecting the MPAC are:

- East side of Eddy Street, Moonee Ponds, between Taylor Street to the north and Homer Street to the south (6 new spaces)
- West side of Penny Lane, Moonee Ponds, between Young Street to the north and Gladstone Street to the south (5 new spaces)
- West side of Moore Street, Moonee Ponds, between Gladstone Street to the north and Browning Street to the south (29 spaces)

Clearly identified as a major issue for the precinct both now and into the future, it is not the role of, nor the responsibility of MPRLA to fix the parking issues/problems with the precinct. Having said that, there are a number of initiatives they can implement and advocate for to negate some of the parking issues.

Business mix

The challenge for the precinct will be continuing to provide a unique, attractive and complementary offer for both customers and investors, ensuring business mix supports the strategic vision and associated brand of the precinct. Maintaining and attracting a diverse product offering only encourages repeat visitation and engages new markets, which also entices new investment into the precinct.

"I like the mix of old style strip shopping specialty shops and Moonee Ponds Central."

Pedestrian Movements / Habits

As the precinct evolves and green space becomes more prevalent, the challenge will be to change existing pedestrian movements and break traditional customer habits into exploring the precinct further.

Many of the existing customers have regular routes they travel and don't meander or linger in the precinct – they know what they want and get in and get out. Whilst parking can inhibit length of stay in the precinct, changing and influencing customer behaviour to utilise the new spaces/hubs to stay longer and spend more should be encouraged.

In light of the influx of new residents, efficient movement of and dealing with the increase in pedestrians will also need to be considered.

CASE STUDY: Specsavers

Moved from Puckle St into the Mirvac Shopping Centre (Moonee Ponds Central) and saw an immediate increase in customer traffic. Customers commented they had no idea there was a glasses shop in the precinct and hadn't realised it was here, others hadn't been for years but came back.

Anecdotal evidence suggested customer's traditional movements and habits limited them from walking further than Hall St – they had a daily or weekly routine that consisted of the same route and never deviated. So whilst the service/business is important and one that many regulars want/need their forces of habit deterred them from exploring the precinct further and spending more time/money in the area.

Changing Demographics – meeting and exceeding customer expectations

Moonee Ponds must adapt to meet customer needs and expectations. The precinct will need to support and deliver on expectations that inner urban residents have and expect of an area, such as being:

- Aesthetically pleasing
- Safe
- Full of a variety of cafes/restaurants
- Areas to play/hangout
- Active/alive
- Vibrant
- OPEN – at the times they want (especially night-time)
- Events/activations.

Is the precinct equipped to deal with this new customer and their needs, wants and demands? High expectations from customers – most notably the 'new' residents, who have a 'need it now, want it now' mentality and expect everything at their fingertips will be a serious challenge for the precinct.

Brand reality versus expectation/customer experience needs to be a serious focus for the area. Moonee Ponds must be able to provide a full offer and deliver on the brand promise, otherwise it risks over promising and under delivering. In addition to expectations, the challenge will be to engage with these new residents, with no connection to the area, how do we build that connection and ensure they stay local – don't assume people will automatically want to shop here.

Whilst the influx of new residents present challenges, the change in existing residents and customers will see a large proportion of regulars age and this older demographic may not contribute as much revenue as they have to the precinct in previous years. We must consider the long-term residents/customers and how we support them and accommodate their needs.

Competition

Both online and larger shopping centres will continue to be a challenge for all high street precincts, not just Moonee Ponds.

Competition is recognised from the major shopping centres in the region to be:

- Highpoint
- Essendon Fields
- Airport West
- Essendon DFO.

The challenge here will be to attract and hold customers against this competition by providing a unique and complete personalised customer experience that cannot be duplicated online or by major centres. Focus on points of differentiation and leverage off the village feel and country town atmosphere that is obsolete in these larger centres or online.



Status Quo

A failure to act and do nothing will have a greater impact on the precinct than ever before. The precinct cannot continue to lose customers to the other areas, allow negative perceptions of the area to breed, it must engage and energise operators to move with the times, improve and adapt to the changing customer needs, meet and exceed customer expectations.

In addition, MPRLA must advocate strongly to Council for increased support of businesses and investment (particularly urgent implementation of the Streetscape Plan) into the precinct so as to not discourage potential investors and shoppers to go elsewhere.

Council has developed the draft **MPAC to 2040 – Moonee Ponds Activity Centre Local Plan**, which support the directions of MV2040 and outlines a vision for an activity centre that is beautiful, green, easy to move around, full of life, and celebrates the area's heritage character. Council is also proposing new planning controls will help realise this vision.

The draft Plan includes recommendations for how development should look and function, better pedestrian and vehicle access and movements, a more resilient environment, and where we can plan for affordable housing. By making the most of existing infrastructure and focusing growth on key areas, we can create vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods. The plan prioritises the pedestrian experience, focusing on improving the attractiveness and functionality of the streets and public open spaces to increase walkability.

Market forces

Factors outside the control of MPRLA will continue to be a challenge for the precinct well into the future, and whilst there is little that can be done from a MPRLA, they must be acknowledged as they impact the precinct and its long term prosperity.

Feedback highlighted the concern from some traders regarding overzealous landlords with huge rental expectations, which could be to the detriment of other traders and discourages investment into the precinct. If landlords continue to charge exorbitant fees then this could have the potential to increase vacancy rates, with more businesses closing down.

Vacancy rates soared to 21% in 2017 along Bridge Rd, with one in five shops empty – decreased foot traffic and increased rental fees were considered the key contributing factors.¹³

The market itself is tough for small business and the predictions that the market in general will take a turn-down in the next 12-24 months means less disposable income for customers and this will only add further pressure to local businesses. Lastly negative perceptions of the racing and gambling industry and the increased media coverage could detract from the precinct and see a loss of customers to the area.

¹³ Inside Retail

Markets

There are a number of existing and emerging markets that will provide both sustainable and increased growth in visitation to the precinct. Currently core markets can be generalised as locals and workers.

They can be loosely categorised as:

Current Markets

LOCALS	LOCALS	WORKERS
Older demographic who has established shopping habits and patterns. Shops at the precinct on a regular basis perhaps daily, but at least a few times a week with essential services the driving force for this market. Loves the village feel and community atmosphere it provides. Limited disposable income.	Typically women between the ages of 25-54 (which made up over 85% of online customer survey respondents) who live locally within the LGA, and may have family/small children. Love the convenience and variety of shops available and primary purpose is to shop or eat/drink. High disposable income – usually dual income.	People that come to the precinct and surrounding areas daily (during the week) to work. These people shop on a regular basis, mostly for food but are looking for easy access to potentially purchase additional leisure items. This market is more about locational based opportunity.

Secondary markets appear to be from further afield and view the precinct as more of a destination than a habitual or daily routine. They are highly influenced by product offerings, customer experience, marketing, social media and word of mouth. Opportunities exist to strengthen existing markets, but to also grow and capitalise on emerging and untapped markets to substantially increase visitation to the precinct.

Emerging / Untapped Markets

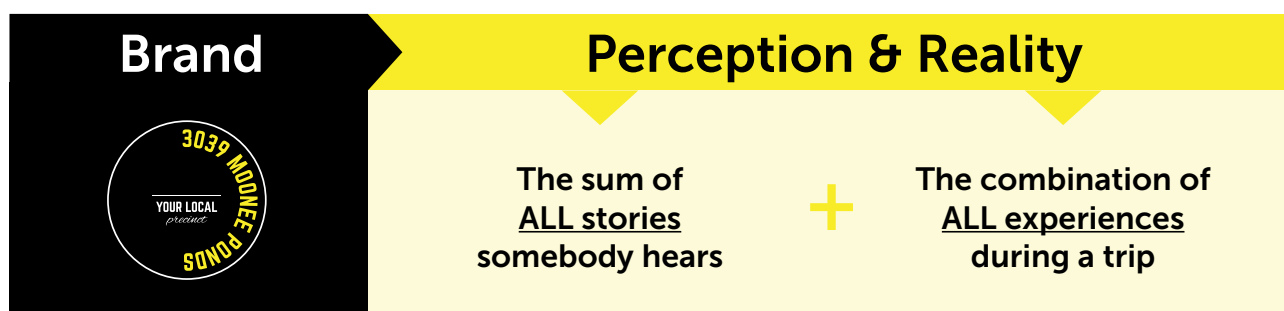
NEW RESIDENTS	LOST LOCALS	JOURNEYMEN	DESTINATIONERS
New residents who will be moving into the precinct in the heart of the activity centre and at MVRG. Eager to spend and explore the area that they will call home. Mix of renters and owner/investors.	Locals that have stopped shopping in the precinct and have turned other more convenient or enticing areas/centres for their shopping needs.	People that are passing through the precinct however do not stop as they are merely using the centre as a thoroughfare or connector to their final destination.	Those that live outside the LGA, mostly from the west or Melbourne who want to visit the area on occasion, day out or night out. Looking for a unique experience, a point of difference.

It's important to remember, it's hard to please everyone – the precinct cannot be all things to all people, MPRLA must strategically focus on target markets to maximise its ROI.

Brand

Work has been done in recent years to transform the traditional Puckle St brand into a more inclusive and progressive precinct brand – under the banner MooneePonds3039. This recognises the need for a collaborative, modern approach and lays the foundation to be built upon for the future.

A destination or precinct brand is built on two key factors:



Customer Content

Today's customers are discovering their preferred destinations or experiences in the same way that they discover the best local ramen or cocktail: through the photos their friends share on Instagram and elsewhere online.

While word of mouth has always been a compelling and trusted marketing tactic, today's consumers are able to reach exponentially larger audiences because of digital social networks. This shift means that customers are no longer just content consumers but content producers, therefore our focus must shift to engaging and leveraging off these customers to support, market and authenticate our precinct brand.

Manufacturing stories for a mass audience (also known as traditional advertising) is no longer the preferred method of marketing. Instead successful destinations harness the power of the stories that are generated from within their destination – those that resonate with their customer's personal passions and values. Personalised stories are the most compelling because they engage the emotions and help create a specific reason to visit a destination. Today, these engaging stories are most often created by consumers themselves and they are better equipped than ever to share their stories. Operators benefit further from improving the experiences when they are able to

prompt social sharing and user-generated promotion. **This way, they can help their customers become their best marketers.** However, many operators neglect to support and amplify the stories their customers are telling, treating social media as simply an affordable opportunity for them to promote their *own* messages.

When customers start to share, operators have another role to play, flagging interesting, engaging and authentic stories and images for MPRLA who can share them with a larger audience for greater impact and brand awareness.

Customer Experience

The current economic outlook is challenging and the need to master customer experience is more critical than ever. When things get tight the customer is far more selective with their spending, if you can't deliver a superior service and experience then you will lose out on sales. So the question we must ask is, are we delivering? Are the expectations of our customers being met; is the reality different to the expectations? It doesn't matter if we have the best marketing campaign in the world, its false promises if we don't deliver once in destination.

Successful businesses are reviewing their customer journeys and making sure it's finely tuned. They have a point of difference in the way they **think about customer experience**. They approach the process very differently to most. They ensure everything they do must provide

value to their customer and if it doesn't, they keep developing until they can prove it does. This approach ensures the customers experience is front and centre and delivers true value that's beyond the price tag.

"Optimising customer value and margin is directly proportional to the standards of service you deliver. If you just deliver a standard of satisfaction, you will sell what the market needs and minimise average sale values."

Darrell Hardidge
CEO - Saguity

If you obsess over your customers and deliver a superior service directed to what the customer values, you will open the door to

selling a whole range of things they **want not just need**. If you're not remarkable with your service standards, then you're not memorable and you quickly become invisible. In the current climate, obsessing over customers and not competitors has one unique benefit that provides more sales and guaranteed repeat visitation than anything else. It's the personal referrals supplied by appreciative customers and most importantly why they were given.

Different isn't always better, but, better is always different. Obsessing over customers and not over competition will build a powerful reputation of being better. MPRLA needs to focus on all facets of a customer experience, not just marketing to deliver a great experience.



ALL YOU COULD
WISH
FOR

YOUR LOCAL
precinct

3039 MOONEE
PONDS



Vision

- To be the destination of choice for a unique shopping and dining experience in the West.
- To be a strong and connected precinct that harnesses the community spirit.

Mission of MPRLA

- To support, advocate and represent all traders, providing a unified voice on all precinct matters.
- To partner with, and assist businesses to grow and prosper, improving skills and capability to deliver an outstanding experience to all customers.



3039 MOONEE PONDS

YOUR LOCAL
precinct

Key Focus Areas

The top priorities that Moonee Ponds precinct operators¹⁴ would like MPRLA to focus on for the next five years are:

- **Marketing**
- **Streetscape and image**
- **Business mix/attracting investment into precinct**
- **Communication with traders.**

From this and based on all the research undertaken, four key focus areas have been developed to underpin the strategic directions of this plan.

1. Marketing

Continue to build on work that has been completed to date in this space. Grow digital platforms, integrate and expand brand, collaborate, focus on customer curated content and strong word of mouth referrals encouraging customers to become our marketers and ambassadors for the precinct.

2. Business Development & Customer Experience

Support businesses to deliver an outstanding experience and exceed customers' expectations with a focus on fulfilling the complete customers experience – at all touch points. Encourage businesses to look inside first and value add their own experiences as each and every business is a key piece of the puzzle to improve the precinct and increase visitation!

3. Destination/Place

The precinct lacks street appeal and is visually in need of invigoration. General beautification and presentation of the area is a key priority to restore pride in its citizens and encourage increased visitation. Support and guide works to improve the precinct to become a destination.

4. Advocacy / Leadership

MPRLA must evolve to meet the needs and expectations of current traders, and play a broader role than it has in the past. It must advocate for all businesses on all precinct matters and lead as one united voice.

¹⁴ MPRLA Business survey 2018-19



Strategies and actions have been allocated a priority for implementation (high, medium and low) however an annual action and marketing plan with more specific timelines will be produced to provide more detail. Where possible, the high priority items will be researched and addressed in the first year of the plan.

PRIORITY	YEAR
HIGH	1-2
MEDIUM	2-3
LOW	3-5

Strategies / Action Plan

1. Marketing

STRATEGY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	PRIORITY HIGH MED LOW
Continue to develop the brand proposition to raise awareness of Moonee Ponds precinct as a shopping precinct and destination.	Focus on strategic marketing messaging using the five key brand attributes as identified in the Puckle St re-brand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boutique Unique / One of a Kind Different Specialised Progressive 	HIGH
	Develop themes or personas for each sub-precinct based on key strengths and products of each area	HIGH
	Develop content stories for each of the sub-precincts to guide customers through a journey of the precinct and maximise promotional of all product offerings	HIGH
	Commission the production of imagery to build a digital brand library aligned to brand strengths – make it available for all stakeholders to use, increasing destination awareness across digital platforms	MED
	Continue to develop brand specific collateral across all platforms (mostly digital) to raise awareness of brand amongst consumers and traders/stakeholders	MED
	Integrate digital brand collateral into all businesses within the precinct	MED
	Investigate opportunities to integrate brand collateral on the street/on the ground to further reinforce brand proposition once in destination	LOW
Increase positive perception of the precinct through customer curated content.	Build advocacy, storytelling and word of mouth referrals by encouraging and enabling shoppers, locals, residents, visitors, influencers, media and key stakeholders to share and broadcast their unique experiences in the precinct	HIGH
	Continue to encourage shoppers to post their experiences on digital sites such as Instagram, Facebook, Trip Advisor, etc	HIGH
	Undertake research into visitor perceptions of the precinct - measure impact of brand	HIGH

STRATEGY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	PRIORITY HIGH MED LOW
Increase visitation to the precinct through a range of collaborative marketing initiatives targeting key markets.	Develop (continue) a Shop Local campaign aimed at local families who may be shopping at alternative centre, encouraging them to support their local area. Identify local champions and community identities to profile for campaign to engage at a grass roots level	HIGH
	New resident campaigns – target new residents, primarily in the developments, with specific offers just for them as a welcome to the precinct	HIGH
	Engage schools through targeted campaigns to drive foot traffic to the precinct	HIGH
	Encourage and facilitate stronger collaborative marketing with precinct operators, utilising key brand attributes to build brand and destination awareness	HIGH
	Encourage sub-precincts to work together and combine marketing initiatives for greater impact	HIGH
	Increase operator participation in marketing activities through increased engagement and facilitation	HIGH
	Develop a VFR (Visiting Friends and Family) marketing campaign designed to get locals to visit the precinct when they have visitors – increased spend	MED
	Leverage off the change in business mix within the precinct and develop sector specific campaigns focusing on the highest concentration of sectors within the precinct	MED
	B2B Trader campaign - buy local/support local businesses campaign	MED
Build on established digital platforms and increase digital footprint, particularly on social media.	Continue the sound work already achieved on all digital channels by formalising the activities and developing a social media strategy. Key considerations should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of bloggers and influencers ● Partnerships with key online partners such as Urbanlist, Time Out, Broadsheet, etc ● Paid SEO ● Online targeting ● Competitions 	HIGH
	Continue activation of Instagram with the introduction of videos, vox pops, stories and precinct ambassadors	HIGH
	Build online visitor interaction and engagement through online call to actions such as competitions, discount vouchers or special offers – whilst driving online traffic back to the precinct	MED

STRATEGY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	PRIORITY HIGH MED LOW
Continue to activate the precinct through a wide range of events driving increased foot traffic to the precinct.	Continue to support large, blockbuster, high impact events such as the MVCC Winterfest event – specifically the ice-skating rink in the precinct	HIGH
	Continue to develop sub-precinct activations such as the 'Junction Lane' event. Investigate options for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best placement of activations • Pop-up parks • Street activation projects • Art installations • Projections/night time activations • Markets – monthly or seasonal • Activation of weekend events – particularly Sunday when precinct is very quiet • Seasonal events • Themed events, e.g.: food • Unique events – non-traditional/outside the box 	
	Facilitate greater operator involvement in local events to leverage off and maximise benefits of both precinct and municipal events. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Offers • Showcasing product • Competitions 	HIGH
	Work with operators and MVCC to develop walking tours of the precinct for new residents – welcome tours/orientation tours. Specially tailored for them, to suit their needs.	MED

2. Business Development & Customer Experience

STRATEGY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	PRIORITY HIGH MED LOW
Research, review and analyse the complete customer experience within the precinct to make informed decisions and understand the needs of core markets.	Undertake a series of customer experience audits within the precinct to identify customer gaps in the visitor experience and business training needs	HIGH
	Undertake customer satisfaction analysis annually – through a range of collection methods to determine customer sentiment	MED
Communicate and engage with operators to better understand their professional development needs.	Develop an annual operator survey to identify issues, concerns, training needs and precinct trends	HIGH
	Develop an electronic operator newsletter – designed specifically for precinct operators keeping them abreast of activities, updates and opportunities for the precinct (to be distributed monthly)	HIGH
	Host networking functions every year to bring operators together in an informal setting to share ideas, learn from each other and to encourage cross collaboration.	MED
	Investigate options for a digital B2B group for the precinct – which facilitates greater communication and collaboration between precinct operators	LOW
	Investigate the possibility of an 'office' location at the precinct at least once a week so the Coordinator can be on the ground on a regular basis available to talk to any business from precinct. Encourages more face to face contact and greater engagement between operators and the association.	LOW
Upskill operators to meet and exceed customer expectations. Increase positive perception of the precinct and word of mouth referrals by delivering an exceptional customer experience.	Work in conjunction with Council to provide a targeted professional development program specifically for precinct operators. Topics could include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retailing • Shopfront/window/visual merchandising • Finance • Marketing/PR • Social media • Customer service • Customer experience/centric • Inclusion and accessibility 	HIGH
	Encourage businesses to take advantage of Council driven/funded professional development activities.	HIGH
	Develop a series of pilot programs for selected businesses, focusing key issues identified through customer feedback and consultation	MED
	Work with operators to raise awareness of, and help them prepare for, the changing demographics of the area and increased expectations from these markets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g.: Expected opening times 	MED
	Provide opportunities for one on one mentoring for businesses.	LOW

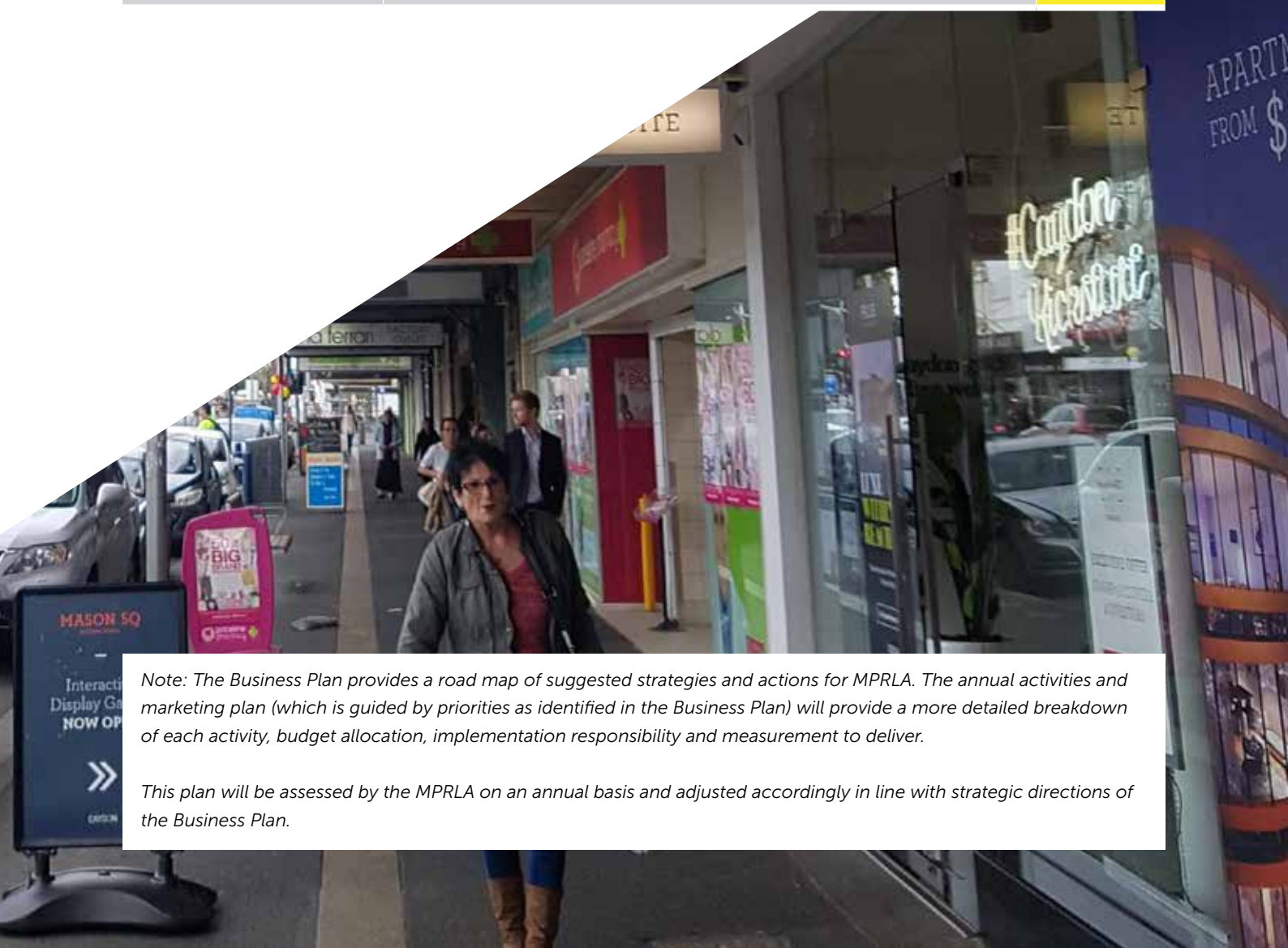
3. Destination / Place

STRATEGY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	PRIORITY HIGH MED LOW
Develop and implement initiatives to limit the impact of car parking concerns to support a more enjoyable customer experience and discourage customers from shopping elsewhere.	Investigate the possibility of a car-parking APP to inform customers in destination where available car spots are – timely and accurate information at the touch of a button	HIGH
	Support operators to change the narrative around car parking in the precinct so as to not discourage people from shopping elsewhere	HIGH
	Provide further information to customers on available car parking options within the precinct. Utilise the existing car parking map (print version)	HIGH
	Investigate opportunities to partner with larger employers who own car parks to utilise for customer use at night time or on weekends	HIGH
	Ask Council for a formal review of permit parking, particularly around the Mt Rd precinct during the day to support visitation and staff car parking requirements	HIGH
	Ask Council for a formal review of time limits with a view to increase capacity of three and four hour parking – so as to encourage increased length of stay and spend in the precinct	HIGH
	Undertake a mini awareness campaign to educate operators and customers about alternative options to driving and parking at the precinct	MED
Create good first impressions with a warm welcome and sense of arrival for customers as they enter the precinct.	Work with Council to improve welcome signage and sense of arrival into precinct. This should include way-finding signage, directional, impact and acknowledgment of arrival at key entrance sites to precinct and brand integration at street level	MED
	Under take a trader pilot program to enhance shop front windows (visual merchandising) and beautify the shop appeal at ground level	MED
	Investigate opportunities for grant funding for art installations or the like at major entrance points into the precinct	LOW
Create a visually appealing precinct that encourages customers to stay longer, explore further and ultimately spend more.	Support implementation of the proposed MPAC to 2040 – Moonee Ponds Activity Centre Local Plan which should address key concerns around housekeeping, streetscape and general upkeep of the precinct	HIGH
	Implement a 'business streetscape program' where businesses look at their own backyards and get their house in order	HIGH
	Work with Council, local real estate operators and landlords to encourage streetscape and shopfront improvements and potential activation of vacant shops for short term use	MED
Encourage exploration of the precinct by connecting sub-precincts.	Explore opportunities to use art and activations to connect sub-precincts and draw attention to areas less frequented by shoppers. External grants should be considered to support this work	MED
	With work Council to address issues around the perceived physical barriers and distance between Puckle St and MVRC	LOW

4. Advocacy / Leadership

STRATEGY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	PRIORITY HIGH MED LOW
Develop and strengthen strategic partnerships with key stakeholders to yield stronger economic benefits.	Continue to build upon and strengthen partnership with MVCC	HIGH
	Team up with developers (Caydon/etc) to leverage off their database of residents. Work with them to gain access to this hugely lucrative new market and development partnerships that will be mutually beneficial	HIGH
	Work with MVRC to grow cross promotional opportunities and leverage off the large number of visitors who frequent the venue	MED
	Develop relationships with key public transport providers to explore opportunities to run campaigns, promotional activities on-board or at sites across the network - ultimately encouraging people using these modes of transport to visit the precinct	MED
Strengthen the resolve of the MPRLA Committee to lead a strong and united association well into the future.	Committee – explore opportunities to add skills based members onto the committee to further enhance and improve the associations ability to support businesses and a prosperous precinct	HIGH
	Review role of current paid resourcing to provide for amendment of current duties in line with future directions of the association	HIGH
	Review business plan/action plan at the end of each financial year to assess and review actions ensuring current strategies and actions meet MPRLA needs	HIGH
	Join forces with the Chamber of Commerce to forge a stronger, more unified voice for the precinct under one umbrella. Broaden the role and responsibility of the association by undertaking some of the actions that the Chamber of Commerce was responsible for in line with trader expectations	MED
	Succession plan – develop a succession plan for the association	LOW
	Seek a review of the special rate levy boundary in preparation for next rate renewal	LOW
Advocate to Council to increase its resources and investment into the precinct to support local businesses to grow and thrive in the precinct.	Advocate to MVCC for dedicated Place Making position for Moonee Ponds in light of increasing demands of the precinct and in line with other inner urban activity centres	HIGH
	Advocate for more support for small businesses at a grass roots level. Advocate for reduced red tape, less growth inhibitors and for a proactive and enabling approach to business support	HIGH
	Advocate for improved event regulations to support easier implementation of activations in the precinct	MED

STRATEGY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	PRIORITY HIGH MED LOW
Support and encourage strategic investment into the precinct.	Work with Council to encourage and support targeted investment into the precinct to complement current business mix. Focus on 'destination' businesses that will enhance product offering and grow visitation.	LOW
Encourage sustainable initiatives throughout the precinct to support conscious shopping.	Encourage businesses to implement more sustainable initiatives within their business such as using less plastic, recycling more and saving energy	LOW
	Undertake a sustainable campaign focusing on one sustainable initiative for the precinct to champion. E.g.: Straws Suck campaign implemented by a number of inner urban precincts such as Sunshine Town Centre	LOW



Note: The Business Plan provides a road map of suggested strategies and actions for MPRLA. The annual activities and marketing plan (which is guided by priorities as identified in the Business Plan) will provide a more detailed breakdown of each activity, budget allocation, implementation responsibility and measurement to deliver.

This plan will be assessed by the MPRLA on an annual basis and adjusted accordingly in line with strategic directions of the Business Plan.



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YOUR LOCAL
precinct

Proposed Budget Allocation

ACTIVITY	SUB-ACTIVITY	% of ACTIVITIES	% of BUDGET
MARKETING	Events	25%	25%
	Campaign marketing	15%	10%
	Digital/social media	15%	10%
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE		25%	20%
DESTINATION/PLACE		10%	10%
ADVOCACY/LEADERSHIP	Management Fees	-	25%
	Administration	10%	5%
TOTALS		100%	100%

Note:

Although not all items require a financial/budget allocation, it is expected that the paid resource (Coordinator) will undertake a number of these actions and thus sufficient time should be allocated accordingly to implement these initiatives.

It is suggested in Year one a change in budget allocation from recent years to allow a greater focus on professional development activities and digital platforms. There would also need to be direction of Coordinators time to allow for more industry development and engagement. Although there is not direct cost for advocacy, it is anticipated that the Committee would undertake most of these actions.

