

**21.05**12/07/2012  
C39**ENVIRONMENT**

This Clause provides local content to support Clause 12 (Environmental and Landscape Values) and Clause 13 (Environmental Risk) of the State Planning Policy Framework.

The Council Plan 2009-2013 is committed to the following in terms of the environment:

- Recognising that our economic and community wellbeing are linked to the health of the Murray River and lakes systems. Council seeks to minimise any detrimental impact on the health of the river or the lakes through advocacy, facilitation and direct action.
- Recognising that our economic and community wellbeing are linked to the health of the Mallee and bushland reserves. Council seeks to minimise any detrimental impact on the health of these environs through advocacy, facilitation and direct action.
- Encouraging the adoption of practices that reduce our overall impact on the environment.
- Seeking to protect indigenous flora and fauna, with individual decisions based on sound application of legislation, policies and guidelines.
- Ensuring the appropriate management and protection of our built and natural environment to meet the needs of our community.

**21.05-1**12/07/2012  
C39**Murray River corridor****Overview**

The municipality has a major frontage to the Murray River. The Murray River and its environment are a vital and fragile ecosystem. The River Murray Reserve performs an important role in protecting the Murray River from erosion and maintaining flora and fauna habitats. Activities that have altered the quality of its character include clearing of vegetation, irrigation practices, cultivation of adjacent land, access roads, recreation activity, firewood collection, grazing by livestock and water diversion infrastructure.

Consistent and coordinated land use planning and development needs to be promoted along the Murray River Corridor with the major aims of protecting important environmental and cultural values, promoting opportunities for tourism and recreation, and ensuring maintenance of the quality and quantity of water for downstream users. Coordinated approaches to planning and management of the Murray River Corridor are required to prevent conflict arising from urban development, tourism and recreation development along the waterway and on adjoining land.

**Key issues**

- Protecting the environmental values of the Murray River corridor.
- Recognising that the river and its wetlands provide significant habitat values for flora and fauna.

**Objective 1**

To manage the Murray River corridor's environmental values and resource capacity.

**Strategies**

Strategy 1.1 Provide opportunities for better use and physical and visual integration of the River within river towns and promote the establishment of riverside urban precincts.

Strategy 1.2 Ensure that land use activities and development adjacent to the Murray River Reserve protects environmental, visual and landscape values of the river and environs.

Strategy 1.3 Develop the Murray River as a primary recreation, tourism and cultural focus for Swan Hill by implementation of the Swan Hill Riverside Precinct concept.

Strategy 1.4 Prevent conflict arising from agricultural, urban, tourism, recreational, and other uses and developments along the Murray River and on adjoining and nearby land.

### **Implementation**

The strategies in relation to the Murray River corridor will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

#### **Application of zones and overlays**

- Applying the Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) along the Murray River Reserve to protect its environmental values.

#### **Further strategic work**

- Participating with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, in conjunction with other municipalities bordering the Murray River, to finalise and implement a regional policy to protect the Murray River environs, and introduce this policy into the Planning Scheme.

#### **Reference documents**

Murray River Frontage Action Plans - Nyah to Robinvale & Robinvale to Merbein

21.05-2

12/07/2012  
C39

### **Catchment and land protection**

#### **Overview**

The natural resources and catchment of Swan Hill Rural City are significant to the local, regional and State environments. The sustainability of land and water resources in the catchment is integral to the municipality's environmental, economic and social well-being.

The Rural City of Swan Hill is a unique area of north west Victoria consisting of riverine floodplains and Mallee dunefields. Land use and development reflects the diverse landscapes of the Rural City. The floodplain and adjacent dunefields are extensively utilised for irrigated horticulture and pasture, and urban and rural residential development.

In the dunefields away from the floodplain, cereal cropping, broadacre pasture and smaller rural settlements dominate. Waterway health is an important aspect of catchment health in the municipality. The threats and pressures upon the Murray River and adjacent riparian vegetation from expanding development are a major challenge.

Unlike other areas of the Mallee, Swan Hill Rural City retains only a small number of public reserves with remnant native vegetation. The protection and maintenance of remnant native vegetation on private land is important for catchment health and prevention of wind erosion, particularly in dryland farming areas.

#### **Key issues**

- Recognising the regional importance of catchment and land protection.

#### **Objective 2**

To ensure the sustainable development of natural resources of land, flora, natural ecosystems and water, including groundwater.

## Strategies

- Strategy 2.1 Ensure that land use and development provides a net environmental benefit to the catchment.
- Strategy 2.2 Ensure use and development of land is consistent with and implements regional catchment strategies and associated plans.
- Strategy 2.3 Ensure protection of the catchment, natural environment and landscape by requiring development to be setback from waterways and water bodies.
- Strategy 2.4 Encourage the use of a whole-of-farm approach to agricultural development, using a 'whole farm plan' prepared in accordance with the Department of Primary Industries guidelines and approved by the responsible authority.

## Implementation

The strategies in relation to catchment and land protection will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

### Application of zones and overlays

- Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 to waterways, wetlands and lakes.
- Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 2 to areas of poor drainage.
- Considering the application of the Environmental Significance Overlay to significant wetlands and environs on both private and public land, when further strategic work by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and Mallee Catchment Management Authority is complete.

### Further strategic work

- Supporting the completion of the Mallee River Health Strategy and its use in informing Schedule 1 to the Environmental Significance Overlay.
- Supporting the completion of salinity mapping by the Mallee Catchment Management Authority and when complete, apply the Salinity Management Overlay to high salinity risk areas.
- Supporting the completion of wetlands inventories on private land by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the completion of a wetland audit and prioritisation study and subsequent wetland management strategy by the Mallee Catchment Management Authority.

### Reference documents

Mallee Regional Catchment Strategy 2003-2008  
North Central Regional Catchment Strategy 2003-2008  
Mallee Waterway and Floodplain Strategies  
Loddon Murray Land and Water Management Strategy  
Nyah to South Australia Border Salinity Management Plan  
Nyah Irrigation District, Renewal and Salinity Management Plan  
Sunraysia Salinity and Water Quality Management Plan  
North Central Second Generation Dryland Salinity Management Plan  
Avoca Dryland Salinity and Water Quality Management Plan  
Mallee Dryland Salinity and Water Quality Management Plan  
Lake Boga Wetland Management Strategy  
Tresco to Wood Wood Land Capability Study

North Central Rural Drainage Management Strategy  
 Lower Murray Surface Water Management Strategy  
 Mallee Wetland Operational Plans – Heywoods Lake and Lakes Powell and Carpul

**21.05-3**

**Conservation of native flora and fauna**

12/07/2012  
 C39

**Overview**

The municipality has sites of threatened fauna such as the Regent Parrot, Carpet Python and Plains Wanderer and rare or threatened flora, such as the nationally vulnerable Yellow Swainson pea and the statewide vulnerable Wilga (that only occurs in the municipality). A number of threatened vegetation communities exist within the Rural City of Swan Hill, including semi-arid herbaceous pine woodland, semi-arid shrubby pine - buloke woodland, semi-arid grassy pine – buloke woodland, Belah woodland and various grassland communities.

Only limited vegetated land in the Rural City of Swan Hill has been retained as protected public land. Much of the remaining vegetation within the municipality exists on roadsides and as freehold remnants. Native vegetation in the municipality is valuable to the natural environment and as a landscape and recreational resource. Roadside vegetation constitutes the major wildlife corridor network across the municipality.

The municipality also encompasses two other major wildlife corridors, the Murray River frontage and Lalbert Creek. Wildlife corridors are essential for the movement, development and survival of flora and fauna in the municipality, providing escape routes from danger and access for recolonisation.

**Key issues**

- Recognising the value of remnant native vegetation to the natural environment.
- Protecting biodiversity.

**Objective 3**

To protect remnant native vegetation, including understorey and vegetation constituting significant habitat and facilitate natural revegetation.

**Strategies**

- Ensure high value remnant native vegetation (assessed through the Victorian Native Vegetation Management Framework or as being in an area of depleted, vulnerable or endangered ecological vegetation class (EVC) identified in ecological vegetation communities mapping) is retained and enhanced.
- Ensure that native vegetation is retained in any land use or development proposal when there is an alternative to native vegetation removal.
- Retain native vegetation in subdivision or development proposals by discouraging location of lot boundaries, access tracks / roads, building sites or other works in areas that would require the removal of native vegetation.
- Protect and enhance native habitat, particularly the critical habitat of Victorian rare and threatened flora and fauna species and culturally significant vegetation.
- Encourage maintenance and development of linkages between existing remnant vegetation.

**Objective 4**

To protect and maintain biodiversity, including native vegetation and habitats for flora and fauna.

## Strategies

Strategy 4.1 Maintain and develop linkages and habitat corridors between existing remnant vegetation.

## Implementation

The strategies in relation to conservation of native flora and fauna will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

### Application of zones and overlays

- Applying the Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 1 to remnant vegetation.

### Further strategic work

- Modifying the Vegetation Protection Overlay map when vegetation mapping has been completed by the Department of Primary Industries.
- Applying the Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule to the Regent Parrot habitat, when the Department of Sustainability and Environment has provided sufficient strategic justification.

### Reference documents

Selected Biodiversity Components Map - Parts A & B LGA Swan Hill, Department of Sustainability and Environment

*Ecological Vegetation Class Mapping Data*, Department of Sustainability and Environment

Mallee Area Review Final Recommendations, Land Conservation Council

Action Statements - Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

North Central Native Vegetation Plan

*Regent Parrot Breeding Season Habitat Mapping*, Department of Sustainability and Environment

21.05-4

12/07/2012  
C39

## Flooding

### Overview

Floodplains of the Murray River and its tributaries affect urban and rural areas of the municipality. There is an absence of data to identify floodways from land subject to inundation. Land subject to inundation and floodways are identified by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay where the division between the two flood plain types is not known.

### Key issues

- Obtaining additional data to support further flood mapping.

### Objective 5

To protect the floodplain from inappropriate development.

### Strategies

Strategy 5.1 Delineate those portions of the River Murray, Avoca River, Little Murray River and Lalbert Creek flood plains which are inundated in a 1% probability flood event.

Strategy 5.2 Discourage development that could adversely inhibit the flow of flood waters.

Strategy 5.3 Maintain the function of the flood plains.

### **Implementation**

The strategies in relation to flooding will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

### **Policy guidelines**

- When deciding on an application in the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay, considering, as appropriate:
  - Clause 22.01 Flooding Policy.

### **Application of zones and overlays**

- Applying flood zoning or overlay controls when all information is prepared in the correct format.

### **Further strategic work**

- Completing local floodplain development plans for the Murray River, Loddon River and Avoca River Precincts by Catchment Management Authorities in consultation with Council.
- Preparing an amendment to the planning scheme to implement the local floodplain development plans and revised flood mapping.

### **Reference documents**

Swan Hill-Tyntynder Flats Floodplain Management Strategy

North Central Floodplain Management Strategy

Robinvale Irrigation District Stormwater Flooding Strategy