

# CHAPTER 08

## STRONG COMMUNITIES

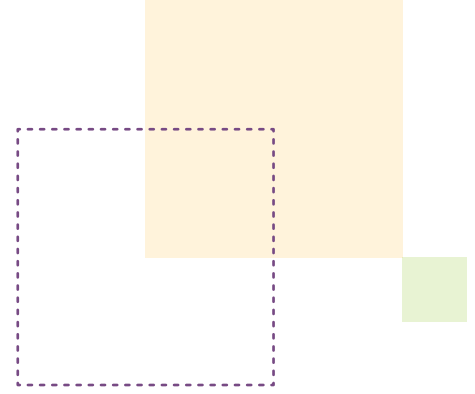


Plan Melbourne Outcome 5:  
Melbourne is a city of  
inclusive, vibrant and healthy  
neighbourhoods

The Western Metro Region has many of the key attributes of strong, inclusive and healthy communities. Community services, hospitals, educational and cultural institutions and transport infrastructure are all essential to community health and well-being.



Photo credit: Tim Bell Studio



The provision of these services will need to keep pace with over 900,000 additional people living in the region by 2051. There are also significant parts of the region that have some of the highest levels of disadvantage in metropolitan Melbourne.

Taking a regional approach to planning will ensure social infrastructure and open space serve the widest possible catchment and cross-section of people. Plan Melbourne aims to build on the fundamentals of strong, healthy and sustainable neighbourhoods by improving access to and provision of amenity, social infrastructure, health and education, open space and the promotion of walking and cycling options.

Plan Melbourne advocates for the vision of a city of '20-minute neighbourhoods' in which most everyday needs can be met within a 20-minute walk, cycle or local transport trip from home. The established suburbs within the Western Metro Region are well placed to achieve this vision. Realising the hallmarks of 20-minute neighbourhoods in the region's growth areas will require integrated land use and infrastructure to support liveable, strong communities.

## State of play

### Community profile

The Western Metro Region has emerged as a multicultural hub in metropolitan Melbourne especially in the Wyndham, Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay LGAs, where more people (47 to 55 per cent) were born overseas than the average for metropolitan Melbourne (41 per cent) and Victoria (35 per cent) (ABS, 2016). The region is home to diverse communities of post-World War II migrants, many of whom arrived as refugees, and all of whom have contributed to the cultural heritage of the area.

The region also has a high proportion of newly arrived migrants from refugee backgrounds who require additional health and community services to respond to their needs, across all age groups.

As a rapidly growing region, with land designated for future urban growth in the Wyndham and Melton LGAs, population growth is likely to expand in outer suburban areas including Melton, Tarneit, Werribee and Point Cook. Inner areas such as Footscray and Sunshine are also expected to intensify and renew.

The Western Metro Region has an ageing demographic profile in established areas while growth areas typically have a younger age profile. Moonee Valley and Hobsons Bay LGAs have the largest proportion of people of retirement age and the lowest proportion of children. Conversely, Melton and Wyndham LGAs, in the Western Growth Corridor, have the lowest proportion of retirees and the largest proportion of young adults and children.

The Western Metro Region is characterised as having lower levels for crime and drug crime than the metropolitan average, although it experiences higher rates of family violence and child protection issues (DELWP, 2017c).

The Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) ranks local government areas according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The 2016 SEIFA rankings for the region are shown in **Figure 22**. Areas of high disadvantage are evident within both established suburbs, including Footscray, Sunshine, Deer Park, Melton and Werribee, and the rural and growth area communities within the LGAs of Wyndham and Melton. The highest relative levels of socio-economic advantage can be found within and around the suburbs of Essendon, Keilor, Williamstown and Point Cook.

### Health and education facilities

The Western Metro Region features 10 public and three private hospitals, but has fewer GP clinics and allied health services than the metropolitan average to provide for the day-to-day, sub-acute health needs of the community.

The region has four major hospitals. Public hospital services are provided by Western Health, which operates Sunshine Hospital (which includes the Western Centre for Health Research and Education in St Albans), Footscray Hospital and Williamstown Hospital (which also includes acute care and an emergency department). Mercy Hospitals operate the Ursula Frayne Mental Health Unit in Footscray and the Mercy Public Hospital in Werribee, while Djerriwarrh Health Services operate Melton Health.

Private hospital services are provided by St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne Limited, which operates St Vincent's Private Hospital in Werribee, Stanlake Private Hospital Pty Ltd which manages Western Private Hospital in Footscray, and Wyndham Clinic Pty Ltd which operates Wyndham Clinic. These

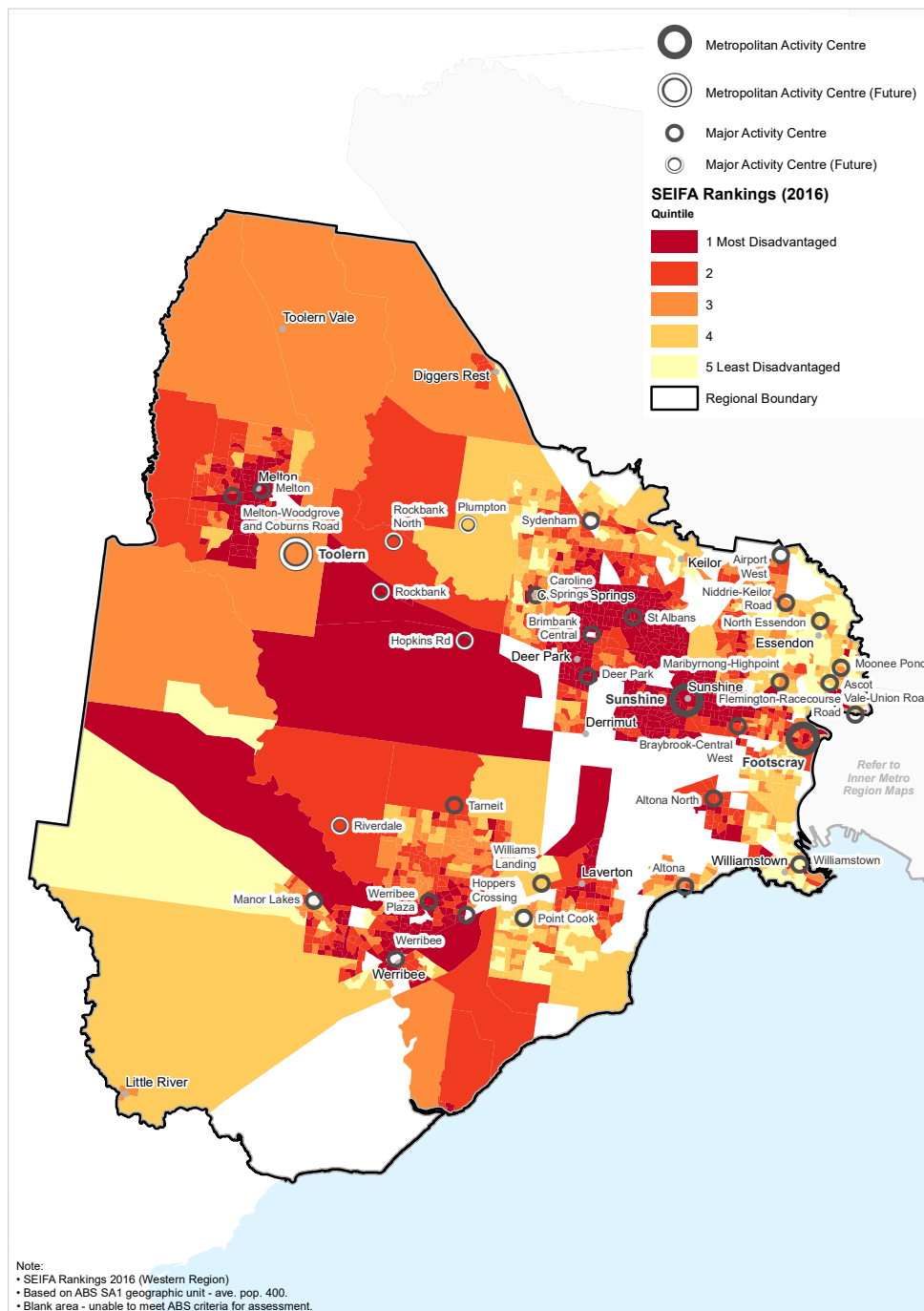
facilities and precincts provide jobs and services to surrounding neighbourhoods and contribute to the development of 20-minute neighbourhoods.

In terms of education, the Western Metro Region has 90 government primary schools and 27 government secondary schools. (DELWP, 2017c) The region features seven university campuses and four TAFE institutions operating across a total of nine sites. This includes Victoria University campuses in Footscray, Sunshine, St Albans and Werribee campuses that are of state significance. Additional

education facilities of regional significance include RMIT flight school at Point Cook, and the University of Melbourne satellite Veterinary Hospital campus and University of Notre Dame in Werribee.

Tertiary and TAFE facilities are spread across the region and are in reasonable proximity to the Western Growth Corridor. The proximity of The University of Ballarat, and Deakin University and Gordon TAFE make them accessible to students within the Western Metro Region.

**FIGURE 22. SEIFA rankings (2016) in the Western Metro Region**



## Social infrastructure

Access to social infrastructure varies across the Western Metro Region. Many state and regional facilities are located within the middle and inner urban areas. As the population grows, additional facilities will be required to adequately service new communities within the growth areas.

The region has a range of active recreation and sports facilities and benefits from its natural landscape areas for outdoor activities, especially along the Port Phillip Bay coastline. It is home to over 20 significant recreation facilities which serve the local population and beyond with a wide range of sports and active recreation opportunities.

Major sporting and active recreation assets include the Werribee Park Equestrian Centre, State Baseball Softball Centre in Altona, Wyndham City Stadium in Tarneit, Whitten Oval in Footscray, Moonee Valley Racecourse and Calder Park Raceway. Other regional level facilities include Windy Hill football ground in Essendon and Eagle Stadium in Werribee. Williamstown and Altona also feature yachting and sailing clubs.

These facilities are generally located in the inner and middle ring suburbs, while there are no regional-scale, multi-use sporting facilities in the growth corridor. Additional regional-scale, multi-use sporting facilities will be required to keep pace with population growth across the region.

Key cultural and creative facilities include Wyndham Arts Incubator, the Clocktower Centre, Hunt Club Community Arts Centre and Gallery and the Footscray Community Arts Centre. Additional regionally-significant multi-use community spaces are needed to allow for diverse uses and gatherings such as markets, events, performing arts and food places.

Regional justice infrastructure within the Western Metro Region includes two Magistrates Courts, four Community Corrections Locations, one Justice Service Centre and two youth justice locations at Footscray and Sunshine. (DELWP, 2017c)

## Regional strengths

- The region’s established precincts and facilities for health, education, recreation and other social infrastructure cater for a wide range of community needs.
- There is a strong network of activity centres within the inner suburbs, many of which are vibrant, accessible community focal points, that achieve (or exceed) the principle of the 20-minute neighbourhood.

## Regional challenges

- Varied levels of access to aged care and health services exist across the region, with critical services located closer to the metro region requiring travel for residents in the outer suburbs.
- Access to primary health, education, community services and sport and recreation facilities needs to be provided in the early planning of growth areas.
- Achieving the hallmarks of 20-minute neighbourhoods in growth areas, where public and active transport are dispersed, is an ongoing priority.

## Directions and strategies

The directions identified to achieve the 2050 vision for the Western Metro Region in terms of strong communities and Outcome 5 of Plan Melbourne are:











<b>Direction 21</b>	Plan for major social infrastructure at a regional level
<b>Direction 22</b>	Deliver health and education services in strategic locations
<b>Direction 23</b>	Support a network of activity centres to anchor 20-minute neighbourhoods across the Western Metro Region

Each direction is implemented through regionally-specific strategies identified in this LUFFP.










Map 8 shows how strong communities will be enhanced across the Western Metro Region by 2050 as a result of these directions and strategies, together with Plan Melbourne and other strategies and initiatives as outlined in Appendix 01.

**MAP 8. Western Metro Region strong communities 2050**

**Precincts and Activity Centres**

-  National employment & innovation cluster (NEIC)\*
-  Metropolitan activity centre
-  Major activity centre
-  Health & education precinct (state)
-  Health precinct (state)
-  Education precinct (state)
-  Health precinct (regional)
-  Education precinct (regional)
-  Major recreational facility
-  Regional recreational facility





**Transport**

-  State-significant road corridor
  -  Road network
  -  Train station
  -  Rail network
  -  Strategic Cycling Corridor
- Principal Public Transport Network
-  PPTN station
  -  PPTN interchange
  -  Bus
  -  Tram

**Environment**

-  Conservation reserve - emerging
-  National park/state park
-  Western Grassland Reserve
-  Public open space
-  Marine/coastal national parks and reserves
-  Waterway
-  Waterbody

**Land use/Administration**

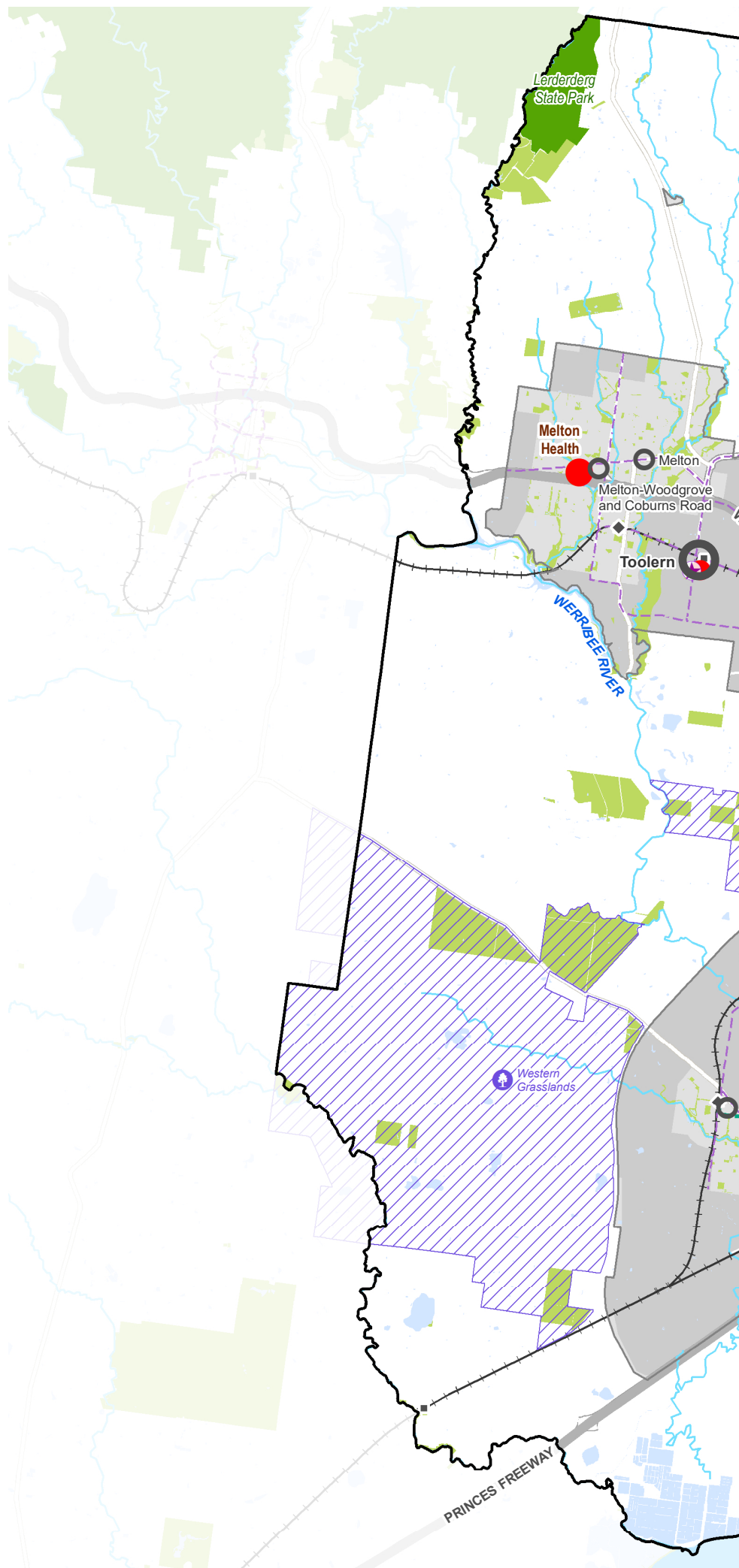
-  Regional boundary
-  Growth area
-  Urban area
-  Urban growth boundary

\*NEIC boundary is indicative only and subject to detailed planning.

**Note:** Regional health precinct also identified for the new Point Cook Community Hospital, location yet to be determined.



**Location Map**





**DIRECTION 21.****Plan for major social infrastructure at a regional level**

Planning from a regional perspective requires coordination between different levels of government to acknowledge that local councils plan for local infrastructure such as kindergartens, while the Victorian Government plans for state-level services such as government schools.

Major activity centres in the Western Metro Region should be planned within the context of their role in local communities, ensuring centres have complementary roles that fit with the broader activity centre network. Planning for high-order social infrastructure should prioritise locations in activity centres and, where appropriate, enhance and align with the centre's identified role within the region. Local services should be planned for as a network of well distributed, complementary facilities to accommodate a range of lifestyles and employment arrangements. There is an opportunity to create a network of community hubs in the Western Metro Region that have a mix of uses and align with the existing public transport network.

The full range of 'whole of life cycle' facilities – from maternal and child health to aged care to cemeteries – should be considered and coordinated in precinct planning for new communities within the growth corridors as well as within existing activity centres. A major new cemetery is currently proposed for Harkness on a 128-hectare site which will serve an expanding community.

There are opportunities to link regional sporting assets such as Eagle Stadium (Werribee), Wyndham City Stadium (Tarneit) and the Victorian Baseball and Softball Centre (Altona) with nearby activity centres. Planning is underway for the Wyndham City Stadium to anchor a transit-oriented, mixed-use development, with major and minor stadiums, training facilities, a sports science facility, short-stay accommodation, commercial and residential precincts near the future Riverdale railway station. This represents an important opportunity to develop a major recreational asset for the Western Metro Region and link tourism and sporting assets with Strategic Cycling Corridors and public transport, to enhance visitor experiences and provide access choices.

The link between health, wellbeing and nature is reflected in many Victorian Government strategies including the *Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019–2023* and *Active Victoria – A Strategic Framework for Sport and Recreation in Victoria 2017–2021*.

There is an opportunity to enhance and diversify the role of essential social infrastructure within the Western Metro Region so that existing and

future resources are used to their full capacity, and their role as focal points for the community is reinforced. Partnerships with the private sector can provide opportunities for community access to facilities. Victoria University's Footscray Park campus provides community value through Footscray University Town project and high levels of community use of facilities including the gym and swimming pool.

There are opportunities for the Western Metro Region to build on a vibrant arts and cultural community. More regionally-significant multi-use community spaces are needed to allow for diverse uses and gatherings such as markets, events, performing arts and food places. Current developments in the region include the expansion of the Footscray Libraries Community and Cultural Hub – NeXT. The Defence Site Maribyrnong provides a significant opportunity for community use to support new residential development.

**STRATEGY 82.** Facilitate a regionally coordinated approach to planning for 'whole of life cycle' social infrastructure (excluding schools), within existing communities and the Western Growth Corridor.

**STRATEGY 83.** Encourage planning for major social infrastructure (such as libraries, recreation facilities, cultural centres or community hubs) to be undertaken in conjunction with neighbouring regions to maximise co-location of facilities.

**STRATEGY 84.** Locate social infrastructure near activity centres and to be accessible by walking, cycling or public transport.

**STRATEGY 85.** Support the upgrade and expansion of social infrastructure to enable it to diversify uses and be more flexibly and intensively used, including libraries, recreation facilities and if required and appropriate, schools.

**STRATEGY 86.** Ensure planning for urban renewal areas facilitates access to community uses, particularly the Defence Site Maribyrnong.

**STRATEGY 87.** Support regional planning that will provide for a range of sporting and active recreation facilities to meet the needs of the growing population within existing urban areas and growth areas.

**DIRECTION 22.**  
**Deliver health and education services in strategic locations**

A key issue for the Western Metro Region is to ensure established and new health infrastructure is appropriately positioned to respond to growing communities, especially in greenfield areas within the Melton and Wyndham LGAs.

In the Western Metro Region there is an opportunity to connect health and education precincts to develop a regional network of facilities that provide a community focal point, address gaps in service provision and meet the needs of a growing population. Local neighbourhood services and facilities also contribute to a broader network of health and education provision.

Plan Melbourne identifies state-significant health and/or education precincts to support health and education services that are well served by public transport in a range of locations across Melbourne.

Regionally-significant health and/or education precincts (Table 14) have a regional catchment, are accessible by a range of transport options and have a specialised economic function. This identification provides opportunities for the agglomeration of ancillary health and education services, retail, commercial and accommodation uses.

Access to healthcare, including hospitals, medical and allied health services, should be coordinated and build on existing health and precincts in Sunshine, Footscray, Melton and Werribee. This includes areas experiencing high population growth and new communities in growth areas that may require additional acute and primary health

services. The Sunshine Health, Wellbeing and Education Precinct is well positioned to provide major public services facilities for the growth areas of Melton, Sunbury, Wyndham and beyond to the western region of Victoria.

More comprehensive and specialist education, health and community facilities should be considered for the higher order activity centres including the Sydenham - Watergardens and Werribee Plaza activity centres, and other activity centres identified at Toolern, Tarneit and Manor Lakes.

In meeting the needs of residents in growth areas, particularly on the metro-regional fringe, strategic planning should prioritise health services and facilities in regionally-significant health and/or education precincts that encourage the co-location of services to support 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Residential aged care facilities should also be considered in relation to these precincts to support equitable access to health services. Additional aged care services will be required to provide for an expanding and ageing population in Melbourne’s west. Current facilities located near Melbourne’s CBD are outdated and pose access barriers for patients and families in outer suburbs.

Population growth is also expected to fuel demand for both university courses and vocational training. Continual monitoring and assessment of the capacity of existing infrastructure to meet this need is essential.

The growth of education precincts will provide opportunities for greater engagement of young people in education and promote a culture of learning.

**TABLE 14. State-significant and regionally-significant health and/or education precincts**

STATE-SIGNIFICANT HEALTH PRECINCT	REGIONALLY-SIGNIFICANT HEALTH PRECINCT
Footscray Hospital (known as Western Hospital in Plan Melbourne) Melton Health (Melton West)	Melton Hospital at Cobblebank (Toolern) and allied health services (proposed) Point Cook Community Hospital and allied health services (proposed)
STATE-SIGNIFICANT EDUCATION PRECINCT	REGIONALLY-SIGNIFICANT EDUCATION PRECINCT
Victoria University (Footscray) Victoria University (Sunshine)	Victoria University (Footscray Nicholson Campus)
STATE-SIGNIFICANT HEALTH AND EDUCATION PRECINCT	
Sunshine Hospital and Victoria University Precinct (St Albans) Werribee Health and Education Precinct	



Formal partnerships are being developed with Victoria University and other tertiary institutions to explore precinct development opportunities, including within Sunshine and Werribee NEICs. Tertiary education expansion priorities at Footscray University Town will closely align with the vision for the Footscray Learning Precinct and support the precinct's goal to enable seamless transitions from early learning and school to adult education. There is a need for improved transport links between Footscray railway station and the health and education precinct to improve accessibility.

Key health facilities developments in the Western Metro Region include:

- New Footscray Hospital (Western Health) and redevelopment of Footscray University Town
- Expansion of Tweddle Child & Family Health Service, Footscray
- New Joan Kirner Hospital and St Albans Health and Wellbeing Hub
- New Melton Hospital at Cobblebank (Toolern Metropolitan Activity Centre) creating a new health precinct with private and public hospital services
- Expansion of the Sunbury Community Hospital (Western Health)
- Critical infrastructure works at Western Health (Footscray and Sunshine)
- New Point Cook Community Hospital (Western Health) to provide access to a broad range of in-demand medical and social services in one facility
- Major expansions proposed for Werribee Mercy Hospital.

**STRATEGY 88.** Strengthen the role of the health and/or education precincts of the Western Metro Region by co-locating new health and/or education facilities within these precincts and encouraging an agglomeration of ancillary uses such as primary healthcare, retail and accommodation.

**STRATEGY 89.** Expand the network of health and/or education facilities and precincts across the region to meet the needs of the growing population. Ensure that these facilities and precincts are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

**STRATEGY 90.** Support the upgrade of existing health and education infrastructure to allow for more intensive use of those services.

**STRATEGY 91.** Ensure the early provision of health and education facilities and precincts in the Western Growth Corridor to support the needs of new communities. Locate these facilities or precincts within or near activity centres to maximise the benefits of colocation with ancillary land uses.

**STRATEGY 92.** Provide residential aged care, primary healthcare and remediation facilities in and around health precincts.

**STRATEGY 93.** Support the development of a health and education precinct in Toolern.

**DIRECTION 23.****Support a network of activity centres to anchor 20-minute neighbourhoods across the Western Metro Region**

While individual neighbourhood activity centres are not regionally significant, when combined these centres are important for delivering 20-minute neighbourhoods and supporting strong communities in the Western Metro Region. A network-wide approach will identify gaps in provision, enable better planning and prioritisation of services and facilities and better planning for neighbourhood activity centres.

In growth areas, land dissected by major freeways and areas of industrial land constrain achieving 20-minute neighbourhoods. Planning and design of new communities should consider ways in which these barriers can be overcome and the hallmarks of 20-minute neighbourhoods can be achieved.

Having a consistent approach to planning for neighbourhood activity centres will help people live locally for their day-to-day needs. Consistent designation and planning approaches are particularly important where centres straddle regional or local council boundaries such as in Sunshine and Sydenham.

- STRATEGY 94.** Plan for existing and new activity centres to embed the 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks, through a place-based, community partnership approach.
- STRATEGY 95.** Support a consistent designation of neighbourhood activity centres and their role in the network of activity centres across the Western Metro Region.
- STRATEGY 96.** Embed the 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks in planning within the catchment of major infrastructure projects.
- STRATEGY 97.** Support the role of neighbourhood activity centres to provide retail, community and allied health services to their respective local catchments.
- STRATEGY 98.** Embed the hallmarks of 20-minute neighbourhoods in planning for new communities within the Western Growth Corridor.

**ACTIONS –  
Strong communities**

**ACTION 15.** Develop guidance on a new approach to neighbourhood planning in partnership with local councils of the Western Metro Region which embeds the hallmarks of 20-minute neighbourhoods.