



## AN EXTRAORDINARY SMALL-TOWN STORY

Tract Consultants undertook a one in one hundred years task with the planning and landscape architecture of the Eynesbury Township for joint venture developers, Geo Property Group and Woodhouse Pastoral Company. This is the first new town to be founded in Victoria in a century, and also the only one where ecological sustainability is built into the community landscape.

There have been multiple, complex stages to Tract's endeavours. First, in a two-year process, they obtained the rezoning of the Eynesbury township land, approximately 7400 ha situated roughly 40km from the Melbourne CBD, from Green Wedge Zone to Mixed Use Zone. Then Tract prepared the Eynesbury Incorporated Plan and the Eynesbury Development Plan, setting the broad objectives for development and an overall design concept. In addition to the initial strategic planning task, Tract's landscape architects played a significant role in the 'place making' process, responding to the area's unique environmental features in landscape masterplans for the township, and plans for streetscapes and community spaces.

Being situated amidst agricultural land gives Eynesbury a unique opportunity to benefit both the natural landscape and food production, by providing a source of recycled water to otherwise semiarid land which is suffering the effects of long-term drought. Features such as wetlands, creeks, equestrian trails and bushland preservation and enhancement add to the sense of rural oasis.

"The Grey Box Forest, extensive landscaping to the Eynesbury Golf Course and restored Homestead Garden have been integral to determining the landscape response first stages of land release. A key objective was to maintain the open rural feel of Eynesbury, and extensive open spaces and indigenous landscaping has been undertaken to preserve the rural

and environmental qualities of the site," said Tract Principal Landscape Architect, Alistair Wenn.

"Within the streetscapes, the naturestrips are wider than usual, allowing for native and indigenous 'copse-style' tree planting. Rain gardens retard and treat runoff before it enters the adjacent waterways. Kilometres of shared paths, waterways and trails will provide access to many of Eynesbury's unique features and promote passive outdoor activity."

Numerous permits had to be obtained for elements such as restoration of the Heritage-listed stone homestead, construction of the golf course, upgrades to access roads, and a 'third pipe' to deliver recycled water from Sorbiton waste water treatment plant, another unique feature of the Eynesbury plan. Tract's planning and landscape architecture teams also supported construction projects such as the first stages of the subdivision, construction of the community house and associated recreation facilities.

Tract incorporated input from specialist consultants for Aboriginal and Cultural Heritage, post-settlement Heritage, flora and fauna, civil engineers, traffic engineers, community infrastructure, retail, economics, wildfire management, arborist and drainage. They had to meet the requirements of two local Councils, Shire of Melton and Wyndham City Council, as the township straddles two shire boundaries, in addition to satisfying Heritage Victoria, Country Fire Authority, Department of Sustainability and Environment and Melbourne Water.

"As part of the approvals process, a suite of management plans were prepared that achieved protection of the Grey Box forest in perpetuity, protection and enhancement of areas of native grasslands which represent one of the most threatened EVC's (Ecological Vegetation Class) in

Victoria, pest plant and animal management, and environmental strategies for Green Hill and the Werribee River gorge," said Associate Town Planner Luke Chamberlain.

"The Heritage listed Eynesbury Homestead is of particular note as are some of the associated structures: staff quarters (now the golf changerooms), stables (now the golf pro shop), silos, killing sheds and smokehouse.

"The whole town is subject to approved Design Guidelines for both building design and landscaping which set a preferred character for the township. The small town 'feel' is an important aim which will guide the amenity of neighbourhoods and streetscapes.

Tract continues to provide planning and landscape architectural services for this innovative township, translating the overall masterplan into a successful on-ground development.

Tract's specialised urban design team complements the company's wider mission. A pioneer in integrating the disciplines of town planning and landscape architecture since the 1970's, Tract now further bridges these disciplines with a dedicated urban design team. The company's design philosophy was based on ESD long before the advent of Green Star.

"ESD is vital in building new communities that are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable," said Luke.

"Tract is committed to improving the natural and cultural environments through our planning, design, and community building expertise. At no time during our history has there been a greater challenge to protect and improve the wellbeing of the natural environment and humankind. The growth of

the suburbs, supply of infrastructure and services, community identity, creation of sense of place and lifestyle opportunities are all challenges facing communities of the future. In order to meet these challenges, Tract's aim is to provide leadership and solutions that ensure the health and prosperity of the natural and urban environment."

"Tract looks forward to an ongoing role in helping to build a unique, vibrant and sustainable Eynesbury that meets best practice industry standards, and supports a proud and engaged community."

Tract has offices in Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney and Darwin, with over 100 combined staff in the fields of Planning, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture. Projects include greenfield, brownfield and inner-urban developments and redevelopments; urban renewal; transport linkages and transit-oriented developments; tourism-based developments, mixed-use activity centres and infrastructure for both private and public sectors. Their continued excellence has been recognised with dozens of AILA, UDIA, and PIA Awards. They have achieved outstanding success in many landmark projects including Manly Wharf and Transport Interchange, Cairns Esplanade, the ongoing New Quay Development, the Twelve Apostles Visitor Centre, Eastlink, and a range of international projects in various places from China to Gibraltar.

**Tract**  
**Landscape Architects**  
**Urban Designers**  
**Town Planners**  
 PO Box 181  
 195 Lennox Street, Richmond VIC 3121  
 t. 03 9429 6133  
 f. 03 9429 5925  
[www.tract.net.au](http://www.tract.net.au)