

## 21.03 ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE VALUES

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### 21.03-1 Biodiversity Conservation and Habitat Protection

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The Shire has been extensively cleared as a result of its agricultural heritage. Remnant vegetation is very valuable in terms of biodiversity, habitat, water table management and soil stabilisation. The municipality has 77 of Victoria's rare and threatened plants of which 20 are listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, and 46 species of threatened fauna of which 29 are listed under the Act. Many of these species are found on public land but some also present on private land. Road and railway reserves frequently contain important remnant vegetation and habitat. As such, the management of roadside vegetation, and remnant native vegetation in other reserves, is a relevant consideration.

The South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne*) is listed as an endangered species under the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. It has a specialised diet in that it only eats the seeds of two species of stringybark eucalypts; Desert Stringybark (*Eucalyptus arenacea*) and the Brown Stringybark (*Eucalyptus baxteri*), plus the seeds of Buloke (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*). The South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo occurs as a single population in south-western Victoria and south-eastern South Australia. In Victoria, its range generally covers the area bounded by Portland, Casterton, Harrow, Kanagulk and Natimuk. It uses large hollows in eucalypts for nesting and requires the Stringybark and Buloke trees for feeding. Stringybark trees provide the year round staple food in the form of seeds while the Buloke trees which occur mostly north of Edenhope provide food in the form of seeds between December and April. Bulokes are themselves rare and are listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The Red-tailed Black Cockatoo is a highly nomadic species and its range extends to the western area of the Horsham Rural City Council municipality. The absence of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos from a locality within its range does not mean that the locality does not provide habitat for this species.

#### Objectives and Strategies

- Objective 1 To protect the quality of the land and water resources of the municipality through sound environmental management.**
- Strategy 1.1 Protect and enhance native vegetation, biodiversity and ecological processes and endeavour to achieve a net gain in the area and quality of native vegetation throughout the municipality.
- Strategy 1.2 Use overlays to guide development to improve biodiversity conservation and habitat protection outcomes.
- Strategy 1.3 Protect and enhance key environmental features of the municipality including areas such as the Grampians National Park in the Wartook vicinity, Mt Arapiles - Tooan State Park, Natimuk-Douglas Wetlands, Little Desert National Park and the Wimmera River.
- Objective 2 To reverse the long term decline in remnant vegetation and associated biodiversity and encourage a net gain in the area of native vegetation across the region within identified strategic locations.**
- Strategy 2.1 Protect remnant vegetation on private land, and road and railway reserves prioritised within identified strategic locations.
- Strategy 2.2 Direct Council managed vegetation offsets to strategic locations.
- Objective 3 To protect the habitat of the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.**
- Strategy 3.1 Conserve the availability of suitable nesting sites for the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo through the protection of live and dead hollow bearing trees and other suitable trees within the bird's known nesting area.
- Strategy 3.2 Conserve the feeding habitat of the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo through the retention of Buloke and Stringybark trees.

### **Scheme Implementation**

Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay to areas ecological, significance.

Apply the Vegetation Protection Overlay to areas of significant vegetation.

Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay to areas identified as Red-tailed Black Cockatoo habitat.

### **Further Strategic Work**

Prepare controls for flora and fauna management.

In conjunction with the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority develop a Roadside Management Plan and introduce the Vegetation Protection Overlay over areas of significant roadside vegetation.

Update Vegetation Protection Overlays and/or Environmental Significance Overlays when more detailed mapping is carried out by the catchment management authorities.

## **21.03-2**

### **Waterways**

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Rivers, creeks, streams, wetlands and lakes are among the municipality's most valuable natural assets. The Wimmera River is the largest watercourse in the municipality and north of the Polkemmet Bridge is classified as a heritage river under the *Heritage Rivers Act 1992*. This section of the river is very important environmentally but much of the remaining length of the river is in poor condition and the river generally has poor water quality in times of low flow.

The Natimuk Douglas Saline Wetland Depression is considered to be of international significance as a nesting site for many thousand migratory birds each year. The wetlands are also significant from a geomorphological perspective, as a former course of the Murray River. The wetlands consist of more than thirty natural saline and fresh water lakes in both public and private ownership.

The municipality also contains other waterways and wetlands of high environmental value in the Millicent Coast Basin and the Wimmera River Basin.

### **Objectives and Strategies**

**Objective 1 To protect surface and ground water quality and preserve important wetlands and areas of environmental significance.**

Strategy 1.1 Protect the environmental significance of the Natimuk-Douglas wetlands and their catchments and protect the wetlands from development and land management practices that would alter the quantity and quality of water entering the wetlands.

Strategy 1.2 Protect the environmental significance of waterways and wetlands of high environmental value in the Millicent Coast Basin, Wimmera River Basin, and the Glenelg Basin.

Strategy 1.3 Support a flow regime that is sufficient for recreation, stock and domestic purposes while sustaining viable populations of native flora and fauna.

### **Scheme Implementation**

Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay to protect the environmental significance of waterways and their catchments.

## **21.03-3**

### **Landscape**

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There are four significant landscapes within Rural City of Horsham. Two of these landscapes, the Grampians Ranges and Mount Arapiles have been assessed as having state level significance. The other two landscapes, the Black Ranges and the Natimuk-Douglas

Saline Wetland Depression, have been assessed as having regional level significance. Some of these significant landscapes extend beyond the municipal boundary. The Natimuk Douglas Saline Wetland Depression is addressed in Clause 21.08-3.

### **Objectives and Strategies**

**Objective 1**      **To protect the scenic qualities of the landscape of and surrounding the Grampians National Park, Black Range and Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park.**

Strategy 1.1      Support the implementation of the South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study.

Strategy 1.2      Require all new development to demonstrate how it contributes to achieving the desired landscape objective.

**Objective 2**      **To protect and manage the landscape character and significance of the municipality.**

Strategy 2.1      Require all development to contribute to the area's future landscape character.

### **Scheme Implementation**

Apply the Significant Landscape Overlay to significant landscapes.

### **Further Strategic Work**

Implement the recommendations from the South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study 2012.

### **Reference Documents**

South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study, Planisphere Pty Ltd, 2012

## **21.03-4**

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### **Ecological Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Council's long term community goal is to sustain the economy and the environment.

### **Objectives and Strategies**

**Objective 1**      **To promote a high standard of ecologically sustainable development.**

Strategy 1.1      Encourage new development to adopt sound environmental practice.

Strategy 1.2      Require new subdivision adopt best practice in relation to walkable neighbourhoods, water sensitive urban design, energy efficiency and sustainability.

### **Scheme Implementation**

Apply zones and overlays to support ecologically sustainable development.

Apply the Design and Development Overlay to areas where specific design solutions are required.

### **Further Strategic Work**

Prepare an Ecologically Sustainable Development Local Planning Policy

**Reference Documents**

Environment Sustainability Strategy, Horsham Rural City Council, 2010