

Overview

Community Reference Groups (CRGs) were established for each Activity Centre to provide advice to the Department of Transport and Planning in developing its Activity Centre Plans. The advice was developed over 3 sessions in June 2025.

All Statements of Advice will be released publicly alongside other engagement outcomes during Phase 2 engagement planned for September 2025.

Statement of Advice – Murrumbeena Station

What we value about the Activity Centre:

A summary of what CRG members believe makes the place unique and worth protecting.

The Murrumbeena Activity Centre is a cherished part of our community—distinct in character, deeply connected to its heritage, and shaped by its green environment and people. We, as residents, value its unique mix of history, natural beauty, and community spirit, and see it as a place well worth protecting and celebrating.

A welcoming and community-focused character

- The Centre has a warm, friendly, and relaxed atmosphere that makes people feel safe and at home.
- Murrumbeena has a strong village feel, supported by proactive, family-oriented residents who care about their neighbourhood and community.
- It's a place where people know their neighbours and contribute actively to shared community life.
- There's a noticeable difference in character here compared to nearby centres like Carnegie, Hughesdale or Oakleigh. Murrumbeena has its own cultural rhythm and identity.

Heritage and local identity

- The area has a rich historic charm, evident in its older homes, shopfronts, and streetscapes.
- Heritage buildings, including those along Neerim Road and the Inter-war Ardyne Estate and Beauville Estate, help tell the story of Murrumbeena's past and give the area a distinctive identity.
- Artistic and Indigenous heritage are present and add depth to the local character.
- Residents value the preservation of these buildings and gardens as vital parts of the suburb's visual and cultural fabric.

Green spaces and the natural environment

- Murrumbeena is known for its tree-lined streets, large private gardens, and leafy ambience.

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- Significant trees, including red river gums, and carefully maintained gardens give the neighbourhood a calming and welcoming feel.
 - Local parks and reserves, such as Boyd Park, Duncan McKinnon, Packer, Stanthorpe, Riley Reserves and Murrumbeena Park offer places for recreation, relaxation and social connection.
 - These natural features are key to how people live in and enjoy the area—walking, cycling, gathering with friends, or simply spending time outdoors.

Access and movement

- Walking and cycling are common ways to get around the Activity Centre, especially on local trails and along tree-lined streets.
- Families, pet owners, and recreational cycling groups frequently use the area's paths, although road safety remains a concern, particularly for cyclists.
- The under-rail bike path adds a safe and enjoyable connection for movement through the area.
- Lack of safe Nth/ Sth walking, cycling access disconnect at Dandenong.
- While public transport is limited, residents often rely on cars but find parking—especially for short visits—difficult to access.

Defining places and landmarks

- A number of key places define the Murrumbeena Activity Centre and are deeply valued by the community.
- These include parks and reserves like Boyd Park, Packer Reserve, Duncan McKinnon Reserve, Stanthorpe, Riley.
- Murrumbeena Village Shops serve as a local hub and reflect the area's heritage charm.
- The character of the Centre is further shaped by notable home frontages, traditional gates, and leafy streets that give the suburb its unique identity.

Our Advice

Part A: General Advice

How do we plan for more homes in and around Murrumbeena while strengthening the things that make it unique?

- Respect the suburb's character: Residents strongly prefer traditional blocks with front and back yards. Apartment development should be carefully planned, with functional designs suited to families—not just single-use student housing. A one-size-fits-all approach is not a preferred solution.
- Protect heritage: Heritage is viewed as essential to Murrumbeena's identity. There is urgent community support for a heritage overlay in the Arydne Estate, comparing its importance to the already-protected Beauville Estate. Without action, residents fear the loss of intact interwar streetscapes.
- Prioritise green space in housing design: The community refers to Heart Foundation guidance—advocating visibility of three trees from every home, 30% canopy cover, and 300m proximity to green open space. These are seen as minimum requirements for liveability.
- Encourage housing diversity with community benefit: The need for social and affordable housing is acknowledged, alongside the importance of housing that supports diverse

demographics. There is concern about the impact of unregulated investment and a call for better demographic assessment.

- Balance development across suburbs: Residents urge planners to take an “activity centre-wide” perspective. What happens in Murrumbeena affects Carnegie and vice versa. Development must consider cumulative impacts and not push problems across suburb boundaries.
- Have time limits on development permits to minimise the impact of ‘land banking’.

Part B: Thematic advice across four key areas:

Public and Green Space

- Expand and connect open spaces: Larger parks and well-designed pocket parks are highly valued, but more open space is needed between Carnegie and Murrumbeena. Open spaces should be well-lit to ensure safety after dark.
- Support for community gardens: These are viewed not just as food-producing areas but also as social spaces that help strengthen community ties and local resilience.
- Recreational facilities needed in the activity centre: There are currently no sporting or recreational facilities within the activity centre itself—therefore requiring cars! Residents support including spaces for exercise, play, and community use as part of any development.
- Tree cover and green outlooks: Seeing trees from home and living close to green spaces are key to wellbeing. These aspects are seen as non-negotiable in higher-density planning.
- Lighting and maintenance for safety: Community members feel unsafe in train stations parks or green spaces at night due to poor lighting. Keeping these spaces clean, visible, and maintained is considered critical to both safety and enjoyment.

Moving Around

- Walking is the main mode of movement: Murrumbeena is described as a “walkable” suburb, and this needs to be preserved and improved. Creating safe, well-lit, and wide pedestrian paths is essential.
- Cycling is dangerous and under-supported: Narrow roads, high traffic, and blind driveways make cycling risky. More dedicated and protected bike infrastructure is needed.
- Currently there is no safe Nth/Sth access linking to Stonnington at Dandenong Road.
- Public transport is infrequent and limiting. Residents say PT options around Murrumbeena are too irregular to rely on. Improvements are needed to allow people to move within and beyond the activity centre without cars.
- Traffic congestion is a major concern: Murrumbeena Road is already heavily congested. The loss of car parks, and access points due to Neerim Road State Government Development upgrades is expected to worsen this.
- Intersection upgrades are overdue: Key intersections at Murrumbeena & Neerim Road, Koornang & Neerim Road, and Poath Road need significant redesign to improve traffic flow and safety.
- Car parking pressures: Many properties have been subdivided without corresponding increases in parking capacity. Residents call for off-street and underground parking, especially in larger developments.

Safety

- Lighting is key: Poor lighting is repeatedly raised as a reason people feel unsafe at night. Side streets, alleys, and parks are often avoided in the evenings.

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- Station safety is at risk: The current open layout of Murrumbeena Station car park allows visibility, making it feel modestly safe. Planned developments that make the space more enclosed or isolated may reduce this sense of safety.
 - Graffiti and urban decay contribute to fear: Overgrown lots, tagging, and unkempt properties are linked to perceptions of neglect and risk.
 - Presence and visibility: Protective Services Officers (PSOs) at train stations, adherence to traffic rules, and active community presence make people feel safer. Areas that are quiet or inactive, especially after hours, feel more vulnerable.
 - Youth safety and PT: Young people rely on public transport but are more vulnerable to harassment or unwanted attention, especially during off-peak times.
 - Consider town-centre-style spaces carefully (proper town planning): While converting roadways to open spaces could foster community, residents warn this may increase congestion and decrease safety if not carefully managed.

Local Infrastructure

Key Areas of Agreement and Disagreement

Agreements

- Preserve and respect local character: There is consensus around the importance of maintaining the traditional housing character and streetscapes, especially in heritage areas like Arydne Estate.
- Green space is essential: Everyone values access to trees, green outlooks, parks, and safe open space. These are seen as central to health, wellbeing, and neighbourhood character.
- Congestion is a real and growing problem: Traffic and parking are major concerns, particularly with changes around the railway station. Solutions must be found to prevent gridlock. Consideration of one way traffic on Neerim and Railway Pde.
- More diverse housing types are needed—but not at any cost: While people agree we need housing for more demographics (e.g. families, older people, low-income residents), there's concern that inappropriate density or poorly designed apartments will degrade the area.
- Lighting and maintenance affect perceptions of safety: Well-maintained, clean, and visible areas are safer. Lighting is an easy and essential improvement.
- Planning must be integrated and regional: Residents see Murrumbeena, Carnegie, and the wider activity centre as interconnected. Planning decisions in one area affect the others and should be coordinated. Also consider Malvern and Chadstone.

Disagreements and Concerns

- Scale and form of development: Some residents are open to more housing density if it's well-integrated and respectful. Others want to preserve "one house per block" and are sceptical about multi-storey apartments.
- Town centre transformation vs traffic management: Proposals to convert roads to open spaces are polarising—seen by some as community-building, and by others as creating more traffic headaches.
- Level of infrastructure planning: There's a lack of trust that infrastructure upgrades (especially underground services and education) will keep pace with housing growth. Some feel this has been historically overlooked.
- Unregulated investment and affordability: While some focus on housing design, others raise concerns about affordability, investment pressures, and the role of non-resident buyers. There is a shared concern, but different views on the root causes and solutions.

Considerations

Areas where the community was open to acceptable compromises, and areas where compromise was not supported.

Agreements:

- That heritage review of architecture is overdue and should be prioritised.
- Heritage and character must be respected: Broad agreement that developments must preserve the Ardyne Estate and broader heritage overlay. Tree-lined streets and gardens are considered essential to the local identity.
- Concentrate development near the core: Residents agree that denser housing should be limited to specific locations like Railway Parade, Dandenong Road, and in between Dandenong Road and Neerim Road and the Neerim-Murrumbeena Road intersection.
- Community and environmental values: Strong shared support for sustainability, green space, and enhancing community assets (e.g., gathering places, art, and business support).
- Demand for transparency and accountability: Clear agreement that planning processes must be transparent including modelling and assumptions of demographics, with ongoing community input, tracking of implementation outcomes, and adherence to council regulations.

Disagreements or Areas Without Support for Compromise:

- Heritage protections are not negotiable: There is no community support for compromising on the heritage overlay or the character of older residential areas.
- Encroachment into quieter streets is opposed: Community members are not open to housing changes that would disrupt the streetscape or quiet residential nature of surrounding areas.
- Lack of responsiveness or vague planning criteria: The community expects that government bodies will respond specifically to the advice and concerns of the Community Reference Group (CRG). Plans perceived as vague or lacking in measurable accountability are not acceptable.

Areas of Acceptable Compromise

- Building heights: Willingness to accept moderate building heights in central areas, aligning with the train station's height (as the maximum permitted).
- Increased density with green trade-offs: Residents would accept higher density if developments include public green space and address parking and traffic issues.
- Heritage review: Openness to reviewing (not weakening) the heritage overlay to ensure clarity and effectiveness, not to allow for broader development.

Key Messages for Planners – Murrumbeena Station

Final key messages the group would like to leave with decision-makers.

1. Protect Heritage and Character—They Are Non-Negotiable

- The community values Murrumbeena's distinct village feel, heritage streetscapes, and tree-lined character.
- A heritage overlay is urgently needed for Ardyne Estate and other significant areas to prevent irreversible loss.
- Development must respect existing housing styles and avoid encroaching on quiet residential streets.

2. Prioritise Green Space and Tree Canopy in All Development

- Green outlooks and access to nature are seen as essential—not optional—for health and wellbeing.

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- All housing should meet minimum standards for tree visibility, canopy cover, and proximity to green open space.
 - Parks, gardens, and leafy streets must be preserved and expanded, not compromised by new builds.

3. Plan for Safer, More Sustainable Movement—Not Just More Traffic

- Walking is the primary way people move around; safe, wide, and well-lit footpaths are critical.
- Cycling is growing but unsafe—dedicated infrastructure is needed to support it.
- Congestion, poor intersections, and lack of car parking are already problematic and must not worsen with growth.
- More public transport around the broader activity centre.

4. Focus Development Where It Fits—and Design It for Diverse Lifestyles

- Moderate housing growth is acceptable near key transport and commercial areas (e.g., Railway Parade, Dandenong Rd).
- New developments must offer more than just high-density units—family-friendly, sustainable, and accessible designs are expected.
- Off-street parking, green space, and infrastructure upgrades must be built in—not left as afterthoughts.
- Support increase in local business around Murrumbeena Village.

Deliver Transparent, Responsive and Regional Planning

- Planning should consider impacts across Murrumbeena, Carnegie, Chadstone, and Malvern—not in isolation.
- Residents expect clarity, accountability, and genuine community input throughout the planning process.
- Vague, one-size-fits-all strategies that ignore lived experience or fail to respond to CRG advice will not gain community trust.