

## 21.06 RURAL LANDSCAPE

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

### 21.06-1 Issues

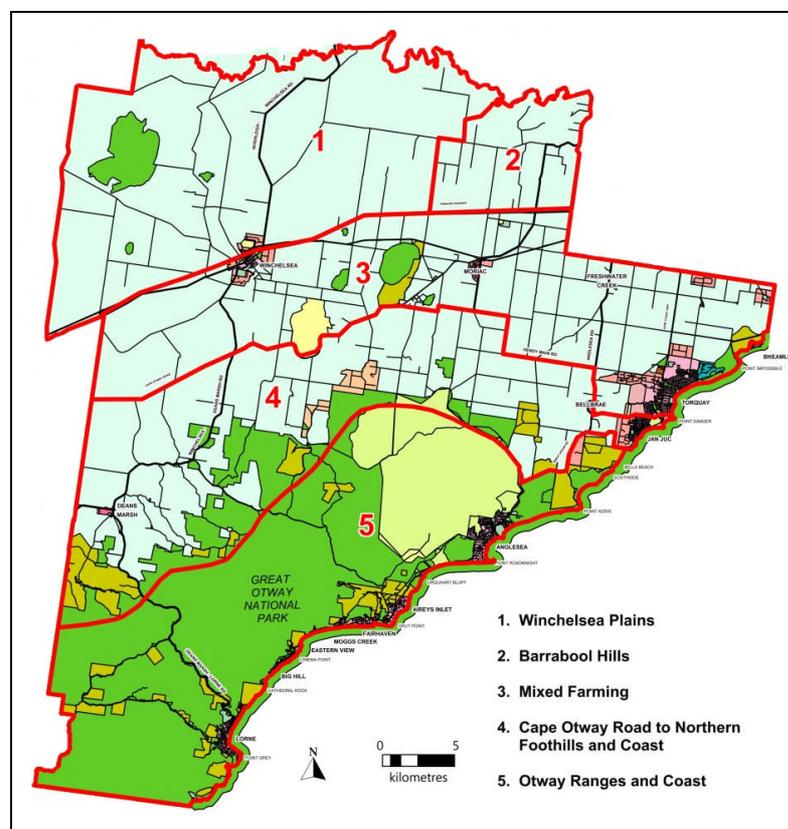
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- Landscape character is the interplay of geology, topography, vegetation, water bodies and other natural features, combined with the effects of land use and built development, which makes one landscape different from another.
- The physical landscapes of the Surf Coast Shire make an important contribution to the amenity of the Surf Coast, enhancing the lifestyle of residents and adding value to the tourism economy.
- As the cost of coastal land continues to rise development pressure in rural areas increases and is often associated with tourism activity, hobby farming or infrastructure development.
- Ensuring that new land use and development is complementary to the highly valued rural landscapes is important for economic and social reasons.
- Understanding the values of the different rural landscapes is necessary to appropriately manage future use and development.

### Rural Landscape Precincts

The rural areas of the Shire have been categorised into five landscape precincts based primarily on landscape features, but also taking into account land use, agricultural quality, tenement/allotment patterns and environmental values (refer to Map 1 to Clause 21.06).

### Map 1 to Clause 21.06 – Landscape Units



- Winchelsea Plains – characterised by generally flat topography, with the Barwon River valley bisecting the flat plains. The RAMSAR listed Lake Murdeduke is the dominant feature to the west, with international significance for wading birds, while to the east the landscape becomes more undulating gently rising to the volcanic cone of Mt Pollock. The current settlement pattern allotment and tenement sizes, and the agricultural capability of the precinct are conducive to agriculture, and this is reflected in the continuing use of the land for broadacre farming and the growing intensive animal husbandry industry of pig and poultry production. Rural living development is very limited in this precinct.

Farm houses and outbuildings are scattered throughout the pastoral landscape and long distance views to the low horizon are available throughout the precinct. The majority of the original native vegetation has been removed, and what remains (particularly of the native grasses) has high environmental value. Similarly, the remaining wetlands and riparian vegetation have high ecological value for the habitat they provide to native wildlife and migratory birds.

- Barrabool Hills – a distinctive upland ridge that slopes steeply down to the Barwon River on the northern side and more gently southward to the Princes Highway. This scenic corner of the municipality features Mount Moriac, the highest relief in the Shire north of the Princes Highway. The Hills, comprising this precinct and west to Mt Pollock (in the Western Plains precinct) is classified by the National Trust of Australia as significant at a regional level for its aesthetic qualities, geological and geomorphological properties and association with indigenous peoples. Aboriginal Affairs Victoria has listed numerous sites in the Barrabool Hills. It is also recorded as having historical importance at a local level, with twelve sites covered by the Heritage Overlay. The Hills offer extensive views of the surrounding pastoral landscape and have been depicted in many well known paintings of early Victorian landscapes.

The current allotment and tenement sizes are conducive to agriculture and much land is still used for broadacre farming. The topography, agricultural capability and its strategic location near the major market of Geelong provide opportunities for more intensive horticultural production, subject to the availability of water. The settlement pattern of the area is relatively sparse with smaller lots concentrated in pockets along a few roads.

- Mixed Farming – takes in a band of predominantly undulating, cleared pastoral land bisected by the Barwon River in the west and Thompsons Creek in the east, ending in low, environmentally significant, open swamp behind coastal dunes at Breamlea. The eastern saltmarsh area has a strong sense of isolation and openness, In the west the allotment and tenement sizes are conducive to agriculture, particularly broadacre farming. In the east the potential exists for sustaining an irrigated agricultural industry should recycled water become available.

The settlement pattern is scattered and varies in density. The precinct includes the rural settlement of Freshwater Creek and the rural residential hamlets of Lower Duneed and Connewarre in the east. The township of Moriac is centrally located in the precinct and land to the west is sparsely settled.

- Cape Otway Road to the Northern Foothills and Coast – visually attractive undulating landscape of open farm land, framed by dense bushland. It extends from the steepening valleys and foothills of the northern slopes of the Otway Ranges in the west, through the lifestyle bush blocks of Wensleydale and Gherang to the semi-pastoral hills of Bellbrae to the urban edge of Jan Juc in the east. The gently rolling hills, with some incised creeks and gullies, and pockets of remnant vegetation contribute to a sheltered, enclosed landscape. Buildings tend to be located away from roads, often in valleys or among trees.

While the main land use in the precinct is farming, it occurs predominantly for lifestyle purposes. Dairying, particularly concentrated around Deans Marsh, has declined and timber, grass seed production, vines and olive groves are emerging. There are a number of rural tourism businesses primarily around Deans Marsh and Bellbrae. The landscape and environmental values of this precinct are the

primary reasons for its attractiveness for tourist and lifestyle use and development.

- Otway Ranges and Coast – comprises substantial tracts of dense forest in hilly terrain edged with exposed areas of low coastal heath. This precinct is dominated by the Great Otway National Park. The Great Ocean Road hugs the coastline offering dramatic coastal views and is an important domestic and international visitor tourist destination. The townships, settlements and nearby hinterland of the Great Ocean Road are also popular tourist destinations. By its nature the precinct is also one of the most fire prone areas within the State of Victoria.

Bells Beach forms the north eastern boundary of this precinct and is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register for its surfing, cultural and aesthetic heritage values. The scenic landscape value of the Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve and surrounds derives from the coming together of the pastoral landscape and seascape and from the relative absence of built structures visible beyond the Torquay/Jan Juc settlement boundary. The hinterland to Bells Beach (bounded by Bones Road, Addiscot Road, Bells Beach Road and Jarosite Road) provides an important rural and bush setting on route to the Bells Beach Reserve.

The adjacent area of Point addis, located on the southern side of the Great Ocean Road is bounded by the Great Otway National and includes the remote and scenically dramatic Point Addis beach. Both areas provide stunning coastal views with rugged cliffs, coastal vegetation, sandy beaches, rocky reefs and world renowned surf breaks.

The settlements of Anglesea to Eastern View sit within fragile heathlands and open dry woodlands meaning that any development between townships is highly visible along the coast. In contrast the Lorne hinterland is characterised by dense, tall forest where there may be potential for some small scale tourist accommodation but will be limited by bushfire risk, environmental values and physical site constraints.

## 21.06-2 Objectives

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To protect and enhance the landscape values of the rural precincts as described in Clause 21.06-2 above.

To protect and maintain open and uncluttered rural landscapes, including vistas from main road corridors.

To protect the rural landscape from urban intrusion and to provide clear distinction between townships.

To recognise the importance of maintaining the visual landscape qualities of the Great Ocean Road and Bells Beach environs both for residents and visitors to the coast.

## 21.06-3 Strategies

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- Encourage the siting and design of new buildings to complement existing farm structures, avoid locating on hilltops and ridges and to nestle into the landscape where possible.
- Promote indigenous revegetation around buildings and structures, wetlands and along waterways to assist blending new development with the surrounding landscape.
- Ensure new buildings are sited and designed in the Barrabool Hills to foster the historic rural landscape qualities of the area.
- Ensure tourism facilities are limited in their intensity and scale to avoid adverse visual impact on the natural environment and rural landscape and to retain the marketing characteristics of low key, eco-based tourist values.
- Direct tourism and other commercial facilities to land within settlement boundaries or in locations with easy access to existing infrastructure. Beyond

settlement boundaries, avoid these uses in land subject to the Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 1 or where the removal of indigenous vegetation cannot be avoided or suitably minimised.

- Manage development in Nationally and Internationally significant areas to ensure landscape, native vegetation and natural features remain visually dominant over the built environment. These areas include the Bells Beach hinterland (bounded by Bones Road, Addiscott Road, Bells Road and Jarosite Road) and other land zoned Rural Conservation Zone that is subject to either the Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 1 or the Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 1.
- Ensure development is visually recessive within the viewshed of the Great Ocean Road between Anglesea and the Shire's western boundary identified by the Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 1 and Design and development Overlay Schedule 11.
- Ensure any development is visually recessive within the viewshed of the Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve identified by the Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 1.
- Encourage new development, including intensive animal industries and dwellings, to adopt a clustered development pattern rather than being dispersed throughout the landscape.
- Discourage the subdivision of land below the minimum lot sizes specified in the schedules to the rural zones.
- Discourage any proposal to use, rezone or subdivide land for rural residential or urban residential development.
- Discourage uses not associated with an agricultural activity in any rural area outside the Rural Activity Zone.
- Maintain clear, non urban breaks between Geelong and Torquay and between the coastal settlements.
- Oppose any rezoning proposals that would allow more intensive development in the Bells Beach hinterland and Point Addis.
- Protect the visual prominence of the Great Ocean Road and significant public viewing points along the Otway Coast and Ranges.
- Support the concept of a buy-back scheme for private land with significant environmental value along the Great Ocean Road and in prime tourist locations along the coast.
- Oppose intensification of development and subdivision of large freehold coastal properties between Aireys Inlet and the Shire boundary west of Lorne, due to their high visual exposure, steep slopes and limited access.
- Oppose subdivision and tourist development in the Mt Sabine area, Bells Beach viewshed and Point Addis.

#### **21.06-4 Implementation**

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The strategies will be implemented by:

##### **Using policy and the exercise of discretion**

- Development that is likely to detrimentally affect the scenic landscape, environmental and cultural values of land within the Bells Beach hinterland will not be supported.
- Require a minimum 20 metre wide native vegetation landscape buffer as a condition of any planning permit for timber production along any Category 1 or Category 2 road or any other tourist road.
- In considering any application for a non-agricultural land use and/or development apply the following development principles:
  - Buildings should be of modest scale and nestle into the landscape;

- Buildings should be subservient to the landscape so as not to detract from its visual qualities;
- Proposals should include net gain environmental outcomes; and
- Development should be self-sufficient in the provision of infrastructure and associated costs.

#### **Applying zones and overlays**

- Applying a Significant Landscape Overlay, an Environmental Significance Overlay and a Design and Development Overlay to areas with high scenic landscape value to protect the visual amenity of these landscapes, including the Great Ocean Road corridor, Bells Beach and Point Addis.
- Applying permit triggers in the schedules to the rural zones for buildings within road setback areas to minimise the visual impact of development along main and tourist access roads.
- Applying the permit trigger in the schedules to the rural zones for timber production.

#### **Undertaking further strategic work**

- Investigating the preparation of siting and design guidelines for buildings and farm structures within the rural precincts and determining the level of status to give to such guidelines.
- Investigating the need for further protection of the landscape qualities of the Barrabool Hills as requested by the National Trust of Australia (Vic).
- Investigating ways to encourage shelter belt planting.

#### **21.06-5**

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#### **Reference Documents**

*Surf Coast Shire Rural Strategy (2007)*

*Surf Coast Landscape Assessment Study North of the Princes Highway (2007)*

*The Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study (2003)*