

# Neighbourhood Renewal

Growing Victoria Together



## Broadmeadows

Community Action Plan PART A

## **BUILDING FUTURES**



Prepared by Project Partnerships  
for the  
Department of Human Services Northern Metropolitan Region

## Acknowledgements

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For the residents we hope that their involvement in the process of Neighbourhood Renewal brings forward the promised improvements in services, facilities and life chances and really assists in meeting their aspirations for the future.

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Project Partnerships  
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## INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhood Renewal is an initiative of the Victorian Government's 'Growing Victoria Together Strategy' to reduce inequality and improve community well-being for residents of public housing estates.

Neighbourhood Renewal aims to:

- Increase people's pride and participation in the community;
- Enhance housing and the physical environment;
- Lift employment, training and education opportunities and expand local economic activities;
- Improve personal safety and reduce crime;
- Promote health and wellbeing; and
- Increase access to transport and other key services and improve government responsiveness.

Neighbourhood Renewal emphasises the importance of local communities shaping their own future, by encouraging local residents to actively participate in leading change and opportunity. Community members are best positioned to determine their concerns and ideas. They will be working together with local agencies, government bodies, local industry and service providers to improve their neighbourhood.

This document is Part A of the Broadmeadows Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan its purpose is to provide a community profile of the Department of Human Services Broadmeadows Neighbourhood Renewal site and to identify key issues for further consideration in the community consultation and engagement phase of the Neighbourhood Renewal Program. The key components of Part A are:

- a physical description of area; basic demographic information; audit of current community activities and government initiatives in the area;
- An analysis of relevant data and indicators of disadvantage relating to each Neighbourhood Renewal objective (eg. employment, education, crime & Safety, health & wellbeing); and
- key issues identified through a limited community & stakeholder consultation and literature search.

**BROADMEADOWS** (37° 49' S. lat., 144° 52' E. long.), post town and shire, with money-order office, county Bourke, electorate of Bourke East on the Moonee ponds, 12 miles N. of Melbourne. It has also a railway station (2 miles distant) on the NE. line (fares, 11½d. and 8½d.), and a place of petty sessions. Height, 408 feet above sea level. There are numerous dairy farms in the district, and two good quarries, the building stone of which was used in the construction of the old Prince's Bridge, the Chief Secretary's Office, and the old Town Hall in Melbourne. State school (No. 982). A shire hall, several stores, and hotels. Places of worship: English, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic (St. Anne's), and Christian. Ratable property in shire assessed at £24,100, area 70 square miles, dwellings 444, ratepayers 470, rate 1s., 5,600 acres under cultivation, chiefly hay. Population of town, 292; of shire, 1,800.

The Australian Handbook 1903

<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/ncas/multimedia/gazetteer/list/broadmeadows.html#BroadmeadowsHist>

## **2. BROADMEADOWS NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL SITE**

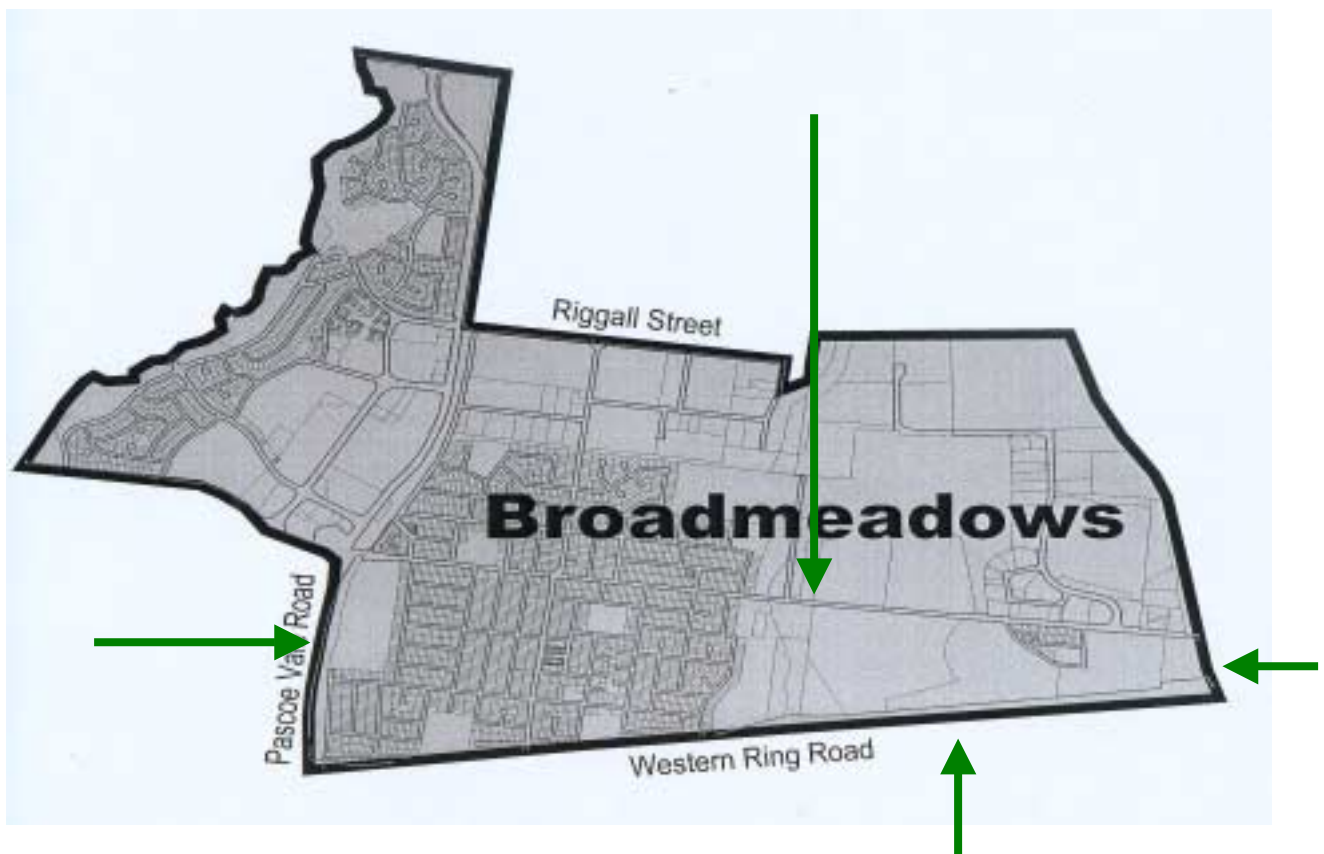
Broadmeadows has been selected as one of the Department of Human Services Northern Metropolitan Region's three neighbourhood renewal areas. The others are Atherton Gardens at Fitzroy and the Collingwood high-rise estate.

Broadmeadows is located within the City of Hume local government area which contains 2,982 public rental units. Within the neighbourhood renewal area there are a total of 1,701 houses, 492 have remained as public housing (ABS supplied by OOH 2003).

The following section contains information about the location, history and context, housing stock and community facilities that are located in or service residents in the neighbourhood.

### ***2.1 Location***

The Broadmeadows Neighbourhood Renewal site is located in the southern section of the City of Hume. It is bounded by the Melbourne – Sydney railway line to the west, on the east by Jack Roper Reserve, the Western Ring Road is the southern boundary and Camp Road provides the northern boundary.



### ***2.2 History and context***

The Broadmeadows Neighbourhood Renewal site is about 16 km northwest of Melbourne's central business district. It is part of the City of Hume which was formed in 1994 from the former City of Broadmeadows, Shire of Bulla and annexed sections of the cities of Keilor and Whittlesea.

### 2.2.1 Original settlers and early European settlement

Before European settlement, the area was home to the Wuywurrung Aborigines.

Broadmeadows became a shire in 1871 and was named for one of the earliest hotels in the district, which had been named after a town in Berwickshire, Scotland. The original Broadmeadows township (now Westmeadows) was surveyed and sold between 1855 and 1870 (Lemon, p4, 1982). This followed the first European explorers, Hamilton Hume and William Hovell, journeying through the area in 1824-25, John Batman in 1835 laying claim to the area via treaties with the local Aborigines and it being subsequently divided between members of the Port Phillip Association. In the same year these treaties were subsequently made void, the settlers declared trespassers and the land taken under formal government control (Lemon, p11, 1982). Squatters, who were subsequently given licences, began occupation of the land largely for grazing sheep.

The first subdivisions and sales occurred almost four years later, these included large holdings for grazing with provision for future townships every few miles along the main roads of the time and where there was water. By 1850 much smaller half acre lots were being sold in the Glenroy area to “the labouring classes” (Lemon, p25,1982). By the 1860’s most of the large landowners did not live in the district and had their land subdivided by lease to families operating small farms growing a range of cereal crops, hay, dairies, vineyards and vegetables. The soil was quite poor this impacted on land turnover, regular changes to the use of the agricultural land as farmers sought to eek a living from it, there were those that became prosperous through recycling of night soil to fertilise their land and the adoption new farming practices

### 2.2.2 The Railway

The decision to build a railway line to travel from Essendon through Broadmeadows to Craigieburn and beyond was made in 1869. It was opened 1872 trains only stopping on request and commenced its influence on the development of the area although this would be slow and in the twenty years from 1882 to 1907 there were few physical changes – a new line of railway and a handful of houses in the southern parts of the Shire. There was, however, significant land speculation, especially along the railway line and developers began contributing to the development of new railways stations on the line (Lemon, p60-61, 1982). By 1918 the land had become more closely settled and the poor water supply for both agricultural and residential use was recognised by government as one of the main factors retarding growth of the population in the area. Other disadvantages noted about living in the new suburbs along the railway were: no sewerage or Council sanitary service, few made roads, no gas or electricity and poor transport as there were few trains running on the line. The result of this was that land prices were low allowing the development of housing at a much cheaper cost that other parts of Melbourne particularly to the south and east (Lemon, p112-6, 1982).

With the amalgamation of Broadmeadows and Merriang (Craigieburn-Kilmore) Shires in 1916 it was agreed to meet in a hall which would be built near the Broadmeadows Railway Station, a move that would see the movement of the administrative centre of the Shire to the site in 1928.

### 2.2.3 The Military Influence on Infrastructure

World War I also had a significant impact as the Military began to utilise Broadmeadows as a training ground and established the Broadmeadows Military Camp which continues in use today. With the camp came reticulated water, telephone, postal and telegraph facilities, however, these were not extended to benefit the Broadmeadows community. The trains also came back and it was the beginning of “Broadmeadows” being associated with a bad name as a result of illness and death

arising from poor conditions in the camp and gambling, drinking and the development of tents and stalls selling goods to the military (Lemon, p125-41, 1982).

Despite some positive infrastructure developments (electric trains – 1921, water – 1925, rubbish and sanitary collection, various road improvements, street lighting and electricity – 1935) in the period 1921 and 1933 the development of Broadmeadows as a residential area and therefore its population was much slower than suburbs in the south and east a similar distance from the CBD – from 5,430 to 6,032. This is despite an increase in the number of properties, primarily in the area south of Camp Road from 695 in 1908 to 23,000 in 1928, these properties were part of another period of land speculation and were primarily purchased by small investors that did not build on the land. The open spaces of the area instead of encouraging residential growth tended to discourage it and the development of flying schools and other aviation industries would over time have a significant impact on development. Council, developers and residents were severely impacted on by the depression, not the least for loans owed to government authorities or the level of unpaid rates but because in the public mind the Military Camp was home to an “unemployment camp” for homeless men. On some estates Council acted on its rights and repossessed significant tracts of land which it leased for grazing, sometimes with four or five developed house blocks within their boundaries. This means of revenue raising was eventually abandoned as cattle and sheep roamed the streets. The perception of the area was of concern to many community associations during this period and Council was pressured to resist the development of industry such as quarrying and questionable recreational pursuits such as greyhound racing. By 1939 a master plan for development had been prepared, building had recommenced and Council had begun lobbying the Railways to increase the service as part of a promotional program for future development. This promising development was again brought to a halt for the six years of World War II and it seemed that there would be no end to the lobbying for services (Lemon, p142-68, 1982).

#### 2.2.4 The Depression

At a broader level, once Australia had begun to emerge from the 1930s Depression, it was clear that a housing policy focused on the promotion of home ownership through subsidised housing finance was unable to solve Australia's acute housing problems. A flurry of reports during the 1930s reinforced the extent of the housing crisis. That the atrocious housing conditions in the inner cities had worsened during the 1930s was amply evidenced by the report of the Victorian Government's Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board (1936). This report documented in some detail the degree of slum housing in the inner city, drew attention to what seemed to be an enduring inability of the private housing market to adequately house low income people, and concluded that the only adequate solution at the present time is for the State to assume the burden' (Housing Improvement Board, 1936, quoted in NSW Housing Commission, in 4 in Hayward).

This led the State Government to turn their housing policy reluctantly in the direction of public housing. Spurred on by a combination of working class pressure and the active campaigning by middle class social reformers like Oswald Barnett and Horrace Hogben the Victorian Government formed its Housing Commission in 1938. The enabling legislation for the Victorian Housing Commission set it two main tasks:

- the improvement of existing housing conditions, and
- the provision of adequate and suitable housing accommodation for persons of limited means”.

The Commission set about achieving these aims by identifying inner city slum areas for demolition, and by building estates which would accommodate the people that lived there. An additional implicit objective, was to improve the moral fibre and health of tenants (Hayward).

World War II then exacerbated the poor housing conditions of the time.

*"There are 17,000 building allotments already surveyed in the southern portion of this Shire, and they are within 8 miles of Melbourne. The nine mile point on the Sydney-Hume Highway is recognised and the highest point in the metropolitan area. There one can see the bay at Port Melbourne and Williamstown. I wish to know whether there is any possibility that the area north of Coburg being used for the purpose of housing the people"*

(Charles Morton MLA 1940 in one of his first parliamentary speeches in Morton, p169-70, 1982)

## 5,500 ACRES TAKEN OVER

THE State Government will today make the biggest land acquisition in Victoria's history. It will take over 5,500 acres in the Broadmeadows area for use as a Housing Commission settlement.

The Commission aims at a model suburb, capable of housing up to 12,000 people.

The acquisition was announced last night by Mr. Swinburne, Housing Minister.

The land begins 3,000 yards south of Broadmeadows station, and extends for 3,000 yards either side of the main Sydney railway line, to a point level with Somerton station.

Hundreds of present landowners will lose their home-building blocks, dozens more will have to leave their homes, and at least 20 families will be displaced from farms.

Mr. Swinburne said it was planned to redivide the area into enough blocks for another 10,000 to 12,000 houses.

Gas, electricity, water, sewerage, and drainage would be installed in the next two years.

Provision would be made in re-divisional plans for parks, roads, churches, shopping centres, schools, theatres, and industry.

### Exemptions

Mr. Swinburne said all homes and buildings that did not fit in with re-divisional plans — those on arterial roads and parklands — would have to be demolished.

All householders in the area would have to apply for exemption from the order, and this would be granted where possible.

No exemption would be given to the 20-odd farmers in the district who would have to find other properties.

Only landowners to escape the acquisition order were those who could prove they had definite plans to build, and whose land did not encroach on future parklands or roads.


Mr. Swinburne said householders forced to move would be offered other homes in the area or compensated.

Mr. Swinburne added that although there were several hundred homes in the area, comparatively few would be affected.

William Harold  
a member of  
an officer of  
not guilty.  
Donald Matthias  
and that on De-



1957 Land owned by Housing Commission Victoria



It would be eleven years later on 12 April 1951 that the morning papers would advise the community that change was to occur - "Model Town for Broadmeadows – Commission to take over 5500 acres" they said (Argus).

### 2.2.5 Post War Growth and Development

In the mean time by 1949 Broadmeadows Shire Council had begun issuing much larger numbers of building permits (455 pa), a number of large projects had been announced including the 1946 purchase of land by Australian National Airways for a model village for 275 airline employees, land purchased by the Commonwealth Government War Service Homes Commission (1950) and the Housing commission had built 113 homes in the Fawkner area. The Council, concerned about the level of uncontrolled development resulting from the previous land speculation sub-divisions and prepared and adopted its first Planning Scheme in 1949. The Town and Country Planning Board criticised the scheme for allowing too large a residential area and wanted a more restrictive plan. Council felt this would be too difficult to enforce. While these discussions continued, it came to Councils attention that people building on land south of Camp Road were building substandard housing and that almost 700 of these lots had been sold to immigrants who had no understanding of building regulations and many of whom had been taken down by speculative builders. Council was in a dilemma, as to allow continued development would mean substandard housing but to take action would see their continued separation from family as they returned to the immigration camps. The houses were demolished and at little consolation to the owners, Council black banned a number of the builders. While these events were unfolding the Victorian Housing Commission was also in the process of unfolding its own plans for the area which were to make much of the discussion about planning and zoning irrelevant (Lemon, p169-176).

### 2.2.6 The Master Plan – A Model City

The Victorian Housing Commissions Master Plan for the proposed Broadmeadows Estate 1951, identified the areas north of Glenroy from Hilton Street through to Somerton Road, it went west to Moonee Ponds Creek, not including the original Broadmeadows township, and east to Sydney Road. The Master Plan incorporated the current Neighbourhood Renewal site. A significant proportion of the Master planned area was already subdivided or developed and included cemeteries, Commonwealth land (eg the Military Camp and the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories). The owners of the subdivided land were spread across Australia and as a result there were no large interests to protest about the takeover. Council supported the development seeing it as a positive approach to solving the housing crisis and assisting in managing the urban sprawl of the south and east.

Land transactions were prevented to anyone other than the Housing Commission in the defined area with the exception of those houses which were already built or being built and a limited number of blocks where owners were to build a house for their own use within a defined period. The sales to the Housing Commission were at a price set by the Housing Commission at 1951 values regardless of how long negotiations took place and if they failed to sell they could be purchased through compulsory acquisition. Until the Housing Commission bought the land the owner was responsible for all rates and the only right of appeal was in relation to the price that would be paid. Many people lost money in these transactions.

The Master Plan identified shops, offices, a pool, gymnasium, library, gallery, town hall, gardens two picture theatres, 200 acres of industry. Within each neighbourhood area playgrounds, shops, doctors residences, primary and secondary schools and kindergartens were marked. In some instances the

street layout was arranged to preserve existing housing, and in other areas a whole new street pattern was drawn. Building was to start in 1953 and it was projected that construction would rise from 250 houses in the first year to 1500 in 1956. Discussions were held with relevant authorities in relation to gas, electricity, water, sewerage and roads, however, prior to being finalised they commenced construction. The first houses were constructed in the area south of the now Western Ring Road.

Despite the Master Plan identifying community facilities and stating its interest in ensuring householders could access services within their neighbourhood this was not what occurred as there was little government coordination, in part brought about by four changes of government from 1951-1956. These and other shortcomings were recognised by the 1956 Royal Commission into the Housing Acts and Housing Commission, most of which have been “rediscovered” in similar enquiries and research activities ever since! The Royal Commission reported that poor housing conditions resulted in ill-health, tensions and dissatisfactions, broken homes, delinquency, vice and crime; and that this was exacerbated by poor access to services and lack of variety in the streets and houses. They also identified that there was little balance in social type or age groups and little consideration of the social aspects of the new housing estates.

**“physical and mental health, industrial efficiency, social relations, civic responsibility and moral and cultural development of the individual [were at stake]”**

(Royal Commission in Lemon, p181, 1982)

By mid-1956 only 881 houses were built, much less than the target of 1500 per annum by this stage, however a steady population growth was occurring through this period and also via private building outside the Housing Commission area (Morton, 182, 1982). At this time, Victoria in line with the other states, was keen to promote home ownership and saw public housing as another way of doing this, providing the dwellings could be sold to tenants on terms which made them affordable (Jones, 1972; Berry, 1988; Martin, 1988 in Hayward). The Commonwealth State Housing Agreement did not support this notion until 1956 which is reflected in the number of house sales prior to this time. The following table indicates the total housing units built in Victoria during the main period of development in Broadmeadows and the percentage which were sold, a similar pattern of sales occurred in the neighbourhood identified for renewal.

| Vic     |                         |               |
|---------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Year    | No of new Housing Units | % Sold of All |
| 1952/3  | 13                      | 1%            |
| 1953/4  | 6                       | 1%            |
| 1954/5  | -                       | -             |
| 1955/6  | 1,289                   | 45%           |
| 1956/7  | 1,732                   | 28%           |
| 1957/8  | 1,336                   | 19%           |
| 1958/9  | 2,506                   | 38%           |
| 1959/60 | 2,672                   | 39%           |
| 1960/1  | 2,704                   | 42%           |
| 1961/2  | 2,125                   | 36%           |
| 1962/3  | 1,791                   | 30%           |
| 1963/4  | 1,799                   | 37%           |
| 1964/5  | 2,028                   | 33%           |
| 1965/6  | 2,219                   | 36%           |
| 1966/7  | 1,859                   | 30%           |
| 1967/8  | 1,794                   | 29%           |
| 1968/9  | 1,404                   | 27%           |

(Jones, 1972: Tables 68-73 in Hayward)

### 2.2.7 The People

Many of the people housed in Broadmeadows, and particularly the Neighbourhood Renewal site, in the early years were being “decanted” as a result of the slum reclamation in the inner city or were resettled from the emergency housing settlement at Camp Pell in Royal Park. This meant that many of those being rehoused were poor. Additionally, preference was being given to large families (Eather, 1988; Howe, 1988b in Hayward and Peel, p44, 2003). Those who became single due to a death of a relative or because of a marriage breakdown were required to vacate their dwellings in favour of families with children (Jones, 1972:69 in Hayward). In 1945, Victoria introduced a ballot system for allocating dwellings. Those seeking assistance attended ballot sessions at the Melbourne Town Hall, with the winners being required to sit an interview to ascertain their degree of need. In 1955, the ballot system discontinued and a means test was implemented, after 1957 allocations were made using a priority system based on current housing circumstances as well as income. Those in most need were those facing eviction (Eather, 1988 in Hayward).

Reflecting on the criteria used for allocations, a disproportionate number of tenants were families with children and of an Anglo-Saxon background and most tenants were on modest incomes. This pattern of housing the traditional family was to remain throughout the 1960’s and into the 1970’s.

However, during the 1980s, the traditional family was replaced by single parents, singles, and shared households as the fastest growing household types. The growth in the number of single parents - largely a consequence of rapidly rising divorce rates - has been especially significant. This is because single parents have the highest incidence of poverty of all household types, with marriage breakdowns often resulting in women (and their children) losing access to male incomes, and becoming dependent on payments made through Government departments or child support payments.

Changes in the demography of tenants began to reflect this as allocation policies changed. New allocations were targeted to low income households and together with the introduction of market based rents for higher income tenants a marked shift in the income profile of tenants toward the lower end of the income distribution occurred. Additionally, by targeting public housing to low income households, the overwhelming majority of tenants became eligible for rental rebates. Whereas in the late 1960’s, less than one in five public tenants were on rental rebates, by the early 1980’s 62% were receiving rebates, and a decade later over 80% were in this situation (Hayward) a pattern which has continued to the present day.

The cultural and linguistic diversity of the area has also changed over time, reflecting the waves of migration, world conflict and the level of purchase of Aboriginal Housing Board accommodation in the neighbourhood.

- 1950’s migrants were usually from Britain and North Eastern European countries;
- 1960’s people were mainly from Italy and Malta;
- 1970’s people from Greece, Egypt, Yugoslavia and India were the predominant new settlers
- 1980’s Middle Eastern and South East Asian people settled in the area;
- 1990’s the former Yugoslavia, Iraq - Assyrian and Chaldean and Horn of Africa peoples;
- 2000’s new settlers are predominantly from Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon, the Philippines and India.

From the 1980’s almost half the new settlers were humanitarian entrants. This diversity has brought both unity and division to the area – unity around an understanding of common issues and division because of the language barriers. A number of reports and community consultations indicate a common desire of residents to respect and understand each others differences (Peel, p147, 2003). This does not mean that from time to time there are not tensions that need to be addressed for example tensions raised as a result of the recent war in Iraq.

Refer to section 3 The People for the current demographic profile of the renewal neighbourhood.

### 2.2.8 Infrastructure development – a slow response

Council at this time was having difficulty responding to the inadequate infrastructure in the more established areas and the demands of its longer term residents, and to some extent was also pre-occupied with the development of its administrative centre and the severance of the section north of Somerton Road from the Shire (1955). Broadmeadows Council together with other government departments was slow to address the social and infrastructure issues that were evident in these new communities. Little consideration was given to planning for the numbers of young families and the impact of the “baby boom” as a result schools were not built in time, maternal and child health services were not available and there was no public transport for families with no access to a vehicle. The following year Broadmeadows was declared a City. This poor planning was further exacerbated by there being a lack of communication between the City and Housing Commission and it wasn't until 1956 that any real cooperation and joint forward planning really began (Morton, 179-85, 1982).

Similarly, problems existed with the coordination of works on the estate as a result of the work sequence not being clearly defined with contractors undertaking the construction of sewerage mains, water mains, gas mains, electricity poles, roads and drains and the construction of the houses. A major dispute resulted in improved work plans beyond 1956 (Morton, 186-9, 1982).

In 1956 the Ford Motor Company was controversially sold 400 acres of the land to provide opportunities for employment to people living in the housing estates. This was to lead the way for other industries such as steel works, clothing manufacturers, leather workers, telecommunications companies and more. Another round of land speculation to the west of the Housing Commission area was fuelled by these developments.

In the period 1957-83, Council, community based groups and other government departments regularly reported concerns about the poor health, community and recreational facilities in the area and these have largely continued through to the present day in relation to both the public housing estates and new growth areas to the north and west within the new Hume City municipal boundaries. Although it is important to say that Council has in recent times increased its planning and coordination capacity and is implementing a number of strategy plans which will be detailed later in this report.

Despite the surveys and reports demonstrating the needs of the people and how deficient the existing services and facilities for any of the population groups (children, young people, families, the aged) little had been achieved by 1976 when the Broadmeadows Town Centre Report was released, for example:

- the Town Hall was constructed and opened in 1964, it was the only public hall of any significance and became the central point for many school activities (speech nights, socials) and community events (ballroom dancing, guide and scout groups etc). It was also a symbol of the lack of facilities elsewhere in the City;
- there was no hospital or health centre and the first community health service was not opened until 1975 in temporary premises and despite a community desire and planning for a hospital, Broadmeadows Health Service (BHS) Victoria's first integrated care centre was opened in the 1990's. It offers a mix of general health and community services as well as specialised medical, surgical and therapy services (rehabilitation, palliative care and geriatric evaluation). If people need and emergency service or to be hospitalised the closest hospitals are the Royal Melbourne or Children's hospitals in the city and the Northern Hospital in Epping and the Austin in Heidelberg;
- the first library in the City was opened in 1969 when the population of the city was 100,000, further library development did not occur until 1971 when the Glenroy library was opened and the mobile

- library service began in the late 1960's, but it took until 2003 until the The Age Library and Global Learning Centre would be opened representing a major turn around for a Council that had in the past felt that libraries smacked of luxury and questioned who would use one (Lemon, p207, 1982);
- maternal and child health services were too small for the population requiring immunisations and there were no alternative venues;
  - schools were built without road access suitable for buses;
  - a very small amount of open space was developed despite the appearance of there being open space available such as creek valleys, easements, commonwealth land and unbuilt areas waiting for development and most of this was covered with thistles;
  - despite the high numbers of children and young people (42%:1976), youth clubs and activities were almost completely organised through voluntary efforts and there remained few meeting places for young people within their neighbourhoods, the Broadmeadows Leisure Centre opened in 1981 and Youth Central in mid 1990's, these were however some distance from the Broadmeadows Neighbourhood Renewal neighbourhood; and
  - the Housing Commission office was in a house in a residential area rather than a shopping centre where it could be accessed by all residents until 1986.


### 2.2.9 Responding to community need

Within the identified neighbourhood renewal area majority of the original public housing was built between 1958 and 1962. The Railways opened Jacana Station in 1959. In the following decade Olsen Place, the neighbourhood shopping centre was opened, the Maternal and Child Health Centre, the first kindergarten and the Broadmeadows Court House. A range of church based agencies began moving into the area in the mid-late 1970's, these included the "Care" Welfare Agency of Broadmeadows Uniting Church Parish Mission and the Mission to the Streets and Lanes (Anglican).

The churches had been working with families for many years in a voluntary capacity and/or had been providing specific services such as education and children's homes, but it was at this stage that they began receiving government funding and began delivery of "welfare services" including but not limited to: financial counselling, childcare, women's support groups, material aid and family counselling.

At the same time a range of community based services were formed through the actions of local people and concerned community and government workers. Many of these commenced as voluntary part-time organisations with few resources. Over time they came to be located centrally for the neighbourhood in Freda Street at the old Broadmeadows Court House providing space after 1981. These included the Broadmeadows Legal Service, Broadmeadows Tenant Information Service, and Broadmeadows Migrant Resource Centre. 1977 saw the conception of The Broadmeadows Women's Community House, but it took until 1985 for it to be relocated to its current address at 2 Hadfield Court. The Women's House was established to respond to the needs of women experiencing family violence and an increasing number of single mothers in the area without family and friendship networks. The existing services located within the neighbourhood and those providing services to neighbourhood are located in section 2.6 Community Facilities and Services.

Also around this time (early-mid 1970's) the Broadmeadows Progress Association was formed to take up the concerns of residents and to address political issues. Over the years it has advocated for change with Council, State and Federal Government bodies and Politicians, on a broad range of issues affecting local people. Issues such as changing the position of letter boxes, helping people with housing problems, keeping the lay-by at Target, stopping the dumping of waste at our local tip and opposing or supporting the Government or Council decisions and policies.



The Broadmeadows Progress Association, is only one of many examples of community based advocacy organisations within the Broadmeadows area that have been brought together to address with varying success, the pace of infrastructure development and community support programs that didn't meet the pace of housing development. These included the Broadmeadows Welfare Advisory Committee (BWAC) and a range of Tenant Associations, primarily on new estates (e.g. Banksia Gardens, Coolaroo West). Despite the having poor housing and the level of disadvantage being experienced in the Broadmeadows Neighbourhood Renewal Area a Tenant Group was not established in the area until 1989, The Glenmeadows Tenant Association operated until 1996 when funding for tenant groups/associations was reduced by the former Kennett government.

These organisations identified issues, developed plans and solutions, and provided a voice for the community by advocating to local, state and federal governments in the absence of local government taking up the issues in the way the local community wanted them to. The development of local solutions by bringing together extraordinary groups of people, residents, new and old, workers, community and government staff, students, unions and individual parliamentarians and councilors has provided the basis of many partnerships that have achieved both small and large steps towards obtaining the services and facilities so needed by the residents of Broadmeadows including those in the Broadmeadows Neighbourhood Renewal Area. In a sense it is a strange irony that the fact that the Council and the State Housing Authority were not responding to needs that strong local organisations developed which built the skills of local residents and provided many with the confidence to further their education and gain employment or visa versa.

From the early 1970's little infrastructure development occurred in the area until the Office of Housing began the redevelopment or up-grade of properties in the mid 1990's and the City of Hume began work on the *"Better Living in Dallas & Broadmeadows An Urban Renewal Plan for the Dallas & Broadmeadows Area"* (2003) which although not yet formally adopted has prompted a range of early works such as landscaping within Olsen Place, planting street trees and road improvement works including the construction of roundabouts. Refer to section 4.3.1 Hume City in other Government Initiatives.

#### 2.2.10 Perceptions

Throughout the development of public housing in Broadmeadows the "character" of its people was regularly questioned as a result of media reports about vandalism, graffiti, unemployment, violence. This has been a continuation of the "pictures" first presented with the establishment of the Military Camp. Media reports rarely identified success stories and/or the establishment of long awaited services, instead generally focusing on the levels of vandalism caused by young people who were presented as "deviant" without critical analysis of the availability of social and recreational pursuits, the levels of unemployment or comparative crime statistics with other metropolitan areas or even the facts as presented by the people being interviewed. Additionally, the reports and particularly photos were often contrived in order to get a better story.

This together with the need for the community to continually have to claim disadvantage in order to argue for resources that they were entitled to and in doing so putting down their neighbourhood and stigmatizing themselves, a heavy burden has been placed on the people of Broadmeadows as they feel they need to reject the notions of being "poor" or "disadvantaged" which then leaves them without the words to explain their experience (Peel, p29-30,2003). This has served on one level to undermine individual and community self-esteem and confidence and on another has spurned interest in an understanding through sharing and learning from each others experiences. This has resulted, for women in particular, the development of common understandings of the injustice and the power of

inclusiveness and empowerment in changing their own and their families life experiences (Peel, 158-64, 2003).

### 2.2.11 Towards Neighbourhood Renewal

From the mid 70's greater effort has been made between council, State and federal Governments to acknowledge and respond to the needs of the community with some recognition that the planned "model town" had not occurred. Yet despite the recognition, provision of funds and a variety of attempts to co-ordinate and collaborate on the planning and development of services and facilities for Broadmeadows as a whole, it has taken over 25 years to see the finalization of the vision on the 1996 Broadmeadows Town Centre Report and to begin to address many of the community concerns first identified in the early 1960's and those identified by the Royal Commission in 1956.

From the early 1980's the State Housing Authority stopped the wholesale development of suburbs in recognition of the problems that developed as a result of inadequate infrastructure and minimal social mix within the community. They also began to support the development of neighbourhood and community houses, childcare centres and community health centres through provision of land and/or buildings as well as supporting tenant organisations through the provision of funds for community development and tenant support workers. This has not been without controversy as governments and policies have changed affecting the level of funds provided to these organisations as well as the relationships between tenants and the local housing office.

The commencement of the Neighbourhood Renewal program in Broadmeadows is occurring at an interesting time in the development of the area. When established in the late 1950's and early 1960's the area was seen as an undesirable location, a place for the working poor and displaced, it was on the urban fringe with little or no services. Today, almost 50 years later, the area (the land in particular) is seen in a more positive light by many because of its proximity to the central business district of Melbourne because of its public transport accessibility by train and the Western Ring Road and Citylink by car. It is in the process of change as properties are being bought for redevelopment and Council has plans for the increase of housing densities in areas adjoining the Broadmeadows Town Centre. This changing face will require different thinking and an ability and willingness by local and state government to understand and really hear the voices of the both new and long term residents about what this means to them and what their aspirations for the future are.

The history of struggle, collaboration and knowledge of past mistakes and successes provides a solid base of knowledge on which to build a future for all.

## 2.3 *The Character – a snapshot in time*

As the streets are travelled many scenes are played out that tell you about the character of the neighbourhood:

- In several streets and courts groups of children and young people can be seen; there is a group playing football, others with a soccer ball, a group with a hacky-sack and another group playing 'roughly' with each other;
- There's a group of boys sitting on their bikes at a street corner having a chat and a group of girls walking together and clearly with a purpose;
- People power walking with their dogs;
- Women picking up children from childcare or preschool a number of whom are trying to manoeuvre the children safely into the car on the other side of the street;
- Women walking home pushing the pram, school aged children following behind;
- a range of home based businesses are evident from the signs adorning fences and doors;

- many houses are for sale and/or have “sold” signs boldly displayed;
- two cars, one with a trailer are parked outside a fairly new brick home and there are several people packing boxes, clothing and other household items into them;
- a number of men are working on cars in their front yards;
- a house with a car parked on the front lawn, it does not move from there as there are no wheels;
- families in the front yard, the children playing on swings and others screaming with delight at each other;
- an empty recycle bin on its side;
- workmen building a house behind a large wire fence;
- a sign saying “premises under constant surveillance” but the gates of the high fence are open;
- people sitting and talking on the concrete boarder of the newly grassed area at Olsen Place;
- a line of people waiting to use the telephone box;
- children being supervised by parents at the playgrounds in Jack Roper Reserve and Anderson Reserve;
- cars whizzing by along Widford Street, a group trying to cross the road near Graham Street wait for the pedestrian lights to stop further up the road after a couple of tries;
- trucks on Camp Road, a horn blast and a person on a bicycle;
- elderly residents standing at their front gate and talking to the children as they go by, one warning the small child to be careful crossing the road;
- people with the curtains open sitting watching television;
- an older woman picking a bunch of flowers;
- interesting coloured graffiti on the signal box by the railway line; and
- cars pulling into driveways as it’s the end of the day;

This is a snapshot in the hour or so after school and before dinner.

## **2.4 Physical Characteristics**

The topography of the neighbourhood identified for renewal is generally flat with significant natural and man-made barriers on all four boundaries.

To the east the land dips to the Merlynston Creek which at this point is part of Jack Roper Reserve which in recent years has been developed to provide a range of passive and active recreation pursuits with a running and bicycle track, a number of children’s playgrounds, a small dam which children and adults are regularly seen fishing from, rotunda and BBQ and seating facilities. Part of the area has been excised over time for the Eric Childs Training Centre, the Greek Community Centre and soccer ground.

To the north is Camp Road which is a significant transport link between Melbourne Airport and Sydney Road and as such carries large volumes of traffic from small cars to heavy vehicles including semi-trailers. At both ends, Camp Road provides two lanes in each direction resulting in congestion along the boundary of the neighbourhood where it is reduced to one lane. The sense of congestion is exacerbated by the level of road traffic signage and barriers on the nature strips, overhead power lines and other visual barriers. Along Camp road are a number of community services including: Broadmeadows UnitingCare, Finchley Support Services, Penola Catholic College and the Eric Child’s Centre and two medical centres within the neighbourhood. St Dominic’s Primary School, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and a Veterinary Clinic are located on the north side of Camp Road.

On the southern boundary is the Western Ring Road and an easement for electricity supply. There are two lines of supply and whilst they are located on the southern side of the Western Ring Road, the large towers loom above the housing on this section of the neighbourhood. Noise attenuation barriers