

Proposed New Whitehorse Activity Centres – Blackburn, Nunawading, Mitcham

The government recently announced the opening of its **Phase 1 community consultation process** regarding the **proposed boundaries of its three Whitehorse Activity Centres around Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham railway stations**. Below is a summary about what is proposed. There is further information available from our recent community information forum on the Activity Centres tab on our website [here](#).



Over the next week there are **key opportunities for you to provide feedback** by:

1. Attending an in-person information session:
 - [22 November](#), Nunawading Hub
 - 24 November - 6.30pm - [Online Information Session](#)
 - [27 November](#) – Blackburn Field Nats
2. Completing an [online survey](#) by 30th November.
3. Submit an email submission by 30th November to: activity.centres@transport.vic.gov.au



Importantly, in providing feedback, recognise what the government is trying to achieve with this proposal i.e. more housing. We suggest you highlight in your responses:

1. Housing goals can be achieved whilst not destroying significant high value community ecological and historical areas that have been protected for decades. Whitehorse Council has an existing housing strategy that achieves the same dwelling target numbers (double existing). Developed with the community's local knowledge, council's housing policy plans for increased housing are in more appropriate locations where relevant supporting infrastructure exists or can be built.
2. The government acknowledge that the provisions of the new Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ) that encourages buildings in the order of 3-6 storeys, would be wholly inconsistent with the present zoning and overlay regime that protects the landscape character and environmental values of Blackburn and parts of Nunawading and Mitcham. Therefore, the present residential zones covered by the above overlays should be retained **and the HCTZ catchment boundaries be redrawn to exclude any areas with Significant Landscape overlays 1, 2, 3, 4.**

Background

The state government has identified 3 Activity Centres in Whitehorse, part of 60 proposed "Activity Centres" for Melbourne. These are proposed to be located on residential and commercial land located within ~800m of Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham railway stations – see map. Once confirmed, these areas will be rezoned to focus on growth in order to create multi-level apartments of at least 12 storeys close to the stations – (**Built Form Overlay (BFO)** - highlighted in dark purple), and 3-6 storeys within a 10-15min walking distances – (**Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ)** – highlighted in light purple). More detailed information and maps, with proposed boundaries can be found [here](#). **Neighbours will have no right to object to any proposed development, no matter what impact it may have on them.**

The government's espoused reason for Activity Centre development is to "solve" the housing crisis for "young families", however there is no plan on how this will be achieved - other than changing the zoning and then leaving it up to developers. There is no explanation of how this will make homes in the area any cheaper and it also ignores the local council's own housing strategy, developed in consultation with the community and with the same number of target dwellings, but within the growth zones located in areas that are not so environmentally sensitive and valued by community for their special amenity!

There are no plans at all about **how the required supporting infrastructure** for the proposed **doubling of dwellings** will be "fitted into" an already built-up area. This includes no plans for providing for things such as - open space/sporting facilities, schools/kindergartens, emergency services/medical facilities and the massive upgrades required for storm water, sewerage, streets and parking - all of which will be desperately needed, but seemingly will just happen - how and where?

The proposed Activity Centre boundaries are generic and adopt arbitrary borders that fail to recognise existing areas of significant environmental, heritage and cultural values. These designated **Significant Landscape Overlay areas (SLO's)** have been embedded in the Whitehorse Planning Scheme over many decades and include special environmental controls - the hatched areas on the map. SLO1, 2 in Blackburn and Nunawading and 3, the Walker Estate, in Mitcham aim to protect tree canopy and landscape character and include a height threshold for buildings of two storeys (9 metres), whilst SLO4 protects the significant cultural heritage of Blackburn's original model village.

The SLO1 **Bellbird Area's National Trust classification** also aims to preserve the area's tree canopy, its haven for wildlife and its unique streetscapes, which are dominated by vegetation. The area, more generally, is a significant example of a protected area within the middle ring suburbs of Melbourne that retains a rural like ambience. It also provides an important habitat corridor and protective open-space buffer for the highly regarded Blackburn Lake and adjoining Creeklands. Implementing the Activity Centres as proposed will destroy much of the long-term protected tree canopy and associated community value of these areas.

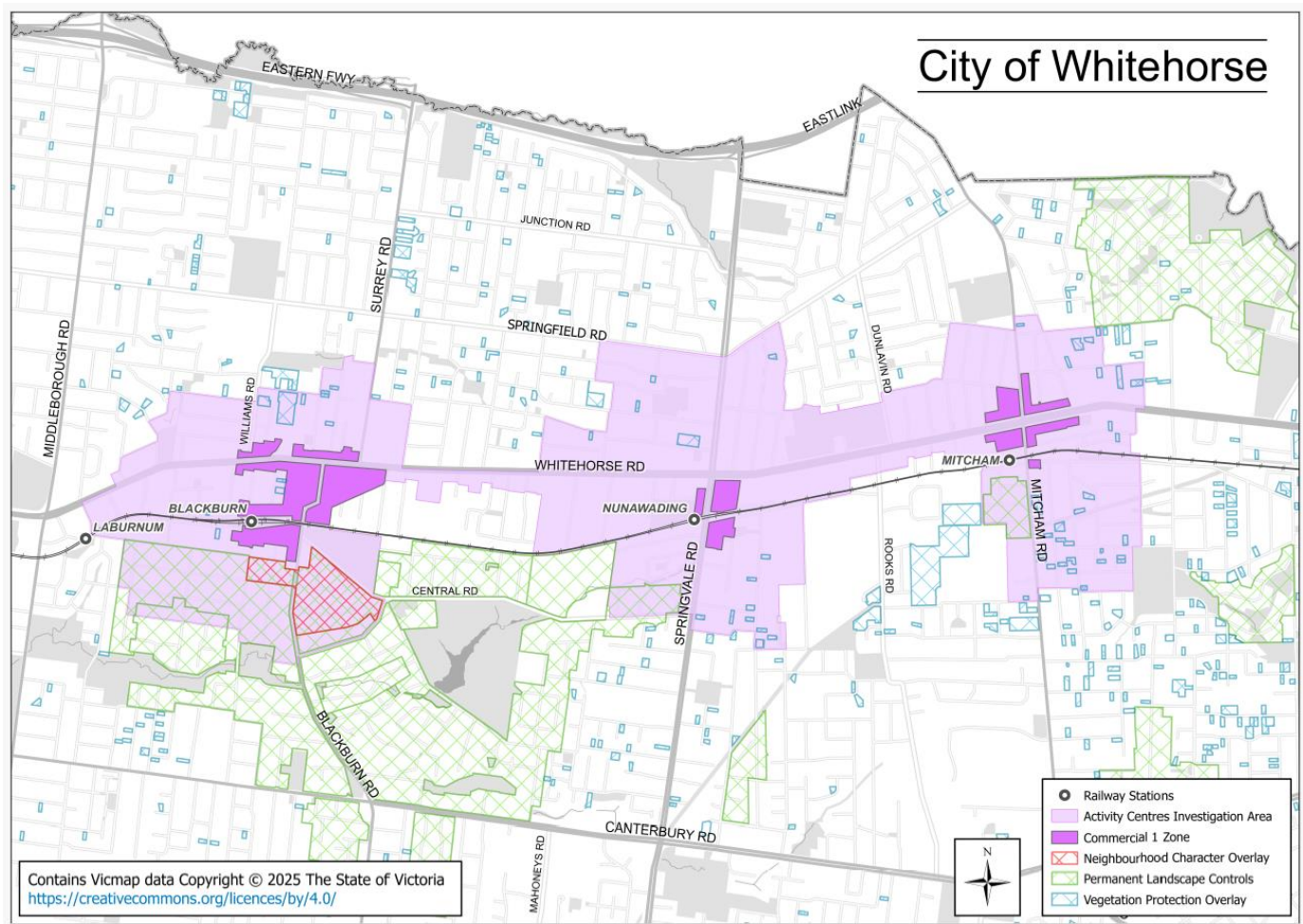


Figure 1. Activity Centre Investigation areas and current overlay protected areas that will be impacted by the HCTZ.