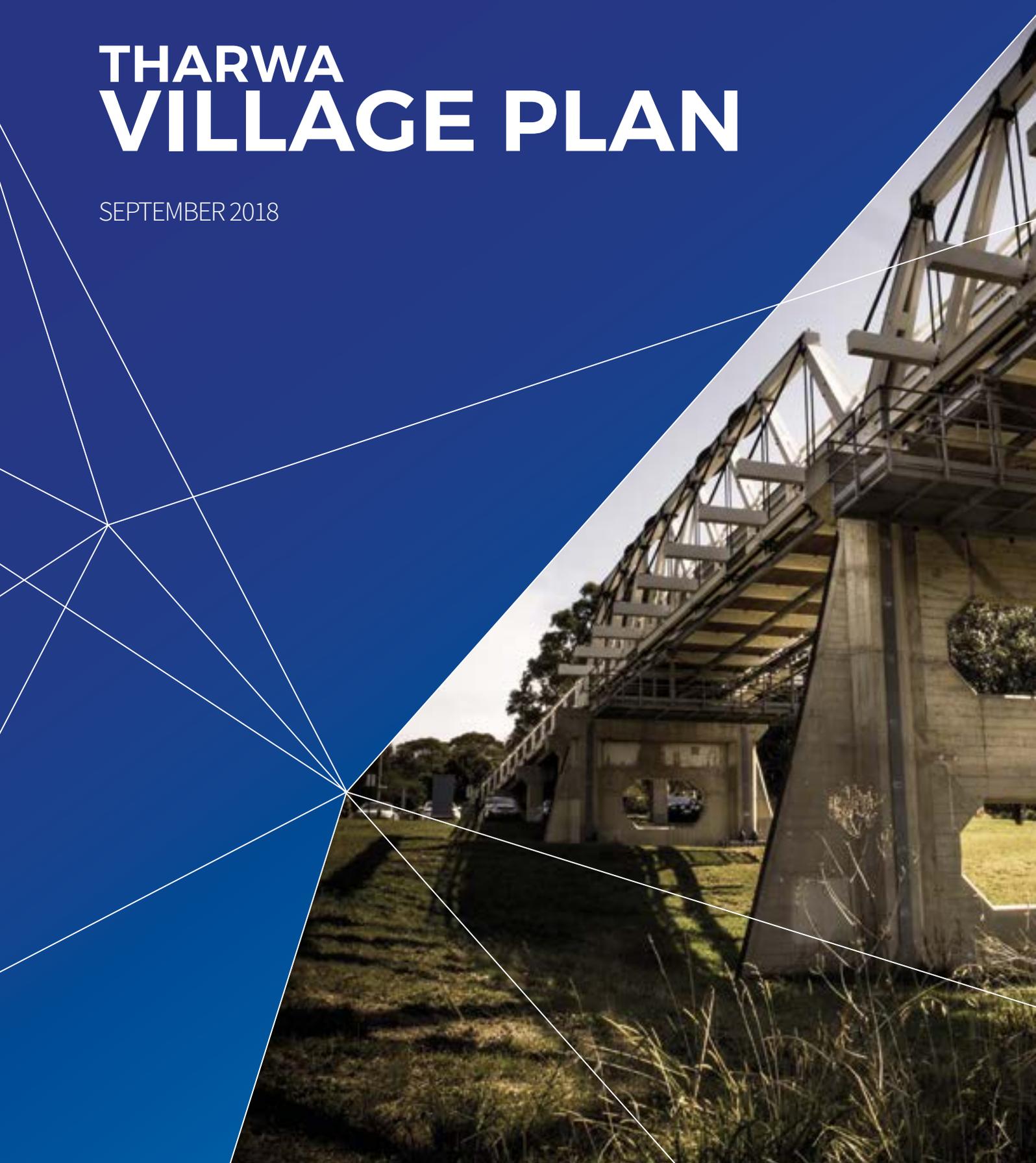




**ACT**  
Government

# THARWA VILLAGE PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2018



**ISBN:** 978-1-921117-79-4

**© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2018**

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from:

Director-General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development  
Directorate, ACT Government, GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601.

**Telephone:** 02 6207 1923

**Website:** [www.planning.act.gov.au](http://www.planning.act.gov.au)

**Privacy**

Before making a submission to this discussion paper, please review the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate's privacy policy and annex at [www.environment.act.gov.au/about/privacy](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/about/privacy). Any personal information received in the course of your submission will be used only for the purposes of this community engagement process. Names of organisations may be included in any subsequent consultation report, but all individuals will be de-identified unless prior approval is gained.

**Accessibility**

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues as accessible as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, such as large print, please phone Canberra Connect on 13 22 81 or email the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate at [epsdcomms@act.gov.au](mailto:epsdcomms@act.gov.au)

If English is not your first language and you require a translating and interpreting service, please phone 13 14 50.

If you are deaf, or have a speech or hearing impairment, and need the teletypewriter service, please phone 13 36 77 and ask for Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

For speak and listen users, please phone 1300 555 727 and ask for Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

For more information on these services visit <http://www.relayservice.com.au>



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



# CONTENTS

<b>DEFINITIONS .....</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>4. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>1</b>	Challenges .....	47
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>	Opportunities.....	48
Purpose and scope.....	5	<b>5. THARWA INTO THE FUTURE .....</b>	<b>51</b>
Village Plan Study Area .....	7	Village Plan Structure.....	53
Block and section Map.....	7	The vision.....	53
What a village plan does .....	7	Character statement.....	53
Planning policies .....	10	The village plan.....	53
Opportunities for land release .....	10	Planning principles.....	58
Public domain upgrades .....	10	<b>6. DESIGN GUIDELINES .....</b>	<b>63</b>
Further studies .....	10	<b>7. IMPLEMENTATION.....</b>	<b>73</b>
Village plan process .....	10	The process of change .....	75
Community engagement .....	10	Further studies.....	76
<b>2. PLANNING CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>13</b>		
Statutory planning.....	16		
Planning history .....	20		
<b>3. BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>21</b>		
Community Engagement .....	23		
Heritage and character .....	24		
Demographics.....	29		
Land use .....	30		
Public domain and connectivity.....	32		
Environment and natural hazards.....	38		
Infrastructure.....	43		

# MAPS

<b>Map 1:</b> Spatial context .....	4
<b>Map 2:</b> Tharwa Village Plan study area .....	6
<b>Map 3:</b> Tharwa Village Plan study area – area of influence .....	8
<b>Map 4:</b> Block and section .....	9
<b>Map 5:</b> Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Lanyon Bowl Area .....	18
<b>Map 6:</b> Territory Plan land use zones .....	19
<b>Map 7:</b> Heritage significance .....	27
<b>Map 8:</b> Land custodianship .....	31
<b>Map 9:</b> Community facilities .....	33
<b>Map 10:</b> Heritage and recreation networks.....	36
<b>Map 11:</b> Murrumbidgee river corridor .....	37
<b>Map 12:</b> Ecological values.....	39
<b>Map 13:</b> Bushfire management zones.....	41
<b>Map 14:</b> Flood events.....	42
<b>Map 15:</b> Spatial framework.....	54
<b>Map 16:</b> Spatial framework inset .....	55
<b>Map 17:</b> Tharwa precincts.....	56
<b>Map 18:</b> Lanyon Bowl area .....	57
<b>Map 19:</b> Heritage and recreation network track connections .....	64

# TABLES

<b>Table 1:</b> Community and recreation facilities located in Tharwa .....	32
<b>Table 2:</b> Summary of Principles.....	59

# DEFINITIONS

**Active travel** is travel that involves physical activity such as walking and cycling.

**Blocks and sections** are how areas of land are identified in the ACT. Land is divided into divisions, suburbs, sections and blocks. Territory Plan zoning determines what activities/uses can occur on the blocks. Blocks are usually leased to one entity.

**Built form** relates to the buildings, associated structures and surrounding public spaces.

**Catchment areas** are the areas of land surrounding a river. Rain falling in a catchment area that isn't absorbed into the ground runs into the river.

**Ecological communities** are groups of plants, animals and other organisms that naturally occur together. Their structure and composition are determined by environmental factors such as climate, landscape position, soil, aspect and altitude.

**Human scale** reflects a sympathetic proportional relationship between the built form and human dimensions where people are not overwhelmed by the built form. Human scale contributes to a person's perception of buildings or other features in the public domain. It is typically referred to when discussing the bulk and scale of development.

**Land use zones** are allocated by the Territory Plan to all land within the ACT. They define what land uses can or cannot occur on a piece of land. See the Territory Plan and more about the zoning system at [www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2008-27](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2008-27)

**Placemaking** enables people to create attractive streets and places that are prosperous, liveable, healthy and green. It includes urban design and place management and results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness and wellbeing.

**Public domain** refers to spaces that belong to or are available to the public, including parks, streets and other public spaces such as plazas, courtyards and open spaces.

**Riparian zone** is the land alongside creeks, streams, gullies, rivers and wetlands. These areas are unique and ecologically diverse, and are often the most fertile parts of the landscape.

**The Lanyon Bowl**, also known as the Lanyon Landscape Conservation Reserve, extends from Point Hut to Tharwa. It contains the historic Lanyon and Lambrigg homesteads, which are located within a shared historic rural landscape setting. The reserve is a visual catchment area and is significant for its preserved and accessible landscape, which bears the imprint of successive phases of nineteenth and twentieth century rural development.

**Shared path** is a path for non-motorised transport, with the exception of motorised wheelchairs and power-assisted pedal cycles. Both pedestrians and cyclists share these paths.

**Surveillance** or **passive surveillance** is the 'eyes on the street' from residents and people going about their daily activities to create a sense of safety on streets and public spaces.

**Water sensitive urban design (WSUD)** is the planning, design and/or construction of the built environment to minimise water runoff and ensure any runoff causes the least amount of damage. It is also about wise use of that water to improve the environment.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ACT Government has prepared this village plan for Tharwa to define what is important about the village and provide a planning framework to guide its enhancement and social, environmental and economic sustainability into the future.

The village plan has been informed by the comments and suggestions provided during community engagement. It responds to broader strategic planning policies for the ACT and issues identified during background analysis studies of the village.

Two stages of community engagement were undertaken, providing an opportunity for local residents, local businesses and ACT Government agencies to detail their concerns and aspirations for the future of the village. Feedback was very useful in the development of the village plan. This engagement was greatly assisted by the Tharwa Community Association.

Tharwa Village is set in picturesque pastoral landscape beside the Murrumbidgee River and at the foot of Mount Tennent. It is the gateway to the Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. The area around Tharwa is significant to the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples, whose connection to the area extends back at least 25,000 years prior to the village being proclaimed as a township in 1862, and for who Tharwa has historically been an important crossing point along a cultural pathway.

Local residents of Tharwa are proud that this community is Canberra's oldest officially recognised European settlement. The village retains important elements from its early rural heritage, making it a valued retreat from the suburban edge of Canberra.

This Tharwa Village Plan aims to foster the protection and enhancement of Tharwa's unique character and build upon the value the village contributes to the local community, tourism and recreational opportunities for Canberra.

Tharwa faces a number of infrastructure, investment and economic challenges given its location and size.

Preparation of this village plan involved extensive background research and analysis, including:

- consideration of strategic planning directions and policies
- responding to outcomes from community and stakeholder engagement activities that were undertaken as part of the village plan process and
- consideration of background research, reports and analysis.

The key findings of this research and analysis:

- The value that the community places in Tharwa's historic and peaceful rural village character.
- The significance of Tharwa's Aboriginal cultural heritage that recognises early Aboriginal habitation within the area.
- The significance of the Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct as one of Tharwa's most valued historic assets that reflects early European settlement.
- The importance that the existing independent art and craft businesses and Outward Bound contributes to Tharwa as a destination for potential visitors.
- That there are opportunities to enhance connections between the Tharwa Village and regional heritage and recreation destinations, such as Lanyon Homestead, Cuppacumbalong Woolshed and Namadgi Visitor Centre.
- That there are opportunities to take advantage of Tharwa's unique location on the Murrumbidgee River and proximity to Namadgi National Park, which could be enhanced with the provision of additional outdoor recreational and environmental activities.
- That there is a presence of some vacant land and underutilised facilities, including the Tharwa School, which could potentially be reinvigorated to enhance social and community connections and new opportunities.
- That there are opportunities to improve the promotion of existing tourist assets and the provision of an increased range of attractions that would encourage more visitors to stop and spend time in Tharwa.

The proposed vision for the village of Tharwa is:

---

**THARWA VILLAGE IS A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE MEETING PLACE FOR THE COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE CAN GET CLOSER TO NATURE AND EXPERIENCE THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF A RURAL VILLAGE LIFESTYLE.**

---

The vision is supported by five planning principles, which inform the planning strategies and actions. The principles and strategies provide direction and guidance for the future development of the village over the long term, and consider the broad range of issues identified during community engagement and in the background research and analysis.

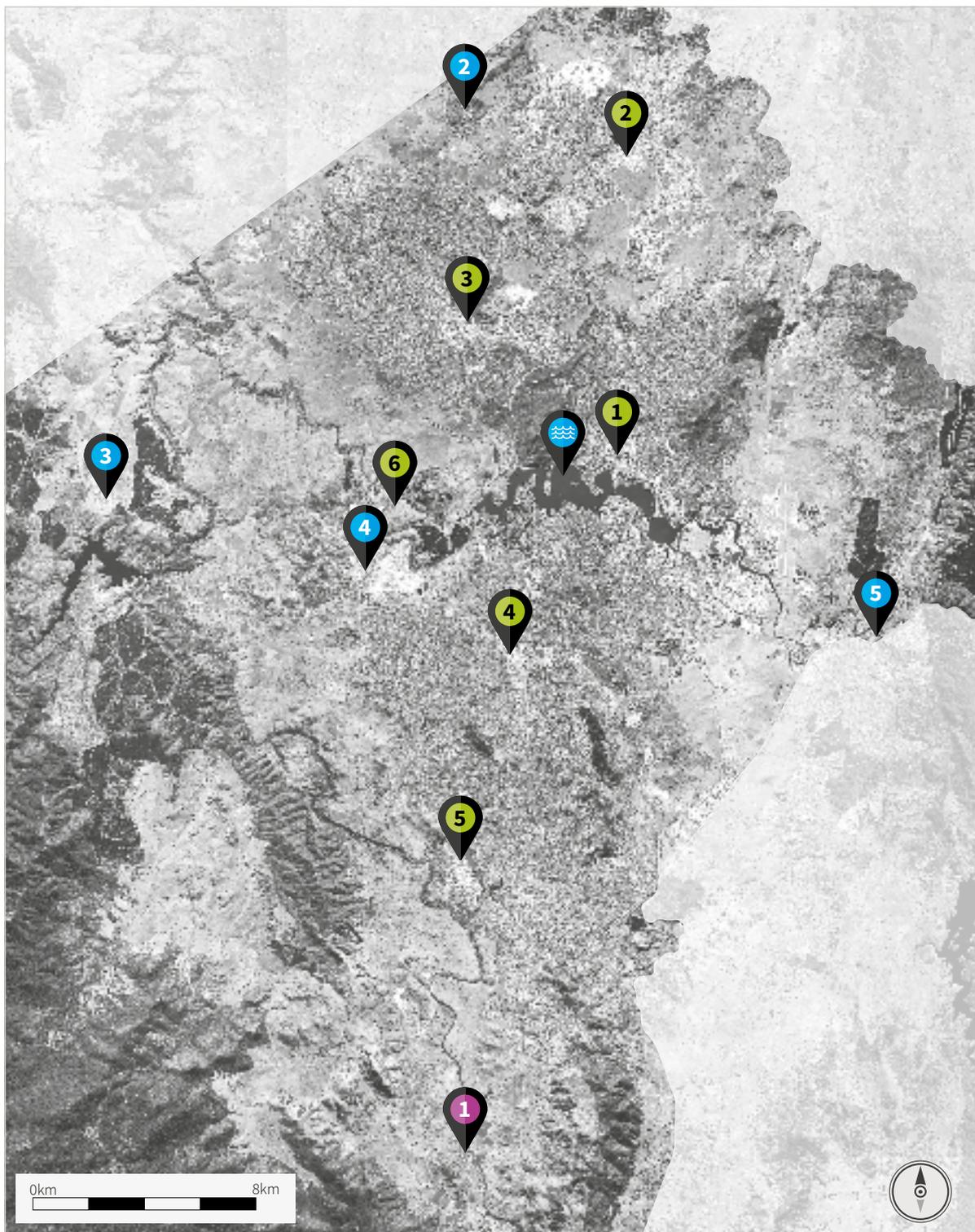
Some of the key recommendations proposed by this Tharwa Village Plan:

- Make the village core an appealing, social, recreational and creative hub for the local community while also attracting visitors to experience the qualities of a rural village lifestyle.
- Ensure Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct expresses and enhances the story of Tharwa.
- Protect and enhance Tharwa's history (both Aboriginal and European) and unique natural environment.
- Protect and enhance the natural environment, particularly improving the riparian zone of the Murrumbidgee River to benefit recreation opportunities.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Tharwa Village Plan

Map 1: Spatial context



LEGEND

<b>1</b> THARWA VILLAGE	<b>5</b> OAKS ESTATE	<b>4</b> WODEN TOWN CENTRE
<b>2</b> HALL VILLAGE	<b>1</b> CITY CENTRE	<b>5</b> TUGGERANONG TOWN CENTRE
<b>3</b> URIARRA RURAL VILLAGE	<b>2</b> GUNGAHLIN TOWN CENTRE	<b>6</b> MOLONGLO CENTRE
<b>4</b> STROMLO VILLAGE	<b>3</b> BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE	 LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The ACT Government recognises the value of the ACT's rural villages and has prepared a village plan for Tharwa that will provide a long-term vision and planning framework to guide its enhancement and social, environmental and economic sustainability into the future. This Tharwa Village Plan responds to feedback received through two stages of community engagement undertaken during 2016 and 2017. It aims to define what is important about Tharwa and how its rural character and qualities can be kept while providing sustainable lifestyle opportunities to live and work in a unique rural village setting.

Over the past few years, key strategic documents for the ACT have been introduced including the ACT Planning Strategy, Transport for Canberra, the Active Travel Framework, AP2: A New Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for the ACT, the ACT Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the Minister for Planning's Statement of Planning Intent.

The ACT Planning Strategy encourages more detailed planning for the urban areas of the ACT and its rural villages, including Tharwa, to set guidelines to retain the character of these villages while allowing for limited growth. The Tharwa Village Plan aims to keep the function and identity of Tharwa, as well as look at locally-based economic, tourism, recreation and community opportunities to support its long-term prosperity.

This village plan provides an overview and background analysis of the study area. It recommends a vision, spatial framework, planning principles and strategies to preserve Tharwa's distinct rural character and manage limited change and development in the village over time. Key strategies and recommendations are based on the background analysis and community engagement feedback received as part of the village plan process. **Map 1** and **Map 2** show the village plan study areas.

Implementation of the recommendations will be subject to funding consideration through future government budget bid processes as well as market demand for land and development opportunities. Due to the nature of some of the recommendations, it may take a number of years to realise the final vision.

Map 2: Tharwa Village Plan study area



LEGEND

- |          |                                 |          |                            |   |                    |
|----------|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|---|--------------------|
| <b>1</b> | THARWA BRIDGE                   | <b>5</b> | ST EDMUNDS ANGLICAN CHURCH | <b>1</b>  | THARWA DRIVE       |
| <b>2</b> | THARWA PRESCHOOL/PRIMARY SCHOOL | <b>6</b> | CUPPACUMBALONG HOMESTEAD   | <b>2</b>  | TIDBINBILLA ROAD   |
| <b>3</b> | GENERAL STORE                   | <b>7</b> | OUTWARD BOUND              | <b>3</b>  | NAAS ROAD          |
| <b>4</b> | THARWA PUBLIC HALL              | <b>8</b> | DE SALIS CEMETERY          |  | MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER |

## VILLAGE PLAN STUDY AREA

Tharwa is one of five rural villages located in the ACT, as shown in **Map 1**. The village is situated on the west bank of the Murrumbidgee River, 34 kilometres south of Canberra's city centre and approximately 5 kilometres south-west of the suburban edge of Tuggeranong.

Tharwa is a small rural village that pre-dates the establishment of Canberra as a city and the nation's capital. The area around Tharwa was a crossing point for Aboriginal groups for at least 25,000 years prior to the village being proclaimed as a township in 1862.

The main access route to the village from Canberra is via Tharwa Drive, passing Lanyon Homestead and over the historic Tharwa Bridge. Tidbinbilla Road and Naas Road provide access from the north-west and from the south. The Namadgi National Park Visitors Centre is 3.5 kilometres south of the village centre.

Tharwa Village is bounded by the Murrumbidgee River to the east, Sawyers Gully to the south and rural holdings with box-gum woodland to the west and north. The village comprises a small number of residential cottages and community facilities located within a formal grid pattern at the northern end of the village. The historic Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct, a group of artisan properties and Outward Bound Australia's national base and campsite are at the southern end. Historic cemeteries are located at either end of the village. The study area for the Tharwa Village Plan is shown in **Map 2**.

While focused on the Tharwa Village study area, the village plan also considers the relationship with the areas of influence adjacent to the study area, as well as regional heritage and recreation places, such as the Lanyon Homestead to the north-east and Namadgi National Park to the south-west. The area of influence for the Tharwa Village Plan is shown in **Map 3**.

## BLOCK AND SECTION MAP

Under the Territory Plan, Canberra is divided into divisions, suburbs, sections and blocks, with blocks usually leased to one entity. Blocks and sections are referred to in this document. **Map 4** provides a reference to help the reader identify blocks and sections within the village plan study area.

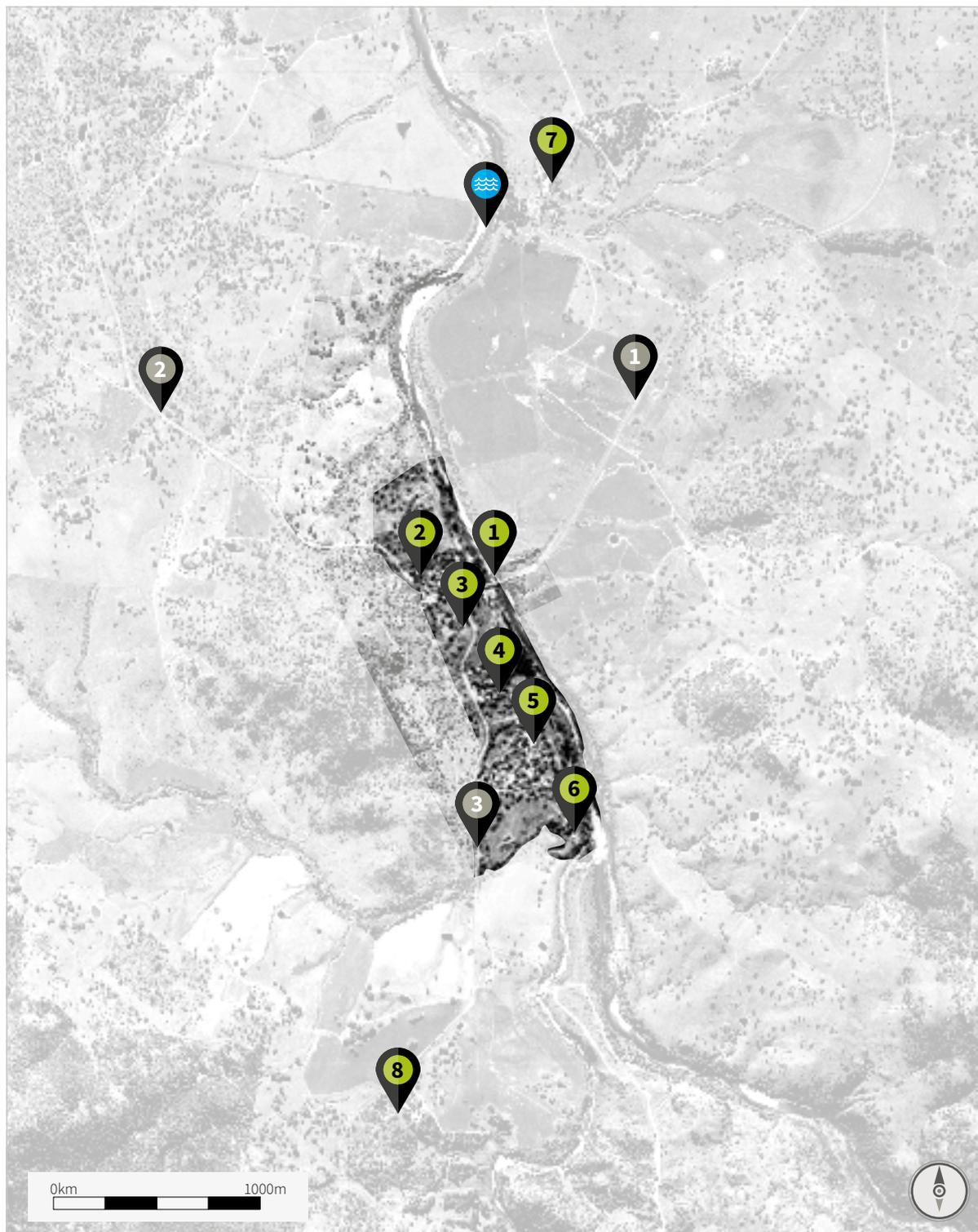
## WHAT A VILLAGE PLAN DOES

Village plans for rural areas are a common strategic mechanism for governments to support smaller townships that face locational, infrastructure and investment challenges similar to those Tharwa faces. They define what is important about a rural village and identify opportunities for preserving and enhancing the unique quality of that place.

This village plan provides a vision, a spatial framework and strategies to preserve Tharwa's distinct rural character and manage limited change and development in the village over time. It offers a long-term planning framework that is guided by key actions and strategies identified in the ACT Planning Strategy, particularly in relation to retaining the function and identity of regional villages and towns as distinct places, rather than a continuation of the Canberra urban area.

This village plan is a non-statutory document that recommends planning policies, opportunities for land release, public domain upgrades and further studies.

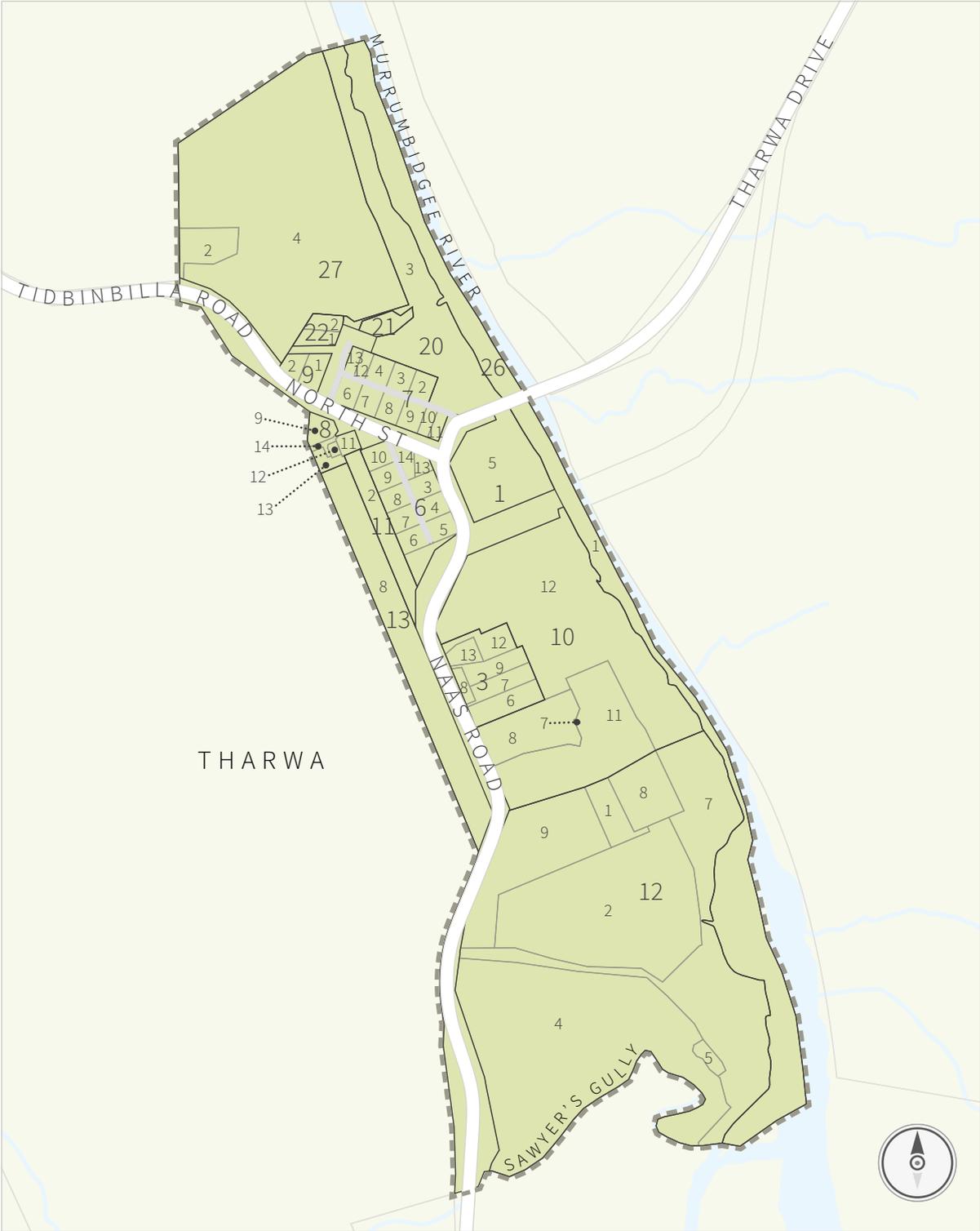
Map 3: Tharwa Village Plan study area – area of influence



LEGEND

- |          |                                 |          |                       |   |                    |
|----------|---------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|
| <b>1</b> | THARWA BRIDGE                   | <b>5</b> | OUTWARD BOUND         | <b>1</b>  | THARWA DRIVE       |
| <b>2</b> | THARWA PRESCHOOL/PRIMARY SCHOOL | <b>6</b> | DE SALIS CEMETERY     | <b>2</b>  | TIDBINBILLA ROAD   |
| <b>3</b> | ST EDMUNDS ANGLICAN CHURCH      | <b>7</b> | LANYON HOMESTEAD      | <b>3</b>  | NAAS ROAD          |
| <b>4</b> | CUPPACUMBALONG HOMESTEAD        | <b>8</b> | NAMAGI VISITOR CENTRE |  | MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER |

Map 4: Block and section



LEGEND

-  STUDY AREA
-  SECTION BOUNDARY
-  BLOCK BOUNDARY
- 1** SECTION NUMBER
- 1** BLOCK NUMBER

## PLANNING POLICIES

The Territory Plan is the key ACT statutory planning document that provides the policy framework for the administration of land use and planning. It specifies what can and cannot happen on each block of land. Potential changes and inclusions in the Territory Plan take the form of a revised precinct code.

A precinct code sits within the Territory Plan and provides place specific planning controls. This village plan, which is informed by community input, makes planning policy recommendations to update the existing precinct code for Tharwa Village.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAND RELEASE

Land release is the sale of Territory-owned land. The supply and release of land in the ACT considers factors such as forecast population changes, household changes, demand for land and the capacity to cost effectively deliver infrastructure and services.

## PUBLIC DOMAIN UPGRADES

Infrastructure and public space improvements are required to realise the vision and some of the strategies of this village plan. There may be opportunities for the private sector to contribute to the public domain through partnerships with the government. Works undertaken by the government will involve further investigations by various government agencies and funding consideration through future government budget bids. Public domain upgrades undertaken by the government are based on a number of considerations including the age of existing assets and infrastructure, and the wider budget context within the Territory.

## FURTHER STUDIES

These may be required to progress strategies that are either outside the parameters of the village plan or may take more time to investigate.

## VILLAGE PLAN PROCESS

The village plan process includes three main stages, as illustrated in **Figure 1**, with opportunities for stakeholders and the public to provide input during stages 1 and 2.

The process began with Stage 1, the gathering and analysis of information, including community engagement, to help inform the preparation of the draft village plan.

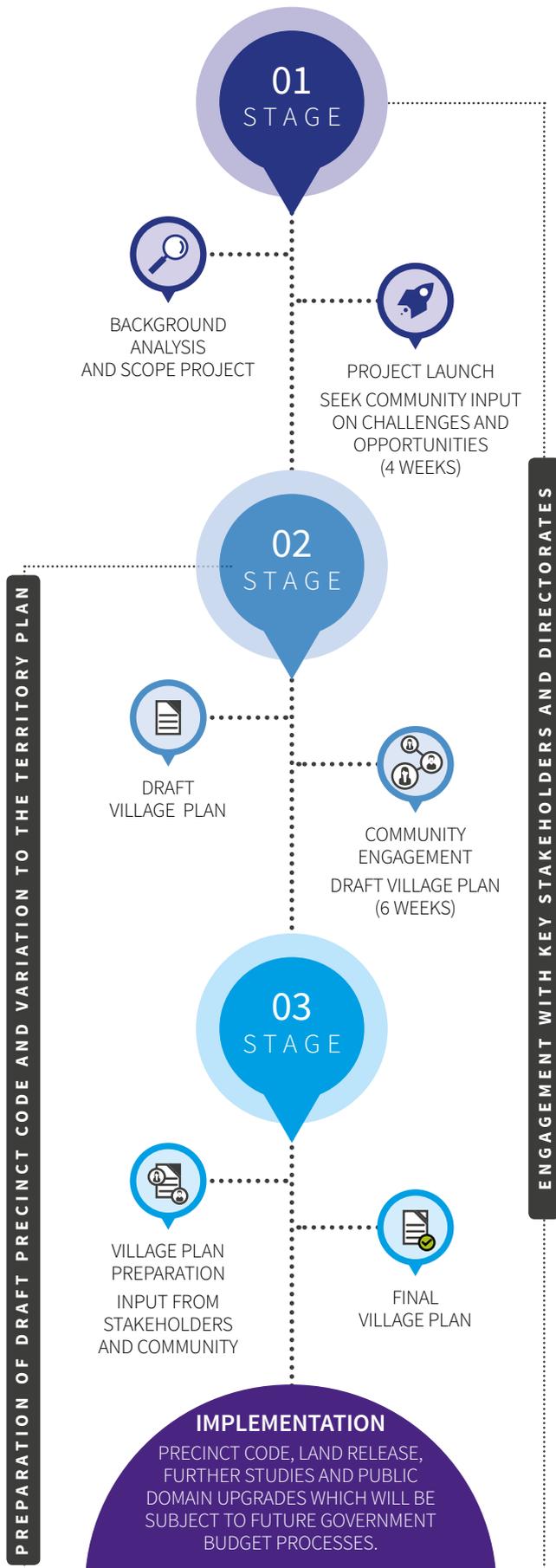
The draft village plan represented Stage 2 of the process. Feedback from stakeholders and the community informed Stage 3, the development of this final village plan. The implementation of the village plan may include new planning controls in the form of a precinct code in the Territory Plan, potential land release, public domain upgrade recommendations subject to future budgets and potential further studies. **Figure 1** illustrates how the preparation of a precinct code runs concurrently with the village planning process.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement forms a critical part of the analysis in the early stages of the village planning process and in refining recommendations in the village plan.

The background and analysis section of this village plan and the community engagement reports provide details of how community engagement was undertaken and a summary of feedback received. The community engagement reports, which include a summary of messages heard from each stage of community engagement, can be seen at: [www.planning.act.gov.au](http://www.planning.act.gov.au).

Figure 1: Village Plan process



THIS PAGE WAS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## **2. PLANNING CONTEXT**

### Tharwa Village Plan



## 2. PLANNING CONTEXT

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Tharwa Village Plan is a strategic policy document that seeks to translate the ACT Government's broader metropolitan policies at a local rural level. The following section outlines the policy context that applies to Tharwa.

### THE STATEMENT OF PLANNING INTENT

The Minister for Planning released his Statement of Planning Intent in 2015. The statement sets out the key planning priorities for the ACT Government for the next three to five years. The statement establishes four key planning priorities and associated actions:

- Create sustainable, compact and liveable neighbourhoods with better transport choices.
- Deliver high quality public spaces and streets through placemaking.
- Deliver an outcome-focused planning system to reward design excellence and innovation.
- Engage with the community, business and research sectors to optimise planning outcomes.

While these key planning priorities have a focus on urban renewal, they can be used to provide high level guidance for the planning of Tharwa. This includes improving the quality of the streets and public spaces, such as the reserves, and engaging with the community to optimise planning outcomes.

### ACT PLANNING STRATEGY

The ACT Planning Strategy was prepared in response to changes in the ACT's economic, demographic and environmental circumstances. The strategy outlines a number of principles relevant to Tharwa Village, including ensuring lifestyle opportunities afforded by the region will be recognised and supported with the opportunity to live in an urban or suburban environment, rural village, in the 'bush' or on a farm.

The ACT Planning Strategy encourages more detailed planning for locations such as the ACT's rural villages, including Tharwa, noting that "the distinctive character of these villages can easily be lost with inappropriate development. Planning should set guidelines to retain the character of these villages while allowing for limited growth".<sup>1</sup>

### CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

AP2: A New Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for the ACT is the ACT Government's strategic policy on climate change. AP2 guides the Territory's strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% of 1990 levels by 2020 and to transition the ACT to zero net emissions by 2060. In May 2016, the ACT Government brought forward its target for net zero carbon emissions to 2050 at the latest. The ACT Government is also on track to meet its target of providing 100% renewable electricity by 2020.

In response to projections for the ACT and region for an increasingly hotter and drier climate with more extreme weather events, the ACT Government takes mitigation action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by minimising use of fossil fuels for heating, cooling and transport, and increase the efficiency of energy use.

AP2 provides a pathway to achieve emission reductions through energy efficiency and increased use of renewable electricity. It also identifies opportunities for improved environmental performance of buildings and infrastructure.

The ACT Government has developed a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy to help the community, city and natural environment adapt to climate change and become more resilient to its impacts.

.....  
1 ACT Planning Strategy – page 59, ESDD, 2012.

## ACT WATER STRATEGY AND CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

The ACT Water Strategy 2014–44: Striking the Balance was endorsed by the ACT Government in July 2014. The strategy incorporates three themes and a detailed implementation plan. It will guide the management of the Territory’s water supply, water resources and catchment practices over the next 30 years. It builds on the original ACT Water Strategy, Think Water, Act Water.

While the emphasis of the original strategy was on water security following the 2003 bushfires and the Millennium Drought, the 2014 strategy also focuses on improving water quality and ecosystem health of the region’s rivers and streams.

The ACT and Region Catchment Strategy 2016–2046 details factors that affect the wider catchment and includes actions to promote a healthy catchment region. The strategy aims to coordinate governments, community and industry to produce a healthy, productive, resilient and liveable catchment region.

## STATUTORY PLANNING

### NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN

The National Capital Plan is the strategic plan for the ACT managed by the National Capital Authority on behalf of the Australian Government. The National Capital Plan ensures Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.

The National Capital Plan recognises the importance of the natural landscape setting of the National Capital, with the Murrumbidgee River Corridor one of the key components of a nationally significant open-space framework, the National Capital Open Space System (NCOSS). The Murrumbidgee River Corridor zone is a strip of land and water up to 4 kilometres wide along the full length of the ACT section of the river and is defined by the National Capital Plan’s ‘General Policy Plan’ for land use in the Territory. The general planning policies for river corridor zones set out to reinforce and preserve the landscape, heritage

values and ecological continuity while providing for a balanced range of recreational and tourist-related uses. Specifically, the Murrumbidgee River Corridor is to be conserved as an important national resource and a key open space element that provides a definable edge to developed urban areas.

Tharwa Draft Village Plan study area lies within the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Lanyon Bowl Area, as shown in **Map 5**. Development along the corridor is managed in accordance with the general policies of the National Capital Plan, including the Special Requirements for Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Lanyon Bowl Area and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor Policy Plan, the requirements of the Territory Plan and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor Plan of Management 1998. The ACT Government is responsible for implementing the intent of the National Capital Plan, including all formal planning and approvals for these areas. The National Capital Authority has a referral role to ensure that proposals are consistent with the provisions of the National Capital Plan.

## TERRITORY PLAN

The Territory Plan is the key statutory planning document in the ACT, providing the policy framework for the administration of land use and planning in the ACT. The purpose of the Territory Plan is to manage land use change in a manner consistent with strategic directions set by the ACT Government, Legislative Assembly and community. The provisions and administration of the Territory Plan must be “in a manner not inconsistent with the National Capital Plan”.<sup>2</sup>

Development in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and the Lanyon Bowl areas is subject to special requirements under the National Capital Plan that are administered by the ACT Government through the Territory Plan.

2 Planning and Development Act 2007- section 48.

As shown on **Map 6**, blocks in the northern area of the village are predominantly zoned as low density residential (RZ1 Suburban Zone). The sites of the tennis courts, school, preschool, community hall and fire brigade are zoned as community facilities (CFZ), while the general store is zoned as commercial (CZ4 local centre). A Sport and Recreation Reserve (Pi) overlay is currently also in place over block 10, Section 6.

Blocks along the river frontage and in the southern part of the village around the Cuppacumbalong Homestead are zoned as river corridor (NUZ4: Non-urban zone River Corridor). A Public Land Reserve overlay also applies to parts of this land use zone. The reserve north of Outward Bound is a Special Purpose Reserve (Pd) providing an area for recreation and education purposes. South of Cuppacumbalong is Gigerline Nature Reserve, a Nature Reserve (Pc) that seeks to conserve the natural environment as well as provide for recreation, education and research uses. Some sections of land in the study area adjacent to Tidbinbilla Road and Naas Road are also zoned as hills, ridges and buffers (NUZ3: Non-urban zone Hills, Ridges and Buffers).

The village plan may recommend changes to the Territory Plan, including the introduction of a revised precinct code for Tharwa.

## THARWA PRECINCT CODE

An anticipated outcome of the village plan is a variation to the Territory Plan that will implement a revised precinct code to update the current Tharwa Precinct Code. The precinct code provides place-specific planning, design and environmental controls to guide the design of development proposals and preparation of development applications. The updated precinct code will give effect to key elements of Design Guidelines that have been developed for the Tharwa Village and contained in this village plan. The Design Guidelines (page 65) provide place specific controls for building heights, building setbacks and design elements to preserve Tharwa's rural village character.

## MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER CORRIDOR PLAN OF MANAGEMENT 1998

The plan of management, prepared by the ACT Government, describes how the Murrumbidgee River Corridor is to be managed to enhance its conservation, educational and recreational values. The corridor serves important hydrological, ecological and recreational functions. Its proximity to urban development requires co-ordinated management to preserve the area's generally natural and undeveloped character and to protect it against damage and inappropriate use. The plan of management is consistent with the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan.

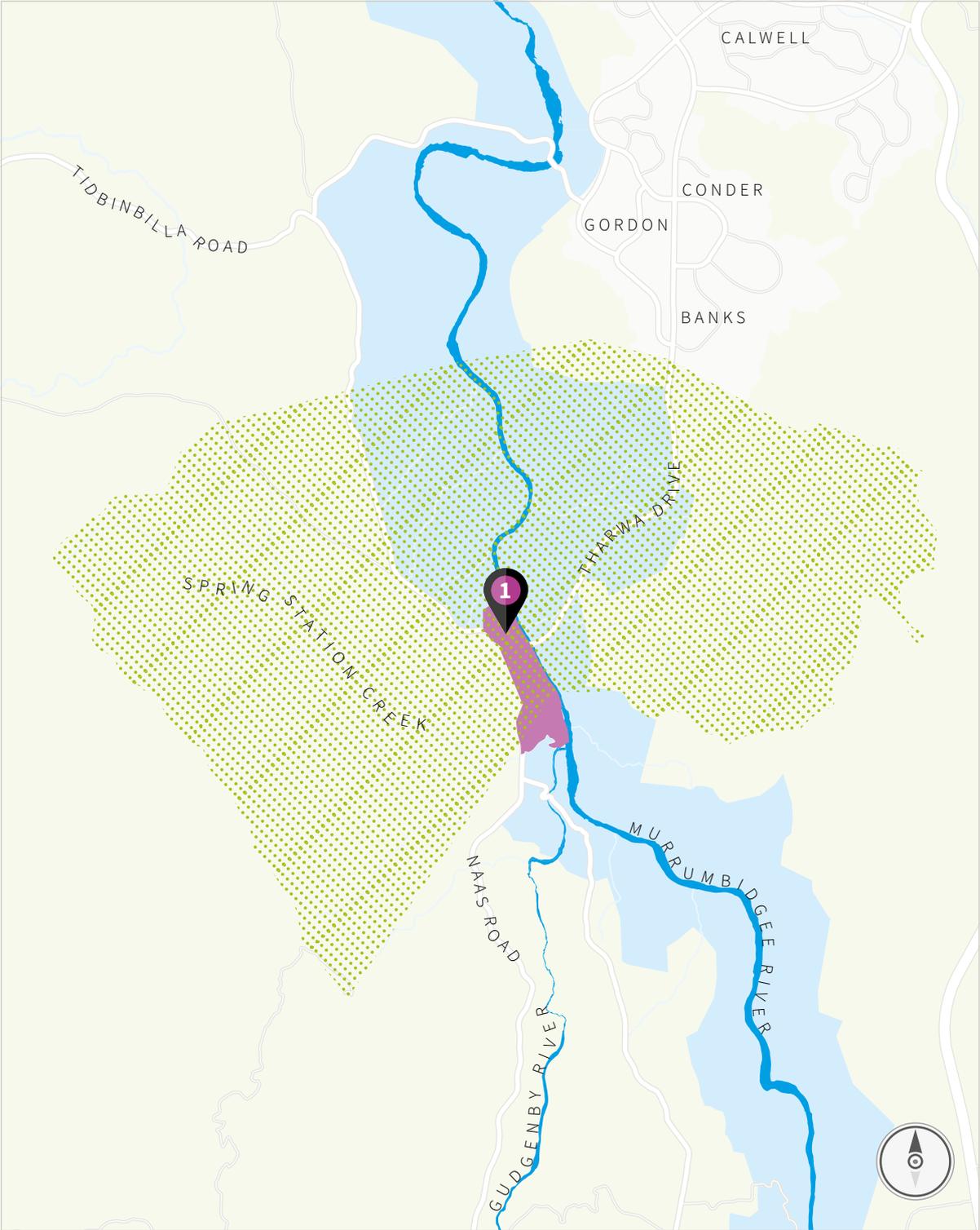
Tharwa is located within the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and is subject to the provisions of the plan of management, except for the village core, which is zoned urban land and is excluded from these provisions.

The Gigerline Nature Reserve is one of five declared nature reserves in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. Gigerline Nature Reserve comprises undisturbed areas of ecologically significant habitat. The Murrumbidgee River Corridor Plan of Management aims to protect these nature reserves from further disturbance and to enhance their nature conservation values. The objectives for the Tharwa section of the reserve are to provide low key recreation opportunities and to interpret and protect significant cultural sites and settings surrounding the existing De Salis Cemetery.

The Tharwa Bridge Reserve and reserve adjacent to Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct are environmentally important parts of the river corridor that are recognised as providing a range of community and recreational opportunities.

The corridor plan of management prescribes management objectives that recognise the importance of "retaining a viable rural operation, and prohibiting inappropriate or incongruous elements from the landscape" and not detracting or destroying the historic integrity or context of the pastoral surroundings.

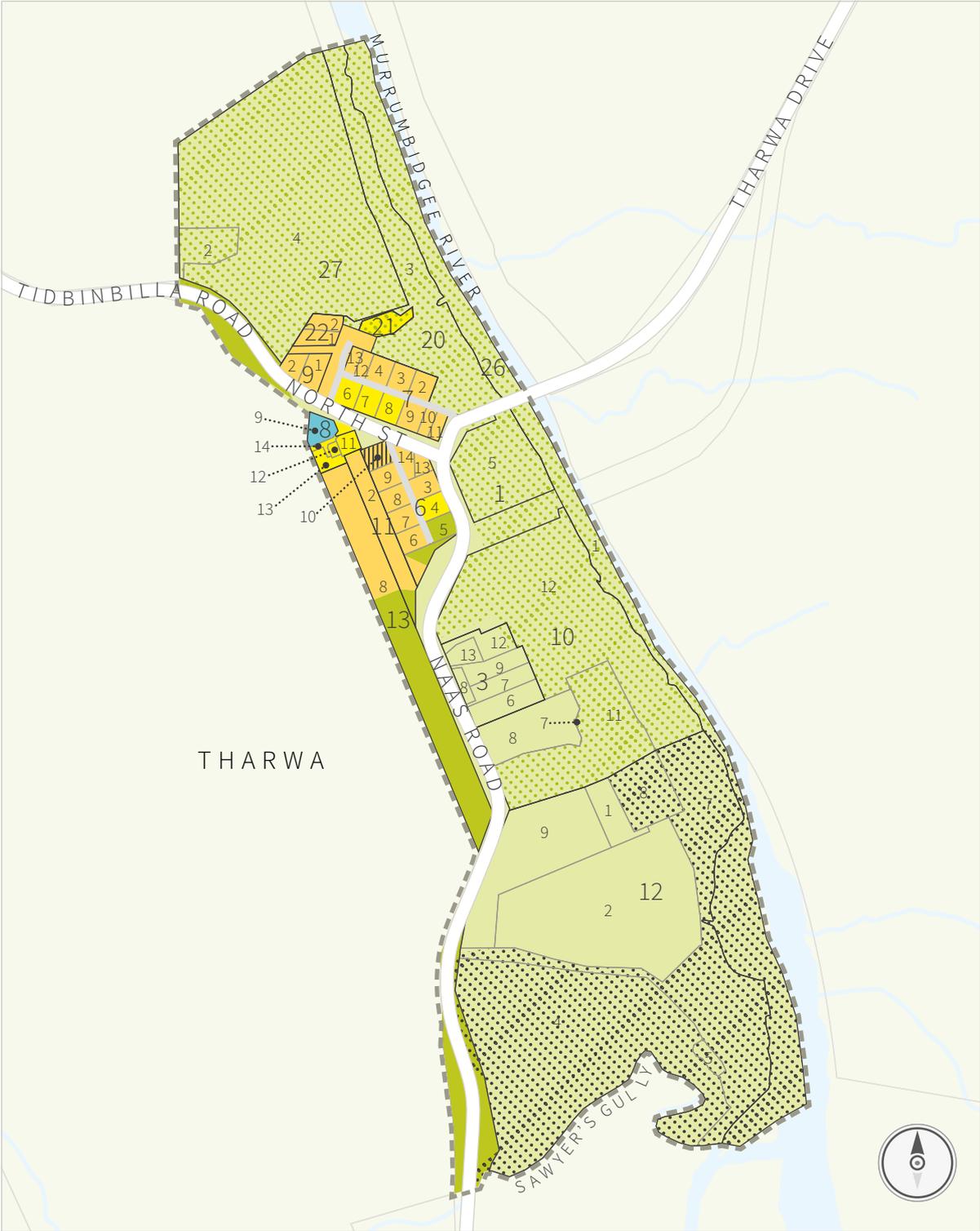
Map 5: Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Lanyon Bowl Area



LEGEND

- STUDY AREA
- MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER CORRIDOR
- 1 THARWA VILLAGE
- LANYON LANDSCAPE BOWL AREA

Map 6: Territory Plan land use zones



LEGEND

- RZ1: SUBURBAN
  - CFZ: COMMUNITY FACILITIES
  - CZ4: LOCAL CENTRE
- NUZ3: HILLS, RIDGES, AND BUFFERS
  - NUZ4: RIVER CORRIDOR
  - TSZ1: TRANSPORT
- PC - NATURE RESERVE
  - PD - SPECIAL PURPOSE RESERVE
  - PI - SPORT AND RECREATION RESERVE
  - STUDY AREA

## ACT STRATEGIC BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014–2019

The ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan 2014–2019 is the overarching strategic framework that directs all levels of bushfire planning and management throughout the ACT. The government agencies with a responsibility for bushfire response and management include the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA), the ACT Rural Fire Service and, such as the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. Rural landholders and the general community also have a duty to take reasonable care to reduce bushfire risk, including preventing the spread of a fire from their property.

Tharwa Village is exposed to the risk from bushfires that could start within and spread from the Namadgi National Park and adjoining farmlands. The village is in a designated Bushfire Prone Area (BPA)—a risk-based Map that depicts the area of the ACT that has been assessed as being at high risk for life and property due to bushfires. Assets on urban or rural property in Tharwa identified in the BPA to be at risk from the impact of bushfires include critical and social infrastructure, businesses (including agricultural production operated by rural landholders), water catchments, cultural heritage and environmental assets (including threatened species and ecological communities).

## PLANNING HISTORY

Tharwa Village was proclaimed a township in 1862, with a traditional grid layout similar to other small rural communities across New South Wales. The village did not grow to the extent of the original layout. This was due to a lack of demand, with the exception of the early 20th century when there was some “haphazard and opportunistic planning”<sup>3</sup> undertaken. This included several irregular shaped and sized blocks clustered around the village core and the formalisation of main roads through the village.

The National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) produced a report, Tuggeranong Planning Studies, by A. Bickford in 1975 to look at the historical significance of the Cuppacumbalong–Tharwa–Lambrigg–Lanyon area to assess their potential for museums and aid development planning in the southern part of Tuggeranong. The primary recommendation for Tharwa was to “preserve (the village) as it is”<sup>4</sup> and that its future was best seen as a place for artists and craftspeople who would appreciate, and could work within, the quiet village atmosphere.

In 1983 the NCDC completed the Village of Tharwa Policy Plan, which described planning policies for the village. This consisted of providing for changing needs and future development while seeking to preserve and protect the essential visual and historic character of the village. The policy plan specifically intended to provide for limited “residential development and some provision for tourist-oriented recreational or craft activities, where these are of a type compatible with the rural nature of the village”<sup>5</sup> This plan was the last major planning document prepared for Tharwa.

3 GML Heritage, Tharwa Heritage Significance Study, September 2015, p95.

4 A. Bickford, Tuggeranong Planning Studies, December 1975, p11.

5 National Capital Development Commission, Village of Tharwa Policy Plan, June 1983, p1.

# 3. BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

## Tharwa Village Plan



THARWA PRIMARY  
SCHOOL 1899

# 3. BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community and key stakeholder engagement for the Tharwa Village included two main stages. Each stage informed the village plan as it evolved.

A range of engagement activities for both stages of engagement included:

- two focussed community workshops with the local village community and surrounding rural lease holders
- information displays at the Tharwa General Store and Tuggeranong Library
- feedback forms (online and hard copy)
- an information stall and 'drop-in' session at the 2017 Tharwa Bush Fair
- written and email submissions on the Tharwa Draft Village Plan
- meetings with individual stakeholders including the Tharwa Community Association, and
- online information, project pages, feedback and survey questions on the ACT Government's 'Your Say' website and social media presence through the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate's (EPSDD) Facebook and Twitter accounts.

## STAGE 1 – ISSUES STAGE

The first stage of community engagement was held from January to February 2016. The purpose was to understand key issues and concerns, develop a shared community vision and explore strategies for Tharwa's future. More than 125 people participated in this process.

Key messages from Stage 1 of community engagement included:

- a desire for the village to retain its country charm, unspoilt by over-development
- support for limited development that respects Tharwa's rural village character and heritage values and promotes adaptive re-use options that respect the heritage values of individual sites and places, such as cultural and low-scale commercial activities
- the Murrumbidgee River is valued for its contribution to the character of the village and for the opportunities it provides for recreational and environmental activities
- improvements are needed to water, sewage, telecommunications and road infrastructure (while retaining the current soft edges and kerbing profiles during road maintenance and roadworks, subject to safety requirements) in order to preserve the rural landscape, and
- concerns regarding the closure of the primary school and public access to Cuppacumbalong.

All feedback was considered and, where appropriate, key messages and relevant background information used to develop the Tharwa Draft Village Plan.

## STAGE 2 – DRAFT VILLAGE PLAN

The second stage of community engagement sought feedback on the Tharwa Draft Village Plan over a five-week period from August to September 2017. Analysis of the 32 formal submissions showed broad support for the proposals and recommendations in the draft village plan that aim to build on and enhance the rural character of Tharwa.

Key messages from Stage 2 of community engagement included:

- strong support for retaining and protecting Tharwa’s rural village character and identity
- strong support for continued maintenance and improvement of the river corridor and Tharwa Bridge Reserve, including the introduction of new facilities at the Village Green, such as additional BBQs and a nature-based playground
- strong support for the upgrade of the Tharwa Explorer Track and the development of wider regional heritage and recreational track connections
- strong support for the continued use of the Tharwa School as an educational and community facility.

Some submissions expressed a preference not to rezone the existing public hall and tennis courts and to retain community facilities uses for these sites. There were mixed views about the proposed release of vacant residential land within the village, with concern about the potential for adverse impacts on the village character. Several submissions also expressed concern about inadequate infrastructure in the village including water supply, sewerage and telecommunications.

There was general support for the proposed introduction of shared pedestrian and cycle path infrastructure within Tharwa Village, but concern about the proposed route along Bridge Street and Clarrie Lane.

Further information on community feedback can be found in the Community Engagement Report – Stage 2 at [www.planning.act.gov.au](http://www.planning.act.gov.au). Where appropriate, these key messages and relevant background information have informed the development of this village plan.

## HERITAGE AND CHARACTER

The ACT has a number of rural villages that reflect pioneer life before the formation of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). They are important in understanding the history and story of our place and are evocative of a way of life no longer available within the urbanised areas of the ACT.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the heritage issues in Tharwa, a study was undertaken to inform the development of the Tharwa Village Plan. The Tharwa Heritage Significance Study was completed in 2015.

## ABORIGINAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE

The ACT region has a long and rich Aboriginal history, extending back at least 25,000 years. The area around Tharwa has been a significant Aboriginal place for thousands of generations, particularly for the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples, forming part of an important cultural pathway from the plains to the high country following the Murrumbidgee River, crossing the river at a shallow bed at Tharwa.

The land now known as Cuppacumbalong was one of the main Aboriginal camping places in the ACT. With the establishment of Cuppacumbalong Homestead in the 1840s, Aboriginal people continued to live on the property, and their economic contribution—working as stockmen through to the 1880s—helped the estate thrive, particularly in the 1850s when the station lost many European workers to the gold rushes in New South Wales and Victoria.

‘Tharwa’ is understood to be the traditional name for Mount Tennent, an important part of a Dreaming story of the sons of Bundjil, the first great ancestors who moved across the land. ‘Cuppacumbalong’ is understood to be the traditional name for the junction of the Murrumbidgee and Gudgenby Rivers.

Tharwa Village and the surrounding area contain many Aboriginal places that reflect its rich history and are of heritage and cultural significance. Importantly, Onyong’s Hill within Tharwa is named



after Aboriginal man Onyong, who was traditionally buried on its slopes with his spear and nulla nulla (hunting stick). Onyong is still honoured among local Aboriginal families as a warrior and leader of the mid-1800s.

Tharwa is still a significant place for Traditional Custodians, who now use the area for cultural education and as a base for maintaining cultural connections to the lands and waters of the Namadgi National Park.

## EUROPEAN CONTEXT

During the early to mid-1800s European explorers and settlers used the river crossing at Tharwa to access land west of the Murrumbidgee River, particularly for pastoral stations. Camps were often made at Tharwa while transporting stock across the river. During the Kiandra goldrush of 1859–61 the track crossing the Murrumbidgee River at Tharwa provided an alternative route from Queanbeyan to the gold fields, the main road being via Cooma.

The small settlement at the river crossing was proclaimed as the township of Tharwa in 1862—the first township established within the present boundaries of the ACT.

The village continued as a small pastoral settlement until an economic depression in the 1890s was brought on by a fall in the price of exported wool and major drought. While the Cuppacumbalong Homestead remained a fine example of a working property, producing fine merino wool and beef, the village itself remained relatively undeveloped and did not grow to the originally intended extent.

This situation was exacerbated when the Commonwealth Government resumed all rural properties in the southern part of the ACT in the late 1960s and many of the rural families left the district.

Since 1975 the Cuppacumbalong Homestead has performed a role as a tourist and visitor destination, alongside four new blocks that were created in the 1980s with the intent of fostering an environment for craftspeople to create and sell their works. Several of the original craftspeople were joined by other independent artists and the group remains an active presence in the village.

The closure of the Tharwa Primary School, followed by the closure of the Tharwa Bridge for restoration works and Canberra's 2003 bushfires have been further challenges in the more recent history of the village.

With its small resident population who enjoy a rural village lifestyle, Tharwa today remains valued by the local and ACT community for its rural history, local crafts, proximity to parks and reserves, outdoor adventure opportunities and expansive views of pastoral and natural landscapes.

## IDENTIFIED HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Tharwa Village has key elements that are registered on the ACT Heritage Register. The register identifies places and objects of heritage significance at the Territory level that enrich our understanding of history and identity.

As identified on **Map 7**, Cuppacumbalong Homestead, Tharwa Bridge, Cuppacumbalong (De Salis) Cemetery (which includes the Avenue of Elms), St Edmund's Anglican Church, Tharwa General Cemetery and Onyong's Grave Site are all included on the ACT Heritage Register.

The current Cuppacumbalong Homestead, built in 1923, is a relatively rare and intact example of an Inter-War Californian Bungalow set in an enclosed garden landscape. The original Tharwa School was a slab building, built by the community in 1899. The current school building dates from 1912 and includes the site of the original school. In April 2018, the ACT Heritage Council decided to register the Tharwa School for inclusion as a heritage place on the ACT Heritage Register.

A Travelling Stock Reserve north of the village has been nominated for consideration by the ACT Heritage Council for inclusion on the ACT Heritage Register. The Tharwa Heritage Significance Study also recommends:

- Further heritage assessment of the Tharwa Bridge Reserve, Tharwa General Store, Tharwa Public Hall, tennis courts and a number of residences due to their local significance.
- Undeveloped areas within Tharwa Village undergo detailed survey in consultation with the Representative Aboriginal Organisations.

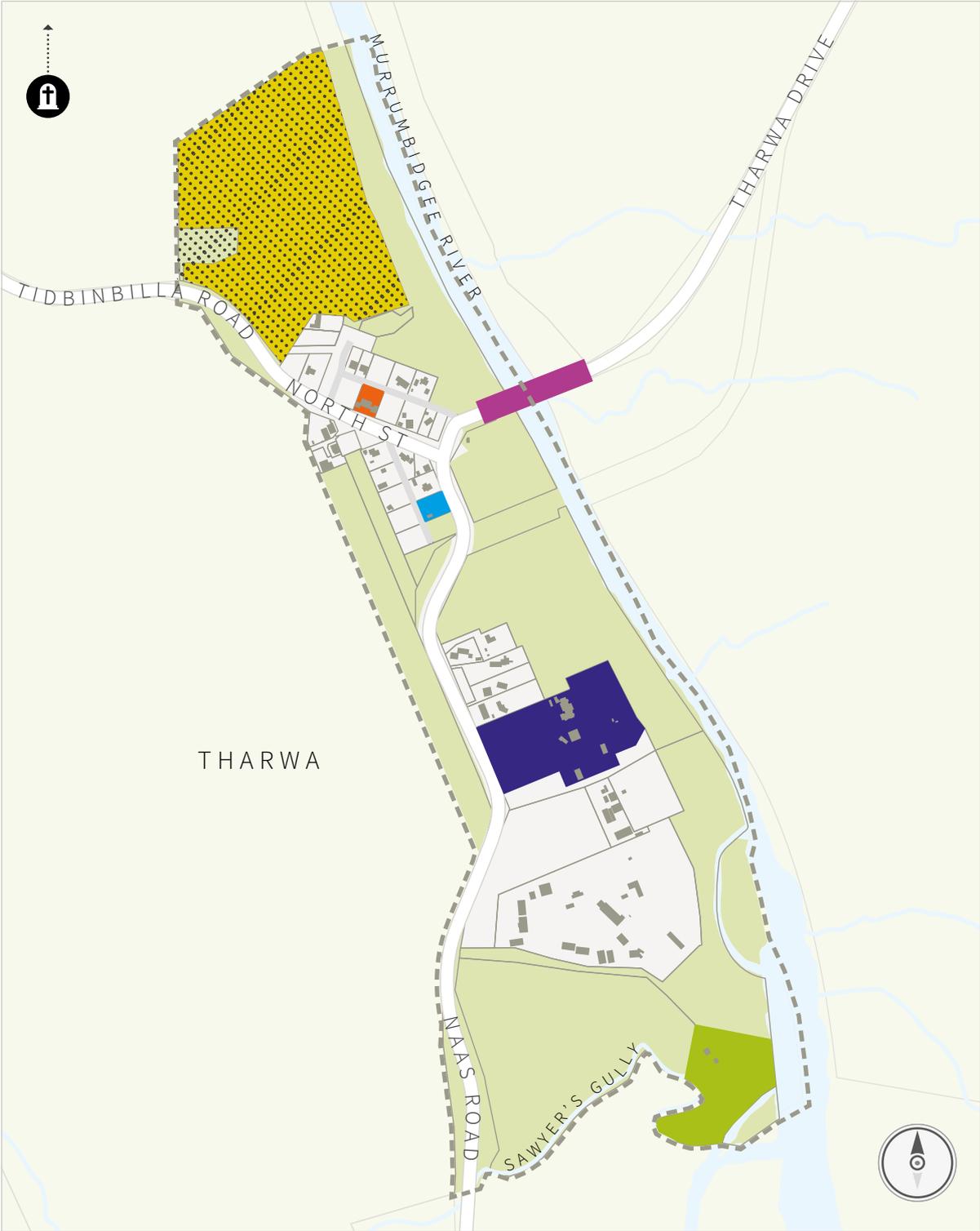
The Rabbiter's Cottage, a former workers' cottage, faces directly onto the public access road to Cuppacumbalong (De Salis) Cemetery. Its proximity to the road creates a false impression of entering a private property, which deters potential visitors to the cemetery.

Two kilometres south of Tharwa Village on Smiths Road is the heritage-listed Cuppacumbalong Woolshed Complex, which includes the Shearer's Quarters and other features. The shed retains its original integrity and serves as a reminder of times when Cuppacumbalong was the centre of a pastoral community, with the original owners being producers of large quantities of fine merino wool. The woolshed is still operational and retains a significant relationship with the Cuppacumbalong Homestead.

## VILLAGE SETTING AND IDENTITY

Tharwa Village is set against the backdrop of Mount Tennent and smaller hills to the west and north. The village also overlooks the Murrumbidgee River to the east with expansive rural views of the Lanyon Landscape Conservation Reserve (Lanyon Bowl area). A mature stand of Lombardy Poplars, originally planted by the De Salis family in the 1870s as a windbreak, form an avenue along the western bank of the Murrumbidgee River providing a striking and memorable edge to the village. Tharwa's picturesque rural character is distinct from the suburban edge of Tuggeranong and the village provides a transition into the rugged natural environment of Namadgi National Park.

Map 7: Heritage significance



LEGEND

- |   |                                |   |  |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
|  | ONYONG'S GRAVE SITE            |  | CUPPACUMBALONG HOMESTEAD   |  | TRAVELLING STOCK RESERVE (NOMIMATED) |
|  | THARWA BRIDGE                  |  | THARWA PRIMARY SCHOOL  |  | THARWA GENERAL CEMETERY              |
|  | SAINT EDMUND'S ANGLICAN CHURCH |  | CUPPACUMBALONG (DE SALIS) CEMETERY (WHICH INCLUDES THE AVENUE OF ELMs) |  | STUDY AREA                           |

## VILLAGE STRUCTURE

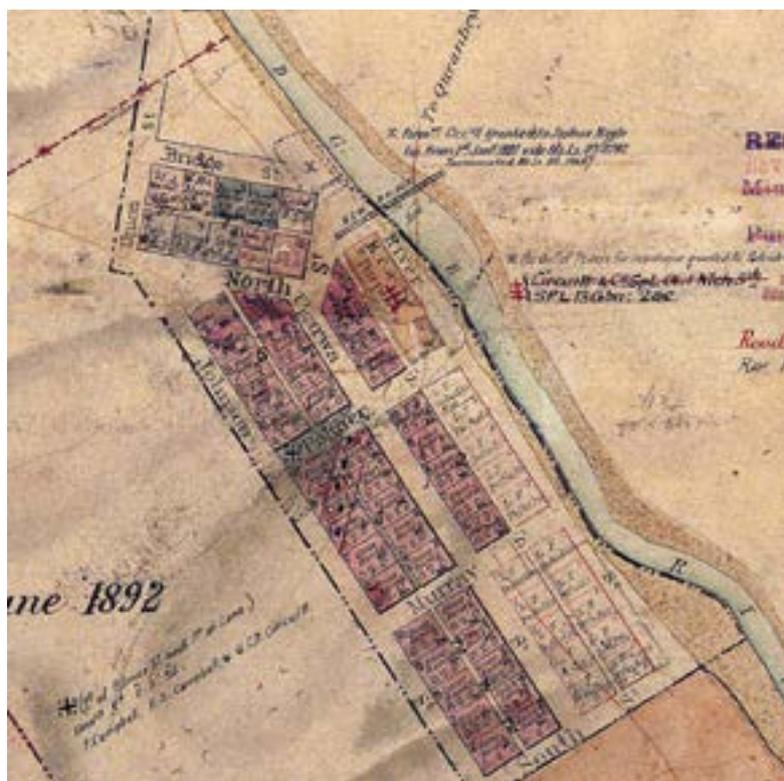
Tharwa was laid out in 1861 in a traditional formal street grid, typical of rural villages in NSW. It provided a compact, walkable village structure with well-defined boundaries. Dwellings are located fairly close to one another and not scattered over the landscape.

The original plan, indicated on **Figure 2**, comprised six sections, each with ten half-acre blocks divided by a small lane, and a larger section for public buildings set in a reserve along the Murrumbidgee River, just south of the future bridge.

Cuppacumbalong Homestead, originally part of a larger working property, occupied part of one of the planned sections. The introduction of residences with a distinct 1980's brick form and character, along with the breakup of the Cuppacumbalong property holdings for Outward Bound, have impacted on the historical form of the village.

While parts of the original town plan remain intact and reflect a distinct village character, much of the plan has not been realised. This is due to a small and static population resulting in a lack of development demand over time. The integrity of the original village plan has also been reduced through the implementation of some inconsistent changes during the twentieth century. In particular, the introduction of alternative alignments for the main arterial roads and the establishment of some irregular blocks in the early twentieth century have altered the original street grid and contributed to separation between the northern and southern parts of the village.

**Figure 2:** Original Tharwa plan



## BUILT FORM AND CHARACTER

Within the village there are 18 existing residential houses, excluding the Cuppacumbalong Homestead and a worker's cottage (The Rabbit's Cottage) near De Salis Cemetery in the southern part of the village.

The Tharwa Heritage Significance Study, commissioned in 2015, identified six existing houses that demonstrate the traditional built form and character of the village and noted they have potential heritage value. Built between the 1920s and 1940s, these houses were constructed using pitched corrugated iron roofs and large verandas, with painted weatherboard or fibre cement exterior walls. Generally situated on large blocks, with separate garages and deep setbacks from the street, they are typical of their time.

Community buildings such as the school, St Edmund's Anglican Church and Tharwa General Store are built of the same materials, while the public hall is a large galvanised iron clad structure set on wooden stumps. All these buildings were built before 1930 and are representative of Tharwa's early rural village character.

While houses built later in the twentieth century tend to be brickwork and of a style of their time, the village as a whole has resisted modernisation of its streetscapes and built form. The village has retained most of the original infrastructure and built features of a small rural settlement.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Growth and change in Canberra's population generate demand for housing, business services and community facilities and associated infrastructure. As at June 2017, the ACT population was estimated to be 410,300, with the population projected to reach 429,000 by 2021 and 500,000 by 2031.<sup>6</sup>

Historically, the population of Tharwa has fluctuated, with an initial surge during the 1860's Kiandra gold rush, but with substantially slowed growth during the last century. According to the 1933 census the population was 73 people and 14 dwellings, while in 1954 the population had increased to 81 people and 20 dwellings. In 2016, the local Tharwa area including the village proper, had a population of approximately 83 residents living in approximately 35 dwellings.<sup>7</sup>

In 2016, the broader Tharwa region (including Namadgi National Park and all of the non-metropolitan ACT region west of the Murrumbidgee River) had approximately 617 residents, with slightly more male residents than female. The median age was 32.5 years, slightly less than the ACT median age of 35 years.<sup>8</sup>

The 2016 population structure of the broader Tharwa region showed proportionally more people in the 0-17 year age group than any other group. This can be attributed to the formation of household families with children in this age range. There were atypically low numbers in the 15-19 and 30-34 year age brackets, which may reflect people moving away from home for study, employment or to start a family in another place. There was a significant, but typical, dip in the population from 60 years that may be due to the elderly moving to more centrally located aged care services.<sup>9</sup>

6 Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate estimates, derived from ABS 2011 census data.

7 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, Population by Age, Sex and Region of Australia, Regions of Australian Capital Territory, Table 6.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

At the time of the 2016 census all Tharwa residents categorised as eligible to be in the labour force were employed. At the same time, the broader Tharwa region had an unemployment rate of 2.8%, compared with the rate of 3.6% for the whole of the ACT.<sup>10</sup> Car ownership is high with every household having at least one car, compared with the ACT where 6% of households do not own a car.<sup>11</sup> All dwellings in Tharwa are separate detached houses.

## LAND USE

### LAND USE ZONES

The Territory Plan, as indicated at **Map 6** identifies land use zones for Tharwa.

Tharwa Village is located beside the Murrumbidgee River and is part of the broader Murrumbidgee River Corridor that runs through the full length of the ACT. To ensure the ecological and cultural values of the river are conserved, the strip of land fronting onto the river is zoned Non-Urban River Corridor (NUZ4). Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct, the adjoining arts and crafts properties and Outward Bound are all located in this land use zone.

A Public Land Reserve overlay applies to parts of this land use zone. The reserve north of Outward Bound is a Special Purpose Reserve (Pd) providing an area for recreation and education purposes. South of Cuppacumbalong is Gigerline Nature Reserve, a Nature Reserve (Pc) that seeks to conserve the natural environment as well as provide for recreation, education and research uses.

The river corridor is also subject to the provisions of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor Plan of Management 1998, as described in Section 2.2.3.

The surrounding hills are also zoned for non-urban land use, in sub-category Hills, Ridges and Buffer (NUZ3). The purpose of this zoning is to conserve the environmental integrity of the hill system as a visual backdrop, as well as protect the significant cultural and natural heritage resources and the diversity of natural habitats and wildlife corridors in these areas.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census of Population and Housing, Community Profile Tharwa Suburb.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Secondary uses, such as farm tourism, are allowable in this land use zone, provided they are ancillary to the primary use of the land as defined by the lease. Farm tourism includes overnight camping and guest house accommodation.

The village core area is categorised for urban use with the majority of blocks zoned as Suburban (RZ1) with the objective to protect the character of established single dwelling housing areas. Eight blocks are zoned as Community Facilities land use (CFZ), including the school, St Edmund's Anglican Church, Tharwa Public Hall and tennis courts.

The general store and post office are located on the only commercially zoned block in the village, specifically for use as a Local Centre (CZ4) to provide convenient shopping and community and business services to meet the daily needs of local residents.

### LAND CUSTODIANSHIP

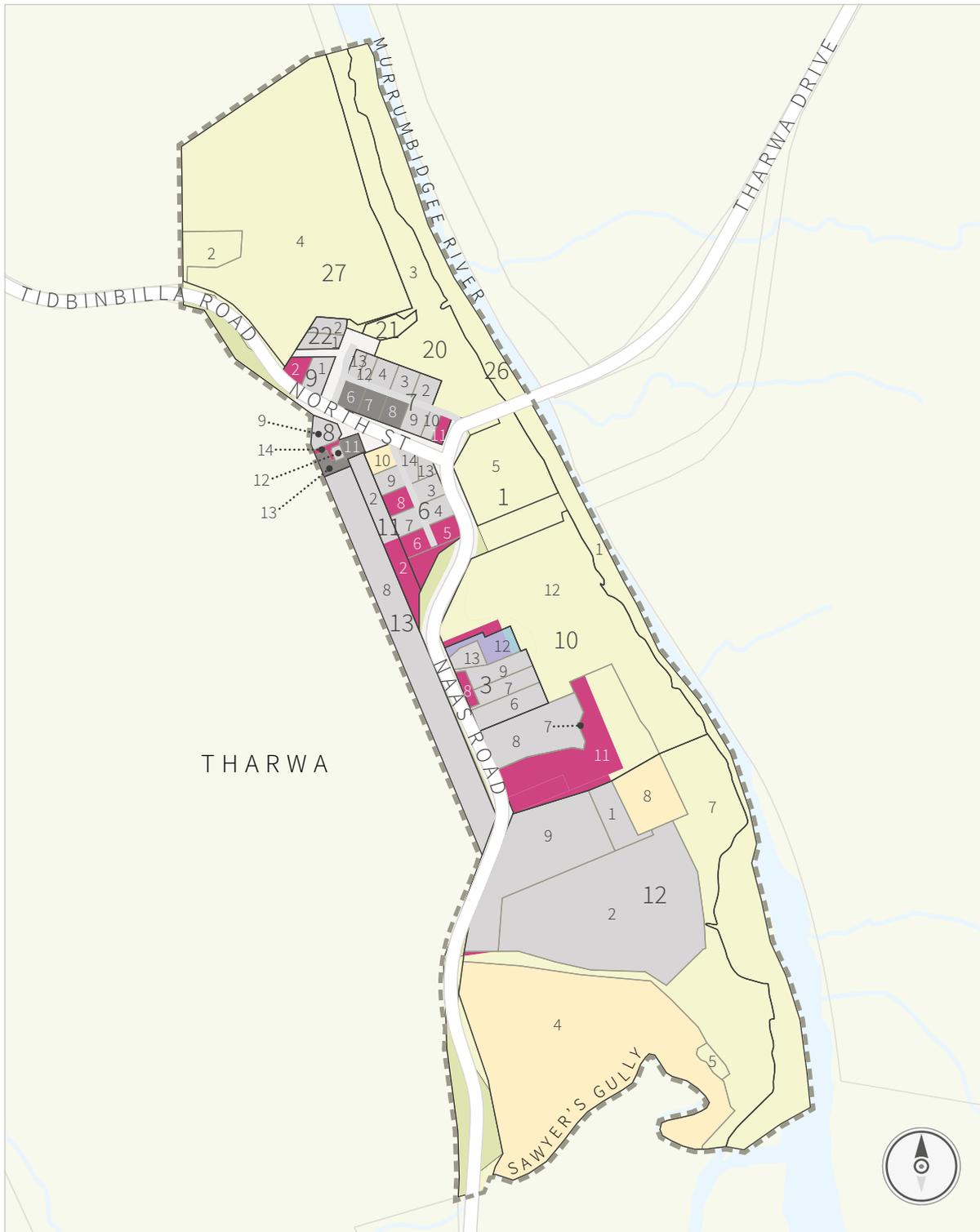
All land in the ACT is owned by the Territory with a leasehold system of land tenure for all blocks of land. **Map 8** shows the mix of land custodianship in Tharwa. The majority of blocks with existing development are held under private lease and are not public land. Residential development, including Cuppacumbalong Homestead, Tharwa Public Hall and Outward Bound headquarters fall into this category.

The school, tennis courts and the Southern Rural Fire Service station are on Territory land leased to various government agencies.

Vacant blocks, predominantly in the northern part of the village, are unleased Territory land currently managed by Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS). They are mostly zoned for Residential Suburban (RZ1) use. Some of the unleased blocks have licences to occupy them for the care of stock.

The reserve area fronting the Murrumbidgee River, including Tharwa Bridge Reserve, is public unleased Territory land managed by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. The surrounding hills and agriculture areas are generally held by the land holders as private rural leases.

Map 8: Land custodianship



LEGEND

	LEASED TERRITORY LAND/LICENCED		LEASED TERRITORY LAND - PRIVATE LEASE - PUBLIC LAND		OTHER ACT GOVERNMENT AGENCY - NOT PUBLIC LAND - UNLEASED		TCCS - PUBLIC LAND
	LEASED TERRITORY LAND - GOVERNMENT LEASE - NOT PUBLIC LAND		OTHER ACT GOVERNMENT AGENCY - PUBLIC LAND - UNLEASED				TCCS - VACANT (OTHER)
							TCCS - ROADS
							STUDY AREA

## PUBLIC DOMAIN AND CONNECTIVITY

The public areas of Tharwa are maintained by the Parks and Conservation Service. This includes maintenance of the open spaces of the reserve, public toilets, streets and roadsides.

## PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND TREES

Tharwa has significant public open space that fronts on to the Murrumbidgee River and includes the Tharwa Bridge Reserve. On the northern side of the bridge a stand of deciduous trees provides a shaded and protected recreation spot for locals and visitors.

Tharwa Bridge Reserve is equipped with public toilets, barbeques, picnic tables, parking and a large open grassed area to the south of the bridge. The reserve is used for swimming and picnics during the warmer months as well as the occasional game of cricket, while the ‘marker and mow’ heritage trails and tracks along the river reserve are well used by local walkers. Dog walking along the reserve is currently not allowed. Opportunities for safe access to the river along the river corridor are limited.

North Street is the main street of the village, rising gradually uphill from Naas Road near the Tharwa Bridge Reserve, past the Tharwa School, to Tidbinbilla Road adjacent to the Tharwa General Store. North Street has a broad width characteristic of rural townships. The wide road corridor incorporates natural swale drains and generous areas of public open space including scattered informal tree plantings.

The forecourt to Tharwa General Store consists predominately of a large asphalt surface parking area, which plays an important role as the primary public gathering place for the village. The function of the forecourt is further strengthened by the proximity of the Tharwa Public Hall, tennis courts and several outbuildings to the general store, all of which all open onto the car park as a central common area.

There are large and well-established trees along the main roads and remnant native Kurrajong trees, noted for their lush, green foliage and drought tolerance are scattered throughout the village.

While Tharwa displays many of the characteristics typical of a rural village, there are opportunities to improve and enhance this character. These include providing a more identifiable entrance to the village to create a sense of arrival for visitors, providing clearer definition for North Street as the main street and enhancing the forecourt to the Tharwa General Store as a central public space in the village.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

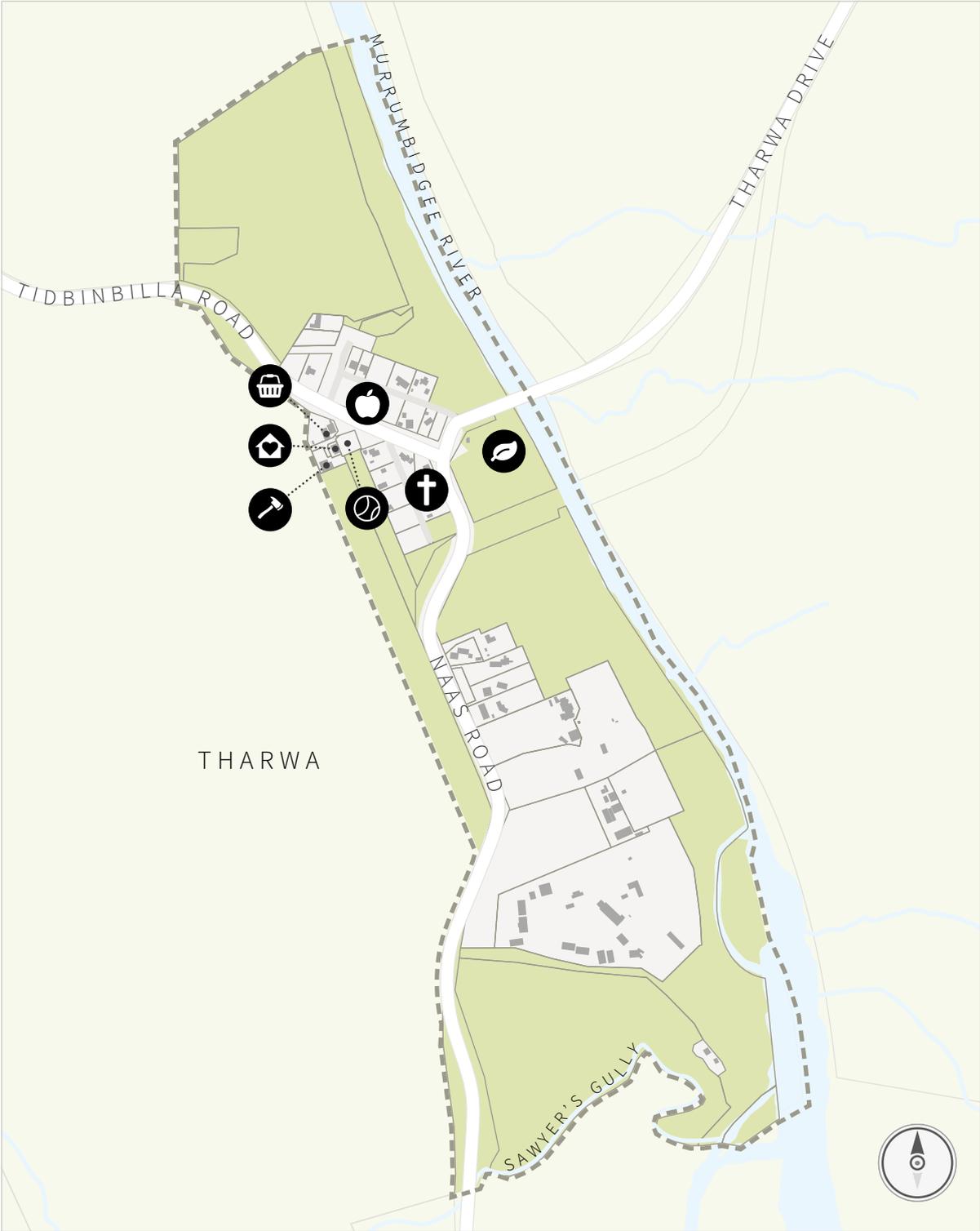
For a village of its size Tharwa is reasonably well provided for, with community facilities and meeting spaces shown in **Table 1**. The suburban areas of Banks, Conder and Gordon offer additional shopping, health, schooling and recreational facilities within a 10-minute drive of Tharwa.

**Table 1:** Community and recreation facilities located in Tharwa

FACILITY	LOCATION
Tharwa Preschool	Blocks 6-8 Section 7
Tharwa Public Hall	Block 12 Section 8
St Edmund’s Anglican Church	Block 4 Section 6
Tharwa Bridge Reserve	Block 5 Section 1
Tharwa tennis courts	Block 11 Section 8
Southern Rural Fire Service	Block 13 Section 8

The location of these community facilities is identified on **Map 9**.

Map 9: Community facilities



LEGEND

- THARWA PUBLIC HALL
- THARWA PRESCHOOL/PRIMARY SCHOOL
- SOUTH RURAL FIRE SERVICE
- GENERAL STORE
- TENNIS COURTS
- THARWA BRIDGE RESERVE
- ST EDMUNDS ANGLICAN CHURCH
- STUDY AREA

Tharwa Public Hall is privately owned but used as a community activity centre that provides a large meeting space for the community. Public toilets are located behind the hall. Tennis courts, consisting of two clay courts that were previously sub-leased by the local tennis club, are adjacent to the hall.

The Southern ACT Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade is based in the village and provides protection for the southern area of the ACT, from Lanyon to the NSW border.

St Edmund’s Anglican Church is well maintained. Regular services are held one Sunday per month and ceremonial services are held occasionally. It is available for small community cultural events.

The Tharwa Preschool, located on the Tharwa Public School site, is associated with Charles Conder Primary School and operates two and a half days a week. The preschool currently caters for 22 students from the village and other areas of Canberra.

The former Tharwa Primary School, which closed in 2006, has been listed on the ACT Heritage Register. The building is significant for the Tharwa community and is available for community and business activities, including private yoga classes. There are clear opportunities to encourage new uses of the building.

## WALKING AND CYCLING

There are no designated cyclist/pedestrian paths or on-road cycle lanes within the existing road corridors of the village. The community has expressed concern about the tension experienced between drivers and cyclists. The village is a popular staging point for cyclists riding through the village as part of a range of courses, including the annual ‘Fitz’s Challenge’ event.

Formalised pedestrian facilities are generally not provided in the village or along the approach roads. Footpaths are provided near the public toilets next to the Tharwa Public Hall and near the Tharwa Bridge recreational facilities. A children’s crossing is provided near the Tharwa Preschool.

A lack of dedicated pedestrian and cycle paths within the village reduces opportunities for active travel by the local community and visitors to Tharwa, and encourages a reliance on vehicular transport between the northern and southern parts of the village.

## ROADS AND PARKING

Tharwa is located at the intersection of three arterial roads—Tidbinbilla Road from the north-west, Tharwa Drive from the north-east and Naas Road from the south. The approaches of these roads have differing speeds; however, traffic is slowed to 50 km/h within the village.

The historic Tharwa Bridge, built in 1895, is single lane and a rare Alan Truss construction. It was closed in 2006 for restoration works that cost over \$26 million, reopening in June 2011. The bridge provides the most direct route to Canberra and its closure was a significant inconvenience for the community.

Roads are generally bitumen and are in a satisfactory condition, although the lane width of the arterial roads does not conform to current design guidelines. Unsealed gravel roads in the village vary in condition, with some possibly requiring repair although they are still accessible.

Parking within the village is unrestricted, with the exception of a ‘no stopping’ zone along North Street on the approaches to the school crossing. Parking for approximately 12 vehicles is provided on the North Street verge for the Tharwa School.

Car parking is also available on the asphalt forecourt to the Tharwa General Store. Parking is generally to the north side of this area under existing trees. There is parking for approximately 20 vehicles at the carpark near the Tharwa Bridge, overlooking the reserve. There is minimal concrete kerbed drainage within Tharwa Village, with the majority of roads being soft-shouldered gravel with natural swale drains.

There have been no major collisions within the village in recent times. However, there have been several fatal accidents involving cyclists just outside the study area on the approach routes into the village.

No public transport service is provided to Tharwa due to insufficient demand. A private bus service is, however, provided by ACT Government for students travelling to schools in south Canberra.

## HERITAGE AND RECREATIONAL NETWORKS

Tharwa has long been—and remains—the gateway between the plains of the urbanised city and the mountain ranges of the Namadgi National Park to the south-west. The village is a destination or stopping point en route for many heritage and recreational walking, cycling, equestrian and driving networks.

The Murrumbidgee River Corridor provides many interesting walks along sign-posted and well-formed tracks. These include the Tharwa Explorer Track, an easy 2.8 km return walk from the bridge upstream to the De Salis Cemetery, with interpretive signs that tell stories of people who lived at Cuppacumbalong. The Tharwa Sandwash Track is a short walk accessed off Smiths Road near Tharwa. There is a picnic spot in the Gigerline Nature Reserve where canoes can be launched onto the river, as shown in **Map 10**.

Tharwa is also part of an ancient Dreaming Track telling the story of ancestors travelling the land.

The village is a destination on Canberra Tracks, a network of heritage signage that incorporates self-drive routes leading to many of Canberra's historic sites. The 650 km Australian Alps Walking Track winds through the alpine high country of Victoria, NSW and the ACT, starting and finishing at Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre, 2.5 km south of Tharwa Bridge.

The Bicentennial National Trail, Australia's premier long distance, multi-use recreational trekking route that extends 5330 km from far north Queensland to Victoria, also passes through Tharwa Village. A campsite provided for trekkers on the Bicentennial National Trail is located next to the Namadgi Visitor Centre on the banks of the Gudgenby River.

Tharwa Village is a key destination on the ACT Tourist Drive 5, which is a signposted tourist driving route of approximately 85 km. ACT Tourist Drive 5 is the science and nature loop, which takes in attractions including the Cotter Dam, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, the Tidbinbilla Deep Space Tracking Station, Cuppacumbalong and Lanyon homesteads and Tharwa Village.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety issues in Tharwa Village include vehicular speed, road design and a lack of surveillance. Vehicle speeds are reduced within the village limits via speed reduction zoning. However, the proximity of arterial roads can lead to occasional speeding through the village. The geometry of the main road provides some traffic calming measures, but there are further opportunities for traffic to be slowed to facilitate safe pedestrian movement around the village.

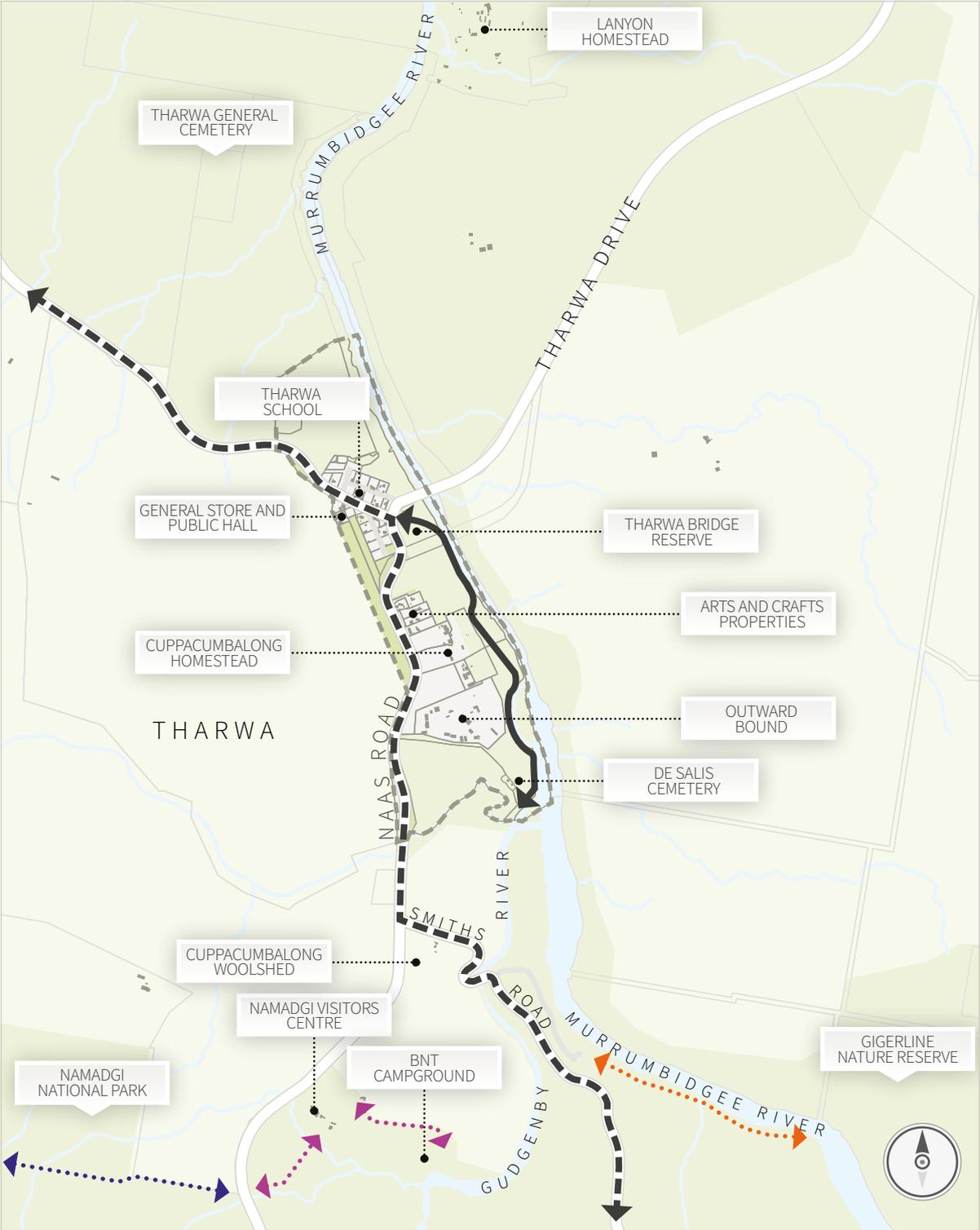
Other issues include the minor deficiencies in the road layout on Tharwa Road at the southern approach to Tharwa Bridge near the intersection with Bridge Street and poor sight lines to property access on Naas road south of the 50 km/h village speed zone.

A lack of street activity and the presence of dead-end lanes contribute to reduced surveillance in the village. Limited sightlines between the village core and residential properties overlooking the Tharwa Bridge Reserve contribute to the community's perception of a reduced level of public safety at the recreation area.

A lack of surveillance over the bridge reserve may also be an additional contributing factor to antisocial behaviour that has been reported by the community.

Limited street lighting is provided in the village precinct along North Street, Bridge Street and Clarrie Lane. Lighting is also provided adjacent to intersections and near Tharwa General Store and the tennis courts.

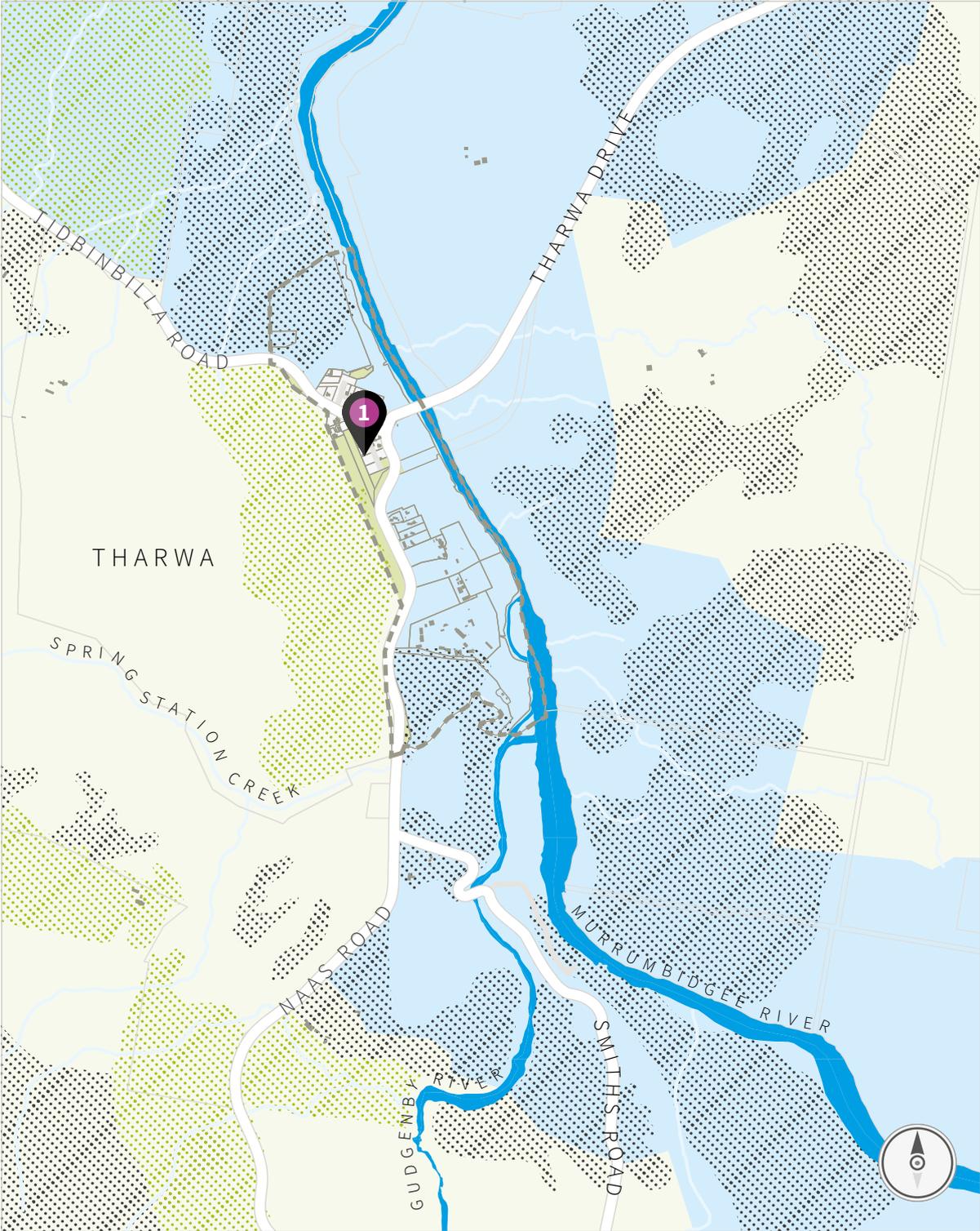
Map 10: Heritage and recreation networks



LEGEND

- BICENTENNIAL NATIONAL TRAIL (BNT)
  - THARWA EXPLORER TRACK
  - THARWA SANDWASH TRACK
  - NATIONAL PARK TRACKS
- AUSTRALIAN ALPS WALKING TRACK
  - NATURE RESERVE
  - STUDY AREA

Map 11: Murrumbidgee river corridor



LEGEND

- MURRUMBIDGEE AND GUDGENBY RIVER
- MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER CORRIDOR
- EPBC LISTED BOXGUM WOODLAND
- ACT LISTED BOXGUM WOODLAND
- THARWA VILLAGE
- STUDY AREA

## ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL HAZARDS

### LANDSCAPE SETTING

Tharwa village is set in a rich natural landscape on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River and amongst a significant box-gum woodland ecological community (**Map 11**).

The Murrumbidgee River Corridor is an important element in the region, providing diverse ecological, scenic, cultural and recreational resources.

Retaining the river's undeveloped character and conserving its natural systems is a priority, not just for the amenity and recreational opportunities the river provides, but also because it is an integral part of one of Australia's major river systems, the Murray–Darling Basin.

Protecting the health of the river is central to the ongoing sustainability and future prosperity of Tharwa. The ACT and Region Catchment Strategy (2016) sets out governance and management principles to produce a healthy, productive, resilient and liveable catchment region.

Sections of the river near Tharwa have been severely affected by large amounts of sand, called 'sand slugs', that have built up over time. These were caused by land clearing for grazing since European settlement and several large floods in the 1800s that washed large amounts of sediment into the river. More recently sand build-up has been exacerbated by water extraction. The recent introduction of engineered log jams north of Tharwa Bridge is contributing to the rehabilitation of the Murrumbidgee River systems. The log jams increase the depth of the river channel and provide suitable fish habitat to help protected native fish survive. Future tree planting will further improve and stabilise the river corridor.

The Tharwa section of the river corridor riparian zone has a long history of land clearing for pastoral use, with weed cover and erosion prevalent in the Tharwa Bridge Reserve and the reserve fronting Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct. As degraded areas they have little nature conservation value; however, the Gigerline Nature Reserve is relatively undisturbed, retaining significant nature conservation

value. These areas are subject to the Murrumbidgee River Corridor Plan of Management 1998.

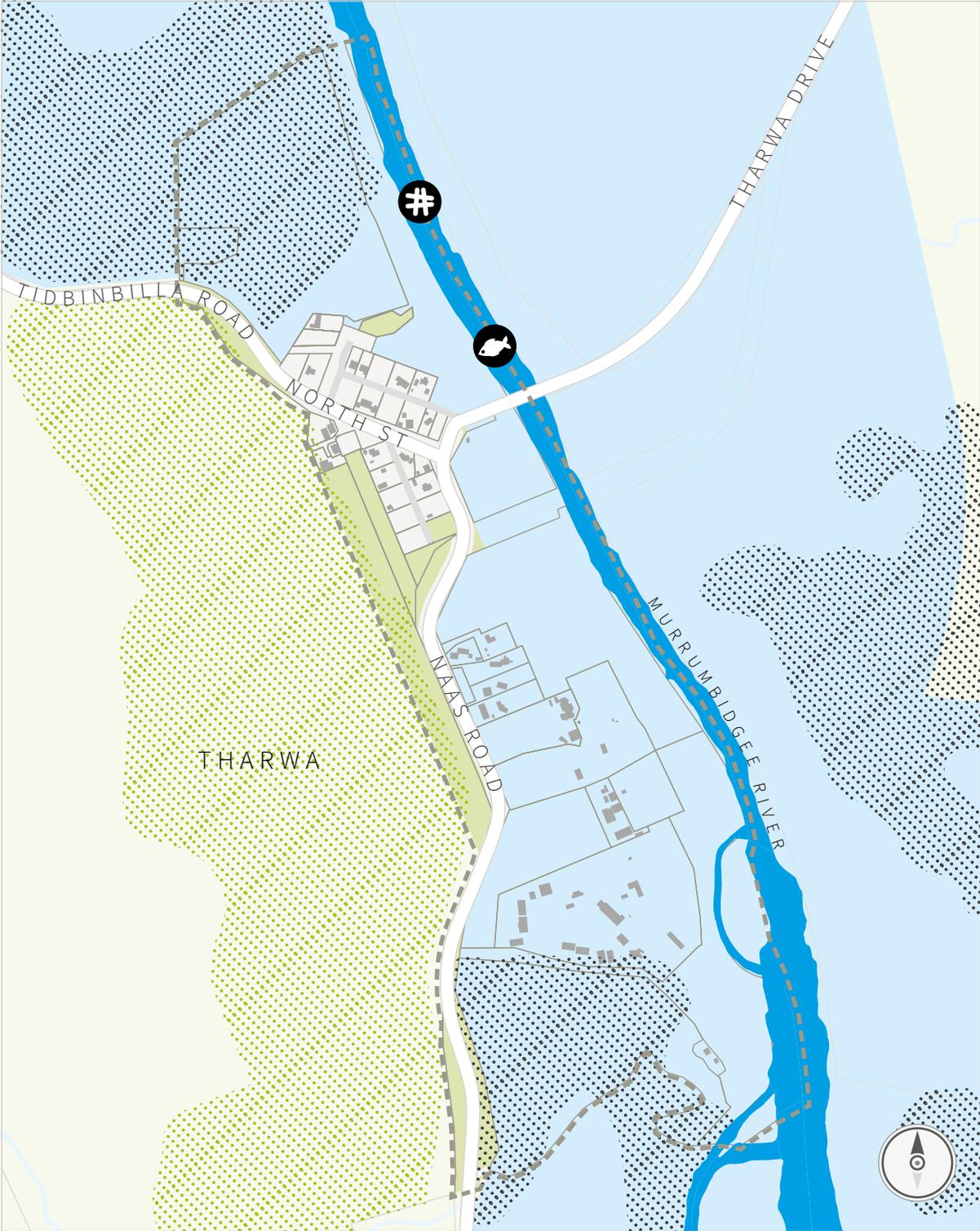
Tharwa is surrounded by relatively intact box–gum grassy woodlands. This is a threatened ecological community that is characterised by a dominant eucalyptus overstorey and a grassy understorey that provides habitat for rare and declining species of woodland birds. Large areas of this ecological community have been cleared or modified in the Tharwa district since European settlement and remaining fragments are listed as critically endangered.

Ecological connectivity is generally good in the woodlands to the north and south of Tharwa. They are listed by the ACT Government for protection because of their high conservation value. Rural landholders are required to manage these woodlands according to best practice, with any development to take into account its potential impact on the local ecological community. This includes maintaining ecological connectivity across the rural landscape and preventing further land fragmentation.

As indicated on **Map 12**, the woodlands adjoining the western boundary of Tharwa Village are listed as a threatened ecological community and are protected under the *Commonwealth Government's Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Activities that affect the condition or extent of these woodlands may require consent or approval by the Commonwealth Government. A preliminary visual assessment of the vacant blocks on Clarrie Lane suggest that some may have vegetation that meets the EPBC and ACT endangered woodland inclusion criteria.

Another issue is the high occurrence of African Lovegrass, a major weed of grazing lands. This requires management to control its spread and to minimise fire fuel loads and the further fragmentation of endangered woodland areas.

Map 12: Ecological values



LEGEND

-  MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER
-  MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER CORRIDOR
-  EPBC LISTED BOXGUM WOODLAND
-  ACT LISTED BOXGUM WOODLAND
-  ENDANGERED NATIVE FISH
-  LOG JAM
-  STUDY AREA

## BUSHFIRE

The village and adjoining farmlands have been assessed as being at high risk to life and property from bushfires that start within and spread from the Namadgi National Park. Consequently, there are designated Bushfire Prone Areas (BPA), subject to the requirements of the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan 2014–2019 that directs all levels of bushfire planning and management.

Fire Management Zones are identified as a subset of BPAs where measurable fuel management treatments are applied. The zones established in the Tharwa area are indicated on **Map 13** and include Asset Protection Zones and Agricultural Management Zones.

The ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan also takes into account the role of fire management practices in the continued survival of important ecological communities, such as the box–gum grassy woodlands at Tharwa. It provides the framework to implement strategies to maintain these critically endangered ecological communities and meet bushfire management needs.

As the village is located in a bushfire prone area, all new development must be designed and constructed to meet the provisions of the Building Code of Australia and Australian Standard AS3959 Construction of buildings in bushfire prone areas, which require a higher construction standard to achieve adequate levels of bushfire protection.

Unmanaged grassy woodland vegetation in these locations expose Tharwa Village to an extreme level of risk from a major bushfire.<sup>12</sup> Grasses, particularly the prevalence of the weed African Lovegrass, also need to be controlled and managed effectively. Most of the developed parts of the village have maintained landscaped gardens.

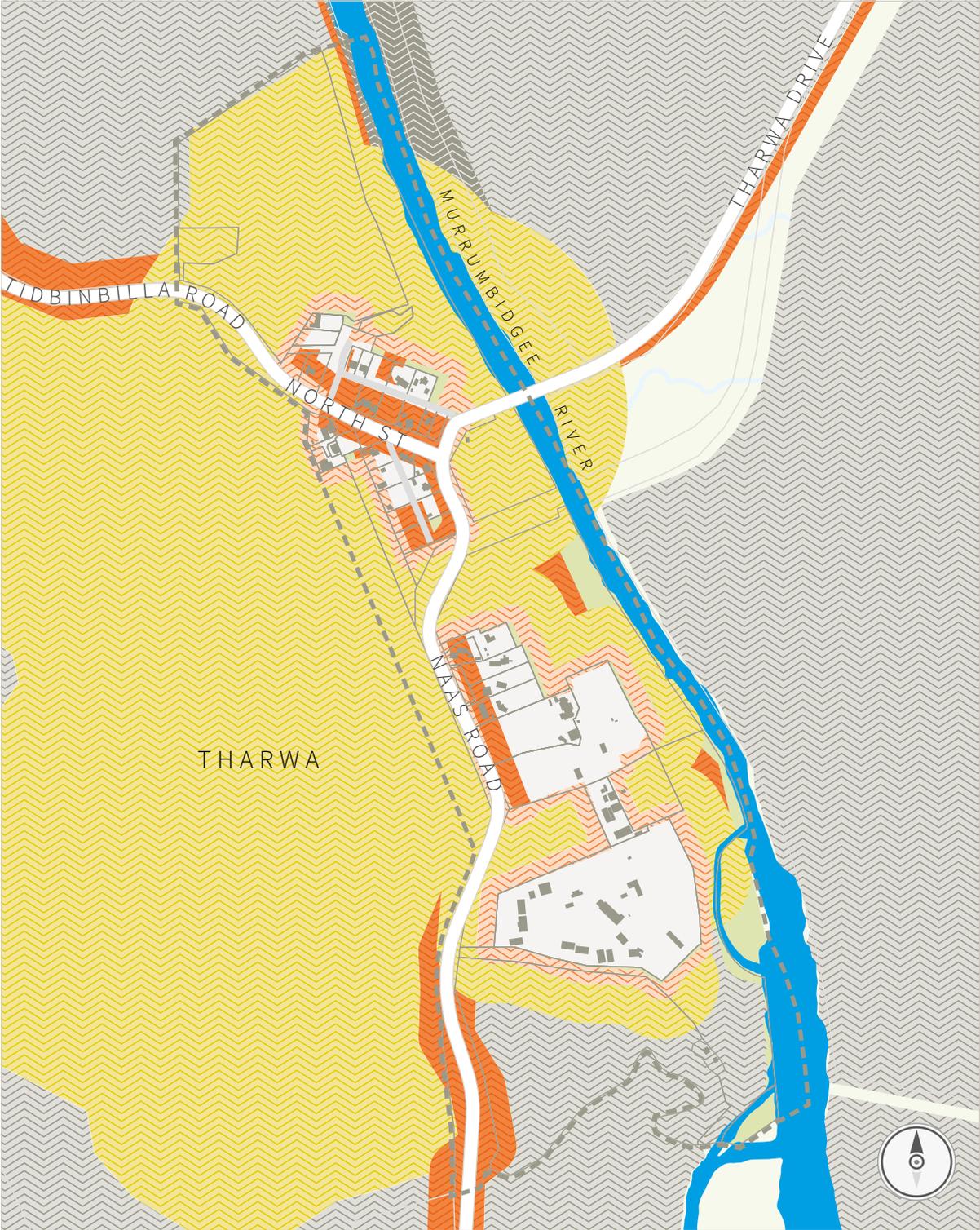
## FLOOD

Due to the proximity of the Murrumbidgee River, flooding to parts of the village in major storm events is probable, although large floods are uncommon. In large 100 year annual exceedance probability (AEPI) storm events, floodwaters will overtop the deck of Tharwa Bridge and the Tidbinbilla road by small margins, and inundate Naas Road Bridge. The estimated 1 in 100 year flood extent is shown on **Map 14**. Emergency access (or egress) may be reduced during times of major flooding.

Overland flow paths convey major storm water flows away from existing residential properties with some minor localised sheet flow to some blocks in the northern part of the village. The public reserve and some blocks under private lease fronting the river corridor are vulnerable to flooding in large storm events, with some property damage possible.

.....  
 12 Australian Bushfire Protection Planners Pty Ltd, Bushfire Risk Assessment for the Village of Tharwa ACT, p43

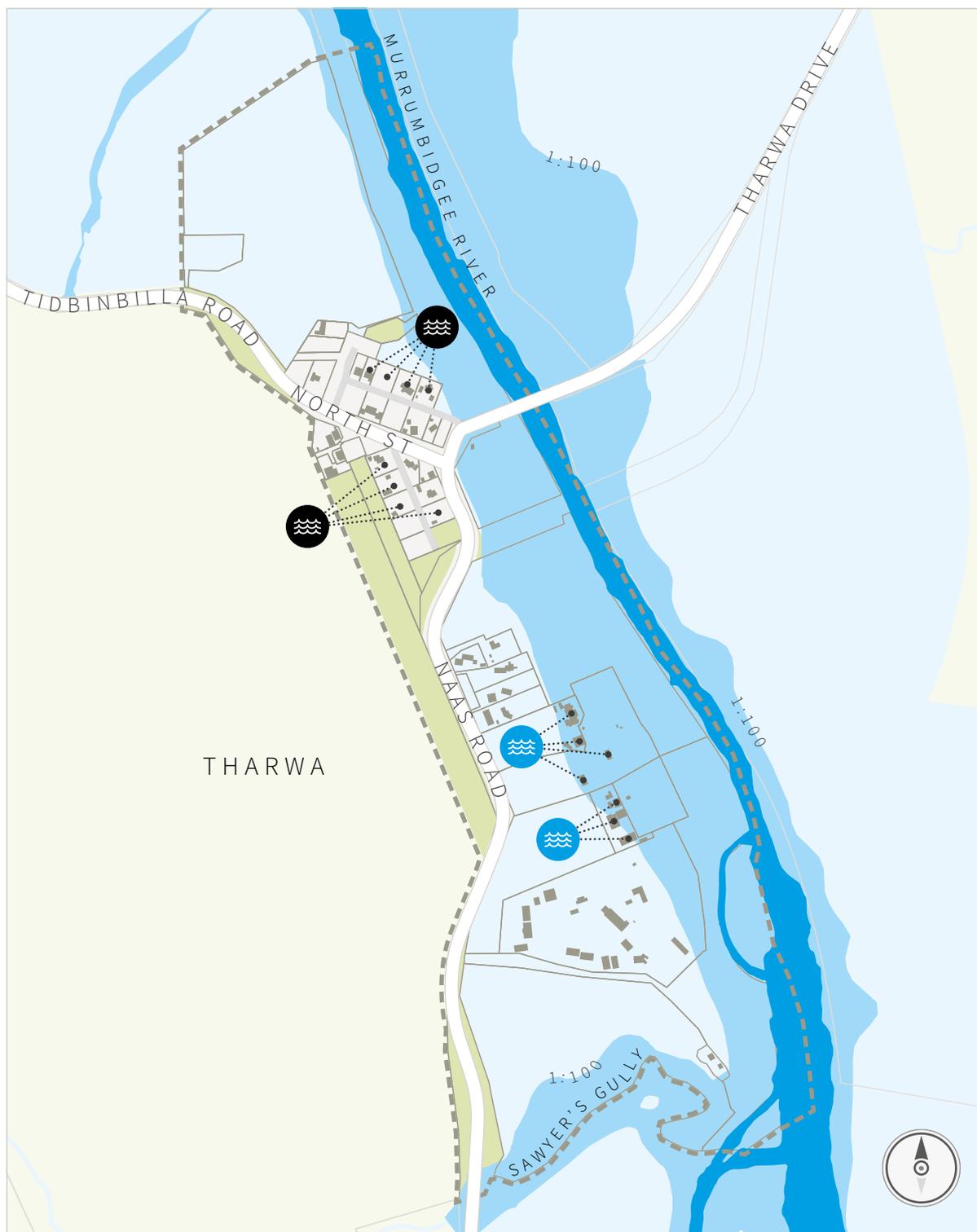
Map 13: Bushfire management zones



LEGEND

- INNER ASSET PROTECTION ZONE
- OUTER ASSET PROTECTION ZONE
- STRATEGIC FIREFIGHTING ADVANTAGE ZONES ACT GOVERNMENT
- STRATEGIC FIREFIGHTING ADVANTAGE ZONES AGRICULTURAL
- LANDSCAPE FIRE MANGAEMENT ZONE
- STUDY AREA

Map 14: Flood events



LEGEND

- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER                             |  | OVERLAND STORM WATER FLOWS THROUGH BLOCK    |
|  | MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER CORRIDOR                    |  | BUILDINGS POTENTIALLY SUBJECT TO INUNDATION |
|  | ESTIMATED ONE-IN-ONE HUNDRED YEAR FLOOD EXTENT |  | STUDY AREA                                  |

## INFRASTRUCTURE

An Infrastructure Capacity Study<sup>13</sup> was undertaken in 2013 to document the existing infrastructure and to consider the capacity for additional limited growth in Tharwa Village. The study included liaison and consultation with service authorities and local residents, a Dial Before You Dig enquiry, and a visual site inspection. The study investigated village infrastructure, including potable and non-potable water, electricity, sewerage, stormwater, gas and telecommunications. The study was considered in the development of this Tharwa Village Plan.

## WATER

The Murrumbidgee River, which is part of the Murray–Darling catchment, is one of Australia’s major rivers; many communities use it as their source of water. For decades, major towns upstream and downstream of Canberra have been drawing water from the Murrumbidgee River, treating it and safely using it for drinking water supply. The river is a ‘third tier’ water supply for the ACT, supplementing the Territory’s water storages when they are depleted.

Factors on the land surrounding the river can affect the quality of its water. It is therefore important that catchment areas are cared for and managed well.

The community collects its drinking water in rainwater tanks fitted to most residences and some community facilities in the village.

There are also two non-potable water supply systems that have been established in the village to extract water from the Murrumbidgee River via two pump and pipe networks. These systems provide for some non-potable and domestic uses, such as watering gardens and fire-fighting supply. One of these non-potable water systems is owned and managed privately by local residents, while the other is owned and managed by Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS).

The privately owned system services the northern part of the village and was constructed during the 1950s. This system currently supplies the general store, the community hall and some residences. This infrastructure is considered unreliable, difficult to maintain and does not allow for monitoring water usage or water quality.

The second system, owned and managed by TCCS, services the Tharwa School and the public toilets and acts as a back up to the privately owned system. The existing extraction points for both systems are poorly located on the western side of the Murrumbidgee River and provide an unreliable water supply during years with low rates of precipitation.

The infrastructure capacity study identified numerous deficiencies in both pumping systems. These included: the storage tanks are located on privately leased land; pump systems and tanks have reached the end of their useful life; the monitoring system of water usage is inadequate; the systems do not provide adequate fire-fighting water supplies (and are unreliable when the river is too high, too low or too silty to pump); and the unknown underground network and connection to low voltage power supply has no backup.

Given the village is within a bushfire prone area and the existing non-potable water supply is aged and unreliable, a non-potable water supply options study was undertaken in 2015. The outcomes of this report were considered by government, which subsequently agreed on the establishment of a new non-potable water supply for the purpose of fire-fighting in the Tharwa Village. An allocation of \$1.42 million was made in the 2017/18 ACT Budget for the provision of this infrastructure including a new pump, a new rising main and new tanks, to deliver a static non-potable water supply for fire-fighting purposes. Design and construction of the new infrastructure is currently being led by TCCS with construction likely to occur during 2019.

.....  
13 Tharwa Infrastructure Capacity Study Phase 1 Report, Brown Consulting, December 2013

## SEWERAGE

All residences in Tharwa Village use localised or individual onsite sewage treatment systems with absorption trenches. Most of the older cottages in the northern part of the village and several others on Naas Road and near the De Salis Cemetery use conventional concrete septic tanks with rubble drains. The risk of contamination of the Murrumbidgee River via leaching of pathogens from the older tanks during extreme drought conditions has been highlighted by the Environment Protection Authority.

Regular, periodic maintenance is required to ensure optimum performance for all onsite sewerage treatment systems in use.

## STORMWATER

Existing stormwater infrastructure in the village consists of roadside swales and small culverts for water run-off under minor roads and driveways, with larger culverts under the main roads. The Infrastructure Capacity Study<sup>14</sup> notes that some of the stormwater infrastructure may require upgrading or augmentation to adequately cope with major storm events. All stormwater drains towards the east and discharges into the Murrumbidgee River.

Rainwater tanks, which collect stormwater from rooftops, are a traditional source of domestic water supply for small communities and are fitted to most residences in Tharwa. Aside from rainwater tanks and an informal grassed buffer between village development and the river, there are no other Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) measures in place in Tharwa. WSUD can protect and improve the Murrumbidgee River's health by actively managing the volume and quality of stormwater run-off. Implementing WSUD measures can provide multiple amenity and safety benefits, including reducing the demand on the existing stormwater infrastructure.

## ELECTRICITY

The electricity network has spare capacity sufficient for limited future additional development in the village, but may not be sufficient to support a large new development.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telecommunications provider Telstra has advised that the existing network is sufficient to meet the current needs in the area. However, a network upgrade may be necessary if development is sufficiently increased in the future.

During the initial community engagement process, some members of the community said the telephone, internet and mobile services were poor. Tharwa is identified as having access to the National Broadband Network's satellite network, which commenced in 2016. There is currently no indication that an NBN cable service will be provided to Tharwa.

## GAS

There is no gas infrastructure within the study area. The nearest gas network is located at the intersection of Tharwa Drive and Knoke Avenue, approximately 6 kilometres away. Some local residents purchase bottled gas for cooking purposes.

.....  
14 Ibid.

# 4. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

## Tharwa Village Plan



# 4. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

THE MAIN CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED FOR THARWA ARE OUTLINED BELOW. WHILE THIS LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE, IT PROVIDES THE OUTCOMES OF THE PLANNING INVESTIGATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THAT INFORMED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS THARWA VILLAGE PLAN.

## CHALLENGES

- **Protection of environmental assets:** The village is bounded by significant ecological communities in the form of protected box-gum grassy woodlands and the Murrumbidgee River. These communities are vulnerable to a range of threats including loss of endangered flora and fauna, weed infestations, potential water contamination from old septic tanks and stormwater run-off, erosion, and natural hazards such as bushfire and flooding. Protection of these environmental assets is paramount to the ongoing sustainability and future prosperity of Tharwa.
- **Lack of a cohesive village form:** As a result of the historic ad hoc pattern of development, the originally intended structural form of Tharwa is incomplete. Arterial roads bisect the village, contributing to reduced cohesion between the southern and northern parts of the village. Some underutilised land remains within the village limits. The main street and civic spaces could be more clearly defined.
- **Limited walking and cycling connections:** With only arterial roads connecting the activity nodes in the northern and southern parts of the village, opportunities for walking or cycling around the village by locals or tourists are limited. This arrangement also reduces safety, health, economic activity and liveability outcomes for Tharwa. Visitors to Cuppacumbalong (De Salis) Cemetery are discouraged by an incorrect perception of entering private property when passing The Rabbiter's Cottage. This has resulted in some tourists not visiting the cemetery.
- **Underutilised community facilities:** Vacant or underutilised facilities limit the places the local community can gather and reduce the range of attractions and activities for visitors to the village.
- **Population:** Limited population growth, with gaps in some age groups, presents challenges for future development, including the provision of service upgrades and infrastructure investment.
- **Infrastructure:** Like most rural communities, Tharwa is not connected to reticulated sewerage or water utilities; these services are provided through private on-site infrastructure. Some existing infrastructure is aged. There is a need to upgrade water supply for local firefighting capacity.
- **Community sentiment:** The community has a wide range of views on the future of Tharwa, with opinions varying on the desired nature and extent of any additional activity and development in the village.



## OPPORTUNITIES

- **Natural heritage:** Set in the picturesque landscape beside the Murrumbidgee River at the foot of Mount Tennent, the village is endowed with abundant natural assets. From the park-like reserves on the banks of the river to Namadgi National Park beyond, Tharwa provides diverse cultural and recreational/adventure and possibly environmental education opportunities. The river and surrounding woodlands are also important conservation habitats for protected ecological communities.
- **Aboriginal cultural heritage:** Tharwa is significant for Traditional Custodians, providing a base for maintaining cultural connections to the lands and waters of the Namadgi National Park. The area is used for cultural education, building on traditional knowledge and skills. There is a significant opportunity to expand the provision of cultural education to the broader community.
- **European cultural heritage:** Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct is one of Tharwa's most important landmarks and a historic asset valued by the local community and the broader Canberra region. Cuppacumbalong Woolshed and Shearers Quarters (located to the south of the village) and the heritage-listed bridge, church and old cemeteries further enhance Tharwa's unique regional status as a pioneering rural village.
- **Reinforcing Tharwa's identity and public domain:** Tharwa has a unique opportunity to build upon its heritage, providing "a rural retreat away from the heavily urbanised Canberra, where people can get closer to nature".<sup>15</sup> Preserving Tharwa's rural village character is also consistent with the objective of the ACT Planning Strategy to provide a diversity of lifestyle opportunities. Landscape and public domain upgrades provide an opportunity to further enhance the amenity and liveability of Tharwa and reinforce its identity as a rural village.
- **Improving pedestrian and cycling connections:** There is scope to significantly improve opportunities for safe walking and cycling in the village through the establishment of shared pathway infrastructure. The establishment of a shared active travel pathway along North Street and Naas Road, linking the village core with destinations around the Cuppacumbalong Homestead and (De Salis) Cemetery, would have the potential to provide important social, health and tourism benefits for the local community and visitors to Tharwa.

.....  
<sup>15</sup> Submission by an ACT resident on the 'Haveyoursay ACT Planning' website.

- **Improving regional track connections:** Situated on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, the Tharwa Explorer Track is located between two significant local landmarks, the Tharwa Bridge Reserve and the Cuppacumbalong (De Salis) Cemetery. This track has potential for improvement and greater promotion. Further opportunities exist to expand regional walking track links to Lanyon Homestead, Cuppacumbalong Woolshed and the Namadgi Visitor Centre, improving heritage and recreation network connections for the local community and tourists.
- **Community facilities:** Assessment of vacant and underutilised facilities may provide new opportunities to enhance Tharwa's cultural and social life, as well as new opportunities to create activity in the village.
- **Encourage economic development:** Rural communities often look for ways to strengthen their economies, provide a better quality of life and build on local assets. It is important that smart goals for growth and development in Tharwa maintain the distinctive rural character of this unique rural village. The existing independent art and craft businesses, the distinctive general store and community facilities provide scope for new enterprises that leverage the resources and capabilities of the community. Existing agricultural enterprises, the natural environment, and Aboriginal and cultural heritage have potential for small-scale development and investment, such as farm tourism. Tharwa's location next to the Murrumbidgee River and at the doorstep of Namadgi National Park and several other nature reserves provides the potential for new tourism opportunities for recreation and outdoor/adventure/environmental education/conservation based activities.
- **Land release:** Five vacant blocks of Territory land located in the existing village limits and zoned for residential use have been identified as suitable for land release. Development on these blocks would be limited to single dwellings and would be encouraged to reflect the existing rural character of Tharwa.
- **Alternative services infrastructure:** Tharwa's rural village character and the lack of urban water and sewerage network infrastructure present an opportunity to showcase best-practice 'off-grid' technologies and sustainability measures.



THIS PAGE WAS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

# 5. THARWA INTO THE FUTURE

## Tharwa Village Plan



# 5. THARWA INTO THE FUTURE

## VILLAGE PLAN STRUCTURE

The village plan structure indicates how the planning strategies and policies support achievement of the vision and principles outlined on **Map 15** and **Map 16**.

## THE VISION

The vision for Tharwa has been developed from feedback from the community and broader government policies. It captures what is valued about the village and sets out what the village could be in the future.

---

**THARWA VILLAGE IS A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE MEETING PLACE FOR THE COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE CAN GET CLOSER TO NATURE AND EXPERIENCE THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF A RURAL VILLAGE LIFESTYLE.**

---

## CHARACTER STATEMENT

Set at the foot of Mount Tennent, overlooking the Murrumbidgee River, Tharwa Village is a picturesque rural settlement in an expansive rural landscape setting of regional cultural, heritage and environmental significance.

Tharwa is a human-scale village with modest buildings made of practical and functional materials and intimate laneways that incorporate rural landscapes, productive gardens and livestock—all underpinning a tranquil and rural lifestyle.

The Tharwa character speaks of a long-standing connection to place and country. There is a deep vein of resilience, with multi-generational families staying in the district, and an attitude of ‘making do’ to conserve valued resources and the cultural and environmental heritage of the village.

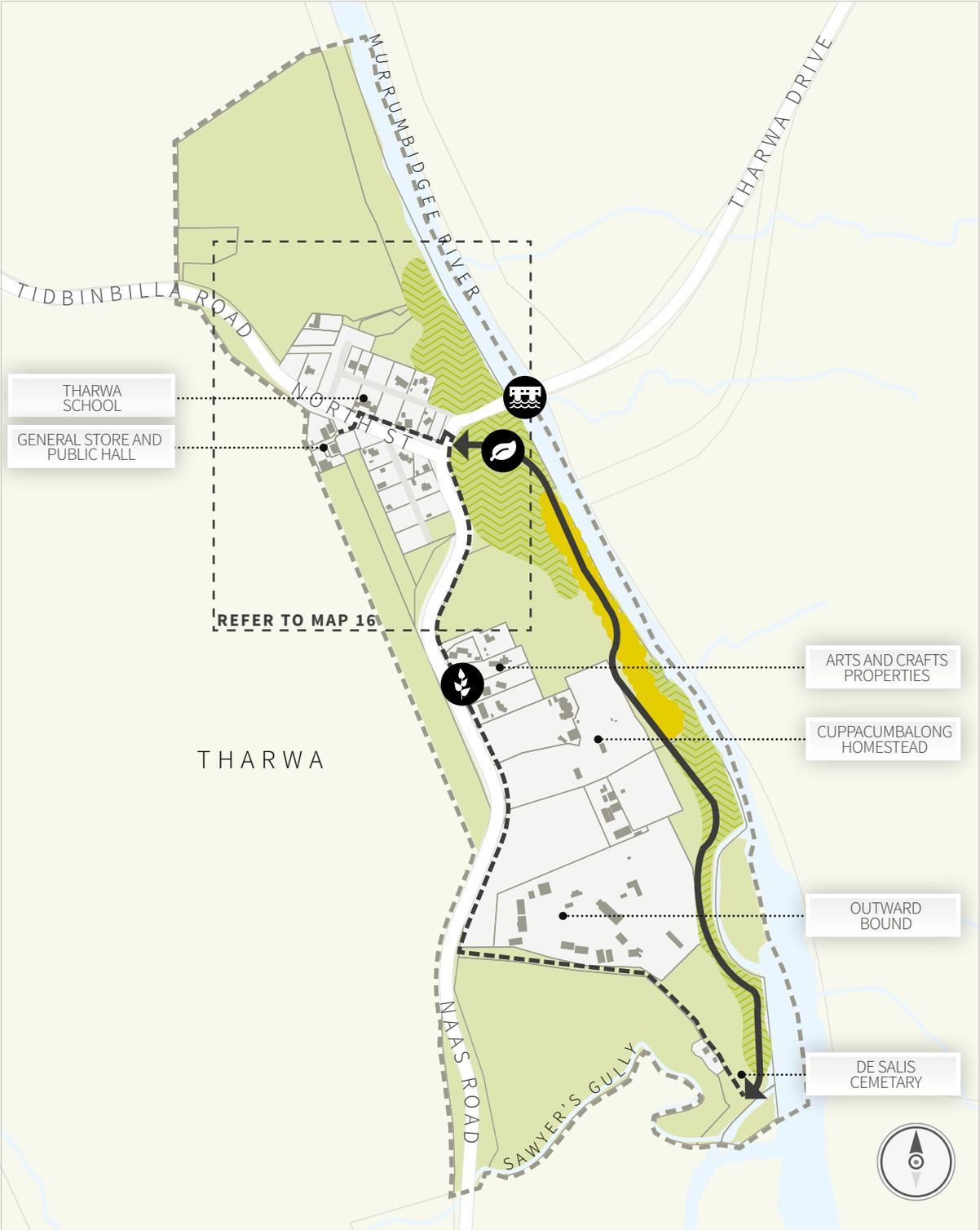
## THE VILLAGE PLAN

The village plan incorporates the vision and principles, and responds to the identified challenges and opportunities. The village plan shows how land use, public domain and connections could be arranged and delivered, illustrating how Tharwa could physically adapt into the future.

In this village plan, Tharwa has three distinct precincts—the Village Core, Historic Cuppacumbalong and the River Corridor. Refer to Tharwa Precincts at **Map 17**.

The highly significant broader cultural landscape for Lanyon and its setting, which includes Tharwa within its boundaries, is recognised through the definition of the Lanyon Bowl and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor areas under the National Capital Plan, shown on **Map 18**. The Tharwa Village Plan was informed by the policies for these areas.

Map 15: Spatial framework



LEGEND

-  LANDSCAPE UPGRADE
  -  THARWA BRIDGE
  -  THARWA BRIDGE RESERVE
  -  LANDSCAPE ALONG THE RIVER CORRIDOR
-  RETAIN AND PROTECT EXISTING VEGETATION AND TREES
  -  NEW SHARED PATHWAY
  -  EXPLORER TRACK
  -  STUDY AREA

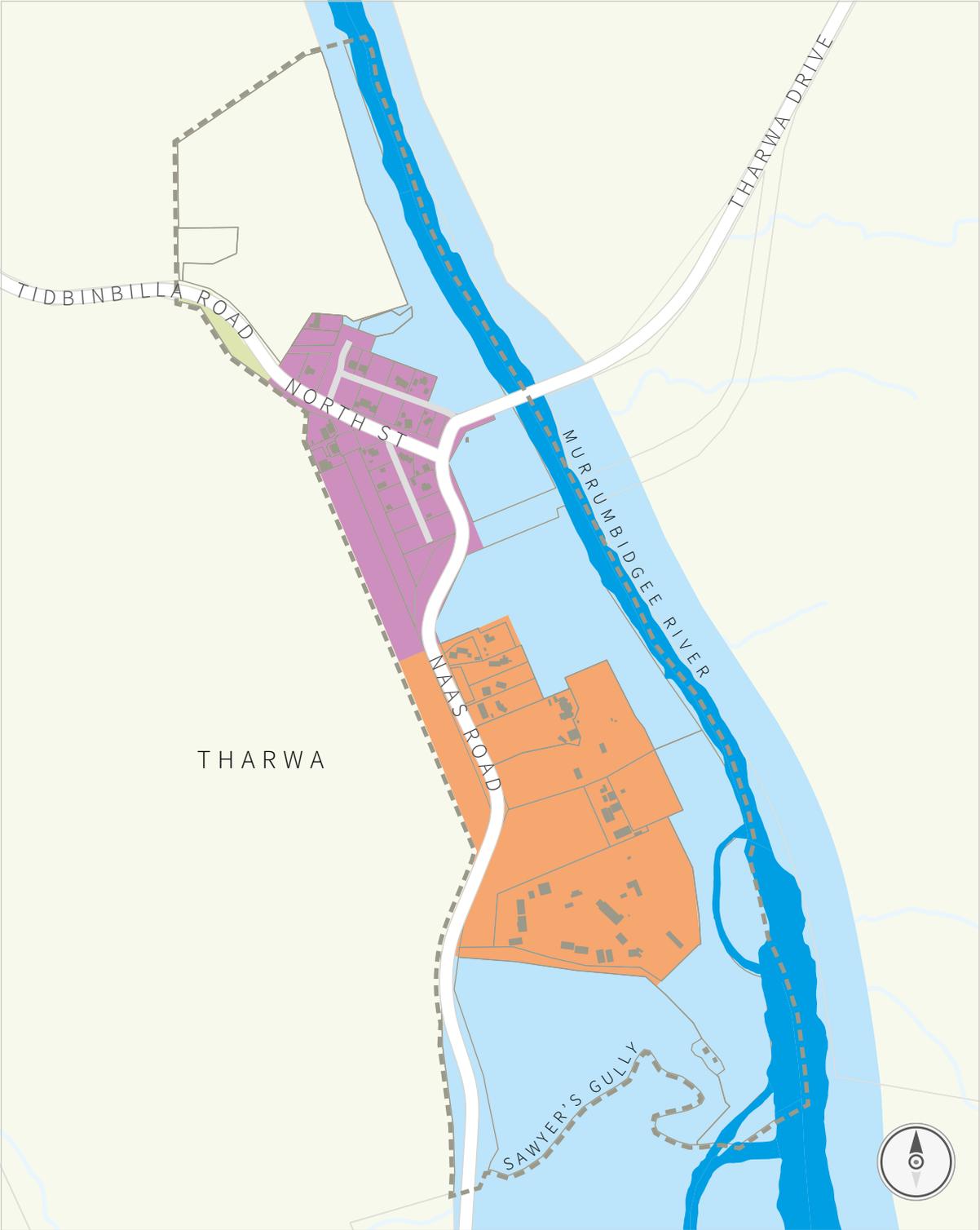
Map 16: Spatial framework inset



LEGEND

- LAND RELEASE RZ1
- LANDSCAPE UPGRADE
- NEW SHARED PATHWAY
- EXPLORER TRACK
- ⤴ CROSSING
- P PARKING
- A RECREATION/FACILITIES UPGRADE
- 🌿 THARWA BRIDGE RESERVE
- STUDY AREA

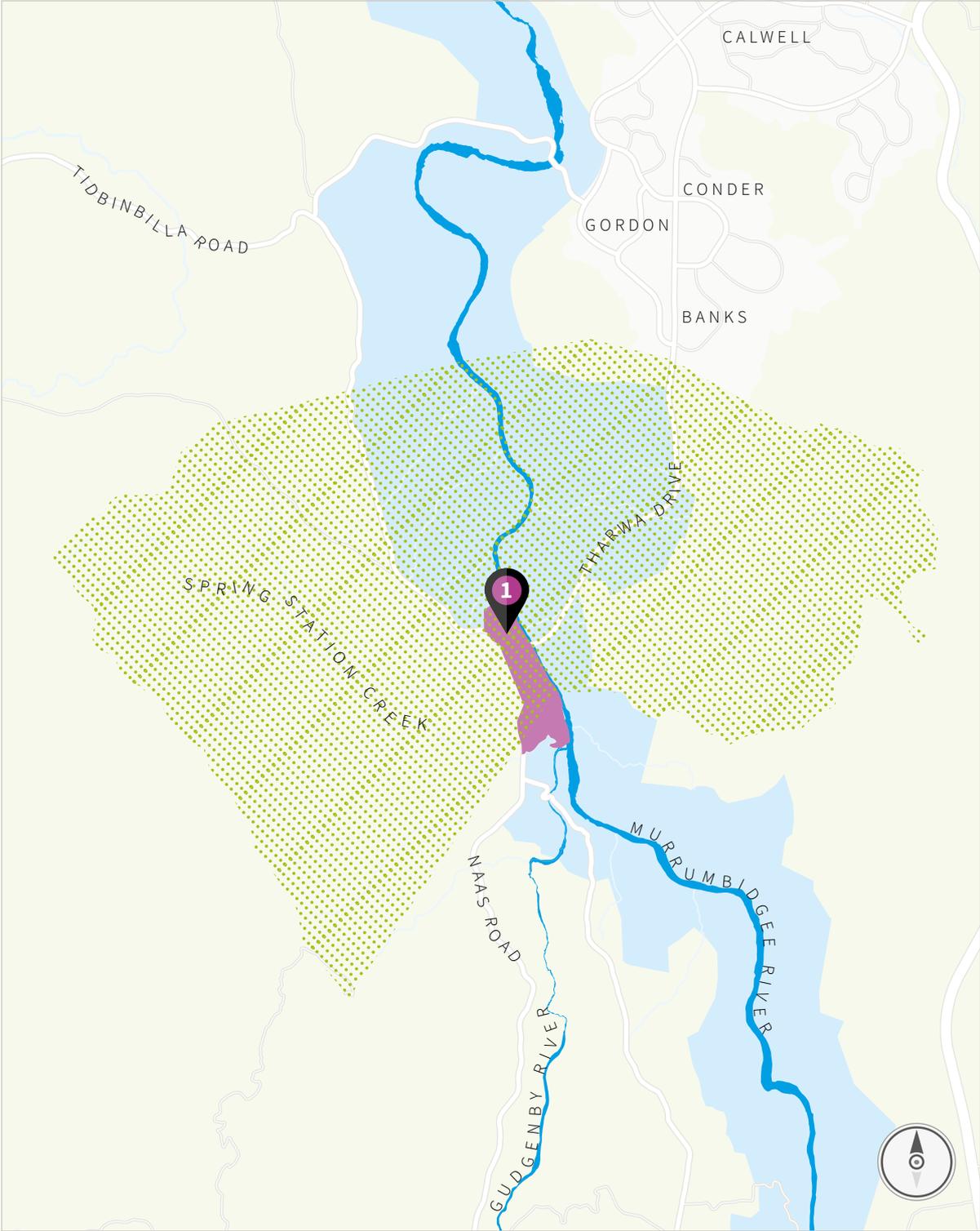
Map 17: Tharwa precincts



LEGEND

- PRECINCT 1: VILLAGE CORE
- PRECINCT 2: HISTORIC CUPPACUMBALONG
- PRECINCT 3: RIVER CORRIDOR
- STUDY AREA

Map 18: Lanyon Bowl area



LEGEND

-  STUDY AREA
-  MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER CORRIDOR
-  THARWA VILLAGE
-  LANYON LANDSCAPE BOWL AREA

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The following principles are applied to guide the implementation of this village plan, its vision and planning strategies. The principles reflect the desired future outcomes for the village.

Design Guidelines that have also been developed for the Tharwa Village (page 65) to provide place specific controls for building heights, building setbacks and design elements to preserve Tharwa's rural village character. The updated Tharwa Precinct Code will give effect to key elements of the Design Guidelines.

### PRINCIPLE 1: RETAIN AND ENHANCE THE EXISTING RURAL VILLAGE CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

The original layout of Tharwa displays many of the characteristics typical of a rural village, being surrounded by farming land and located next to a river with strong visual connections to the natural environment. These qualities should be reinforced. In particular, the existing village boundaries should be respected to avoid further fragmentation together with improvements to the public domain. Enhancing existing civic spaces in the village will provide the setting for public life where a strong sense of community can continue to be forged.

Tharwa's significant natural and cultural heritage features, which are intrinsic to its identity, will be enhanced. Future development will consider:

- the historic street grid with its well defined, compact form, walkability and informal edges
- buildings, places and elements (e.g. the Lombardy Poplars) that contribute to the original rural village character
- Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct
- the use of the Tharwa Bridge Reserve and river corridor for recreational purposes in a way that respects the quality of the water, ecological habitat and riparian zone
- the Lanyon Bowl visual catchment area.

### PRINCIPLE 2: PROVIDE LOCALLY-BASED ECONOMIC, TOURISM AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY

Farming is the economic foundation of the village, with the emergence of arts and crafts businesses and outdoor recreation making Tharwa an attractive destination for visitors.

Supporting existing business and enterprises and exploring and creating new opportunities for complementary entrepreneurial activities will contribute diversity and resilience to the local village economy.

Identifying new opportunities to activate vacant or underutilised community facilities can enhance cultural and social life in the village.

### PRINCIPLE 3: ENSURE THARWA IS ACCESSIBLE AND WELL CONNECTED

Approaches to the village should be safe for pedestrian, cycling, equestrian and vehicular traffic.

Traffic on the approaches to the village should be slowed; providing an appropriate landmark or signage to signify arrival at the village could help this.

Good walking and cycling connectivity with easy access to all parts of the village, including a clear network linking business activity and natural and cultural heritage sites, will help attract visitors and facilitate social, economic and health benefits for Tharwa. This can be achieved by prioritising the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and recreational walkers to encourage active travel as an alternative to car travel within the village. It requires investing in walking and cycling networks that are direct, safe and accessible for multiple users.

Another initiative involves reducing the exposure to high speed traffic by introducing traffic calming measures and safe road crossings.

Attractive open public spaces with good natural surveillance, safe pedestrian access and shade trees with 'sit and rest' opportunities should also be created.

## PRINCIPLE 4: PROTECT AND CONSERVE THE ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE OF THARWA'S NATURAL HERITAGE

The river corridor and surrounding woodlands provide the backdrop to Tharwa's identity as a rural village.

This can be enhanced through the conservation and management of natural heritage, including riparian zones and landscape connectivity for threatened ecological communities.

Other initiatives could include improving recreational facilities to enhance people's enjoyment and experience of the natural environment with activities that are appropriate to the rural and natural river setting. Educational and interpretative opportunities associated with local cultural heritage and water issues relevant to the corridor should be provided.

## PRINCIPLE 5: PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY IN THE BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

There are opportunities to promote the village as environmentally sustainable and, potentially, a showcase sustainable rural village. This includes adopting energy and water efficiency measures for private dwellings and community buildings such as the Tharwa Public Hall.

Improving the energy and water efficiency of public community facilities and adopting water sensitive urban design (WSUD) measures in the public domain should be considered, where appropriate.

Another initiative could be to encourage local food production on a community-wide and domestic scale. 'Village farming/community gardens' could be an opportunity for the local community to reconnect with the food supply system and be involved in issues of provenance and security. Community gardens can significantly contribute to strengthening social networks and offer many benefits, particularly for local residents including young children and youth.

**Table 2:** Summary of Principles

#	PRINCIPLE
1	Retain and enhance the existing rural village character and identity
2	Provide locally-based economic, tourism and recreation opportunities for the benefit of the community
3	Ensure Tharwa is accessible and well connected
4	Protect and conserve the environmental value of Tharwa's natural heritage
5	Promote sustainability in the built and natural environments

## PRECINCT 1: VILLAGE CORE

### OUTCOME 1: THE VILLAGE CORE IS AN ACTIVE RECREATIONAL AND CREATIVE HUB FOR THE COMMUNITY

A vibrant village has an obvious centre with an attractive civic space where the community can come together. Providing appropriate landscape upgrades to the forecourt of the Tharwa General Store and North Street will increase the attractiveness of the village, enrich the lives of the community and enhance the viability of surrounding business and community facilities.

Providing good walking and cycling connectivity between the village core and other precincts within the village will encourage the sharing of the economic and social benefits.

Maintaining the existing fine-grain character of the residential parts of the village core will ensure the rural village character is retained.

Relevant principles: 1, 2, 3, 5.

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

1. In conjunction with the local community, investigate opportunities to provide public domain improvements to the forecourt to the Tharwa General Store and Public Hall, including appropriate street furniture and landscape upgrades, while maintaining fire vehicle access and parking.

2. In conjunction with the local community, investigate opportunities to provide public domain improvements to North Street with appropriate landscape upgrades such as signage, street furniture, additional street trees and water sensitive urban design features.
3. Provide a new shared pedestrian and cycle pathway along North Street and Naas Road that connects the village core with adjoining precincts.
4. Release vacant blocks of land that are suitable for residential development.
5. Encourage built form and siting of new buildings in accordance with the Tharwa Design Guidelines to respect the existing rural village character and complement the historic features of Tharwa's traditional houses, heritage places and community buildings.
6. Promote and encourage home owners to retrofit or build houses to best-practice standards for energy and water efficiency. Advice on improving the efficiency of dwellings is available at these two web sites: <http://www.actsmart.act.gov.au/what-is-the-government-doing/energy/energy-efficiency-improvement-scheme> and <http://www.yourhome.gov.au>
7. Investigate opportunities to repurpose or redevelop vacant or underutilised community facilities through community-focused recreational and commercial initiatives that are compatible with the village identity.
8. Build on the existing identity of Tharwa School and the adjoining Tharwa Community Rooms by continuing to investigate all opportunities for expansion of its role as a community and educational facility, such as serving as a centre for local environmental, recreation, arts and crafts, and/or heritage education activities.
9. Investigate retrofitting existing community facilities to demonstrate best-practice standards for energy and water efficiency.
10. Investigate opportunities for establishing community or native gardens as a means for educating and sharing knowledge about food production, healthy eating, recycling, native flora and fauna, and environmental practices at a local level.
11. Promote adaptive re-use options that respect the heritage values of individual sites and places, such as cultural and low-scale commercial activities.
12. In conjunction with the local community, consider opportunities to improve directional signage incorporating local community and heritage and cultural destinations such as Cuppacumbalong Homestead, De Salis Cemetery, Tharwa General Cemetery and Cuppacumbalong Woolshed.
13. In future road upgrades or development, retain the current soft edges and road kerbing profiles (subject to safety requirements) to maintain the rural village character.
14. In future road upgrades to Tharwa Drive and other roads to and from the village, investigate opportunities to provide improved infrastructure, such as wider road shoulders or dedicated paths, to improve safety for cyclists. Also investigate opportunities to provide infrastructure to facilitate safe road crossing by livestock.
15. Work with the local community to investigate opportunities to create distinctive landmark entry signage for Tharwa Village. It is recommended that this signage be designed and constructed with input from local artists, craftspeople and community members incorporating recycled Tharwa Bridge timbers. Consideration should be given to the placement of landmark entry signs at suitable locations on Tharwa Drive, east of the Tharwa Bridge, Naas Road, before the Cuppacumbalong (De Salis) Cemetery turn-off, and Tidbinbilla Road, near the existing sign location.
16. Implement the 2017/18 ACT Budget allocation of \$1.42 million to establish new ACT Government water supply infrastructure, including a new pump, a new rising main and new tanks, to provide a non-potable water supply for fire-fighting purposes in Tharwa Village.

## PLANNING POLICIES

1. Retain the existing land use zoning for Residential Suburban (RZ1) blocks in the precinct.
2. Remove the Sports and Recreation (Pi) overly from Block 10 Section 6.
3. Undertake development assessment in accordance with statutory requirements for the construction of new non-potable water supply infrastructure for fire-fighting purposes in Tharwa Village.
4. Ensure future land use is in accordance with special requirements under the National Capital Plan applying to the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Lanyon Bowl Area.
5. Ensure any new development is consistent with the Tharwa Design Guidelines (page 65).
6. Ensure the application of appropriate construction standards to respond to the risk of bushfire on Block 2 of section 9, Block 4 of section 7, and Blocks 6, 7 and 8 of section 6 Tharwa, consistent with A.S. 3959 – 2009 – ‘Construction of Buildings in Bushfire Prone Areas’.
7. Ensure that any undeveloped land undergoes detailed heritage survey including consultation with Representative Aboriginal Organisations prior to future development or changes in land use.
8. Ensure any new development or re-development of an on-site sewerage treatment system within 300 metres of a waterway is referred to the Environment Protection Authority for assessment.
9. Update the Tharwa Precinct Code to ensure future land use is consistent with the desired character of the village.

## PRECINCT 2: HISTORIC CUPPACUMBALONG

### OUTCOME 2: CUPPACUMBALONG HOMESTEAD PRECINCT WILL EXPRESS AND ENHANCE THE STORY OF THARWA

Cuppacumbalong Homestead is the anchor of the precinct and retaining its character and viability is important.

Good connectivity with the rest of the village will encourage walking and cycling opportunities for the community and tourists and ensure this precinct forms an integral part of the village.

Relevant principles: 1, 2, 3, 5

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

1. Assist and support tourism and development opportunities for Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct consistent with the lease purpose clause.
2. Assist and support the artists and craftspeople in the properties adjoining Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct to continue to explore new ways to promote and sell their work.
3. Upgrade the landscaping and signage on the designated parking site (Block 8 Section 3) to provide better amenity for tourists visiting the arts and crafts businesses.
4. Provide a new shared pedestrian and cycle pathway along Naas Road that connects Outward Bound, Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precinct and the arts and crafts properties with the village core.
5. Increase visitor numbers to Cuppacumbalong (De Salis) Cemetery by addressing the perceived separation between the public road and The Rabbiter’s Cottage.
6. Facilitate tourism links with the historic Cuppacumbalong Woolshed and Shearers Quarters.
7. In conjunction with the local community, consider opportunities to improve directional signage incorporating local community, heritage and cultural destinations, such as Cuppacumbalong Homestead, De Salis Cemetery, Tharwa General Cemetery and Cuppacumbalong Woolshed.
8. In future road upgrades or development, retain the current soft edges and road kerbing profiles (subject to safety requirements) to maintain the rural village character.

## PLANNING POLICIES

1. Retain the existing River Corridor (NUZ4) and Hills, Ridges and Buffers (NUZ3) land use zonings and Nature Reserve (Pc) and Special Purpose Reserve (Pd) overlays for blocks in the precinct.
2. Ensure future land use is in accordance with special requirements under the National Capital Plan applying for protection of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Lanyon Bowl Area.
3. Ensure future land use is consistent with the Murrumbidgee Corridor Plan of Management.
4. Ensure any new development is consistent with the Tharwa Design Guidelines.
5. Ensure that any undeveloped land undergoes detailed heritage survey including consultation with Representative Aboriginal Organisations prior to future development or changes in land use.
6. Ensure any new development or re-development of an on-site sewerage treatment system within 300 metres of a waterway is referred to the Environment Protection Authority for assessment.
7. Update the Tharwa Precinct Code to ensure that future land use is consistent with the desired character of the village.

## PRECINCT 3: RIVER CORRIDOR

### OUTCOME 3: PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Addressing the diminished conservation value of the riparian zone of the Murrumbidgee River will benefit both local recreation opportunities for the village and the regional hydrological and ecological functions of the river as an integral part of the Murray–Darling Basin.

Tharwa Bridge Reserve is an important ‘green’ civic space with a long history of recreational use. It increases appreciation for the natural environment for locals and visitors. Tharwa Explorer Track is an established recreation walking trail along the river corridor. Connecting it to new pathways in adjacent precincts and regional heritage and recreation

destinations will create a more continuous walkable network.

Relevant principles: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

1. Continue valuable ongoing work to plant, manage and maintain the river corridor to the benefit of the environment, local community and visitors to Tharwa.
2. Work with the local community to investigate opportunities to improve recreation facilities at the Tharwa Bridge Reserve, including potential upgrades to BBQ and picnic facilities, and the establishment of a nature play facility to be designed and constructed with input from local artists, craftspeople and community members incorporating recycled Tharwa Bridge timbers.
3. Increase the attractiveness of the Tharwa Bridge Reserve as a destination for the local community, tourists and recreational users through facilities, landscaping and signage upgrades, contributing to improved passive surveillance and reduced antisocial behaviour.
4. Investigate opportunities to upgrade car parking facilities at the Tharwa Bridge Reserve including options to restrict after-hours access to the lower car park to reduce antisocial behaviour. Consider opportunities for the addition of further traffic management infrastructure in the lower car park area, such as landscaped rocks, boulders or bollards.
5. As part of future facilities upgrades at Tharwa Bridge Reserve, incorporate water sensitive urban design measures that contribute to riparian zone restoration and ensure they are integrated with landscape features.
6. Retain the park-like character of Tharwa Bridge Reserve by developing a planting strategy that respects the aesthetic contribution of the Lombardy Poplars, which will eventually require a suitable replacement species.



7. Upgrade and enhance Tharwa Explorer Track to make it accessible for multiple users. Provide new connections from the track to the boundary lines of Cuppacumbalong and Outward Bound to optimise interaction between the river corridor and these key activity hubs (**Map 19**).
8. Investigate opportunities to improve regional track connections between the Tharwa Explorer Track and regional heritage and recreation destinations, including Lanyon Homestead, Cuppacumbalong Woolshed and Namadgi Visitor Centre (**Map 19**).
9. Together with the development of expanded regional track connections, include consideration of opportunities for the provision of new directional signage, track network maps and interpretive signage highlighting key cultural, heritage and environmental features (**Map 19**).
10. In conjunction with the local community and the ACT Equestrian Association, investigate opportunities to re-align the Bicentennial National Trail route through Tharwa Village to follow a new shared route with the Tharwa Explorer Track and proposed new Namadgi Track link to Smiths Road (**Map 19**).
11. In conjunction with the local community and the ACT Equestrian Association, investigate opportunities to establish a shared equestrian track link to the Bicentennial National Trail campground at Namadgi Visitor Centre

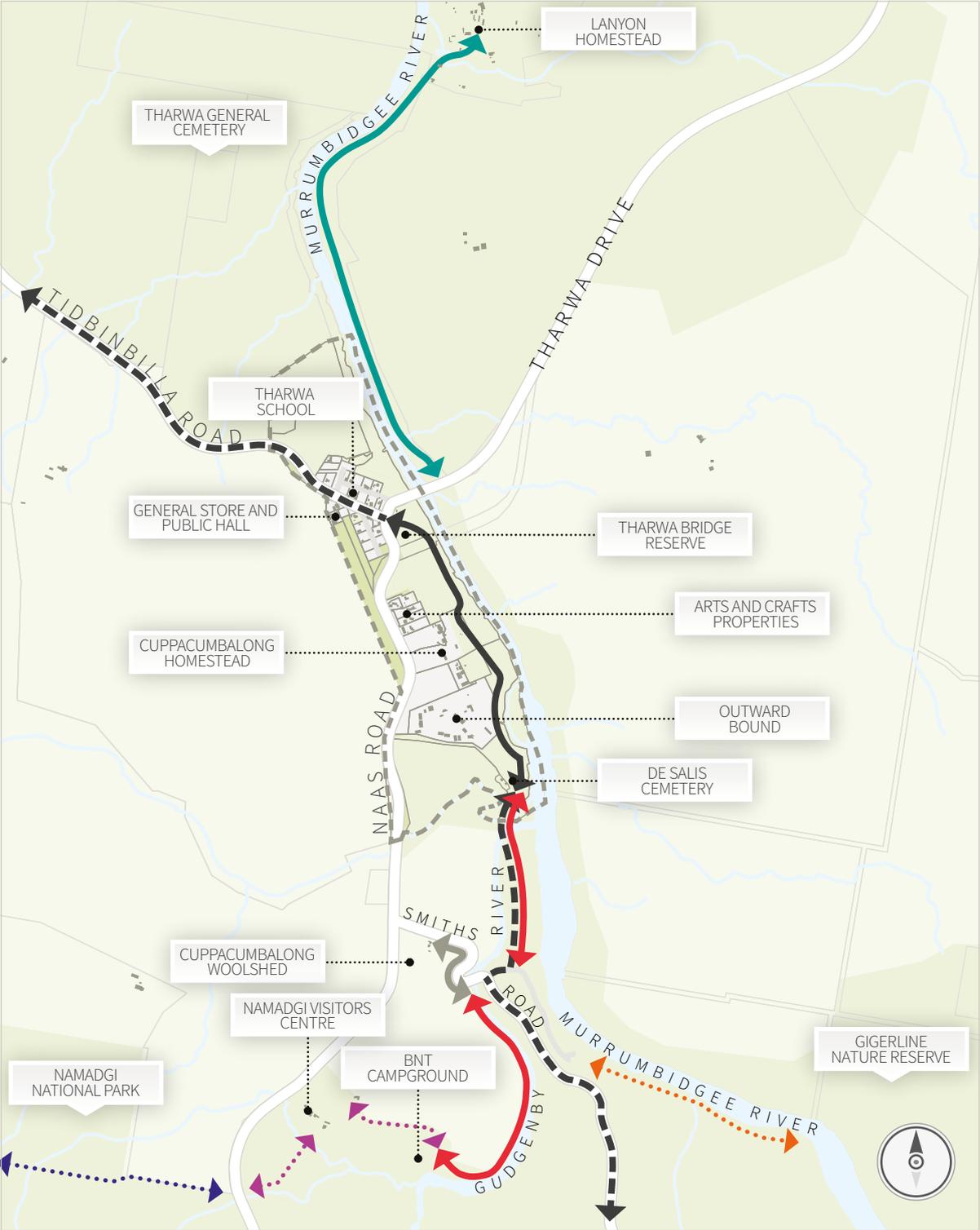
following the proposed Namadgi Track link From Smiths Road (**Map 19**).

12. Update the Murrumbidgee Corridor Plan of Management incorporating proposed new regional track connections along the river corridor and recreational facilities upgrades at the Tharwa Bridge Reserve.

#### PLANNING POLICIES

1. Retain the existing River Corridor (NZU4) land use zoning and Nature Reserve (Pc) and Special Purpose Reserve (Pd) overlays for blocks in the precinct.
2. Ensure future land use is in accordance with special requirements under the National Capital Plan applying for protection of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Lanyon Bowl Area.
3. Ensure future land use is consistent with the Murrumbidgee Corridor Plan of Management.
4. Ensure that any undeveloped land undergoes detailed heritage survey including consultation with Representative Aboriginal Organisations prior to future development or changes in land use.
5. Ensure any new development or re-development of an onsite sewerage treatment system within 300 metres of a waterway is referred to the Environment Protection Authority for assessment.

Map 19: Heritage and recreation network track connections



LEGEND

- > BICENTENNIAL NATIONAL TRAIL (BNT)
- > THARWA EXPLORER TRACK
- ...> THARWA SANDWASH TRACK
- ...> NATIONAL PARK TRACKS
- ...> AUSTRALIAN ALPS WALKING TRACK
- > LANYON TRACK
- > NAMADGI TRACK
- > WOOLSHED TRACK
- NATURE RESERVE
- STUDY AREA

# 6. DESIGN GUIDELINES

## Tharwa Village Plan



## DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR NEW BUILDINGS IN THE THARWA VILLAGE

### WHAT DO THESE DESIGN GUIDELINES DO?

The purpose of these design guidelines is to provide guidance and define the desired character for new and redeveloped buildings that can be built in the Tharwa Village. The aim of the design guidelines described below is to protect and enhance the historic nature of the Tharwa village by:

- ensuring that new and redeveloped buildings are in keeping with the rural character of the village
- maintaining the character of smaller houses and buildings within a rural setting
- guiding the way that new buildings may be sited on each block, particularly in relation to the existing topography, landscape and street network of Tharwa
- guiding the way that front and side boundary, and building frontage is designed to respect the Tharwa village character and landscape setting
- providing flexibility in the way that new and redeveloped buildings may be designed.

### DESIRED CHARACTER

**OBJECTIVE:** To ensure that the design of buildings respects the rural village character of Tharwa.

The following design guidance applies to desired character:

- New buildings and associated utility buildings shall reflect the existing rural village character and scale of traditional houses within the streetscape. New buildings shall compliment the historic features of Tharwa's traditional houses, heritage places and community buildings, and the village's rural landscape setting.

### SITE COVERAGE

**OBJECTIVE:** To ensure that character of future developed residential sites is consistent with the existing Tharwa village and to promote a high valued landscape character.

The following design guidance applies to plot ratio:

- Plot ratio for residential buildings shall not exceed 25% of the block area.

Figure 3: Plot ratio



## RESPONSE TO TOPOGRAPHY

**OBJECTIVE:** To promote sustainable development that reduces its impact on the natural setting of the Tharwa village.

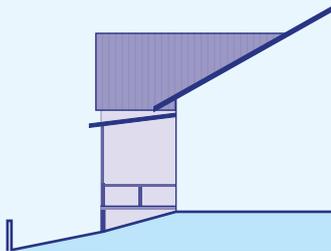
The following design guidance applies in response to topography:

- The natural ground level of the site shall be retained to respect the natural topography and overland stormwater run-off.
- Where earthworks are required, battered soil slopes in conjunction with ground-cover plantings should be used to accommodate level changes in preference to engineered retaining walls. Where they are used, retaining walls should be a maximum of 1m in height and incorporated with the primary building to minimise visual impacts.

Figure 4: Response to topography - front



Figure 5: Response to topography - side



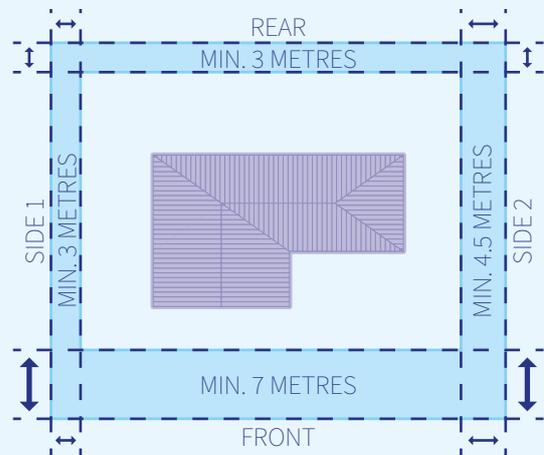
## BUILDING ORIENTATION AND SETBACKS

**OBJECTIVE:** To ensure that buildings address the street and positively contribute to Tharwa's traditional streetscape character.

The following design guidance applies to building orientation and setbacks:

- New buildings in the village core precinct should respect the predominant setback and orientation of Tharwa's traditional buildings, with the front facade being constructed to the front alignment and oriented to the street.
- Front building setbacks in the village core precinct shall be a minimum of 7m to reflect the desired character.
- Side boundary setbacks shall be a minimum of 3m for side boundary 1 and a minimum of 4.5m for side boundary 2.
- Rear boundary setbacks shall be minimum of 3m.

Figure 6: Building orientation and setbacks



## HEIGHT AND SCALE

**OBJECTIVE:** To retain the low, single dwelling character of the Tharwa village.

The following design guidance applies to building height and scale:

- Buildings shall be a maximum of one storey with a floor to roof apex height of 6m.
- Residential buildings shall have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.7m to increase the prominence of the roof, particularly as a separate element to the verandah attachment.

Figure 7: Building Height



## ROOFS

**OBJECTIVE:** To promote a building design that achieves the rural character that exists in the Tharwa village.

The following design guidance applies to building roofs:

- The roof-line is one of the most important features which determines the overall appearance of the building. Steep pitched (between 30° and 45°) gables and hip roofs are preferred.

Figure 8: Roof pitch



## VERANDAHS

**OBJECTIVE:** To promote a building design that achieves the rural character that exists in the Tharwa village.

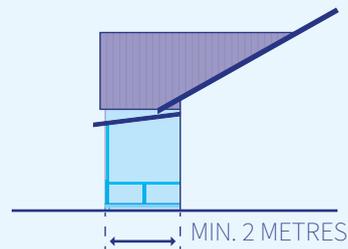
The following design guidance applies to building verandahs:

- All buildings are to incorporate a verandah for at least 50% of the width of building front facade.
- Verandahs shall be at least 2m deep.

Figure 9: Verandah width



Figure 10: Verandah depth



## MATERIALS AND FINISHES

**OBJECTIVE:** To promote buildings that are complimentary to neighbouring buildings and the surrounding landscape setting.

The following design guidance applies to building materials and finishes:

- Colours and materials should be of a traditional rural style. Wall colours should reflect the Tharwa Village environment and generally be of a neutral colour palette.
- Roofs shall be constructed using corrugated metal, or similar, in a neutral and non-reflective colour or traditional galvanised finish.

## GARAGES, CARPORTS AND SHEDS

**OBJECTIVE:** To promote design and siting of buildings that are complimentary to the rural character of Tharwa.

The following design guidance applies to garages, carports and sheds:

- Garages and carports are permitted, where they are:
  - > Detached from the primary building and external walls are separated by a minimum of 1.5m.
  - > A minimum distance of 5m behind the primary building front setback
  - > Do not impact on the scale of the primary building and the streetscape.
- Attached garages may be considered where these are located behind the primary building and and screened from the street.
- Basement garages may be considered only where the access is located at the rear of the primary building and screened from the street.
- Detached sheds may be considered where these are located in the rear zone, are single storey, and are secondary in scale to the primary building.
- Materials and finishes used in the construction of garages, carports and sheds should be consistent with those used in the primary building and complimentary to the desired character of the village.

Figure 11: Garage separation

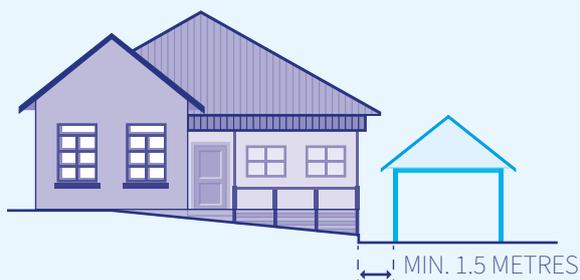
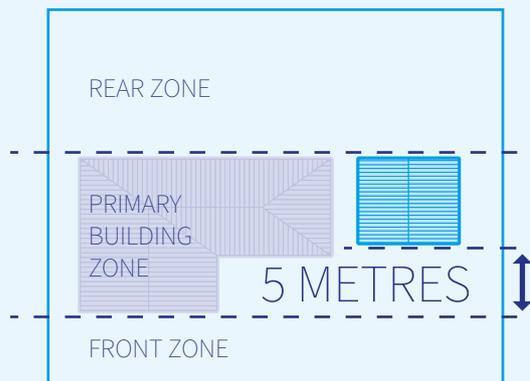


Figure 12: Garage setback



## DRIVEWAYS

**OBJECTIVE:** To promote sustainable landscaping of development and minimise stormwater run-off.

The following design guidance applies to driveways:

- Driveways should be predominately constructed of permeable surfaces, such as gravel, concrete wheel strips or permeable paving in order to minimise sealed hardstand areas and minimise stormwater run-off
- Concrete surfacing is permitted between the road edge and the front property boundary, including where required for footpath cross-overs in accordance with TCCS requirements.
- Concrete driveways may be considered in areas where site topography and overland stormwater run-off present a high-likelihood of erosion.

## FENCES

**OBJECTIVE:** To encourage fences that promote the rural village character of the Tharwa.

The following design guidance applies to fences:

- Fences are permitted in the front zone, where they are:
  - > Maximum of 1.2m height above ground level
  - > Transparent type, such as wire, wire mesh or open timber.
  - > Privacy screening shall be provided through landscape planting.
- Fences are permitted in the primary building zone and rear zone, where they are:
  - > Maximum of 1.8m height above ground level.
  - > Transparent type, such as wire, wire mesh or open timber.
  - > Privacy screening shall be provided through landscape planting.
- Non-transparent fences, such as sheet metal, are prohibited.
- Courtyard walls are prohibited in the front zone or for use as boundary fencing.
- Courtyard walls may be considered for use as a landscape feature where they are located in the rear zone, or are integrated with the primary building, and do not adversely impact on the desired character of the village.

**Figure 13:** Fence heights



## RAINWATER TANKS

**OBJECTIVE:** To promote design and placement of rainwater tanks that is complimentary to the village character.

The following design guidance applies to rainwater tanks:

- The use of rainwater tanks to optimise on-site water storage capacity is encouraged for Tharwa Village.
- To ensure an adequate water supply to dwellings in Tharwa Village the standards in **Table 3** apply. These are required minimum sizes only. Consideration should be given to ensure appropriate tank size to provide optimal capacity and meet bushfire safety requirements.
- Consideration should be given to the design and placement of rainwater tanks in order to minimise visual impacts on the streetscape and ensure consistency with the desired character of the village.
- Colours and materials should be of a traditional rural style. Tanks shall be constructed using corrugated metal, or similar, in a neutral and non-reflective colour or traditional galvanised finish.
- Placement of tanks behind the primary building, placement underground, or screening using landscape planting are encouraged where appropriate.
- Further information on rainwater tank design is available from the ACT Government’s *Rainwater Tanks: Guidelines for residential properties in Canberra*.

**Table 3:** water supply minimum standards

DWELLING SIZE	TANK SIZE (MINIMUM)
Less than or equal to 150m <sup>2</sup>	45,000 litres
Greater than 150m <sup>2</sup>	90,000 litres

## LANDSCAPING

**OBJECTIVE:** To encourage landscaping that is complementary to the village character and the natural landscape.

The following design guidance applies to landscaping:

- Landscape plantings should reflect the existing rural village character and minimise impacts on middle and distant views.
- Landscaping should incorporate appropriate planting of native vegetation to support native wildlife in and around the village and contribute to provide habitat links and corridors.
- Landscape within site setbacks should be complimentary to the desired character.

## SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

**OBJECTIVE:** To encourage the use of sustainable off-grid infrastructure that responds to Tharwa's rural village character and protects the environment.

The following design guidance applies to sustainable infrastructure:

- The use of renewable energy generation and battery storage technologies is encouraged in new development to support cost-effective opportunities for local clean energy production.
- The use of best-practice water efficiency and grey water re-use is encouraged in new development to reduce potable water use.
- The use of best-practice on-site wastewater management systems is encouraged in all new development and re-development of existing systems to protect local waterways and the environment.
- Any new development or re-development of on-site wastewater treatment systems located within 300m of a waterway will be required to be referred to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for assessment.

# 7. IMPLEMENTATION

## Tharwa Village Plan



# 7. IMPLEMENTATION

## THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Release of the Tharwa Village Plan is the first step in ongoing implementation, which will be undertaken through a range of further actions including:

- a variation to the Territory Plan to introduce a new Tharwa Precinct Code
- land release
- capital works for public domain upgrades
- uptake of opportunities by the community and private developers.

Implementation of the village plan will be progressive over the longer term as it is dependent on capital works funding from the ACT Government and investment decisions by private business.

## TERRITORY PLAN VARIATION

A variation to the Territory Plan to revise the existing Tharwa Precinct Code will provide for implementation of some of the planning policy recommendations contained within the village plan, as well as the design guidelines for new buildings in Tharwa Village.

There will be an opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the precinct code through a separate community engagement process.

## LAND RELEASE

There are five ACT Government-owned vacant blocks within the current village layout that are suitable to be made available for sale. These blocks are located at Block 2 Section 9, Block 4 Section 7 and Blocks 6, 7 and 8, Section 6.

The blocks are all zoned RZ1 Suburban and are located in the village core. Minor civil works will be needed to improve road access to several blocks in Clarrie Lane.

## PUBLIC DOMAIN UPGRADES

Infrastructure and public space improvements are required to realise the vision and some of the strategies of this village plan. This will involve further investigations by various government agencies and funding consideration through future government budget bids.

Improvements include improving key civic spaces such as the forecourt to the Tharwa General Store and Public Hall, landscape upgrades to North Street and the creation of a destination walking and cycling network that links the Village Core and Cuppacumbalong precincts. Minor municipal upgrades to improve signage across the village will also be considered.

## COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Subject to approvals by the ACT Government, the Tharwa community is encouraged to explore ways to use the vacant or underutilised facilities in the village core for low cost, community initiated projects that contribute to social and economic activity for the village.

Such community initiated projects could include outdoor heritage and recreation activities, a community garden, a farm shop, a produce market, arts and crafts activities, a seasonal cafe, or a sustainable living hub.

## COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Business and the wider community have the responsibility to take advantage of opportunities identified within the village plan to invest in the area. Implementation of the village plan and the realisation of new commercial opportunities will be progressive over time.

## FURTHER STUDIES

Further studies may be needed to progress some strategies that are either outside the scope of what this village plan can achieve or may require additional time to investigate. Potential further studies include:

- heritage assessments for the significant objects and places identified in Section 3
- infrastructure studies
- environmental assessment of vacant blocks in accordance with statutory requirements.





© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2018

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from:

Director-General, Environment and Planning Directorate,  
ACT Government, GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601.

Telephone: 02 6207 1923

Website: [www.environment.act.gov.au](http://www.environment.act.gov.au)