




REVIEW OF

THE PROSPECT VALE – BLACKSTONE HEIGHTS STRUCTURE PLAN

Current State and Summary of Survey Results
June 2025



An aerial photograph of a Tasmanian landscape. In the foreground, there is a small settlement with several houses and a road. A body of water, possibly a lake or a large pond, is visible in the middle ground. The background features a range of mountains under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the image, centered in the middle ground.

In recognition of the deep history
and culture of Lutruwita/Tasmania,
we acknowledge the pallitorre and
panninher peoples, the traditional
owners of the land upon which we
gather.

We acknowledge and pay our
respects to their Elders, past and
present, and to all Tasmanian
Aboriginal communities, for they
hold the memories, the knowledge,
and the culture and hopes of
Aboriginal Tasmania.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Prospect Vale – Blackstone Heights Structure Plan was first endorsed by Meander Valley Council in 2015. Since then, the entire region has experienced significant population growth and development. There have also been major changes to planning policy and legislation within the Tasmanian Resource Management Planning System (RMPS), such as the transition to the statewide Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

Structure plans are an important part of this system. They provide a framework for the long-term development of our towns and suburbs. They bridge the gap between State legislation, regional policies and the aspirations of local communities. Therefore, it's critical they're up to date, fit for purpose and provide a long-term vision for the areas to which they plan for.

We've asked what you love about the place you live, what could be improved and where you want to see your patch heading over the next twenty years and beyond. Technical investigations have also been undertaken to build a better understanding of the forces and trends our community will encounter during that time.

This document provides an overview of current demographic trajectories and the results of the community survey undertaken in June 2024 – culminating in draft community priorities and local vision statements.

The draft priorities and vision statements, together with the results of the survey, will inform the preparation of the reviewed Prospect Vale - Blackstone Heights Structure Plan, expected to be published as a draft to the community in late 2025.



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INTRODUCTION

Meander Valley Council has committed to review and update the Prospect Vale – Blackstone Heights Structure Plan ('the Structure Plan').

Structure plans are an important part of the Resource Management Planning System (RMPS). They provide a framework for the long-term development of our towns and suburbs, often for a period of 20 years or more. They bridge the gap between State legislation, regional policies, and the aspirations of local communities. They are used as platforms to support rezonings, the timely provision of requisite infrastructure, and to actively work towards the local community's vision for the area in an integrated and orderly manner.

The Structure Plan was first endorsed in 2015. Since then, the entire Northern Region has experienced significant population growth, change, and development. There have also been major changes to planning policy and legislation within the Tasmanian Resource Management Planning System (RMPS), such as the transition to the statewide Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

Whilst the current Structure Plan only pertains to Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights, consideration of Travellers Rest has been identified as an important inclusion into the Structure

Plan investigation area to ensure a holistic consideration of both the Blackstone Hills and the growth corridor between Hadspen and the Prospect Vale interchange.

The spatial extent of the Structure Plan investigation area is illustrated in Figure 1.

This document provides an overview of current demographic trajectories and the results of the community survey undertaken in June 2024 – culminating in draft community priorities and local vision statements.

It is intended that the renewed Structure Plan will provide a framework for future growth and development within Prospect Vale, Blackstone Heights, and Travellers Rest through to 2045 and beyond. In doing so, the renewed Structure Plan will include strategies, rezoning opportunities, and potential future projects to realise the community's vision and objectives for the area whilst meeting Council's statutory obligations.



Figure 1. Spatial Extent of the Structure Plan Investigation Area

WHAT IS A STRUCTURE PLAN?

A structure plans are made by Councils in collaboration with communities, to help shape how a town grows and changes over time. It endeavours to establish a shared vision that builds on existing opportunities and strengths of places and their communities, whilst managing the impacts of future use and development.

By doing so, it lays the foundation for directing where and how future growth is intended to occur, through recommending changes to regulatory zoning, overlays, and unique local provisions.

STRUCTURE PLANS AND THE PLANNING SYSTEM

Local land use planning is regulated through the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, which is comprised of the 'State Planning Provisions' and the 'Meander Valley Local Provisions Schedule'. While most standards are state-wide provisions, the Meander Valley Local Provisions Schedule provides an opportunity to reflect the unique qualities of the municipality through local provisions, such as specific area plans.

While there are no legislative requirements for the content or preparation of structure plans, such documents provide solid foundations and rationale for making changes to the Meander Valley Local Provisions Schedule. These changes require approval by the Tasmanian Planning Commission. They also provide direction for co-ordinating infrastructure investment and clearly expressing the community's vision for their place.

To ensure consistency across policy platforms, the Structure Plan will need to align with the requirements of the Resource Management and Planning System and its policy framework, including but not limited to:

- The Objectives of the Resource Management and Planning System;
- Applicable State Policies;
- The Tasmanian Planning Policies (if made);
- The Northern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy; and
- Council's Strategic Plan

This framework doesn't give Council complete freedom to make and change local planning rules, but it does allow some flexibility to advocate for and shape local development in a way that achieves the aspirations of local communities.



CURRENT STATE

The three localities of Prospect Vale, Blackstone Heights and Travellers Rest are a significant part of the Meander Valley community. They:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| – comprise, together with Hadspen, the ‘western growth corridor’ of Greater Launceston | – contribute approximately 20.1% (\$429.991 million) of the total gross revenue generated by businesses and organisations within Meander Valley | – contain approximately 3,174 homes |
| – are home to around one third of Meander Valley’s residents | | – support approximately 1,400 jobs ¹ |

The area is defined by its natural boundaries, with the plipatumila² / South Esk River running around its northern aspect, the Blackstone Hills along its west, Cataract Gorge and the Summer Hills to its east, and the Arnon Hills to its south.

While Launceston CBD plays a central role in the lives of many within the area as both a place to work and play, it is here that many people choose to live. Together, the three localities provide the full suite of lifestyle options - ranging from rural and environmental living to low density blocks surrounded by nature, from quintessential suburban living to bespoke apartments and villas, and even a range of retirement and aged care facilities. The quantity and quality of good homes is evident through strong growth and continued demand in spite of the recent turndown in the Tasmanian property market.

Key demographic indicators

The three localities within the investigation area each have a unique demographic composition. The demographic makeup of each local population influences how that population will grow and change, the need for different types of housing and services, and what is valued by the community within the area. A summary table of a variety of key demographic indicators, as of 2021, are provided overleaf.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS	PROSPECT VALE	BLACKSTONE HEIGHTS	TRAVELLERS REST
Population	5,530	1,245	384
Land area (ha)	1,004	762	606
Population density (persons/ha ²)	5.51	1.63	0.57
Average household size	2.2	2.8	2.8
One person households	33.2%	13.3%	15.3%
Aged 65 and over	27.4%	12.5%	14.4%
Aged 14 and under	14.7%	18.6%	14.9%
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander born	3%	2.5%	1.4%
Overseas born	16.2%	11.9%	12.6%
Language at home other than English	7%	5.4%	2.5%
Moved to the area between 2016-2021	35%	33.6%	18.4%
Takes public transport to work	1.2%	1%	0%
University qualified	43.2%	50.7%	44.4%
Trade qualified	44.4%	44.4%	46.8%
Unemployment rate	2.6%	2.9%	4.6%
Population in the labour force	57.4%	73.9%	70%
Median weekly rent	\$300	\$370	\$325
Median weekly mortgage repayment	\$1,430	\$1,800	\$1,521
Median weekly household income	\$1,268	\$2,324	\$2,017

Table 1: Key Demographic Indicators for Investigation Area, 2021
Source: Adapted from 2021 ABS Census Statistics and REMPLAN Community

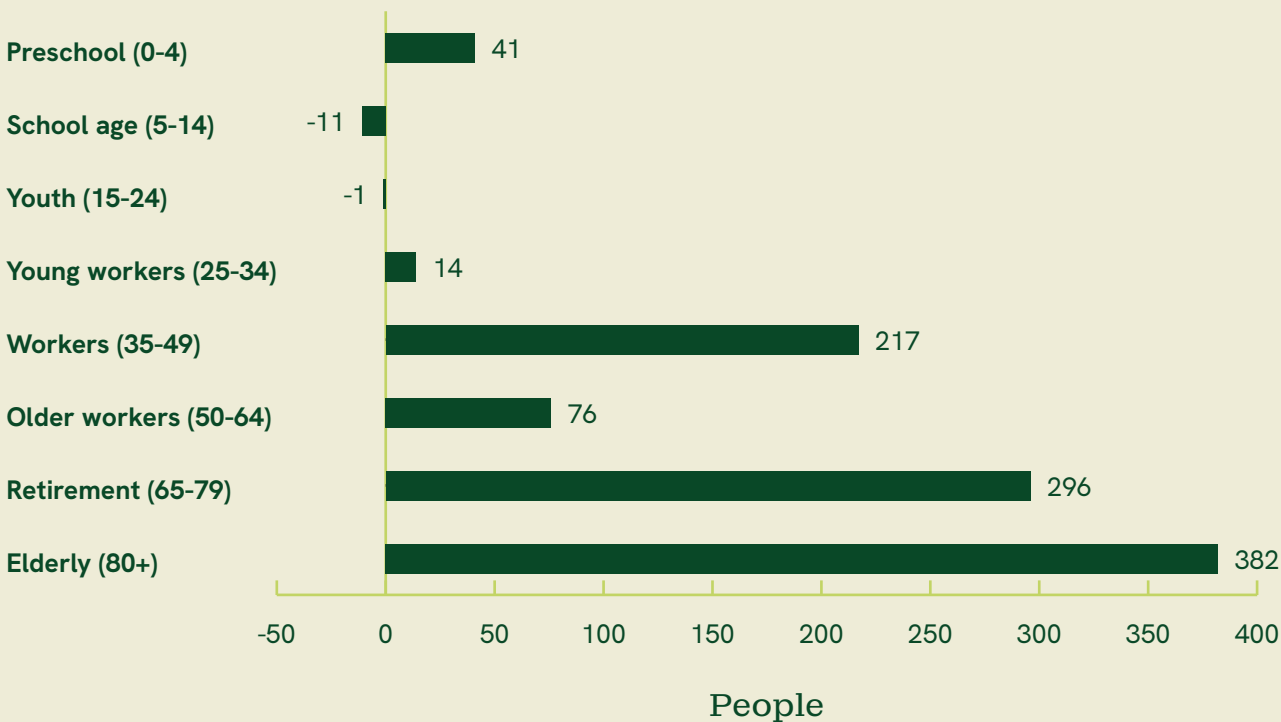
Forecast population growth & change

Population forecasts for the Prospect Vale – Blackstone Heights area have been undertaken by REMPLAN as part of a broader Regional Supply and Demand Study. It is vital to understand that forecasting, as a tool, is a prediction based on a set of detailed assumptions. While it may represent the most likely future based on recent trends, it is not a predetermined outcome. The future is inherently uncertain and the way in which all levels of government and the community respond to local and macro trends will alter how our communities grow and flourish.

Nonetheless, this study estimates a total increase of 1,066 people by 2045. This equates to an average annual growth rate of approximately 0.7% or 53 people per year³. This anticipated level of growth is slightly less than the 1% average annual growth rate (approximately 66 people per year) experienced between 2016 and 2021.

The proportion of the population by age will also change. The investigation area is experiencing rapid aging, with substantial increases being forecast in the elderly, retirement, and worker cohorts whilst the school age, youth and young worker cohorts remain relatively steady (Figure 2.).

Figure 2. Forecast Population Change by Age Group, Prospect Vale – Blackstone Heights, 2024-2044.



Approximately 530 additional homes (an average of approximately 27 per year over 20 years) will need to be delivered to accommodate these demographic shifts. Based on recent housing developments, much of this forecast growth and dwelling demand is likely attributable to Prospect Vale - with both Blackstone Heights and Travellers Rests likely to have a relatively steady population size - unless additional housing is facilitated.

Despite this anticipated growth, the investigation area is also experiencing natural population decline with deaths expected to exceed births as soon as 2025. Any net population growth within the area is therefore entirely dependent upon migration. This trend is consistent across the broader region, where migration has been the driving force behind population growth in Northern Tasmania over recent years⁴.

For the investigation area in particular, trends in migration over the past eight years suggest that the majority of new residents within the investigation area had moved from elsewhere within Launceston rather than from interstate or overseas⁵. This suggests that the investigation area is a beneficiary of a population redistribution within the Northern Region and is an attractive location for a range of age cohorts, particularly retirees, the elderly, and families with very young children⁶.

³REMPPLAN 2024.

⁴Johnson et al, 2024.

⁵ABS 2021.

⁶Urban Enterprise, 2022.

KEY SURVEY RESULTS OVERVIEW

Meander Valley Council undertook preliminary consultation with the community in June 2024, distributing a survey to all landowners and residents within the investigation area. It sought to understand what the community valued in their current lifestyle and what they aspired towards or saw as critical issues that need to be addressed.

This survey was supported by a drop-in session at Prospect Park.

332 responses were received, almost 5% of the local population, and provided a fantastic amount of quality feedback for Council to consider.

Thank you to all those who participated.

A summary of the key insights gained through this survey is provided over the following pages.





TOP FIVE REASONS YOU LIVE IN THE AREA

Understanding why people choose to live in a particular area is critical in leveraging and celebrating its unique qualities. Several themes were prevalent across all localities, with both Travellers Rest and Blackstone Heights in particular being attractive to their residents for very similar reasons.

Prospect Vale

1. Easy access to Launceston city centre.
 2. Easy access to shops and facilities.
 3. My personal safety.
 4. The size and type of housing available.
 5. Easy access to local parks.
-

Blackstone Heights

1. To be close to nature and greenery.
 2. Scenic views and outlooks.
 3. Easy access to Launceston city centre.
 4. The size and type of housing available.
 5. Easy access to shops and facilities.
-

Travellers Rest

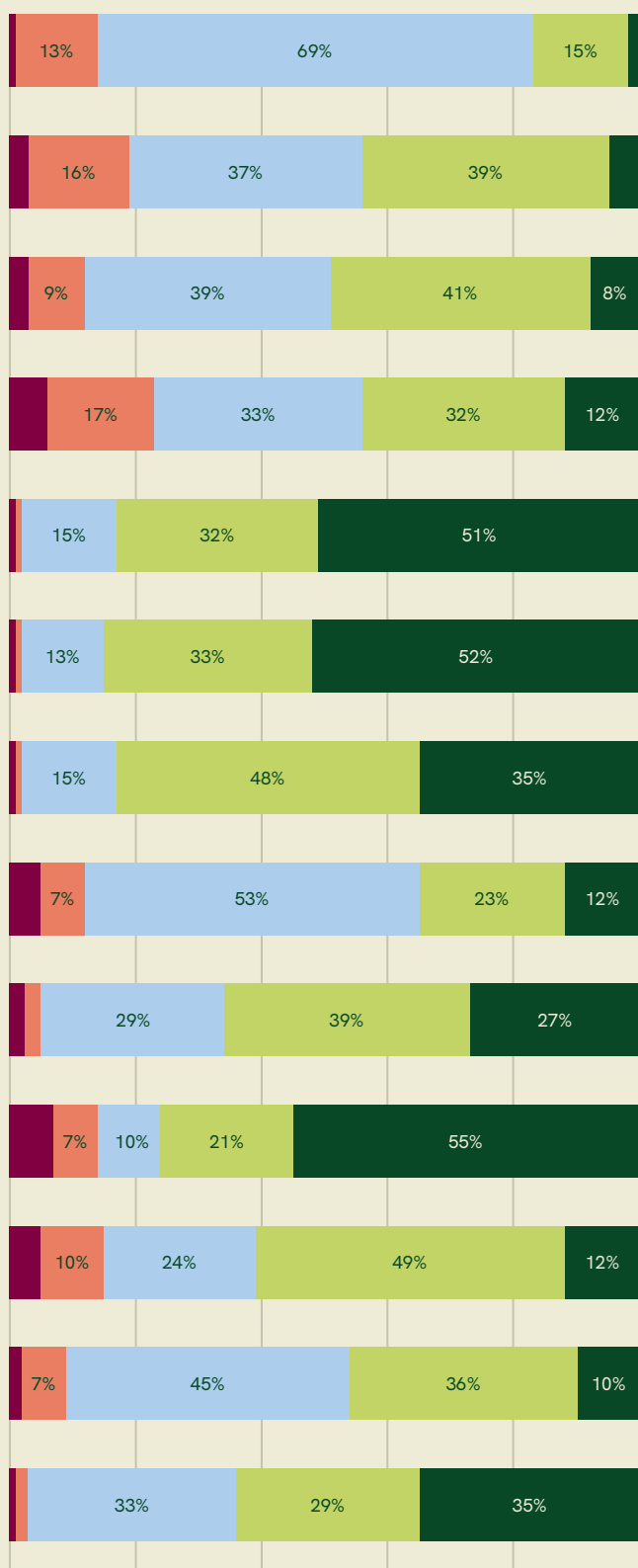
1. Scenic views and outlooks.
2. To be close to nature and greenery.
3. Easy access to Launceston city centre.
4. The size and type of housing available.
5. Easy access to shops and facilities.

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



The current Structure Plan highlights a series of community priorities. Feedback was sought on the level of agreement with these statements to understand if they were still relevant. Generally, there was a high level of agreement with most statements, particularly in respect to the natural landscape, traffic safety and flow, bus services, and reliance on a single road in and out of Blackstone Heights. No statement was overwhelmingly opposed.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

PROSPECT VALE

What do you love?

There was a general spread of reasons why respondents loved Prospect Vale, with responses showing palpable sense of pride in the community and suburb. These included:

- Easy access to the Launceston CBD, activity centres, and the highway.
- The quiet, safe, and welcoming community.
- The suburban lifestyle.
- The flat topography above the fog line.
- The quantity and quality of open space and pathway networks.
- How well maintained both public and private land is.

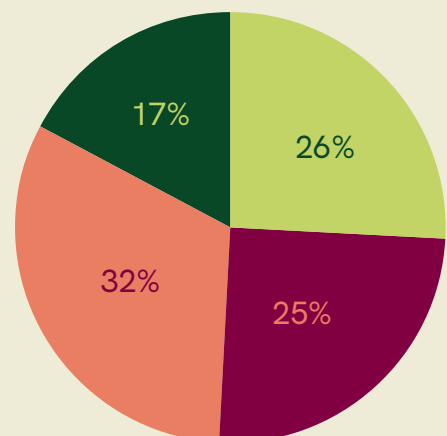
What could be improved?

A range of suggested improvements were raised, including:

- Traffic management through:
 - better distribution within the network
 - congestion reduction at pinch points
 - traffic calming measures
- Footpaths and trail infrastructure, particularly pedestrian crossings
- A wider range of businesses, retail shops and services
- Continual improvements to public open spaces (such as BBQ facilities, more green space and tree plants, and places for youth to spend time)
- Frequency and reliability of metro public transport system, including bus shelters
- Quality of the Westbury Road streetscape, including the design of buildings facing Westbury Road

Preferred rate of development

- 26% Approximately the same number of dwelling in the area, with little growth but some modest improvements in community facilities and services (e.g. roads, open space).
- 25% A similar level of population growth (15 new dwellings per year), with a range of additional community facilities and services.
- 32% Stronger growth with around 30 new dwellings per year, allowing for increased investment in additional community facilities and services.
- 17% Greater growth with around 45 new dwellings per year, allowing for significant investment in additional community facilities and services.





BLACKSTONE HEIGHTS

What do you love?

A wide range of reasons why respondents loved Blackstone Heights were provided, however five clear themes emerged:

- Low density living in a rural landscape.
- Close to nature, greenery and Lake Trevallyn.
- Scenic views and outlooks.
- Easy access to Launceston.
- Peace and quiet.

What could be improved?

While a variety of issues were raised, the following were considered by the community to be the most pressing and important:

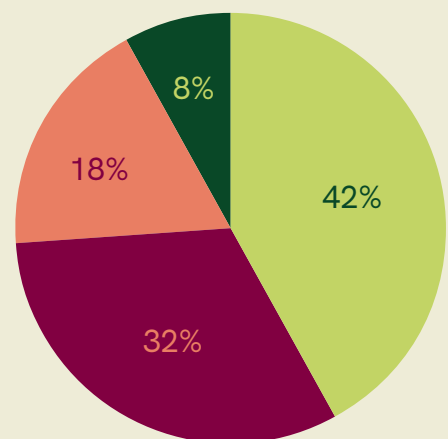
- Provision of a second access road.
- Provision of footpaths and recreational trails.

Other issues of note included:

- Facilitating more shops and services.
- Improving roadside drainage.
- Upgrading existing parks (e.g. improved playgrounds, shades, and toilets).
- Minimising the rate of development.
- Investigating a boat ramp.
- Increasing frequency of buses.
- Better bus shelters.

Preferred rate of development

-  42% Approximately the same number of dwelling in the area, with little growth but some modest improvements in community facilities and services (e.g. roads, open space).
-  32% A similar level of population growth (15 new dwellings per year), with a range of additional community facilities and services.
-  18% Greater growth with around 45 new dwellings per year, allowing for significant investment in additional community facilities and services.
-  8% Stronger growth with around 30 new dwellings per year, allowing for increased investment in additional community facilities and services.



TRAVELLERS REST

What do you love?

Three resounding themes emerged:

- Rural lifestyle so close to Launceston.
- Proximity to nature, the bush, and the natural landscape.
- Quiet and peaceful.

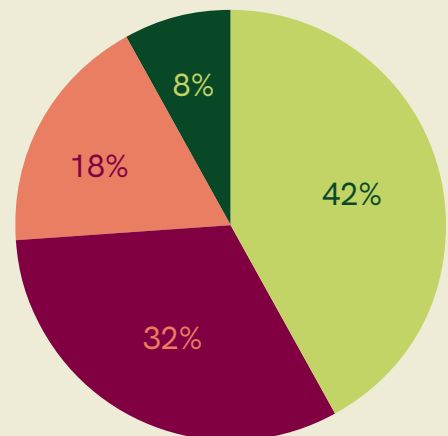
What could be improved?

- A public road linkage to Blackstone Heights.
- Trail links to Hadspen, Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights.
- Road safety Improvements (particularly along Meander Valley Road).



Preferred rate of development

- 42% Approximately the same number of dwelling in the area, with little growth but some modest improvements in community facilities and services (e.g. roads, open space).
- 32% A similar level of population growth (15 new dwellings per year), with a range of additional community facilities and services.
- 18% Greater growth with around 45 new dwellings per year, allowing for significant investment in additional community facilities and services.
- 8% Stronger growth with around 30 new dwellings per year, allowing for increased investment in additional community facilities and services.

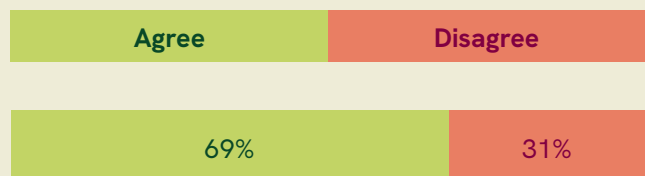


ALIGNMENT WITH CURRENT VISION STATEMENTS

The current Structure Plan highlights a series of vision statements. Feedback was sought on the level of agreement with these statements to understand if they were still relevant. Generally, there was a high level of agreement with most statements, particularly in respect to the natural landscape, traffic safety and flow, bus services, and reliance on a single road in and out of Blackstone Heights. No statement was significantly opposed.

Vision statements for Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights

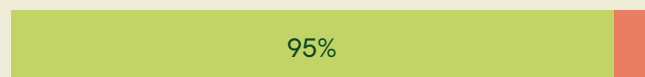
Prospect Vale's role as a tourism destination will be supported by encouraging the development of new attractions and entertainment facilities, creating new jobs in the local area.



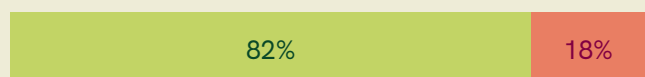
New active transport pathways will encourage residents to walk and cycle to shops, open space, Lake Trevallyn and the South Esk River and support a healthier community.



Investments in upgraded road infrastructure will make it safer and easier to move around the area.



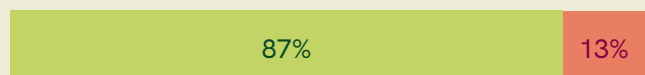
A diverse mix of housing will cater to the needs of an ageing population – from medium density housing choices through to lower density housing.



A larger population will support the development of new shops, services and community facilities, clustered together to form a community heart along Westbury Rd.



In 2035, Prospect Vale & Blackstone Heights will be a growing community, known for the quality of the natural environment, a distinctive lifestyle, and easy access to services.



The community's values and aspirations are largely consistent with the 2014 vision statements. To improve accessibility and readability, those statements have been further refined as shown in the following pages.



Figure 3. The Westbury Road Activity Centre in Prospect Vale.

Vision statements for the Westbury Road Activity Centre

Better walking and cycling links to the WRAC will help local residents enjoy the benefits of the improved centre.

The WRAC will be a key driver of the community's quality of life.

Changes to the street, including beautification, will draw residents and shoppers to the WRAC.

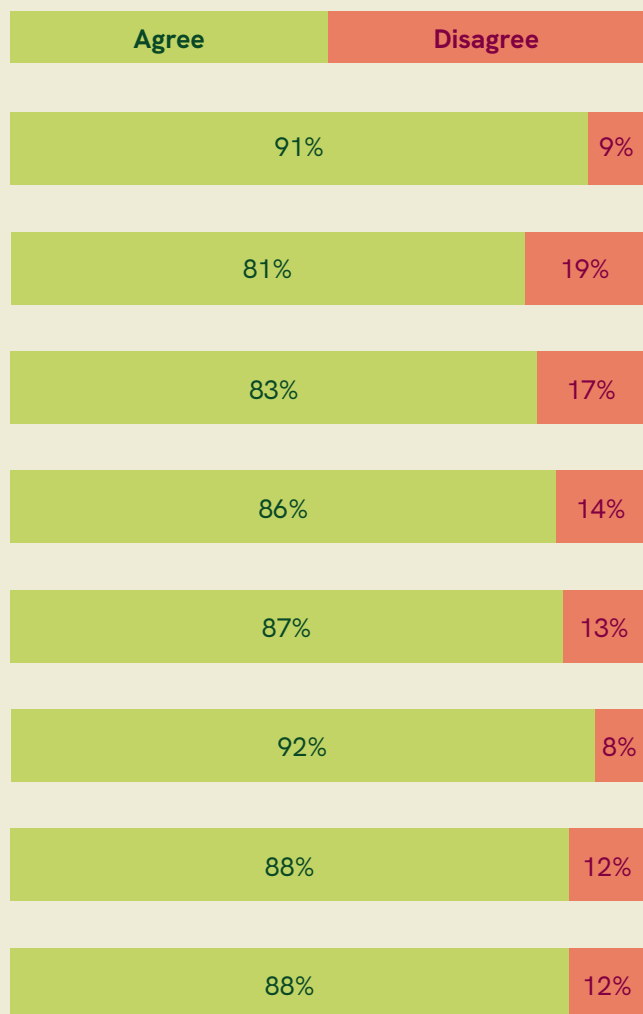
New shops and facilities will face Westbury Road, activating the street and creating a community focal point.

Westbury Road will form the spine of the WRAC, extending from Mace Street in the north to the Bass Highway on-ramp in the south.

Easy car access and frequent bus services will make the WRAC accessible for residents across Greater Launceston.

The WRAC will accommodate a wider mix of retail, entertainment and community facilities.

The WRAC will be a sub-regional commercial and community centre servicing the growing population south-west of Launceston.



COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

When considering the results of consultation to date, it's evident the community has a series of clear preferences on how each locality ought to develop in future.

These preferences have been highlighted below as key priorities for each locality. Priorities on the left hand side represent qualities already present within the area that are highly valued and desired to persist whilst priorities on the right hand side represent qualities that the community aspires towards achieving within the area as a matter of importance.

Prospect Vale

Supporting easy access to activity centres, the Launceston CBD and the Bass Highway.

Developing a safe and efficient road and movement network for all users.

Encouraging a mix of suburban housing types, each with access to functional public and private green spaces.

Strengthening strong community connections that enable a safe and friendly suburban environment.

Enabling strong growth through new shops, businesses and dwellings.

Cultivating an active and lively 'Main Street' ecosystem along Westbury Road.

Blackstone Heights

Protecting the scenic and natural values within the area, particularly Blackstone Hills, the South Esk River, and Cataract Gorge.

Supporting easy access to activity centres, the Launceston CBD and the Bass Highway.

Maintaining a predominance of low-density residential living.

Facilitating additional access roads in and out of the area.

Developing footpaths and recreational trails to better connect with open spaces and natural assets such as the Blackstone Hills, Lake Trevallyn, and Duck Reach.

Enabling a greater number and variety of shops and services.



Travellers Rest

Supporting a rural lifestyle within commuting distance to Launceston.

Protecting the scenic and natural values in the area, particularly Blackstone Hills.

Encouraging a quiet and peaceful lifestyle.

Facilitating additional access roads, particularly to Blackstone Heights.

Developing trail links to Hadspen, Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights.

Improving road safety throughout the local road network.

These community priorities have been used to develop draft vision statements for each locality and to inform emerging options for development and zoning.

DRAFT LOCALITY VISION STATEMENTS

The draft vision statements below describe the desired future for Prospect Vale, the Westbury Road Activity Centre, Blackstone Heights and Travellers Rest. They have been informed by consultation with the community, as well as the key demographic indicators detailed previously in this document.

Prospect Vale

- Prospect Vale will be a growing community, known for the quality of both its quiet suburban neighbourhood and vibrant Main Street, all well connected by a network of public open space, walking and cycling paths, and streets.
 - A larger population will support the development of new and existing shops, services, tourism and community facilities, predominantly clustered together to form a “community heart” along Westbury Road.
 - A diverse mix of housing will cater to the needs of an ageing population, from well-located medium density housing choices through to lower density housing.
-

Westbury Road Activity Centre

- Westbury Road will be a major activity centre, servicing the growing population of south-west Launceston with a wider mix of retail, entertainment and community facilities.
 - Improved walking and cycling links, frequent bus services, and easy car access, will ensure that the activity centre is accessible for residents across the western suburbs and surrounding townships.
 - New shops and facilities will face a beautified Westbury Road, where pedestrian movements are prioritised, activating the street and creating a community focal point.
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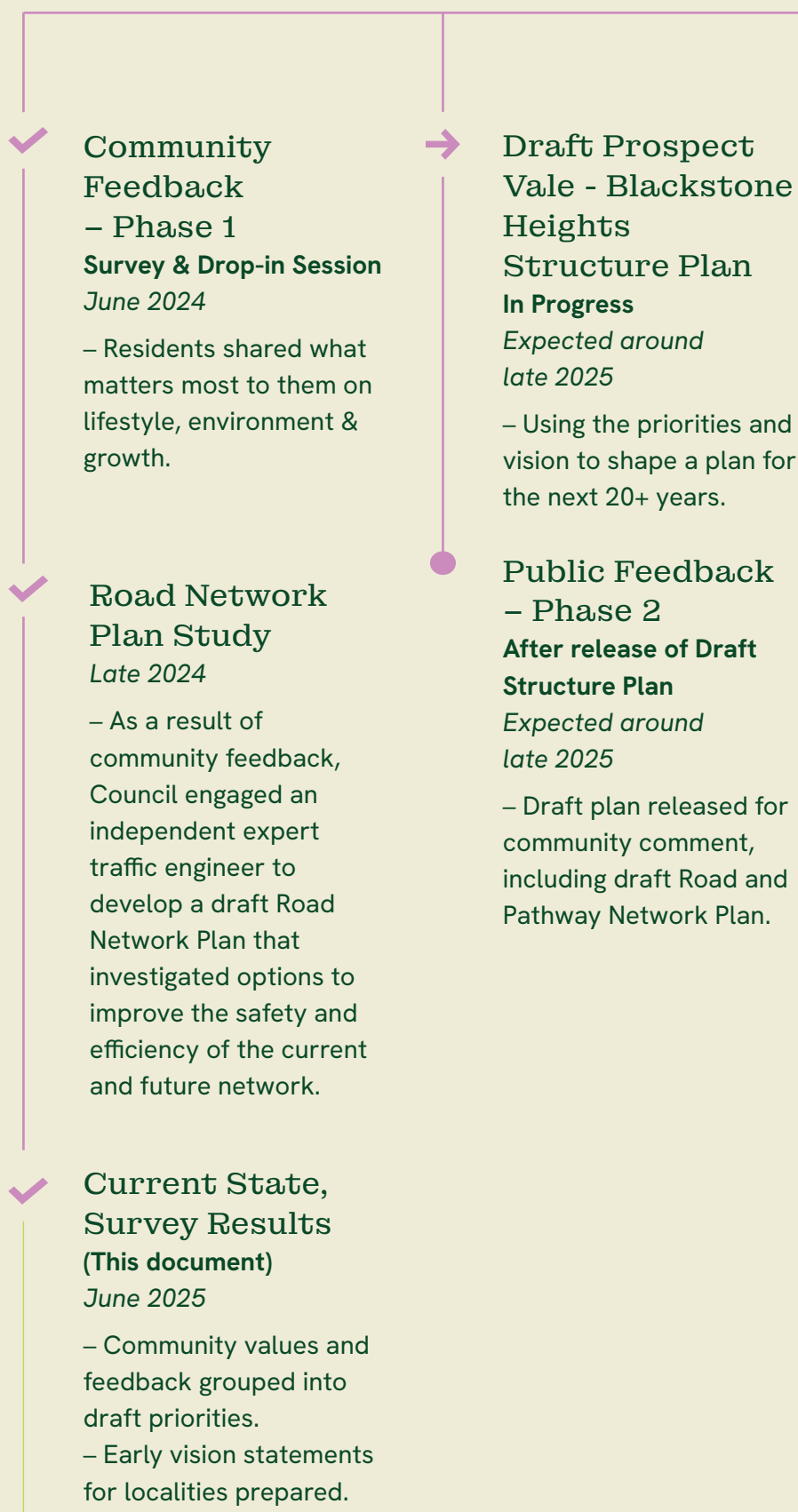
Blackstone Heights

- Modest population growth will support the incremental development of new local shops, services and community facilities, clustered together at the corner of Blackstone and Panorama Road.
- Footpaths and recreation trails will better connect residents to the surrounding natural assets and easy car access to Greater Launceston will be maintained.
- Low density living surrounded by scenic vistas and natural landscapes will be encouraged, whilst still providing for a mix of housing choices that will cater to the needs of an ageing population.

Travellers Rest

- Travellers Rest will be known for its peaceful lifestyle, surrounded by scenic vistas and rural landscape, whilst being so close to Launceston CBD.
 - Improved walking, biking and vehicle links will better connect residents to surrounding towns, suburbs and natural assets.
 - Rural living will be encouraged in a manner, and at a rate, that does not detract from values of the surrounding landscape.
-

NEXT STEPS



**Council Adoption
Prospect Vale - Blackstone
Heights Structure Plan**

Late 2025

– After considering community feedback, the final plan, including finalised Road Network Plan, will go to Council for adoption.

**Council prepares
any necessary
Draft Planning
Scheme
Amendments**

- If the structure plan recommends changes to planning rules, Council may propose a draft amendment to its Local Provisions Schedule (LPS) under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

This could involve:

- Introducing a Specific Area Plan (SAP) for unique character or development controls.
- rezoning land to better achieve the vision and priorities of the community.

**Tasmanian
Planning
Commission
Review**

**Local Provisions
Schedule submitted**

- Only the TPC can approve and formally amend the LPS. The TPC reviews the amendment against the policy framework of the Resource Management Planning System strategies.

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