

Proper Planning Urged

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WITHOUT the right planning, Ballarat's population growth could outstrip jobs and services in the city.

The Committee for Ballarat issued the warning in a document outlining its vision for the Ballarat West Growth Zone.

The area on the city's western fringe has been slated as the hub of residential growth in Ballarat over the next 30 years.

But the committee's chief executive officer Doug Lloyd said urgent economic development planning of the area is needed to keep pace with the expected stream of new residents in coming decades.

Mr Lloyd said projected population increases for Ballarat may understate the city's actual growth, due mainly to its proximity to Melbourne.

"There is a risk that our population growth will outstrip the region's capacity to fund appropriate social development and community services," Mr Lloyd said.

To meet the needs of an expanding population, strong economic activity in the zone is essential and social and community wellbeing are prime considerations.

"Residential development will encompass sustainable design and living principles, and population growth will be designed to have low or zero impact on the region's sustainability."

To achieve the vision, Mr Lloyd said the committee wanted to see development in the area fast-tracked.

That would require the planned Western Link Road and the Ballarat West Employment Zone to be given priority.

"The road link will create local city transport links and new inter-regional opportunities. The employment zone will be an early way to create substantial new sustainable employment opportunities," Mr Lloyd said.