

Prepared by:



Urban Design & Strategic Planning Unit  
Sustainable Development  
Griffith City Council

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# Griffith CBD Strategy

Griffith CBD Strategy

# Context

## Section 1: Context

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# Historical Context

The history of Griffith is one of human ingenuity. From building rail roads to irrigation canals to tending the land and master planning the city, man has had a remarkable influence over the Griffith landscape.

The original inhabitants of Griffith and the surrounding area are the Wiradjuri people. The Wiradjuri survived as skilled fisher-hunter-gatherers in the region, largely concentrating around the Murrumbidgee River. After the settlement of Griffith, many of the Wiradjuri camped along the canals around Griffith and the surrounding villages to get work as farm labours or fruit pickers (Kabaila, 2005).

Griffith was first conceived in the early 1910s as an important junction, linking the interior to Sydney and Melbourne. The settlement was seen to be the major administrative centre and railway junction for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA).

By 1914, Sir Walter Burley Griffin had prepared a comprehensive town plan integrating the 'City Beautiful' and 'Garden City' design movements. Essentially, the design celebrated wide tree-lined boulevards, plentiful open space and a central civic precinct. With the introduction of irrigation to the surrounding region in 1916 by the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA), Griffith steadily grew as an agricultural centre, particularly welcoming returning war veterans and European immigrants.

From the inception of the MIA there has been a strong migration of immigrants to the area. From the very outset, Italian workers began moving into the region as farm hands and builders. Even today over 60% of Griffith's population acknowledge having at least some Italian heritage. Other significant ethnic groups that have since moved into the area, include the Sikh Indians, Afghanis, Pacific Islanders and Turks.

While Griffith's history is relatively short, it is a rich history (Kabaila, 2005). History has proven that the community are resilient and celebrate a 'can do' attitude.



1. Banna Avenue 1920s
2. Yambil Street
3. Workers building the Canal
4. Aerial of Griffith 1950s
5. Billiards Store
6. Denham & Co. signage

Source: Western Riverina Library Catalogue



# Geographical Context

## Regional Location

Griffith is the main regional centre within the Western Riverina region. It has a current population of approximately 18,000 people (ABS, 2011) but the city services a far greater population catchment area throughout the region.

Griffith located in the western plains of New South Wales. It is approximately 575kms west of Sydney and 450kms north of Melbourne.

## Geography

As described by Kabaila (2005), the area is relatively flat, with the only relief towards the north and east in the form of McPherson and Tabbita Ranges. Other significant natural features include the Murrumbidgee River is located 40kms to the south and Cocoparra National Park located 30kms to the east of the city.



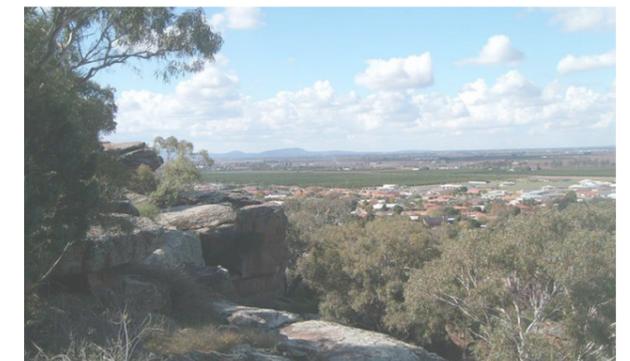
Kidman Way



Cocoparra National Park



Lake Wyangan



Scenic Hill

# Planning & Legislative Framework

## Local Environmental Plan 2014

The Local Environmental Plan is a legal planning instrument, imposing standards to control development in Griffith Council area. It is important the Griffith CBD Strategy aligns with the objectives of the Griffith LEP 2014.

As the majority of the study area falls within the *Mixed Use Zone* and *Local Centre Zone*, it is important to ensure the following objectives:

- To maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling;
- To encourage employment opportunities in accessible locations; and
- To conserve and enhance the centre by ensuring that new development integrates with the distinct urban scale, character, cultural heritage and landscape setting of the place.

## Griffith Land Use Strategy Beyond 2030

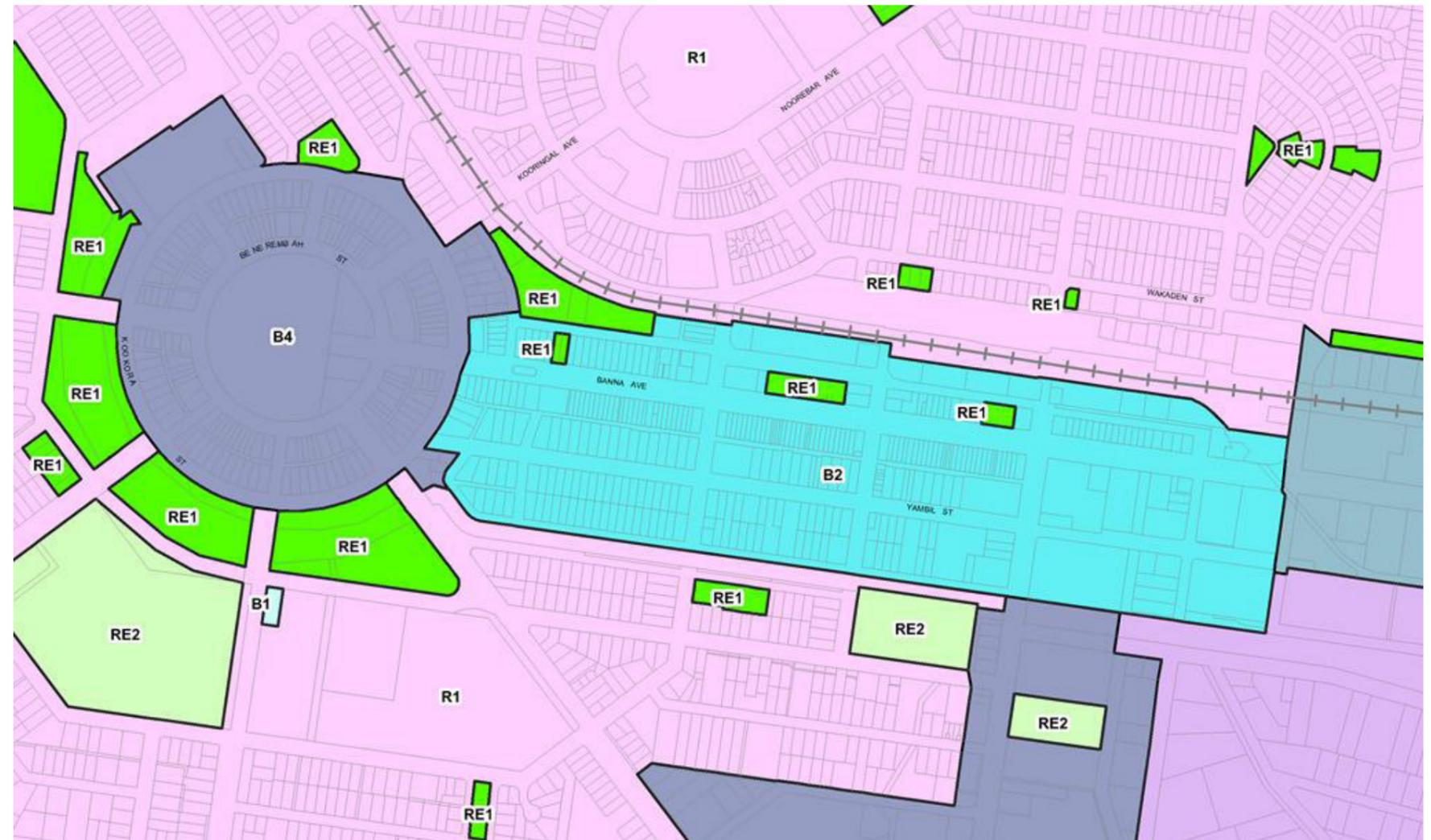
Griffith Land Use Strategy Beyond 2030 is a strategic document, guiding the future allocation and development of land use. The strategy briefly references the city centre, suggesting the following land use priorities for the precinct:

- Commercial retail core of the city centre extending up to Crossing Street to be contained as a compact retail core;
- Developing mixed use character to the east should be further enforced by encouraging a mixed-use character;
- Strengthen the mixed use character and medium density residential opportunities found on the northern and southern fringes of the study area (Wakaden and Coolah Streets); and
- Infill development and intensification of existing businesses in the city centre should be promoted. Controls relating to floor space ratio and height requirements for such redevelopments are envisaged in a comprehensive Development Control Plan for Griffith and also within the potential zoning of the lands in the city centre.

## Growing Griffith 2030

Growing Griffith 2030 is the community strategic plan providing the community vision and direction for the future. It primarily seeks to integrate a number of plans and encourage more holistic planning throughout the city. It prioritises the following areas:

- Creating accessible and safe, liveable places to live
- Promoting and celebrating our cultural diversity and cosmopolitan identity
- Developing Griffith as a centre of choice for trade, business, health, recreation and employment
- Facilitate sustainable growth



Griffith LEP Zone Map (2014)

### Land Zones

B1	Neighbourhood Centre
B2	Local Centre
B4	Mixed Use
B6	Enterprise Corridor
E1	National Parks & Nature Reserves
E2	Environmental Conservation
E3	Environmental Management
E4	Environmental Living
IN1	General Industrial
IN3	Heavy Industrial
R1	General Residential
R5	Large Lot Residential
RE1	Public Recreation
RE2	Private Recreation



# Strategic Process

## Purpose

Griffith CBD Strategy is a visionary, working document, that aims to direct Council in the future development of the city centre. The purpose of the Strategy is:

- To develop an attractive place to live, work and stay;
- To improve the connection and quality of public open space;
- To reinforce the city role as a regional centre; and
- To promote more sustainable development and lifestyle.

## Structure

The document is divided into 5 main parts:

### 01 Context

- Providing information about the purpose, background and study area of the Strategy and the history and geography of the region
- Providing a vision and guiding principles that guide the Strategy

### 02 Analysis

- Establishing data that reveal the opportunities and issues that surround the city centre

### 03 Recommendations

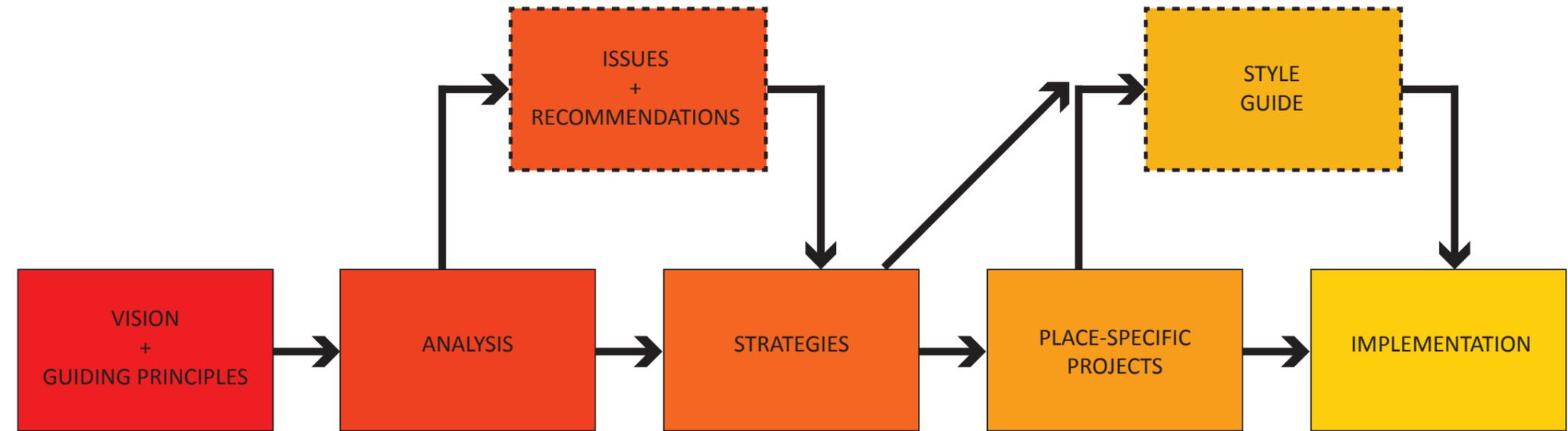
- Presenting strategies that respond to the opportunities and issues found in the analysis and complement the vision and guiding principles of the report
- Recommending various initiatives that achieve the strategies

### 04 Place Specific Projects

- Providing specific and achievable projects

### 05 Implementation

- Explaining how the strategies will manage incremental change
- Recommending how the strategies might be funded



Strategic process



Translating strategy into real projects



# Methodology

It is the intention that recommendations will be well informed by extensive analysis on the issues that face the Griffith city centre. Moreover, the analysis will largely focus on observations of city life and activity (Gehl & Svarre (2013)). It will also be informed by extensive public consultation, considering a range of community viewpoints.

## Placemaking

The key to a great public places is people. A great place is where no one wants to leave, where people linger and where people stay (Gehl, 2008).

Projects of Public Spaces (PPS) discuss four main principles of achieving a great place, as illustrated in the following diagram (Place-making Model):

- Accessibility
- Diverse Activities
- Comfort and Image
- Social Connection

## Healthy Built Environment

As obesity and heart disease are quickly becoming society's greatest killers, it is fundamental that the city centre facilitates active transportation, quality open space, recreational activities, mixed-use development and community safety (NSW Health).



Opportunities to walk and cycle



Opportunities to play



Opportunities to connect



Opportunities to pause

# Community Engagement

Griffith CBD Strategy has engaged the community in a variety of ways to ensure it reflects the views of the community.

## CBD Strategy Survey

The CBD Strategy Survey was a brief survey to gauge community opinion and provide focus for the CBD Strategy. The survey had 215 respondents and revealed the community were concerned with quality and number of public seats (64%), diversity of activities (63%) and quality of the pedestrian environment (54%). They also indicated a need to prioritise implementing a complete bicycle network and infrastructure and quality paving and more landscaping.

Increasingly, the community were less concerned with car parking, with 61% of respondents not believing car parking was a significant issue in the city centre.

## Community Survey 2013/14

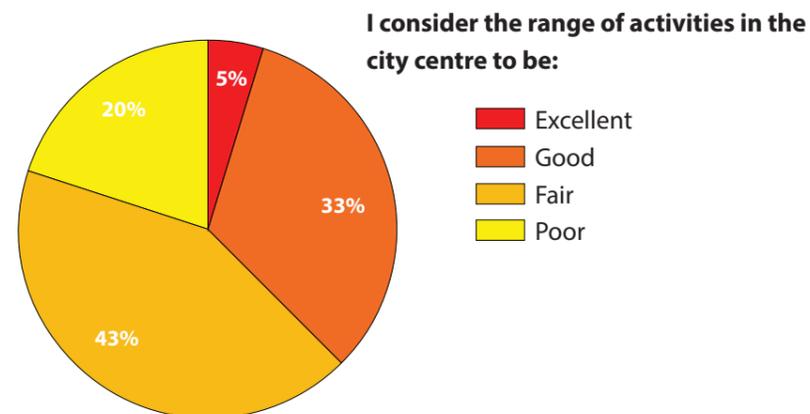
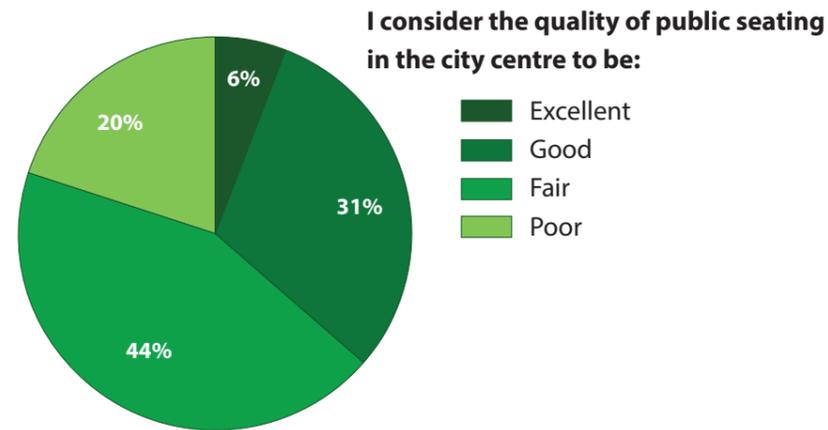
The most recent Community Survey illustrates that a high proportion of the community were unsatisfied with the state of footpaths (33%), cycleways (24%) and city entrances (43%) - as shown in the following pie charts. While the survey was not necessarily directed specifically towards the city centre, it provides a basis point for analysing the study area.

## Stakeholder Engagement

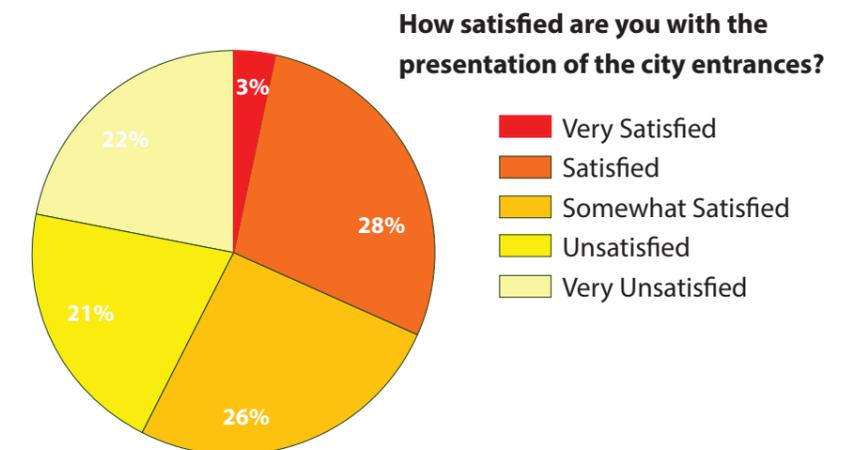
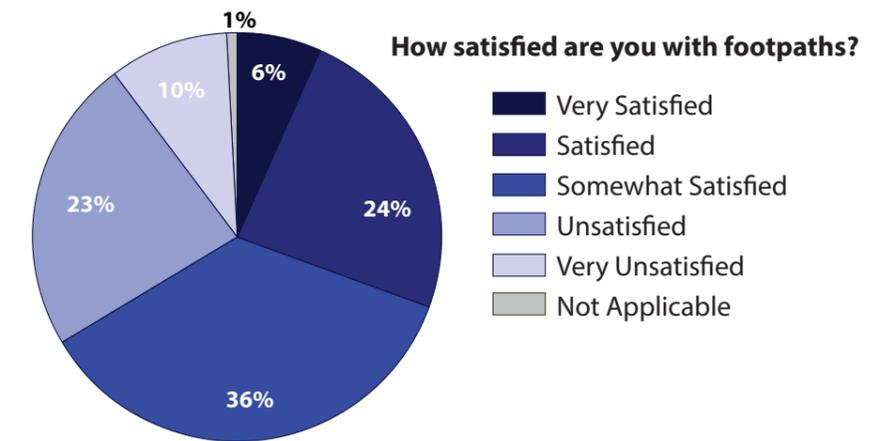
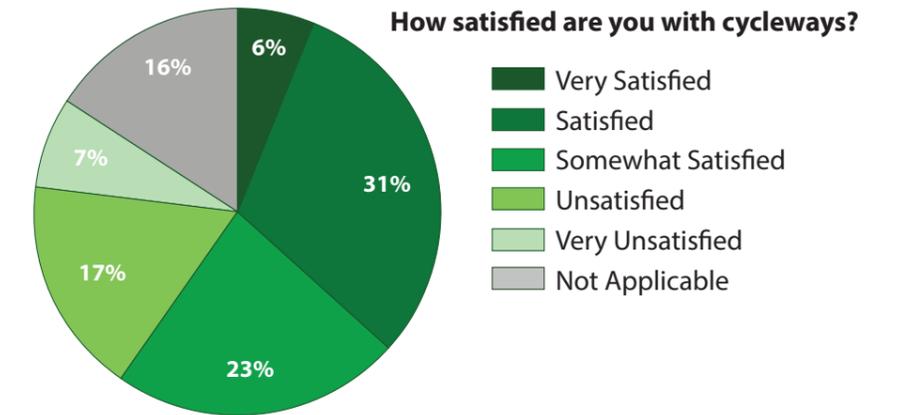
Extensive stakeholder engagement was held throughout the preparation of the CBD Strategy, covering a wide range of stakeholders. Interviews, meetings and workshops revealed a number of issues, including:

- aging streetscape elements
- under-utilized assets
- poor accessibility
- weak brand image
- limited activities
- high car-parking demand

CBD Strategy Survey Data



Community Survey 2013/14 Data



# Vision

The vision for the Griffith CBD Strategy is as follows:

## A more beautiful, vibrant, healthy and sustainable city to experience

In order to achieve this vision the proceeding guiding principles have been formulated to lead the Strategy:

- Connect - a connected city that promotes pedestrian and cyclist movement
- Energize - an energetic city that celebrates its cultural diversity and uniqueness through festivals, events and activities
- Experience - a city full of different experiences and visual attractions
- Characterize - a city communicating a clear and distinct character
- Sustain - a sustainable city that seeks to promote sustainable development
- Comfort - a comfortable and safe public realm

The vision and guiding principles strong reflect the vision prescribed in *Growing Griffith 2030* - Griffith's community strategic plan.



Guiding principles



Connect



Sustain



Experience



Characterize

# Study Area

## Define

The main focus of the Griffith CBD Strategy is the city centre (as defined in the Study Area diagram). The study area is bound by Wakaden Street (north), Coolah Street (south), Crossing Street (east) and Kookora Street (west).

## Scale

The study area is approximately 1.3km<sup>2</sup>, in keeping with the majority of Australian city centres that have an area of approximately 1km<sup>2</sup>.

The city centre is long and narrow, stretching east to west. The north-south section of the study area is a relatively short, spanning 750m, while the east-west section is approximately 2.2kms.

In general, a person can access the majority of goods and services in the city centre within a 10-15 minute walk.

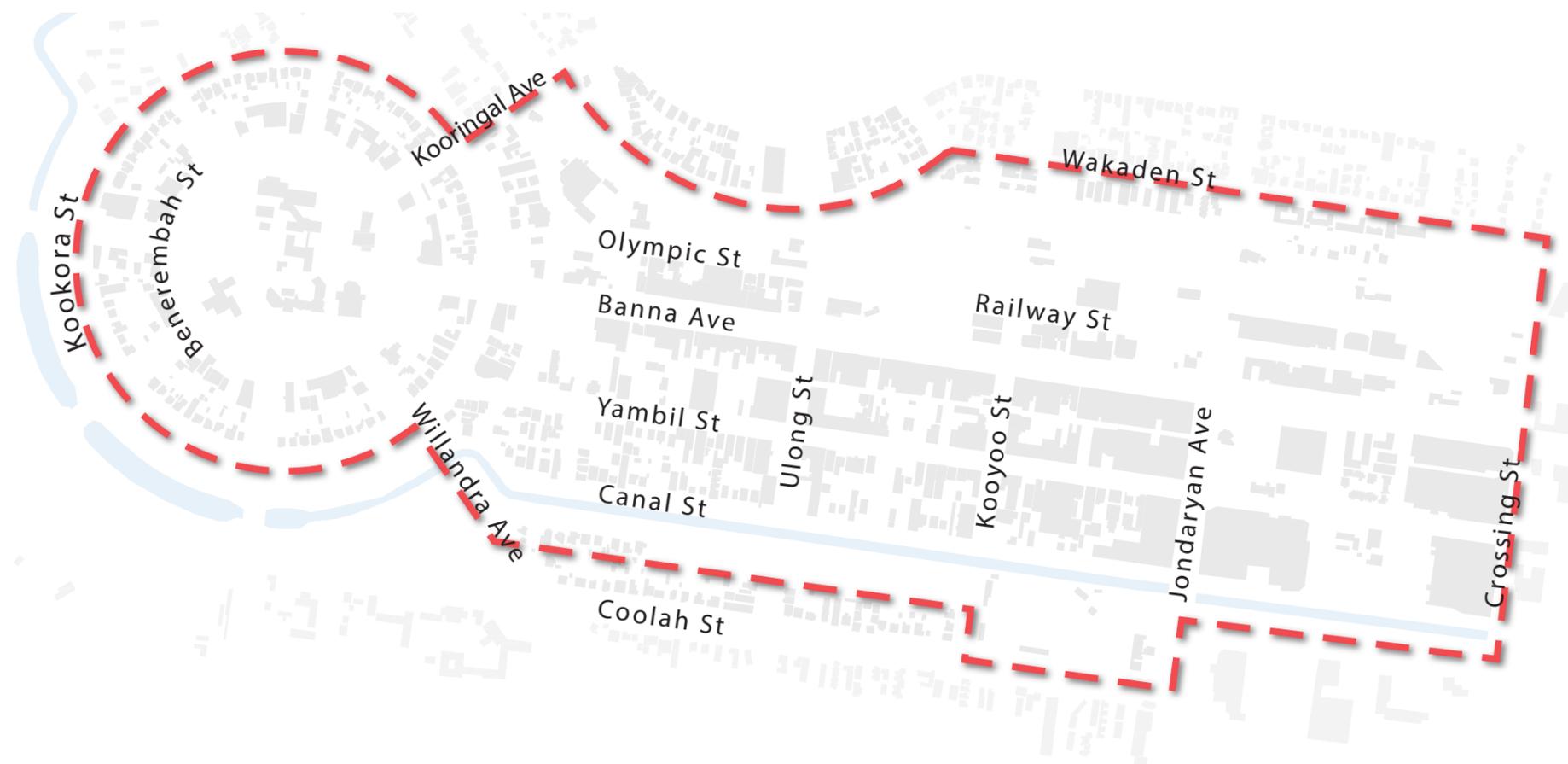
## Characteristics

- Good east-west connection but very limited north-south connection
- Long and narrow city blocks (approximately 200-275m wide, east-west and 50-100m long, north-south)
- Railway is a dominating and significant barrier within the city centre
- Main canal is an attractive environmental feature but poorly utilized
- Retail activity focuses around Banna Avenue

## City Users

- 1,200 people residing in the city centre
- Strong multicultural community (Italians, Indians, Afghanis)
- Diverse range of users - employees, shoppers, tourists, students, residents
- 273,000 visitors to Griffith in a year, including tourists, backpackers and itinerant workers (Destination NSW, 2012)
- 119,000 tourists to Griffith in a year (Destination NSW, 2012)
- 37,325 tourists came through the Griffith Tourist Centre from 1 July 2012 - 31 June 2013

Griffith Regional Theatre to Memorial Gardens  
is a **10 minute walk**



Study area

**119,000**  
tourists to Griffith a year



**1,200 - 1,500**  
people living in the city centre

