



Murdoch

Specialised Activity Centre

Structure Plan

January 2014



Department of
Planning



Western
Australian
Planning
Commission



City of
Melville



Murdoch
UNIVERSITY

Cover image: Kyle Hughes-Odgers “Help is on the way”



Murdoch University ECL Courtyard Mural Artwork

depicts the idea of industry and environment and how they interrelate

(Image used with permission of Murdoch University Art Collection)

Murdoch presents a unique and exciting opportunity to combine specialised employment, residential living and education in one place, while also activating the area so it becomes a distinctive and engaging location for the community.



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The Murdoch Specialised Activity
Centre Structure Plan was prepared
by Hames Sharley under the
direction of the Murdoch Activity
Centre Structure Plan project
management group.



Murdoch

Specialised Activity Centre

Structure Plan

Final

January 2014

This Structure Plan for the Murdoch Activity Centre is a high-level, aspirational and long-term plan and a range of issues will require further consideration over time including further detailed planning, funding, and legislative changes. New and upgraded infrastructure needed to implement the Structure Plan in the medium to long-term has not been committed to, or funded by, Government.



Minister's foreword



This structure plan provides the foundation for the long-term transformation of the health and education precincts of Murdoch into an attractive, vibrant and accessible urban centre.

This structure plan takes advantage of the co-location of government and private institutions in the area and delivers a clear vision for the centre's future development.

The opportunity to build stronger relationships and encourage more collaboration between the education and health institutions has been identified to ensure Murdoch can evolve into a fully integrated and economically viable centre.

This planning framework looks at how to enable this by introducing two new mixed-use nodes that will unite the major institutions and provide shopping, entertainment, residential and servicing opportunities that will benefit future workers, students and the wider community.

The structure plan has been prepared through a partnership between the Department of Planning, the Western Australian Planning Commission, Murdoch University and the City of Melville and included substantial consultation with community, industry and government stakeholders.

It is anticipated that the Murdoch Specialised Activity Centre could accommodate up to 35,000 workers, 22,000 residents and 44,000 students, with Murdoch University, Challenger Institute of Technology, St John of God Hospital and the new Fiona Stanley Hospital all recognised as major employment generators.

The structure plan is consistent with the State Government's *Directions 2031 and Beyond* strategy. Development of the centre in accordance with the structure plan will help meet the government's employment and housing targets and will potentially contribute towards diversifying the Western Australian economy.

Murdoch is set to become a distinctive knowledge-based centre, combining specialised employment in the areas of health, education and research with residential and education opportunities in one place, while also activating the area so that it becomes an interactive and vital location for the community to enjoy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Day". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Day MLA
Minister for Planning

Chairperson's foreword



The Murdoch Specialised Activity Centre Structure Plan is a strategic land-use planning framework which will guide the centre's evolution to become one of Perth's largest and most unique activity centres.

The activity centre is set to become a unique knowledge precinct incorporating existing and proposed education and health institutions such as Murdoch University and the new Fiona Stanley tertiary hospital, as well as a host of related commercial and support services.

The Department of Planning, on behalf of the Western Australian Planning Commission, has worked closely with the City of Melville, Murdoch University and other community, industry and government stakeholders to investigate ways to maximise location and business links between the various institutions, and to integrate the centre with the wider community to form one interconnected and accessible precinct.

The structure plan has been prepared in accordance with *State Planning Policy 4.2 - Activity Centres for Perth and Peel* – and, in addition to providing for specialised employment, also considers the need for complementary types of land uses and activities expected in an urban style centre in a manner that will provide a high level of amenity and best serve workers, residents, students and visitors.

Highlighting the opportunity for transit-oriented development, not only around the train station but also near quality public transit routes, the structure plan places a strong emphasis on accessibility.

Maintaining Murdoch's natural bush setting as a key characteristic of the centre has been a priority for the structure planning. A great deal of respect has been given to maintaining ecological linkages and wetlands for the flora and fauna that inhabit the area.

The structure plan will guide local and State Government decisions for the centre, and provide the basis for more detailed local structure planning in the future. It provides the planning direction necessary to ensure that the future development of the centre will be in keeping with the overall vision for the centre.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Lumsden'.

Eric Lumsden PSM

Chairperson
Western Australian Planning Commission



Summary

Murdoch Activity Centre with its existing collection of tertiary education institutions, hospitals, transport infrastructure and easily developable land presents an opportunity to become one of the largest centres of activity outside of the Perth central business district (CBD). As a specialised centre with considerable scope to grow, Murdoch has the opportunity to provide up to 35,000 jobs in the longer term with nearly 44,000 students.

There are significant opportunities for the centre based on its potential attributes relating to bio-technology and health research, to become a world leader in commercialisation of research and also a significant contributor to the Western Australian economy.

The availability of developable land and amenity provided by the natural environment presents one of Perth's best locations to create quality high-density residential living and help address the State's long-term population pressures. As an integrated centre, Murdoch will also contain all of the uses and activities of a city centre and achieve a high intensity of employees, students and residents, in turn driving the entertainment, transport and quality of place attributes required for a successful centre.

There will be a dynamic shift in the approach to transport planning and the introduction of major public transport trunk infrastructure in an east-west direction will transform Murdoch from being an origin of public transport trips and a redirector of traffic, to a centre which is both an origin and destination.

The structural form of the centre focuses on the creation of an intense core area which contains most of the urban functions. This is supported by a transit corridor adjacent to a high-frequency public transport route and a suburban frame which houses existing communities and, in the longer-term, land capable of development within walking distance of the centre.

The character of the place and the spatial structure is informed by the significant landscape setting in which Murdoch sits. The Structure Plan adopts a landscape-led response to the ecological grain of the wider Beeliar Regional Park. Within this framework, a precinct or centre-wide approach to conserving natural resources can be pursued to provide Murdoch with a sustainable basis for growth.

The creation of eight precincts reflects the need for a particular range of activities to make the centre function effectively. Each precinct will require a local structure plan to address detailed planning and design issues.

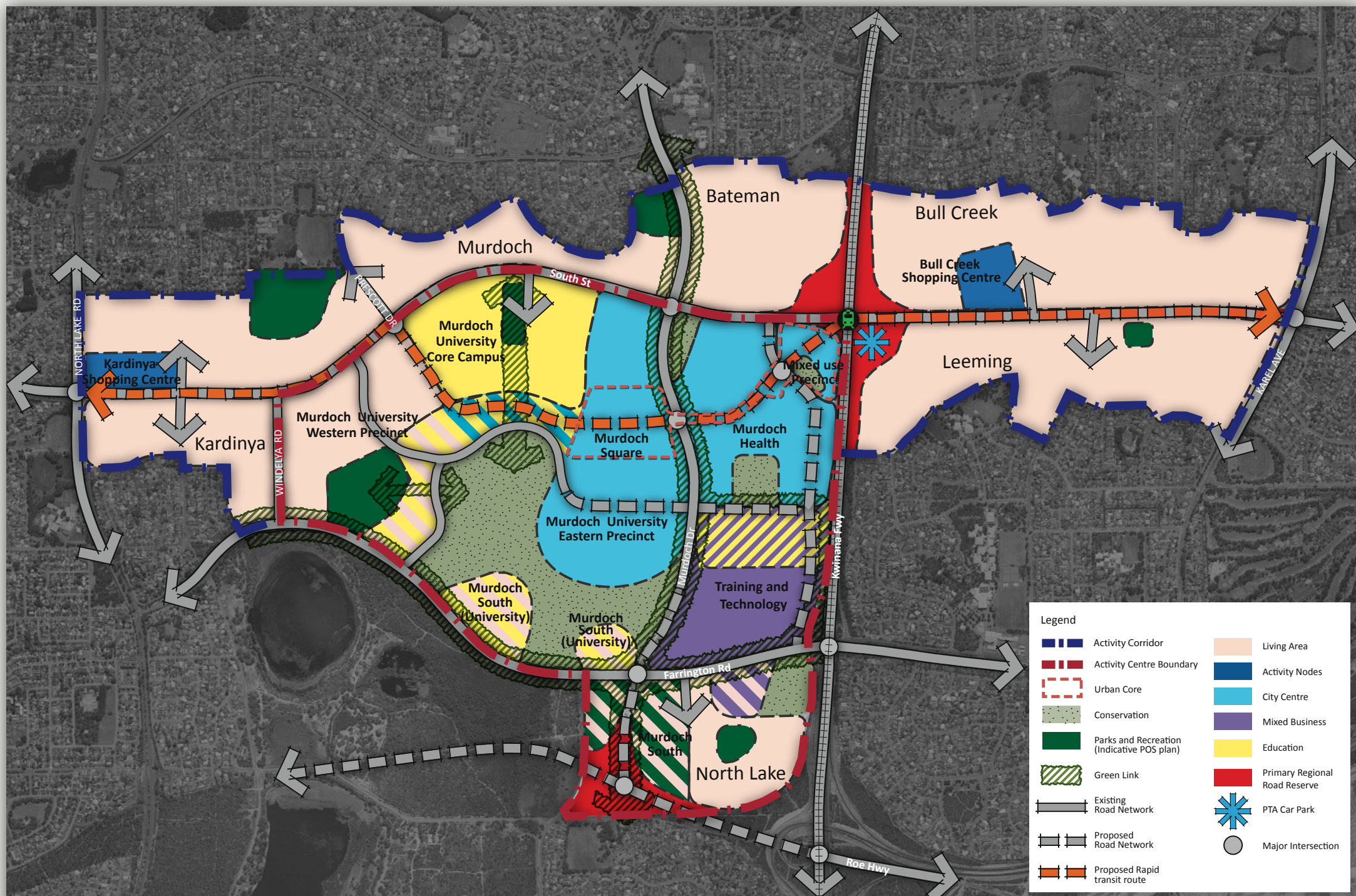
A rezoning of the central area of Murdoch will need to occur to reflect its city centre potential and status. This will allow the flexibility for the centre to respond effectively to market conditions and establish a framework for delivery.

Minimum intensity standards will be set to avoid the typical spacious layout of low density business parks which inhibits interaction between people and activities. These will restrict the footprint of buildings to promote the urban environment necessary to justify the required investment in transport infrastructure.

A series of non-statutory planning studies are required to explore and stimulate market investment in the area and turn Murdoch into a project to be built. These will assist the economic development of the place and help set new environmental standards for the development of a major urban centre.

The long-term expansion of Murdoch into a specialised centre of optimal scale should be led by a new type of partnership between government, industry, community and Murdoch's anchor institutions to promote the best interests of all parties and generate innovative outcomes.

A summary of the key elements of the structure plan are shown in the Structure Plan Key Diagram.



Structure plan key diagram

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Aerial photo of Fiona Stanley Hospital site (October 2013)



Murdoch

Specialised Activity Centre

Structure Plan

1. Introduction

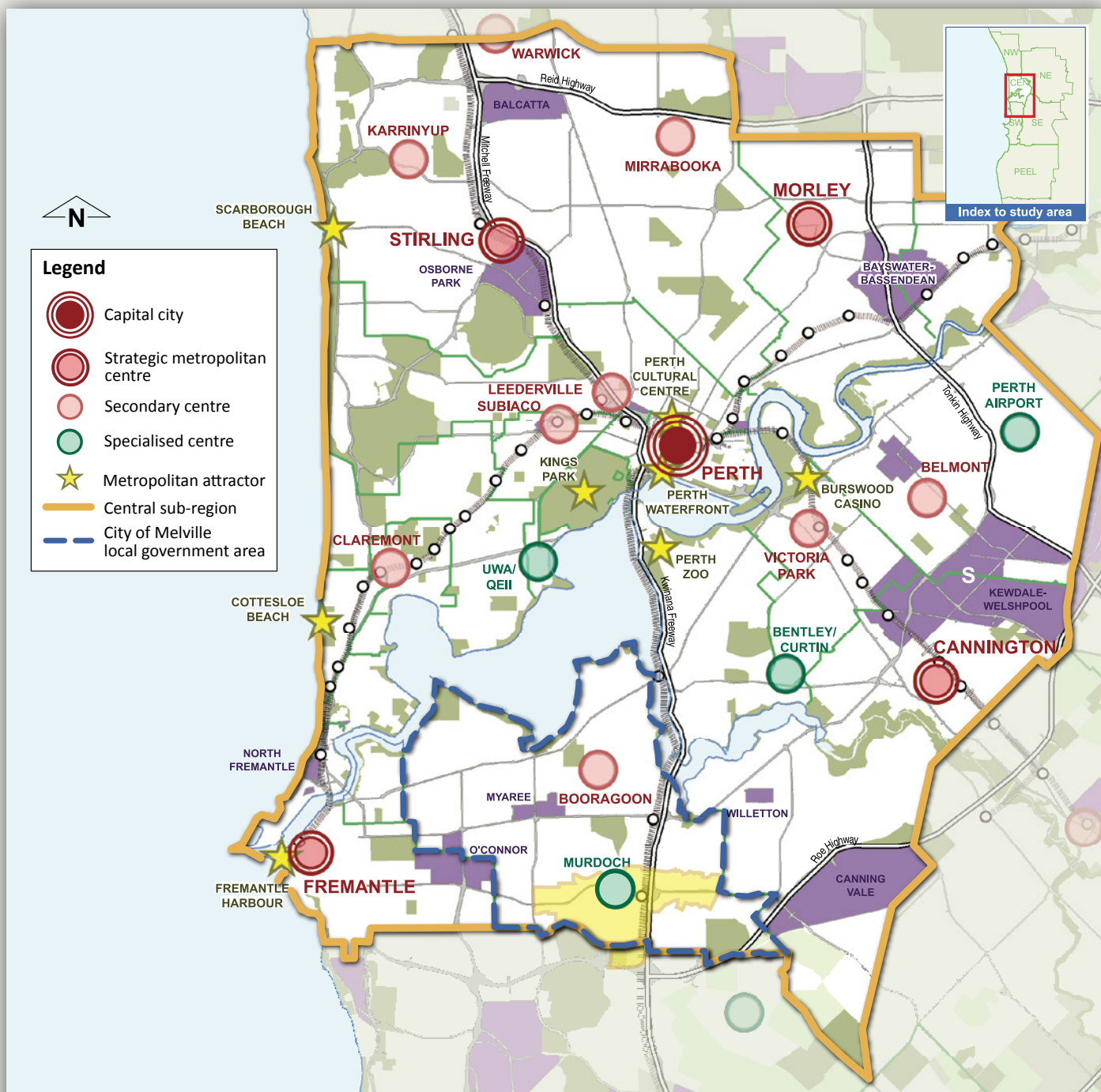
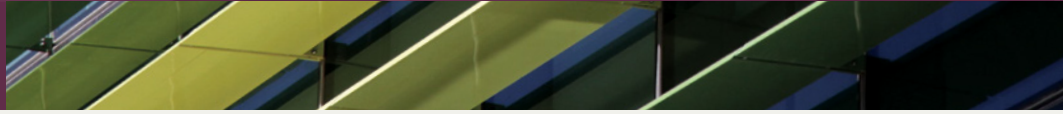


Figure 1.01: Murdoch in context of activity centres in the central sub-region (Source: *Directions 2031*)

1. Introduction



1.1 About this structure plan

This structure plan has been commissioned by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) to guide the strategic development of the Murdoch Activity Centre. The WAPC is the statutory authority with statewide responsibilities for urban and regional land-use planning and land development matters. The WAPC is supported by the Department of Planning (DoP) which is the State Government's primary planning agency for Western Australia.

The WAPC/DoP is responsible for ensuring that integrated land use and infrastructure planning is in place for Murdoch which is identified as a significant 'specialised centre' and transit-oriented development opportunity in the spatial planning framework *Directions 2031 and Beyond*. Within this context, a primary objective of this structure plan is to align the current strategic and development plans of all Murdoch institutions and landholders to ensure the most efficient and compatible use of land. Additionally, the WAPC/DoP has directed that the structure planning considers a long-term vision for the development of Murdoch Activity Centre, promoting not just greater collaboration between parties but innovation in the masterplanning of this activity centre as a major knowledge based export hub in conjunction with the existing regionally significant institutional activities. It is important to note that the success of the structure plan will be dependent on the delivery of key transport infrastructure to ensure it functions at an optimum.

The goal of innovative masterplanning has been embraced in the strategies developed in the structure plan. Innovation is not simply about a creative physical design or land use plan for the study area. It encompasses the critical interventions and actions required to bring about a significant change in the integrated planning of the centre, the outlook of key partners and development outcomes on the ground. The aim, therefore, has not been to seek to prepare a standard spatially based structure plan but to fashion a new type of strategic document, properly informed by the economic realities and opportunities at Murdoch and shaped by the environmental character and sensitivities of the place.

1.2 Status of this document

This structure plan is based on a review of existing and emerging plans within the study area to ensure that individual programs and proposals are consistent with the strategic objectives of *Directions 2031 and Beyond*, requirements of WAPC *State Planning Policy 4.2 Activity Centres for Perth and Peel*, Western Australian Built Environment Policy *Better Spaces and Places*, *Creating Places for People: an urban design protocol for Australian cities*, WAPC *State Planning Strategy*, *Murdoch Activity Centre Main Street and Mixed Use Precinct Detailed Area Plan and Design Guidelines* and the WAPC *Development Control Policy 1.6 Planning to Support Transit Use and Transit-Oriented Development*. This new structure plan for Murdoch forms the principal planning and urban design framework for the entire activity centre. Masterplans and development applications for strategic sites within the centre's boundaries are required to be assessed against the objectives and guidelines within this structure plan. This is in addition to the normal planning considerations set out in the relevant local or town planning scheme for the area.

This structure plan for the Murdoch Activity Centre supersedes the previous Murdoch Activity Centre Structure Plan (Part A – Fiona Stanley Hospital and Health Precinct) 2007.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of the structure plan is to set a framework which facilitates the future development of Murdoch as a specialised centre. In response to this objective, the document has been generated to determine a capacity of development. The calculations which form the basis of the capacity are subject to detailed studies which will be specific to the activities which occur in the future. This document shall guide the decision-making process of the responsible authority.

1. Introduction

1.4 How to use the structure plan framework

The structure plan is set out in seven chapters. The opening two chapters set the planning context and overall strategies which shape the plan, with the detail fleshed out by topic in the remaining sections. The introduction provides a review of findings from the analysis and consultation stages of the project.

Chapters 3 to 7 are in a format consistent with the five key topics of activity centre planning as outlined in *State Planning Policy 4.2*: activity; movement; urban form; resource conservation; and implementation. Chapter 7 includes guidance to local authorities and other agencies on the planning provisions required to support the structure plan proposals, including recommended amendments to relevant statutory documents and arrangements for managing, staging and funding development.

The structure plan is a strategic planning document which should be used to guide major decisions about forward planning within the activity centre. It is therefore applicable to the content of the Metropolitan Region Scheme, town planning schemes, campus masterplans, site development applications or proposals for new transport infrastructure.

This structure plan has been designed as more than a land-use planning document. It has been led by economic analysis and informed by a thorough consultation process with a range of key stakeholders in public, private and community sectors. It therefore contains intelligence and strategies about other elements that are required to be addressed if the structure planning vision for the activity centre is to be realised.

In addition, a series of recommendations are made about specific actions and governance structures necessary to implement key parts of the strategy for the activity centre. Without these interventions, the potential of the activity centre to fulfil stakeholder aspirations and government targets as a significant and specialised urban centre will be compromised.

1.5 Development opportunities and constraints

The background analysis of the current conditions and prospects for the centre have revealed both unique opportunities and significant challenges to the overall vision of a major specialised centre being developed that is second to none in the State of Western Australia. These challenges involve finding ways to:

- achieve true diversity of use within a mono-use landscape, much of which is in the control of State Government;
- attract the specialised investment and commercial buy-in to the overall concept of the centre within a traditional resource based economy;
- engender a compact, dense urban culture, active day and night, in a largely untested suburban location;
- deliver a residential density and genuinely affordable urban housing within the conditions of the Perth property market;
- ensure high quality public realm is provided appropriate to the location and the Western Australian climate;
- encourage more people out of cars and induce a step change in public transport patronage in a roads/car park dominant environment;
- responsibly conserve and integrate the natural habitat within a developing urban context; and
- foster a resource conscious culture across the organisations in the activity centre with respect to water, energy and waste.

This structure plan does not set out to address wider social, economic and environmental challenges but it does highlight their existence and relevance and offers some strategies to assist with delivering the overall plan for the centre.

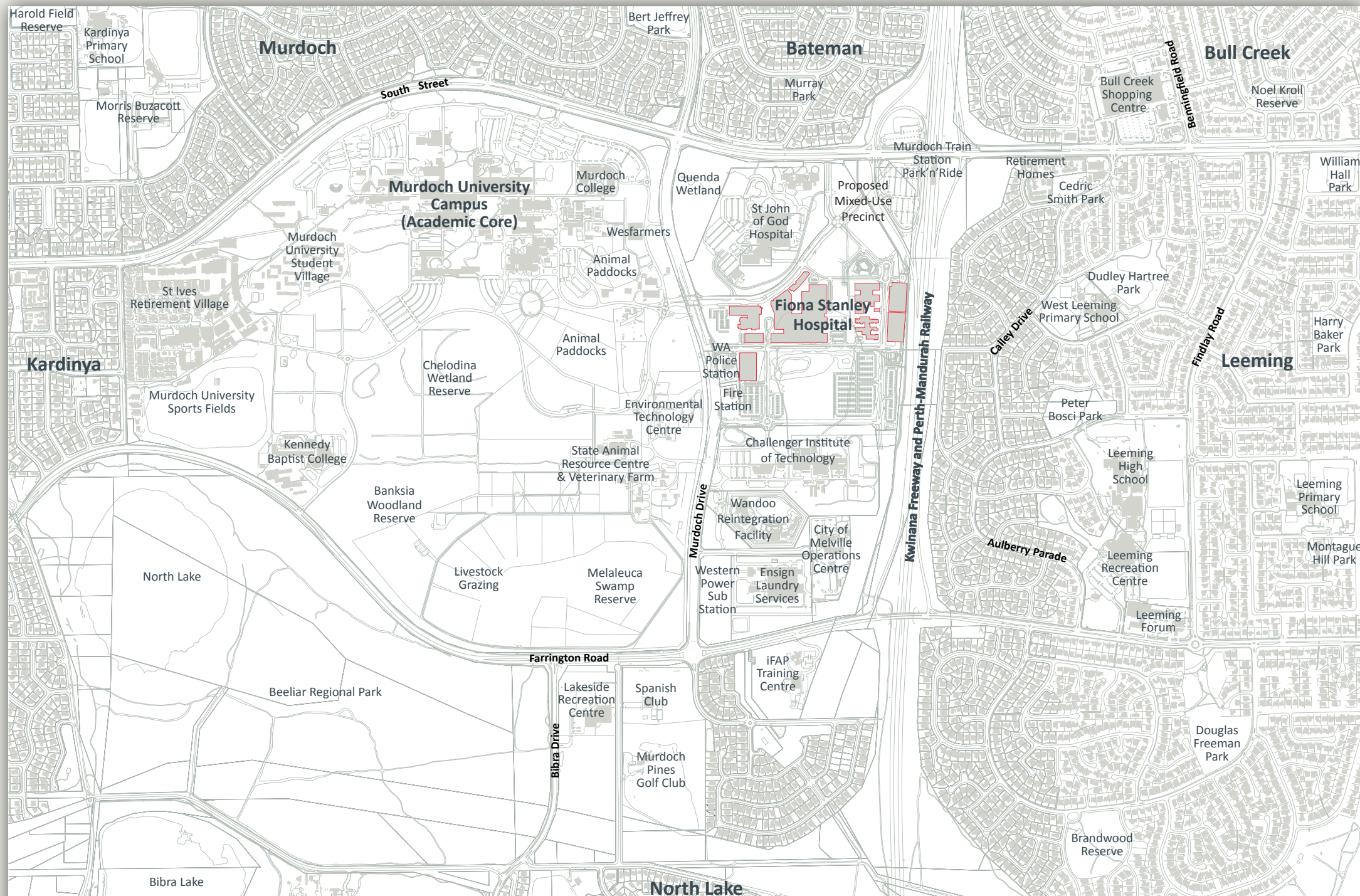


Figure 1.02: Murdoch Activity Centre - Site Plan

1. Introduction

1.6 Centre concept and vision

Murdoch Activity Centre is one of five specialised activity centres in Perth with the potential to become a knowledge-intensive and competitive urban centre, one which is government led, market driven, sustainably designed and innovatively managed. Based around core activities of health, education and research and located at the intersection of key transport arteries, Murdoch presents an unparalleled opportunity to develop a specialised centre which can assist in diversifying the Western Australian economy.

The concept of developing a major activity centre at Murdoch to serve the metropolitan area is not without foundation, as the idea can be traced back to strategic planning by the Western Australian Government in the 1950s and 60s. However, even with substantial public investment in the area in recent decades, the vision for the centre remains unfulfilled and in need of fresh impetus.

An overall vision for the activity centre was formed with input from the community and stakeholders. During the consultation program, the project team worked through a number of conceptual options for the centre and, based on feedback, developed a preferred concept plan (Figure 1.03).

The vision statement for Murdoch Activity Centre is as follows.

Murdoch will become a centre of innovation and sustainability and a workplace and home for a diverse population of 35,000 employees, 22,000 residents and 44,000 students. At its core will be a thriving university town with high class research, teaching of international reputation and a variety of complementary tenants all sharing amenities in an integrated campus environment. Murdoch Square will be the centrepiece, containing low-cost accommodation around a new shopping, leisure and community precinct. Murdoch Activity Centre will have world class health care facilities, Australia's

largest hospital and an intense mix of export-oriented business, research and development and other key services. The mixed use precinct will be the gateway to the centre featuring a lively mix of apartments, offices, shopping and entertainment uses. In the backdrop, the wider Beeliar Regional Park is a unique setting for an active urban life within a compact core served by intercity trains and other rapid transit as the centre transforms into a distinctive Western Australian destination.

The structure plan is also cognisant of key outcomes and interventions required to help deliver on the vision for this major centre and this is addressed in Chapter 7: Implementation.

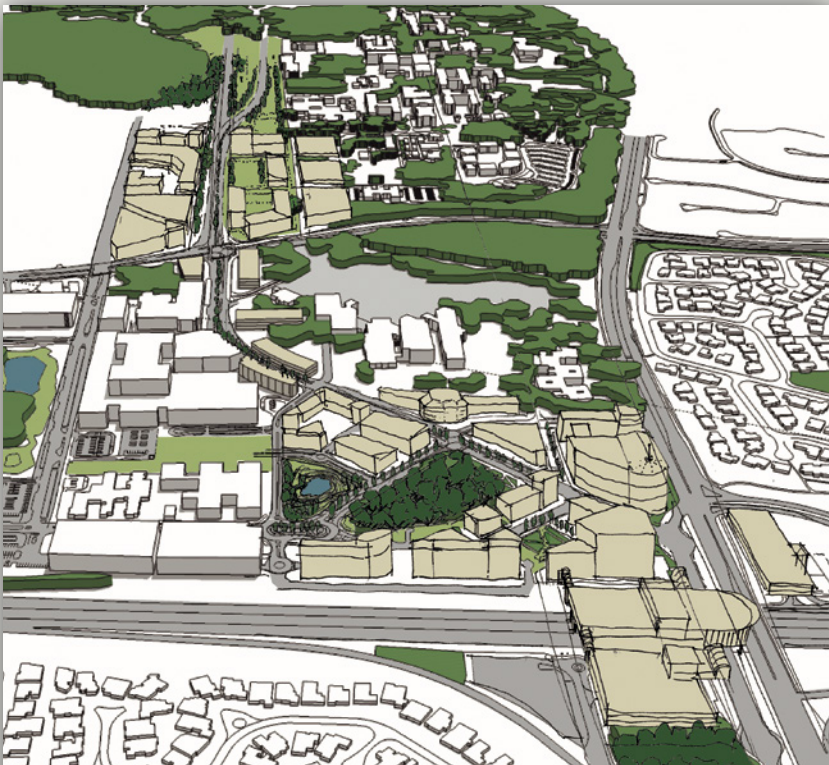


Figure 1.03: Sketch concept of Murdoch Activity Centre - core area (view west)

1.7 Planning objectives for Murdoch Activity Centre

The planning objectives which underpin and are now driving the ambitions for the centre are as follows.

1. A major urban centre with one of the highest levels of activity and employment outside the Perth CBD.
2. A national centre for excellence in health, education and commercialisation of knowledge.
3. An affordable, attractive and convenient community in which to live, including low-cost and higher-density forms of accommodation, e.g. for students, workers, retirees and those in health care.
4. A well connected centre, not just to Perth CBD but to other city centres, specialised centres and activity centres within the metropolitan area.
5. An Australian model for moving around a centre via sustainable urban transport forms.
6. A leader in place making that will set a new benchmark for the integration of an urban centre with a sensitive natural environment.
7. A new standard for conserving resources on a centre-wide basis.

The WAPC/DoP acknowledges the urgency of completing the strategic planning framework for Murdoch Activity Centre given the proposed 2014 opening date for Fiona Stanley Hospital. This structure plan therefore provides detailed guidance and recommendations relating to the provision of infrastructure for short-term (1-5 years) and medium-term (5-10 years) time frames. The structure plan also works within the 20-year horizon of *Directions 2031* and

Beyond and gives consideration to ultimate development scenarios agreed by stakeholders. The structure plan is robust enough to accommodate longer-term transformation, including potential infrastructure requirements in support of an optimum scale activity centre.



Figure 1.04: Aerial view of proposed Murdoch Activity Centre study area



Figure 1.05: Murdoch Activity Centre study area: scale comparison to Perth CBD

