

**21.07**19/01/2006  
VC37**Key issues facing the municipality**

Having regard to the strategic context set out in sections 21.02 to 21.06, key issues or needs have been identified. These issues reflect the Shire's understanding of the existing situation and the trends influencing the Shire and encompass the principles of sustainable ecological and economic development. These issues are addressed in defining the planning strategies and objectives for the Shire as set out in 21.09. They can be summarised as follows:

- The need to identify areas in and around Portland, Heywood and Casterton suitable for long term industrial use including port needs, storage, service industries, processing, the management of off-site effects and the creation of buffer areas.
- The need to protect residential amenity and provide land for future residential areas taking into account the need for housing choice and the need to ensure residential amenity.
- The need to make efficient use of the existing infrastructure including road networks, community services and facilities, recreational facilities, reticulated water and sewerage and major trunk sewers. Continued scattered development particularly around the extended Portland area means higher costs for the whole community. Opportunities must be used to focus development around existing infrastructure. In some cases, necessary infrastructure to support development must be improved including the provision of mobile phone coverage and adequate electricity supply in centres such as Casterton.
- The need to ensure improved management of the Shire's natural resources.. This is critical to the economic sustainability of the community. New development in both urban and rural areas must be planned, serviced and managed so that there is no immediate or long term lessening of the environmental qualities of the area.
- The need to ensure improved presentation of the Shire, particularly its heritage assets, its coastal environment and landscape features. These are important for the promotion and marketing of lifestyles for residents and for the growing tourism industry.
- The need to facilitate the managed expansion of the timber industry through additional plantings, local processing and value-adding as the sector of the economy which provides the opportunity to improve the employment base, add value to agricultural holdings and sustainably manage natural resources. A critical component of such an initiative is to implement a comprehensive road development and maintenance program in conjunction with the timber industry so that the costs are equitably met.
- The need to develop opportunities to utilise productive agricultural land to support innovative industries. Throughout the Shire there are areas of land whose soil characteristics, access to water or particular local circumstances lend themselves to intensive crop production or horticulture. These opportunities need to be encouraged and facilitated particularly where they may lead to local processing and value-adding, are based on sustainable use of resources and do not result in a lessening of environmental qualities.
- The need to maintain biodiversity in terms of the diversity of habitats and the conservation of flora and fauna.