

21.03 ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE VALUES

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C87

This clause provides local content to support Clause 12 (Environmental and Landscape values) of the State Planning Policy Framework.

Specific references to individual towns are also included in Clause 21.11 (Local Areas).

21.03-1 Biodiversity

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The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority has identified the majority of Mitchell as being within the South West Goulburn Zone. This zone includes the following key biodiversity assets: Grassy Woodlands; Grassy Dry Forests; Granite Country; Box Ironbark; Damp Forests; Riparian Systems; and Mount Piper. Thirty three threatened fauna species have been identified in the zone, some of which have been identified as species for conservation including the Brush-tailed Phascogale, Sugar Glider, Golden Sun Moth, Golden Whistler, Crested Shrike-tit and Hooded Robin.

The proportion of private land in Mitchell containing native vegetation is the highest among the peri-urban councils and includes areas of State and national significance.

Roadside vegetation and wildlife corridors also contain pockets of remnant indigenous vegetation with rare, vulnerable and significant flora species. Some of the roadsides and corridors provide a valuable source of native seed stock and important habitat for wildlife. The conservation and protection of these areas is an important strategy.

Approximately 9,350 hectares are contained in national parks and public land conservation areas, with the greatest concentration being within the Kinglake National Park. Other significant forests include the Mount Disappointment and Tallarook State Forests.

Clearing has reduced the natural bushland and has impaired ecosystem functions throughout the Shire. Bushland has largely been reduced to small privately owned patches, public reserves, road reserves and waterways. These remnant areas are susceptible to ongoing degradation due to impacts along edges with other land uses, removal of firewood, 'tidying up', grazing, salinity and other land uses. The resulting fragmented landscape is susceptible to the gradual loss and the extinction of local species and loss of biodiversity.

Key issues

- Protecting and restoring biodiversity and natural habitats.
- Recognising the importance of the Shire's biodiversity assets.

Objective 1

To protect and enhance indigenous flora, fauna and habitat.

Strategies

- Revegetate and connect bio-links, including along watercourses.
- Protect high quality native vegetation and habitat for native animals.
- Control declared and environmental pest plants and declared pest animals.
- Identify and document remnant vegetation, biodiversity assets and wildlife corridors.
- Improve the connectivity and long term security of indigenous habitats and species.

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C87**Significant environments and landscapes**

Mitchell has a diverse range of landscapes including steep to gently undulating sedimentary hills, dissected granite plateaus, volcanic plains and flat alluvial flood plains associated with major rivers. Collectively these diverse landscapes make a major contribution to Mitchell's amenity and attraction for lifestyle living, and need to be protected from inappropriate use and development. Notably, hilltops and ridgelines are seen in the distance throughout Mitchell and inappropriate development on these natural features can destroy the attractiveness and environmental qualities of the area. The natural landscapes and related views also provide an important opportunity for tourism and economic development. Buildings can be intrusive in this type of environment if constructed in materials which may not blend with the surrounding environment.

Key issues

- Protecting and enhancing the distinctive sense of place, cultural identity and landscape within Mitchell.
- Recognising and protecting significant landscapes.
- Protecting and enhancing ecosystems.

Objective 1

To protect and enhance the visual quality of rural and urban landscapes.

Strategies

- Protect and revegetate landscape features.
- Ensure that structures blend in with the surrounding environment.
- Integrate landscape and environmental features into regional open space systems and the emerging metropolitan area.
- Discourage the siting of buildings on hilltops and ridgelines.
- Ensure developments are not sited so as to require the removal of native vegetation on hilltops and ridgelines.
- Ensure any building or structure erected on or near a hilltop or ridgeline is designed so as to not adversely affect the visual significance of that hilltop or ridgeline.
- Ensure the location and design of access roads or driveways on land with a slope greater than 20% cause minimum visual impact.

Policy guidelines**Exercise of discretion**

It is policy that in the rural zones:

- The external cladding of all buildings is to be of a subdued tone.
- The colour of building materials should minimise the visual intrusion of structures in the area by use of soft earthy tones.

Decision guidelines

When deciding on an application for use and development in the rural zones the following will be considered, as appropriate:

- impacts on the environmental, landscape and visual significance of hilltops and ridgelines.