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C37**DESIGN AND SITING GUIDELINES IN RURAL AREAS AND UPON SIGNIFICANT RIDGELINES**

This policy applies to all planning permit applications in all zones of the Shire where significant ridgelines or areas deemed to be of a high level visual amenity are proposed to be developed for the purpose of a building.

Policy Basis

The rural areas of the Shire are acknowledged as one of the Shire's and the region's greatest assets.

Significant for rural production as well as from a natural landscape perspective promoting tourism and attracting visitors to the Shire, many of the rural valleys are recognised as having significant landscape qualities unique to the State and worthy of protection.

In particular, the design and siting of buildings, access driveways and other earthworks must be such as to limit the impact on the visual amenity. This is particularly so in areas of high visual amenity, such as in the more scenic valleys and on or near visually exposed ridgelines.

Due to the location and topography of the Shire the design and siting of buildings on ridgelines or prominent exposed areas is critical to avoid impacts from natural hazards such as fire, flood and land slip.

It is also important that the rural atmosphere and visual amenity of the Shire is protected and enhanced at all times, as specified in the Municipal Strategic Statement.

Definitions for the purposes of this policy:

“Ridge”	<i>A long narrow elevation of the landscape.</i>
“Ridgeline”:	<i>The top of a ridge of length exceeding 100 metres.</i>
“Visually exposed ridgeline”:	<i>A ridgeline visible against the sky, when viewed from any road at a distance of no greater than 2 kilometres.</i>

Objectives

- To ensure that all buildings are designed and sited to minimise environmental and visual impacts.
- To ensure that the siting of buildings does not threaten or reduce the rural capability of the land or introduce the potential for land use conflicts.
- To ensure that access driveways and other earthworks are designed and sited to limit environmental impact and the impact on the visual amenity.
- To ensure that all development is designed and located to minimise risks from natural hazards.

Policy

It is policy that:

Siting

- Buildings, particularly dwellings, should be located so as not to adversely impact on the rural activities conducted on the site and adjoining land and the long term viability of rural production in the area.
- Buildings should be unobtrusive in the landscape, be located along tree lines or topographically obscured to reduce their visual impact.
- Substantial landscaping should be used to reduce the visual impact of the buildings on the landscape.
- Buildings should not be sited on visually exposed ridgelines, unless the visual impact is minimised by using designs and colours that merge with, or compliment, the landscape.
- Building setbacks from property boundaries, government and private roads and waterways should be relevant to the scale of the building, the site circumstances, the potential environmental impact and the rural activities conducted on the site.
- Buildings can only be located less than 30 metres from streams or rivers, or less than 100 metres from state water storages, with the approval of the relevant authorities (Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and Goulburn-Murray Water).
- Building and wastewater disposal field setbacks from waterways and other significant environmental features should be determined with reference to the *Guidelines for the Protection of Water Quality* (as amended).

Built form

- Buildings should be designed to respond to the topography of the land.
- Buildings, including sheds, should be constructed out of materials capable of blending in with the natural surrounding environment whether this be in natural form or via a tailored paint scheme.
- External finishes on buildings should:
 - Respond to, compliment and/or reflect the colours and textures evident in the natural environment;
 - Have a low reflectivity to minimise glare and visual impact.
- Buildings located on or near a visually exposed ridgeline, should not exceed 1 storey or 6 metres in height from natural ground level.

Application Requirements

An application for buildings and works include a report that addresses:

- This policy.
- The decision guidelines specified in the relevant zone provisions.