

**BEGA VALLEY COMMERCIAL LAND STRATEGY**

**INTERIM REPORT - FINDINGS OF STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS**

**COBARGO, 28 AUGUST 2019**

**1. *What are the natural advantages and strengths of the commercial centre?***

- The heritage buildings and Victorian cottages architecture, especially along Princes Highway and Bermagui Road
- A strong community caring for each other
- The location on the Princes Highway and distance from Narooma and Pambula mean that passing traffic motorists stop for food and refreshments. Other retail shops cater to visitors passing through

**2. *What, if anything, is challenging development of the commercial centre?***

- There is no accommodation for tourists. Around 300 caravans pass through the town per day but there is nowhere for them to stop and stay
- Parking, especially for buses, larger vehicles and the elderly is a problem. Business owners tend to park in front of business premises and occupy space that could be used by visitors. More parking would assist trade that is opportunistic as most businesses depend on the highway for trade
- Topography and the slope of the main street prevent people stopping whilst passing through
- There is a shortage of land, especially for rural residential development. Zoned land is not being developed due to high costs of providing infrastructure. The urban area has spread out to the town limits
- Increased traffic has made the town less attractive
- The opening of Woolworths in Bermagui has changed shopping habits and caused convenience shops for residents to close. Locals do not shop in Cobargo
- Commercial rates are a challenge to business
- The Cobargo Folk Festival does well but does not contribute economically to the town due to being self-catering and hosting all music and entertainment venues on site

**3. *Given the natural advantages and strengths, how could growth of the commercial centre be encouraged?***

- There is no immediate need for additional commercial property

- Provide accommodation for the aged so that older residents can stay in the town and be cared for by other residents
- Respect and preserve the heritage character but not as a barrier to development
- Provide free camping and caravan accommodation at the showground which has facilities and amenities. There is a dump point at the pub
- Acknowledge that different communities have different requirements

**4. *What development principles or approaches are necessary to underpin growth of the commercial centre?***

- Return to flexibility and reduce the complexity of the development application process for all developments including commercial
- Consider the characteristics of local areas when applying development contributions, e.g. for base car parking contributions on local land and development costs rather than a generic rate for all commercial centres across the shire

**5. *What are some incentives to stimulate development of the commercial centre?***

- Implement time-limited parking by erecting signs to move traffic on and free up parking