



RURAL LAND USE STRATEGY

ADOPTED 8 MAY 2007



City of Greater Geelong- Rural Land Use Strategy

May, 2007

City of Greater Geelong



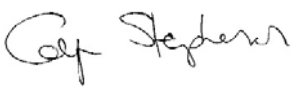
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Contents

	Page Number
Executive Summary	v
1. Introduction	1
2. Process	2
2.1 Key project team members	2
2.2 Study brief	2
2.3 Project stages	3
3. Planning Policy	4
3.1 Greater Geelong Planning Scheme	4
3.1.1 <i>State Planning Policy</i>	4
3.1.2 <i>Local Planning Policy</i>	5
3.2 Implementation issues	6
3.3 New Rural Zones	8
3.4 Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan	9
3.5 Overall strategic considerations	10
4. Agriculture in Geelong	11
4.1 Overview	11
4.2 Agricultural commodities	12
4.3 Agricultural capability	12
4.4 Agricultural manufacturing and processing	14
4.5 Agricultural education and research	14
4.6 Issues for the future of agriculture in Geelong	15
4.7 Opportunities for the growth of agricultural value in Geelong	17
4.8 Strategic issues	18
5. Rural Living in Greater Geelong	20
5.1 Overview	20
5.2 City of Greater Geelong Rural Residential Strategy 1994	21
5.3 Supply and demand	21
5.4 Minister's Direction 6 – Rural Residential Development	24
5.5 Strategic considerations	24
6. Environmental Issues	26
6.1 Overview	26
6.2 Key environmental issues	26
6.2.1 <i>Waterway degradation</i>	26
6.2.2 <i>Soil degradation</i>	27
6.2.3 <i>Salinity</i>	27
6.2.4 <i>Native vegetation degradation</i>	27
6.2.5 <i>Pest plants and animals</i>	28
6.2.6 <i>Wildfire</i>	28
6.2.7 <i>Flooding</i>	28
6.2.8 <i>Coastal area degradation</i>	28
6.2.9 <i>Swan Bay</i>	28
6.2.10 <i>Climate Change</i>	29
6.3 Environment Management and Policy	29
6.3.1 <i>Environment Management Strategy 2006-2011</i>	29
6.4 Landscape values: Coastal Spaces Recommendation Report, April 2006	30
6.5 Strategic considerations	32
7. Economy	33
7.1 Overview	33
7.2 Geelong economy	33
7.2.1 <i>Regional role</i>	34
7.3 Tourism and the economy	35
7.4 Economic development strategy 2005-10	37
7.5 Strategic considerations	38

8. Population and Housing Growth.....	39
8.1 Overview	39
8.2 Growth opportunities	41
8.2.1 Lifestyle	41
8.2.2 Future growth	42
8.2.3 Landscape	42
8.2.4 Tourism and recreation development	43
8.3 Strategic considerations	43
9. Consultation.....	44
9.1 Overview	44
9.2 Consultation activities	45
9.2.1 Issues papers	45
9.2.2 Staff workshop	45
9.2.3 Agency workshop	46
9.2.4 Community open days	46
9.2.5 Farmer's workshops	46
9.3 The prevailing community position	47
10. Geelong Rural Land Strategy	48
10.1 Key strategic elements	48
10.2 Vision	49
10.3 Key strategic directions	50
10.4 Agriculture	51
10.5 Rural living	51
10.6 Tourism	51
10.7 Environment	51
10.8 Northern area	52
10.9 Avalon	52
10.10 Bellarine Peninsula	52
10.11 Western and southern rural peripheral areas	53
10.12 Anakie	53
10.13 Directions for planning	53
11. Delivering the Vision	55
11.1 Greater Geelong Planning Scheme	55
11.1.1 Farming Zone	55
11.1.2 Rural Conservation Zone	56
11.1.3 Rural Living Zone	57
11.1.4 Rural Activity Zone	57
11.1.5 Implementation of the strategy through the Rural Zones	58
11.2 Managing specific rural developments and activities	60
11.2.1 Subdivision and house lot excisions	60
11.2.2 Rural dwellings	60
11.2.3 Intensive animal husbandry	61
11.2.4 Shed based agriculture	61
11.2.5 Tourism	61
11.2.6 Greyhounds	63
11.2.7 Equine facilities	64
11.3 Other implementation options	64
11.3.1 Rates	64
11.3.2 Farm land leasing register	64
11.3.3 Environmental management and improvement	65
11.3.4 Maintenance of Agricultural Infrastructure	65
11.3.5 Farmers Markets	65
11.3.6 Visitor and Community Access to Rural Landscapes	65

List of tables

Table 1 Agricultural industry structure by estimated value of agricultural operations (ABS 2001)	16
Table 2 Comparison of Median Sales Prices (Valuer General 2004)	17
Table 3 Average commercial catch between 2000 – 2004	18
Table 4 Population of the City of Greater Geelong 1991-2001	39
Table 5 Geelong ‘Rural’ Areas Population Change Defined Township Areas 1981 - 2001	40
Table 6 Geelong ‘Rural’ Areas – New House Approvals 2001/02–2005/06	41
Table 7 Strategic Direction Implementation Through the Rural Zones	58

List of maps

Map 1 Land Systems of the Geelong Region.....	13
Map 2 Rural Zones in City of Greater Geelong.....	20
Map 3 Dwellings in Rural Areas	22
Map 4 Lot Sizes in Rural Areas.....	23
Map 5 Significant Coastal Landscapes (source: Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report, DSE, 2006).....	31

List of figures

Figure 1 Moorabool Wharf, Geelong, c.1910	33
Figure 2 A comparison between the Geelong and Victorian Workforce, 2001	34

List of appendices

Appendix A	Land Capability Review
Appendix B	Background Issues Paper
Appendix C	Community open days – key issues raised
Appendix D	Maps
Appendix E	New Planning Scheme Provisions

Executive Summary

Introduction

Greater Geelong City Council commissioned Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) to review, and where appropriate recommend revisions to their rural land use strategy. The current strategy is ten years old, agricultural practices and rural land development pressures are changing, the Minister for Planning has requested Council to implement the State's new suite of Rural Zones and a community strategy plan for the Bellarine Peninsula has been prepared and needed to be reflected in the planning scheme.

The City's rural areas encompass a range of activities, including intensive animal raising, grazing and cropping, horticulture and viticulture, smaller scale hobby farming of various types, agricultural product manufacturing and processing, and agricultural education and research. These uses and activities all form an important network of food and fibre production, economic activity and employment in the region.

Consultation for the preparation of the strategy included community, farmer, agency and Council staff workshops. In all about 200 people attended the community consultation workshops. The clear messages from people was that the rural areas are changing, that agriculture is under pressure and there is uncertainty about the future of agriculture but a desire to provide for it. The local community is passionate about their rural areas and the value of these areas in terms of their agricultural function, landscape character, biodiversity and as a place to live. While urban Geelong is developing as a vibrant city there is a strong affinity with agriculture. A rural landscape is considered by the community to be a key part of the City's economy and character.

The State policy context for a rural strategy emphasises the need to protect agricultural land, support the productive use of agricultural land and industries associated with rural areas and to discourage the unplanned use of rural areas for urban uses. The current strategic objectives of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme seek to protect the City's agricultural resource base for future generations. These strategic directions are implemented through the Planning Scheme by a selection of zones, overlays and policies. Despite the current zoning and policy, demand for rural land for lifestyle purposes has elevated land prices to such a level that vacant farm land is largely unaffordable for existing farmers to buy for consolidation into existing properties. Despite many rural properties being purchased for lifestyle purposes, they are still being farmed many through share farming or leasing arrangements. The current planning regime has maintained land in lots of a size with productive potential.

Geelong's Rural Areas

There is about 55,000 hectares of land farmed at a commercial level across the municipality by about 300 producers. The most significant commodities in terms of gross value of agricultural production are poultry eggs and meat, cut flowers and turf, meat and wool, grains and vegetables. Other key commodities include dairy, pigs, grapes for wine and horse breeding with associated facilities. In all, production at the farm gate is valued at about \$70m. The majority of farm businesses in the City are small scale and part time. Since 1983 the total area farmed and the number of producers has dropped by 14% and 33% respectively.

Some forms of soil-based agriculture are intensifying in production systems and activity while others are diminishing. Small and medium -scale horticulture and viticulture enterprises are seeking out new pockets of land with suitable soil and water, close to transport routes and labour. Shed-based hydroponic tomato production is also expanding from a low base, while the potato industry is shrinking. Shed-based

intensive animal industries such as egg production, broiler farms and piggeries that require buffers for amenity and biosecurity are being displaced to other locations in the wider region by the growth of urban areas around Geelong and the Bellarine.

Geelong has a number of large agricultural manufacturing and processing businesses that provide significant employment in the region - the eight largest enterprises employ about 1800 persons. The established education and research centres in the area also provide a strong agricultural industry focus for Geelong. Agriculture directly provides about 1.5% or 1,130 jobs of the total jobs in the municipality.

Most of the rural land within the municipality is of Class 3 capability, or moderate agricultural quality. Better quality land of Class 2 (or high agricultural quality) can be found on the northern side of the Bellarine Peninsula, and around Lara. It is important to consider that the quality of land is a key, but not a singular factor in understanding the locational dynamics of agricultural activity. Shed-based agricultural activities are largely reliant on factors such as land availability, infrastructure, buffers and labour force access. Also in Geelong, the structure of agricultural activity in many locations is part of a mixed economy that benefits from linkages to urban employment. From a land use planning and policy perspective, land capability should not be considered as offering predictive results, but rather as a layer of information to be considered along with urban and rural settlement dynamics, infrastructure and natural resource circumstances; and all within a context of planning policy and community expectations of economic development and landscape values.

The condition of the environment will affect the productive capacity of farmland and landscape values. The Greater Geelong rural area is home to many significant environmental features and places. Particularly significant in Geelong, are 114 wetlands totalling 11,630ha that play an important role as part of the overall ecosystem of the region. Many of these wetlands are recognised under the Ramsar convention. Swan Bay is one of the most intact areas of wetland and marine ecosystem in Port Phillip Bay. The Moorabool and Barwon Rivers are identified as the most flow stressed river systems in the region and both have high salinity, nutrient and sediment levels. Issues such as soil degradation, salinity, native vegetation loss and pest plants and animals also undermine the environmental integrity of Geelong. The Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report highlights the importance of the non-urban coastal landscape and a landscape assessment of the Bellarine Peninsula has concluded that all coastal areas and some inland locations of the Bellarine Peninsula are of local, regional or state visual significance.

Tourism is an important contributor to the local economy, providing approximately 4,200 full-time positions within the local labour market and generating \$478 million to the local economy. The rural areas of Geelong play an important role in the tourist economy as many people visit the area for the beaches on the Bellarine Peninsula, wineries and natural features such as the You Yangs and Brisbane Ranges. The City's 'unspoilt' rural areas, with their long sweeping views of agricultural land use against a backdrop of coastal areas, is a key element in the City's tourist product.

In some cases rural areas of the City have been used for large scale uses which are likely to limit the attractiveness of an area for future settlement. A prime example of this is the correctional facilities on the Geelong – Bacchus Marsh Road and the Avalon Airport. While in other cases agricultural uses such as vineyards discourage closer settlement because they are associated with activities such as spraying which needs to be buffered from residential development. While the City's rural areas are used for variety of uses increasingly the dominant value in many people's eyes, both rural and urban dwellers, is the role of an attractive non urban landscape. Rural areas provide a 'relief' from the congestion of urban areas. The concept that one can move quickly from an urban setting to enjoy countryside is highly valued. For

the smaller settlements and towns a strongly held view is that there should be non-urban breaks between towns, which helps to retain their separate identity.

Geelong's Growth and Development

The Geelong region has experienced sustained population growth and residential development since the early 1990s. The City's planning policies for rural areas and the administration of zoning provisions has not provided for the further subdivision of rural land into lots for residential, rural residential or rural living purposes. The City has cautiously exercised discretion in terms of granting planning permits for new houses in the rural areas. The City has sought to ensure that any residential development in the rural areas is closely linked to supporting and sustaining agricultural uses. While large numbers of people in the City's rural areas are associated with continuing agriculture either on a full time or part time basis, it is evident that large numbers seek a rural location because of the lifestyle attributes of the areas. Urban (and other non-farm) encroachment often places pressure on farm businesses. Without suitable and active land use strategies and policies aiming to limit conflict between urban and rural activities the agricultural use of rural areas will be compromised.

Rural living in Greater Geelong takes many forms; large scale residential subdivisions, scattered coastal developments and small farmlets, including those actively farming yet relying on economic and employment links to urban areas. In many ways the existing rural landscapes, including the broad range of agricultural activities in numerous areas, already offers scope for rural lifestyles with good connections to coastal towns and the city centre. The ability to live in an attractive environment is a key part of attracting highly skilled workers. Geelong Council has traditionally taken a conservative approach to planning for specific rural living development. It has held a strong position in relation to this form of development over time, and while it has provided a level of supply, it has not supported extensive areas of rural living lots, as have many rural municipalities. The rural living development formally provided in Geelong is within a number of distinct nodes, and consists of lots of between 1ha and 3ha. This approach seeks to strike a balance between the inefficiencies of land use and infrastructure supply associated with rural living, and the genuine demand expressed. Rural living development can change the amenity of the area through additional development and the associated pressures on landscapes, the environment and infrastructure, as well as placing pressures on the continued viability of agricultural activities. Rural living is more expensive and less efficient to service than conventional residential development.

The City's long term planning agenda has been to provide for the majority of population growth in planned extensions of the existing urban area of Geelong, and in selected settlements such as Lara or townships on the Bellarine Peninsula. Very limited provision has been made for low density, rural residential or rural living development. Rural areas have not provided for ad hoc rural living development. The City has consistently adopted the approach of maintaining rural landscapes within the context of population growth in urban areas. Planning for non urban breaks between urban areas, particularly coastal settlements, is crucial in protecting the values that attract new populations, and offering a more sustainable form of settlement growth.

The Recommended Strategic Directions

The Geelong Rural Land Strategy sets out a long term vision for the City's rural areas that

- Reinforces a rural - farmed landscape beyond the urban areas
- Continues to protect and provide opportunities for productive agriculture
- Enhances the condition of the environment and the natural resource base, and
- Contributes to the ongoing economic prosperity and quality lifestyle of the region

The Strategy recognises that agricultural production is locally important and economically significant for some residents, although farming activity for many landholders is essentially about maintaining a rural landscape and lifestyle. The rural landscape and lifestyle is a very significant element in the identity, image and liveability of the City. The City's rural areas contain important environmental assets. Tourism and recreation while focused on the coast values the rural setting and farming.

Implementation of this strategy will involve supporting the "right to farm" of local land owners, preserving non urban breaks between towns, ensuring dwelling development and subdivision will not remove the land from agricultural use and managing the location and scale of tourist facilities so that they do not undermine the rural character of land beyond the towns. Most importantly, the environmental assets must be protected and condition of the natural resource base enhanced, and the unique and valuable landscapes preserved.

The strategy proposes that there is a continuing future for farming and agriculture in the rural areas of Geelong, but it will be a changing form, different from what has been traditionally known. In the future there is likely to be even fewer farms where the family is supported solely or mainly by agriculture. Many properties can and should still be productively farmed either by the landowner or another landowner as a part of a larger enterprise where land is leased or managed.

The land types in the municipality are suited to cropping, grazing, horticulture and viticulture. Consistent with the vision of maintaining farming landscapes around the City, rural land will primarily be used for growing produce and raising stock. Markets will determine the commodities produced, and the amount of land engaged, but the planning system should protect opportunities through maintaining land in parcels with productive and management potential and minimising land lost to building development and non agricultural use. Intensive animal industries and other shed based agriculture should be carefully located so that rural and scenic non urban landscapes are preserved.

It is recognised that the rural amenity and the quality of the environment and the landscape are key parts of the City's appeal to residents and tourists. Any land use change in the rural areas should provide for the improvement in the condition of the local environment and maintain the high landscape qualities.

Tourism facilities within rural areas should be small scale, in conjunction with the agricultural use of the property and should be of a size and in a location so that rural and scenic non urban landscapes are preserved and the agricultural use and character of the property is maintained. There is the potential for a small number of larger, regional tourism facilities to be located within the rural areas to capitalise on the assets of the region and bring economic benefit. Large tourism facilities should only be located in rural areas where there is a demonstrated regional need, they are not suited to an urban area, they will not compromise the rural landscape character, they provide for net environmental gains and they meet their own infrastructure needs and costs.

The northern areas of the City comprise landscapes used for cropping, grazing and viticulture. The strategy proposes that this area should be maintained in agricultural use, and opportunities for the use of reclaimed water around Balliang should be protected.

Avalon airport is a significant State and regional transport facility. The strategy proposes that the integrity, operating capacity and potential for development of the facility should be protected and existing buffer areas for safe operation be maintained.

Working with the Council, the communities on the Bellarine Peninsula have developed a strategic plan that seeks to retain farming and the distinct rural breaks between townships and protect the environmental values of the Peninsula. The Bellarine Peninsula contains a settlement structure of planned towns that is part of the extended urban area. Considerable strategic planning has been undertaken to provide for the managed expansion of some of these towns and all towns have been planned on the basis of clear settlement boundaries. The Peninsula retains unique, high quality rural landscapes associated with viticulture, horticulture, cropping and grazing around these towns as a result of previous planning strategies. Consistent with the findings of the Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan, this strategy proposes that the unique, high quality rural landscapes of the Bellarine Peninsula be maintained through the ongoing support for agriculture in the rural areas as this rural character of the Bellarine Peninsula is highly valued by local residents and visitors, and is a fundamental part of the liveability and identity of Geelong.

The rural areas immediately adjoining the Geelong urban area, to the west and south lie outside the new Geelong bypass route and the new planned urban extension at Armstrong Creek. They contain important agricultural-rural production properties, significant non-urban and agricultural-rural landscapes for Geelong and help to define the urban area. The strategy proposes that the western and southern peripheral rural areas of the City should be maintained as farmed landscapes so as to continue to support agriculture, environmental management and to provide a non-urban break and rural setting for the City.

The strategy proposes that opportunities for some growth of Anakie township should be investigated, but any growth should be carefully planned so as to preserve the small town character, protect adjoining productive agricultural properties and manage environmental values and issues, in particular wildfire.

It should be recognised that land use planning provides only one aspect of a focussed delivery of this vision for rural land. Other actions of Council and other agencies in relation to infrastructure provision, property rating, economic development, environmental management and community planning are also crucial aspects, although largely beyond the scope of this report.

Implementing the Strategy

To implement the strategic directions and vision it is proposed to conceive of the Greater Geelong Rural areas as three broad precincts; the area to the north of Geelong urban area, the area west and south of the city and the Bellarine Peninsula. Differences in the present (and desired future) characteristics of land use and landscape in each of these have emerged through the strategy development process. The application of planning controls (zones, zone provisions and overlays) has been assessed through recognition of the landscapes, land uses and land use challenges in various parts of the municipality. In effect this means that the application of planning controls should reflect the primary aim of rural land management in an area, but not proscribe the flexibility to recognise that rural areas are not homogenous.

The Farming Zone should be applied to the areas currently zoned Rural located in the northern parts of the City, so as to provide ongoing opportunities for agricultural use and development. The Farming Zone should also be applied to the western and southern peripheral rural areas. The basis of the application of the Farming Zone to these areas is the priority of preserving agricultural land for current and future agricultural use, providing opportunities for agricultural activity and maintaining a farmed rural landscape as a setting for the urban areas of Geelong. It also recognises that these rural areas are not offered as part of the settlement strategy for Geelong.

The Strategy recommends that the Rural Conservation Zone be applied to the Bellarine Peninsula in recognition of the unique blend of its landscape, environmental and farming values. The Rural Conservation Zone includes landscape preservation as one of its purposes along with agriculture. The basis of the application of this zone to this area is to elevate the role and value of the environment and rural farmed landscape, and identify that agriculture and other activities should operate in this context. Application of this zone will not compromise existing agricultural activity and in some respects it will protect it. New farming activities should be supported where they are environmentally sound and they contribute to the farming landscape. Tourist accommodation proposals that are associated with, and subservient to, the agricultural use and landscape character of the area may also be supported.

It is not proposed that any areas in the City should be zoned Rural Activity Zone (RAZ). However, it is envisaged that the RAZ may be used to support and provide for a small number of “one off” developments within the rural areas as part of a strategic rezoning proposal. This is particularly likely to be the case for a select range of strategically justified tourism developments. Consideration could be given to tourist related developments where there is a strong basis for a rural location and where they can meet key criteria including, supporting rural and agricultural land use, being in harmony with the rural landscape, meeting all required infrastructure costs, not compromising existing agricultural uses and significantly enhancing the environment. Proposals for the application of the Rural Activity Zone will need to be based upon a comprehensive, strategically justified rezoning submission which demonstrates that site selection requirements require a rural location and that the use and development is compatible and complementary to the rural setting. As a general principle ‘one-off’ isolated accommodation uses which are likely to provide for long term residents or permanent living if it is not linked with services and facilities in established towns are not to be supported.

Appropriate rural land subdivision controls need to be based upon the size required to maintain the farmed landscape and provide opportunities for productive agricultural uses. The Strategy recommends in the Northern Area this size should be 80ha and on the Bellarine Peninsula and the Southern and Western Areas this size should be 40ha. These sizes are based on an understanding of the agricultural opportunities in these areas, and the current minimum subdivision sizes.

Based on the strategy, house lot excisions are considered inappropriate as they will result in an increased density of development, create a lot that is contrary to the purpose of the zone and the vision for the area and the form of farm restructure associated with house lot excisions is highly unlikely to occur due to the value of land and its comparative productive potential. A Local Planning Policy is recommended that identifies that dwellings should only be permitted on vacant rural parcels where Council is satisfied that the house will positively promote farming operations on the land and it is demonstrated by the applicant that the primary use of the land will continue to be agriculture.

Geelong does offer a significant opportunity for some forms of shed based agriculture, including aquaculture and horticulture. In the case of aquaculture it is proximity to the coast and in the case of both aquaculture and horticulture it is access to Avalon airport, which offers export opportunities. Shed based agriculture such as aquaculture and horticulture offer significant benefit in terms of contribution to the

local economy. Such forms of agriculture should be supported but carefully managed in terms of siting so that they do not compromise the landscape objectives of the rural strategy. Horse breeding, raising, training is a significant and emerging industry and is a legitimate rural activity generally suited to the Farming Zone and the Rural Conservation Zone and the objectives of this strategy. The strategy proposes that the appropriate response to managing greyhound keeping is the development of a local planning policy that defines the criteria for such facilities. The key issues associated with such facilities are, noise, landscape impact, loss of agricultural land and consistency with adjoining land uses. The identification of an area specifically for greyhounds keeping is not considered a sound planning approach as it severely limits options for existing land owners in such an area, and limits options for new residents seeking to keep dogs. In seeking to accommodate such a land use it also needs to be recognised that the suitability of a site or an area is heavily dependant on the size and scale of the facility.

Summary

The Rural Land Use Strategy does not depart significantly from the present land use policy position. The strategy highlights the significance of the farming landscape, and seeks to ensure that agriculture and other land uses operate in this context. As such, a significant policy shift in the planning scheme in response to management of rural areas is not required. The revised rural areas strategy is based on the value of the rural landscape to the character, liveability, well being and identity of Geelong and its residents.

1. Introduction

Greater Geelong City Council has commissioned Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) to review, and where appropriate revise their strategic land use position for the rural areas of the City. This project is designed to establish a renewed planning vision for the City's rural areas, develop a range of strategic directions which respond to contemporary agricultural practices and rural land development pressures and provide for their implementation through amendments to the Geelong Planning Scheme.

A review of the strategy for the rural areas was considered appropriate as the current strategy is approximately 10 years old; the Minister for Planning has requested that Council implement the State's new suite of Rural Zones; and a community strategy plan for the Bellarine Peninsula has been prepared and should be reflected in the planning scheme.

The current rural land strategy, City of Greater Geelong Rural Land Use Strategy, Perrott Lyon Mathieson, 1997, focuses on the value of the rural area for agriculture. Over the past ten years the economics of and opportunities for agriculture have changed, as have the population characteristics and community values. It is widely felt that the current strategy can no longer adequately respond to development pressures in the rural areas. While it has been successful in the protection of agricultural land, it doesn't adequately accommodate new forces and trends and other significant values and qualities of the rural areas of the City.

Although the City of Greater Geelong includes the second largest urban area in the State, farming is still a significant land use. Broad acre cropping, grazing, viticulture and horticulture are conducted to a varied extent throughout the rural areas. Agricultural production is not a significant player in the City's economy, but it is important at the local level and has strong links to processing and manufacturing industries, and tourism. Importantly, agricultural land, and its use for particular farming activities, and as a landscape is a fundamental part of the character and identity of Geelong.

The community consultation conducted as a part of this study clearly demonstrated that while urban Geelong is developing as a vibrant city, many in the community still have a strong affinity with the rural presentation and heritage of the area. Agriculture and rural land is considered by the community to be a key part of the City's economy and character. The community expressed strong support and a positive view in terms of the future of farming and the importance of preserving the City's rural areas.



2. Process

The City of Greater Geelong appointed Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) to undertake the study in collaboration with RMCG Consulting, SGS Economics & Planning and Darrel Brewin & Associates. The project team included expertise in strategic and statutory planning, agriculture, land capability and economics.

2.1 Key project team members

The project team from Parsons Brinckerhoff comprised;

Trevor Budge – Project Director and planning consultant

Carolyn Stephenson – Project Manager and planning consultant

Felicity Brown – Planning consultant

Jessie Keating – Planning consultant

Supporting consultants were;

Shelley McGuinness – RMCG - Agricultural consultant

Andrew Butt – Planning consultant

With contributions from SGS Economics & Planning and Darrel Brewin & Associates.

The project team wish to thank the City's Councillors and staff for their assistance and contribution, in particular Damien Drew, Project Manager.

2.2 Study brief

The brief for the study was to complete a new Rural Land Strategy to guide the implementation of the new rural zones and establish a new policy regime to guide rural land use and development. The local land use and development issues influencing the City's rural areas and to be addressed by the strategy include

- new agricultural industries
- animal keeping and training
- intensive animal industries
- tourism activities and accommodation development
- rural lifestyle living
- minimum subdivision allowances

The key tasks involved in developing the Rural Strategy were to

- review existing relevant information
- map rural land use and development issues, constraints and opportunities
- conduct consultation with stakeholders
- identify where the new Rural Zones should be applied
- prepare a new Rural Land Strategy

Preparation of the Rural Land Strategy was to include any necessary changes or additions to the City of Greater Geelong (CoGG) Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), Local Planning Policies (LPP) and zoning or overlay recommendations.

2.3 Project stages

The project was carried out in four stages;

- July 2006 Project commencement – scoping of the study
- August 2006 Research and analysis
- September 2006 Consultation program
- October 2006 Draft strategy prepared

Council propose to exhibit the strategy prior to formal adoption. Adoption will be followed by the amendments to the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme which will be subject to a formal planning scheme amendment process.



3. Planning Policy

The key purpose of this study is to update the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme with respect to rural land use management. This section of the report presents the current policy position on rural land use, and provides an assessment of the ability of Council to implement current policy using the planning scheme.

3.1 Greater Geelong Planning Scheme

3.1.1 State Planning Policy

The Greater Geelong Planning Scheme is required to implement State Planning Policy. There are a number of State planning policies that apply to rural land and regional centres that are of relevance to this project. These are summarised below.

Protect productive agricultural land

Protect the State's agricultural base. Ensure productive agricultural land is not lost due to permanent changes to land use.

Intensive animal industries

Support their establishment and expansion provided they are consistent with relevant Codes of Practice and protection of the environment.

Forestry and timber production

Councils should identify appropriate areas for this use. Forestry and timber production uses are required to be consistent with the National Forest Policy Statement and relevant Codes of Practice.

Promote the growth of Geelong as a regional city

Encourage planning for Geelong that will deliver a supply of land for housing and industry in appropriate areas. Protect the natural resource base and limit the impact of urban development on non-urban areas.

Rural residential development

Control development in rural areas to protect agriculture and the natural resource base. Encourage further development in existing settlements and discourage isolated small lots in rural zones.

Coastal areas

Plan coastal resources and settlements to ensure that the environment is protected and settlement boundaries are defined.

3.1.2 Local Planning Policy

The City's overarching land use planning vision involves developing an image for the City that includes prosperity based on its natural attributes, utilizing the wealth of infrastructure and existing commercial, industrial and institutional facilities, and offering a high quality living environment.

The strategic position on agriculture and rural land, and rural living arises from two planning studies;

- *Rural Land Use Strategy 1997*
- *Rural Residential Strategy 1994*

The position presented in these studies is implemented through the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.

Agriculture and Rural Land

The current strategic objectives of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme for agriculture and rural land are;

- To protect the City's agricultural resource base for future generations.
- To protect the environmental resource base of the City's rural areas for future generations.
- To retain agricultural land in productive units.
- To enhance the role and contribution of the City's rural areas to the regional economy.
- To promote sustainable agriculture and improved land management practices.

These strategic directions are implemented through the Planning Scheme by;

- Applying the Rural Zone to the majority of the rural area, with subdivision sizes and lot sizes for dwellings based on minimum areas for farming system sustainability with sizes ranging from 30ha to 80ha;
- Applying the Environmental Rural Zone to those rural areas that have special environmental characteristics (eg. Around Brisbane Ranges);
- Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay and the Significant Landscape Overlay to those areas that have special environmental and landscape significance;
- Using policy and the exercise of discretion in respect to;
 - Assessing permit applications in rural areas on the proposal's ability to increase the viability and sustainability of agricultural production.
 - Referring applications for subdivision in the rural zones to Council's Farming Advisory Committee.
 - Using local policy to protect the rural areas from indiscriminate subdivision and the erection of non-essential houses (Subdivision, Excision and Dwellings in Rural Areas Local Policy, Clause 22.06). This policy seeks to protect the agricultural and environmental resource base and limit dwellings and other development on prime or high quality agricultural land or where the dwelling will be incompatible with the sustainable use of the land for farming.

Rural Residential / Rural Living Development

The current strategic objectives of the Planning Scheme for rural residential / rural living development are;

- To provide the opportunity for rural residential development in appropriate locations having regard to land capability, locational suitability, existing and likely future demand/supply, and the efficient and economic provision of services and infrastructure.
- To provide an adequate supply of lots for future rural residential growth.
- To protect the amenity of rural residential locations from activities incompatible with the residential purpose of the zoning.

These strategic directions are implemented through the Planning Scheme by;

- Applying the Rural Living Zone to nominated rural residential nodes with a minimum subdivision size of an average of 1.5ha;
- Using local policy to assess permit applications for non-residential uses and second dwellings (Rural Living Development Local Policy, Clause 22.07). This policy seeks to protect the amenity of rural residential locations and maintain the rural character and low density nature of the zone;
- Undertaking rural residential surveys every 4-5 years to determine changes in development of the nodes and the available lot supply.



3.2 Implementation issues

As part of the background review and in the course of the study various issues related to the implementation of planning controls in the City's rural areas were raised. The key issues were;

Dwellings in the Rural Zone: Council's planning staff advised of the difficulties experienced when assessing the appropriateness of dwellings in the Rural Zone. The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and local planning policy provides a policy position that requires the dwellings to be associated with / required for the productive agricultural use of the land, but the staff are finding it difficult to assess when a dwelling might result in the land use changing from agricultural to residential. These difficulties seem to arise from insufficient information being provided by an applicant to demonstrate a case for the development, and inexperience of some planners in rural issues. Use of the Farming Advisory Committee does provide some assistance in this regard.

It should be recognised that where a planning permit is required for a dwelling in the Rural or Farming Zone, the onus is on the applicant to make a case to Council that the dwelling will not result in a change of land use to residential and that the dwelling is required for the farming operation. Although the viability of the proposed farming operation is one consideration in terms of determining the likelihood of the land use remaining farming it should not be the sole consideration. It should also be recognised that part time agriculture or agriculture that is not the primary source of income for the household can still be the primary land use.

The current policy seeks to protect agricultural land for farming purposes and protect opportunities for its acquisition by other farmers for consolidation into their enterprise. Unfortunately, despite the current zoning and policy, demand for rural land in this area for lifestyle purposes has elevated land prices to such a level that vacant farm land is largely unaffordable for existing farmers to buy for consolidation into existing properties as land prices well exceed agricultural value. As such agricultural land use proposals often involve consideration of the ongoing viability of small lot agriculture.

It is interesting that, despite many rural properties being purchased and / or developed for lifestyle purposes, they are still being farmed through share farming or leasing arrangements. The economics of agriculture and the desire for a farming landscape are motivating these choices.

Subdivision in the Rural Zone: The current minimum lot sizes are based on an assessment conducted approximately 10 years ago, as a part of a rural land use review to determine the minimum sustainable lot size.

The determination of sustainable lot size was based on the following factors;

Environmental: to ensure that the natural features which affect a property's level of productivity such as area and quality of soils, water catchment and drainage patterns, contour erosion susceptibility and flooding patterns are adequately contained within the property boundaries;

Technical: to ensure that the natural features discussed above can support sustainable farm management practices conducted under commercial conditions;

Economic: to ensure that the level of output from the farming system practised is sufficient to justify the level of investment in improvements and structural facilities.¹

This determination was related to the associated agricultural capability assessment.

It has since become apparent that the scale at which this assessment was done was not detailed enough to accommodate local circumstances, provide clear boundaries, and present a justifiable position. Further, the economics of the various agricultural enterprises examined has now substantially changed with increasingly large properties required to receive the same level of return as was anticipated at the time of that review.

Although the current minimum subdivision regime has successfully retained agricultural land in larger parcels, they have not maintained land prices at agricultural levels. People have been prepared to buy large lots to secure a rural lifestyle setting, and in many cases this includes legitimate small scale and part time agricultural activities. Although many individual

¹ City of Greater Geelong Rural Land Use Strategy, Perrott Lyon Mathieson, 1997, page 54.

rural lots are now far too small for conventional agricultural enterprise they can be productively used for various forms of agriculture.

Within Geelong and in many other areas the unviability of the lot for agriculture is raised as an argument for further subdivision or a change of use. In *O'Donoghue v Mornington Peninsula Shire Council* [2003] Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) 1472 at para 38, the Tribunal addressed the issue of the 'financial viability of farming operations and expressed caution about assuming a lack of financial viability: *it would not be difficult to accept that a parcel of this size [10ha] not support a viable farm in its own right. It does not follow however that because a particular parcel is not a viable unit in its own right that this means it is not productive land worthy of protection. As the Tribunal notes in Parkworth Pty Ltd and Keska Management Pty Ltd v Casey CC [2002] VCAT 1594:*

There are some old and fallacious 'chestnuts' frequently trotted out in relation to the discussion of such issues. One of the oldest of such fallacies is to say that a piece of farming land has to be a sustainable and viable farming unit, standing on it own and alone from other land, before it can be considered as useful farming land worth preserving from the harmful effects of the proliferation of rural houses and the fragmentation of farming land into small pieces... ..

... ..the sleight of hand involved is to suggest that all of the viable farm undertakings has to be in one piece. Many viable farming undertakings involve more than one piece of farmland, not necessarily contiguous one with another. If this allotment is not a viable farm standing alone, it does not follow that it is not a useful and valuable piece of farming land capable of being a useful and valuable adjunct to a farming undertaking on other land.

Greyhounds: Geelong includes a large greyhound racing facility, and as such attracts residents who wish to keep and train dogs on their properties. The perceived and actual amenity impact issues associated with keeping dogs has resulted in many applications for greyhound keeping being referred to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), due to applications being overturned by Council, or due to neighbours appealing Council's decision to grant permits for such applications. A number of applications have been refused by VCAT because of concerns about the impact on adjoining residents, particularly noise. Other applications have been granted as VCAT was satisfied the proposal was appropriate to the area. Council's planning staff have advised that a clear policy position is required to enable consistent direction on greyhound keeping and training. It has been suggested that an area or areas be identified within the City that would be suited to greyhounds.

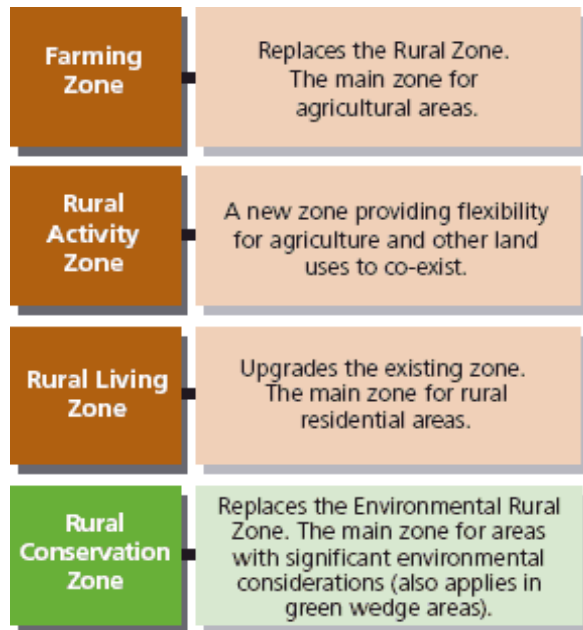
Tourism development in the Rural Zone; Proximity to the coast and the high quality of the amenity of the rural areas of the City further tests the policy position that the best use of rural land is for agriculture. There is strong pressure to enable rural land to be used to respond to the strong demand for tourist accommodation. The revised rural strategy needs to provide a response to this land use demand.

3.3 New Rural Zones

In 2004 the State government adopted a revised set of rural zones. Council is required to implement these new zones.

The State's new rural zones seek to more clearly identify the role of agriculture in rural areas, and protect opportunities for it. They also offer opportunities for other land uses in rural areas that are not associated with agriculture.

The structure and purposes of the new zones are set out below;



Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment

Further information on the new zones can be found at website www.dse.vic.gov.au

This rural strategy needs to provide the basis for the implementation of these zones. In particular it needs to;

- Identify where agriculture and farming will be the preferred land use;
- Identify where rural living will be the preferred land use;
- Identify opportunities to elevate the environmental objectives of an area;
- Develop guidelines to determine use of the Rural Activity Zone.

3.4 Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan

The communities of the Bellarine Peninsula have developed a strategic plan for their area. Although this plan is not a land use plan, it has many elements relevant to this strategy, and there is an expectation by this community that it will be respected and reflected by this project.

Of relevance to the development of this Rural Land Strategy, the Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan seeks to;

- Retain farming on the peninsula;
- Retain distinct rural breaks between townships;
- Protect the environmental values of the Peninsula;
- Develop a more realistic response to the development of houses on existing rural lots.

3.5 Overall strategic considerations

The key strategic issue for the City's rural areas is the selection and application of an appropriate zone from the suite of new rural zones provided in the Victoria Planning Provisions. This *Rural Strategy* offers an opportunity to synthesise the function, values and prospects of the various localities in the rural areas of Greater Geelong and to match these with planning controls that are responsive to local and regional requirements. This process should recognise that the land uses, landscapes, locations and functions of different areas deserve a responsive and where appropriate differentiated policy response.



4. Agriculture in Geelong

4.1 Overview

Agriculture in City of Greater Geelong encompasses a range of activities, including intensive animal raising, grazing and cropping, horticulture and viticulture, smaller scale hobby farming of various types, agricultural product manufacturing and processing, and agricultural education and research. These uses and activities all form an important network of food and fibre production, economic activity and employment in the region, offering ongoing benefits to urban and rural communities.

Some forms of soil-based agriculture are intensifying in production systems and activity while others are diminishing. Raised bed cropping has developed rapidly over the last eight years and farmland allocated to broadacre winter crop growing has experienced large increases. Small and medium -scale horticulture and viticulture enterprises are seeking out new pockets of land with suitable soil and water, close to transport routes and labour. Shed-based hydroponic tomato production is also expanding from a low base, while the potato industry is shrinking.

Shed-based intensive animal industries such as egg production, broiler farms and piggeries that require buffers for amenity and biosecurity are being displaced to other locations in the wider region by the growth of urban areas around Geelong and the Bellarine.

More broadly however, the role of various forms of agricultural activity forms a strong element in the identity of localities and offers an important aspect of the environment and landscape of the Greater Geelong rural area.



4.2 Agricultural commodities

There are approximately 55,000 hectares of land farmed at a commercial level across the municipality by about 300 producers. The most significant commodities in terms of gross value of agricultural production are:

	City of Greater Geelong	Barwon SD2
Poultry (eggs and meat)	\$25 million*	\$66.4 million
Cut flowers and turf	\$18 million	\$21.2 million
Meat and wool	\$10 million	\$168.7 million
Grains	\$9 million	\$38.4 million
Vegetables	\$3 million	\$9.2 million
Grapes – wine	Data not available	\$2.3 million

Source: ABS 2004

Other key commodities include dairy, pigs, grapes for wine and horse breeding with associated facilities.

Since the early 1980s, commodities showing the most significant growth were poultry, nurseries and grain. Sheep and beef production have remained steady while the dairy industry has shown a gradual decline, with few dairy producers remaining in the municipality.

From a land use perspective, this indicates the high value of those areas used for shed-based agricultural activity and the importance of land use and development features such as access to transport and the protection of appropriate buffers.

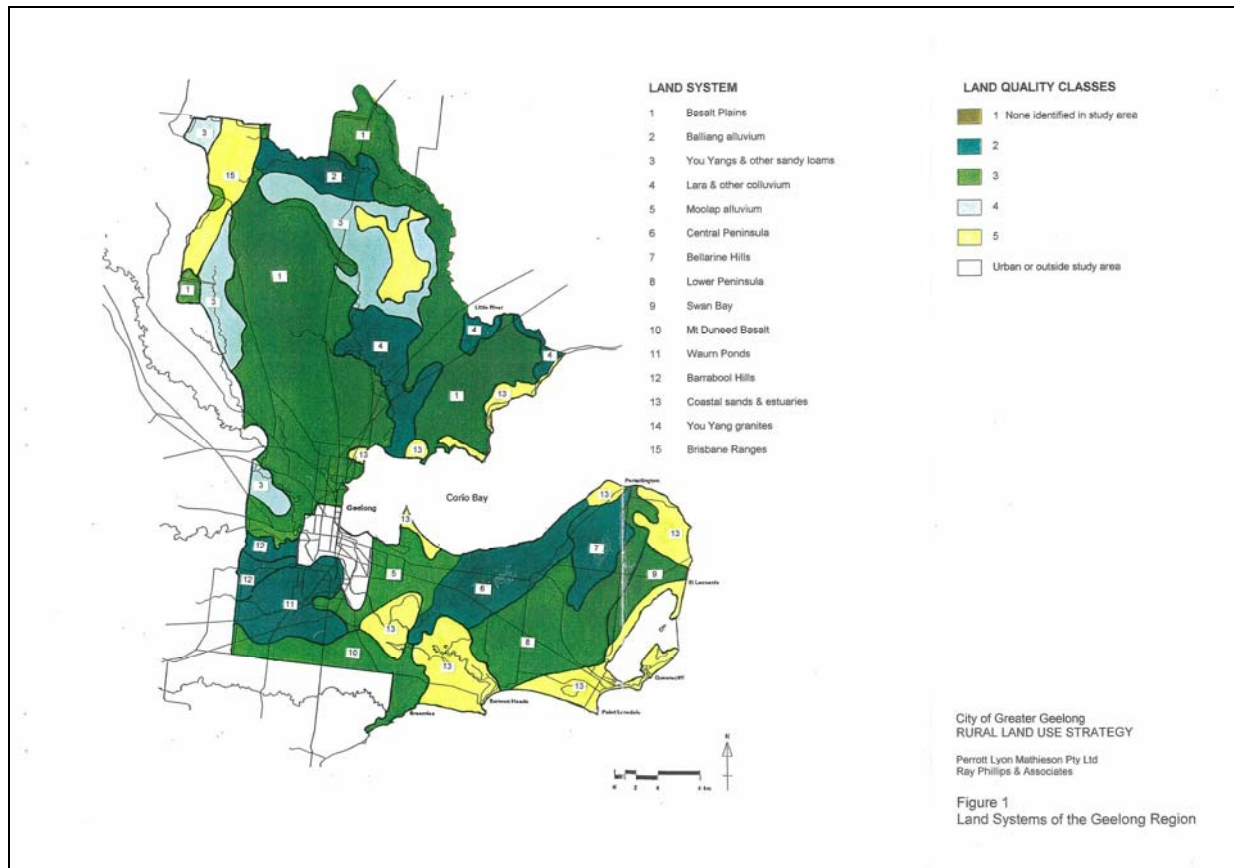
4.3 Agricultural capability

Agricultural capability assessment offers a means to consider the quality of land for soil-based agriculture, and its productive potential. Within the municipality an agricultural capability assessment was undertaken as a part of the 1997 Rural Land Use Study (RLUS).

The methodology and criteria used for that agricultural land quality classification integrated environmental features such as rainfall, geology, topography, soils and indigenous vegetation to determine unique mapping units or land units. In this case 15 land units were identified.

To determine the agricultural quality of each land unit a commonly used five-class land classification system was applied. This system described land qualities that determine the agricultural production and versatility potential of the land for each of the five classes. The 15 land units in the City were classified and described on this 1-5 scale, with Class 1, for land considered to have very high agricultural quality to Class 5, for that land considered unsuitable for soil-based agriculture.

² Barwon SD include City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Borough of Queenscliffe)



Map 1 Land Systems of the Geelong Region

Most of the land within the municipality is of Class 3 capability, or moderate agricultural quality. This means it is generally suited to grazing and broadacre cropping but is not suited to intensive cropping or horticulture. Better quality land of Class 2 (or *high* agricultural quality) can be found on the northern side of the Bellarine Peninsula, and around Lara. In the past, better quality land on the Bellarine Peninsula was used for vegetable production, particularly potatoes. Grape production for wine is now a more common use at these locations.

As a part of this study, an assessment of this earlier review was undertaken to determine its ongoing legitimacy and value for strategic planning purposes.

This review concluded that;

- The RLUS used a well-accepted land capability assessment methodology;
- The RLUS land capability mapping does cover the whole of the Greater City of Geelong. However it was prepared at a scale considered too large for the definition required in contemporary strategic planning (1:200,000). Any future mapping for land capability should be done at a scale of at least 1:40 000 or 1:50 000.
- The mapping scale provides ill-defined boundaries and no provision is allowed for internal variability within broad land units.
- Land capability analysis in the RLUS was only undertaken for agricultural land classification. No land capability analysis exists for the broad spectrum of engineering uses associated with urban subdivision, rural residential living, extractive industries etc.

A copy of this review is included at Appendix A.

It is important to consider that the quality of land is a key, but not a singular factor in understanding the locational dynamics of agricultural activity. Shed-based agricultural activities are largely reliant on factors such as land availability, infrastructure, buffers and labour force access. Also in Geelong, the structure of agricultural activity in many locations is part of a mixed economy that benefits from linkages to urban employment.

As a planning tool, land capability does offer effective indication of the importance of land resources for agriculture in specific areas. From a land use policy perspective, land capability should not be considered as offering predictive results, but rather as a layer of information to be considered along with urban and rural settlement dynamics, infrastructure and natural resource circumstances; and all within a context of planning policy and community expectations of economic development and landscape values.

For Greater Geelong this means that while some land can be considered of high value as an existing and potential agricultural resource, other factors such as the scope for growth in agricultural activity less reliant on land quality (such as shed-based activities) and the need to recognise the value of rural and agricultural land as having important landscape values should also be considered in strategic land use planning.

4.4 Agricultural manufacturing and processing

The municipality has a number of large agricultural manufacturing and processing businesses that provide significant employment in the region. In this regard, the study area acts as a regional centre of activity drawing from dairying regions in south-west Victoria and around Colac, timber plantations around the Otways and south-west, and poultry growers in much of the region including in Golden Plains Shire. Some of the major businesses and the number of employees are listed below.

- Bulla Dairy Foods (295 EFT)
- Bonlac Foods (160 EFT)
- Bartter Enterprises (620)
- AKD Softwoods (timber processing) (170 EFT)
- Calco Timbers Pty Ltd (60 EFT)
- MC Herd (230 EFT)
- CRF Colac Otway (lamb and veal processing) (210EFT)
- Midway (woodchip production) (50)

Farm suppliers are also represented in the area, with Incitec Pivot, a major supplier to retailers and farmers across Victoria employing around 100 staff.

4.5 Agricultural education and research

The established education and research centres in the area also provide a strong agricultural industry focus for Geelong.

- Marcus Oldham College Marcus Oldham College is the only independent agricultural college operating in Australia. The courses focus on business management, and the academic programs delivered include a Bachelor of Business (Agricultural

Management), Advanced Diploma of Farm Business Management and a Diploma of Agribusiness.

- CSIRO - Geelong: Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) The Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) is a major facility of CSIRO Livestock Industries and plays a vital role in maintaining Australia's capability to quickly diagnose exotic (foreign) and emerging animal diseases. This facility provides employment in the vicinity of 230 EFT.
- CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology Centre invents, develops and commercialises technologies for new and improved products and processes, quality control, and environmental safety at every stage of the wool, cotton, textile and leather processing pipelines. This facility provides employment in the vicinity of 230 EFT.
- Deakin University – Cool Climate Wine Science Program: Deakin University – Cool Climate Wine Science Program which affiliated with the National Wine and Grape Industry Centre provides the leading role in national coordination of research and development in cool climate wines across all production zones. The program is a joint venture between Deakin, the Victorian Wine Industry association and Charles Sturt University and is helping to position Victoria on the international wine map through its leading edge teaching and research and development program.



4.6 Issues for the future of agriculture in Geelong

A set of future management issues face the agricultural areas and industries of Greater Geelong. These include the scale of many farm business in the area, the overall challenges of managing land, particularly when in transition to a less-commercial use, pressure from urban and urban-generated land uses, the suitability of a number of forms of agriculture to the Geelong region and the consequent cost of farming land.

Farm Business Size and Scale

Most farms in Geelong (86%) generate less than \$200,000 per annum and fall into the part-time and small category. The remaining 14% are of a scale with capacity and scope to more readily grow and change. Smaller farm businesses are more vulnerable to market and climactic threats, and face greater challenges to remain in the industry. Uncertainty with these businesses may result in greater pressure for land use change, although many of these farming businesses are supported by outside income for lifestyle reasons and the location of this area and its access to urban employment ideally suits this situation.

Since 1983 the total area farmed and the number of producers has dropped by 14% and 33% respectively. Like many other peri-urban locations, shifts from full-time farming and the increasing linkages to urban-based employment suggests that this trend is likely to continue into the future.

Industry Name	Part Time Properties (<100k)	Small Properties (\$100k - \$200k)	Medium Properties (\$200k - \$500k)	Large Properties (\$500k - \$1mill)	Dynamic Properties (>\$1mill)	Total Properties
Poultry	1	1	1	1	2	7
Plant Nurseries	4	2	5	2	1	14
Vegetables	11	7	8	3	-	30
Grapes	12	5	-	2	-	19
Beef	69	5	-	1	-	76
Dairy	3	1	1	1	-	6
Mixed Farming	25	8	7	-	-	39
Grain	4	1	2	-	-	7
Flowers	2	3	1	-	-	6
Sheep	46	2	1	-	-	49
Other	45	3	2	-	-	49
Total	222	39	29	12	3	305
% of Total	73	13	10	4	1	100

Table 1 Agricultural industry structure by estimated value of agricultural operations (ABS 2001)

Farm affordability

A comparison of median sales prices for rural land in Greater Geelong, Golden Plains and Colac Otway indicates that significantly higher prices are paid for all types of rural land in Greater Geelong. This has had a significant impact on investment in farm businesses. For example, 75% of the farm capital of a beef grazing business is the land value. For a business to grow by investing profit (as opposed to capital growth), high land values will pose a significant risk as only highly profitable businesses will be able to generate sufficient return on capital to service borrowings. In the City of Greater Geelong increases in land prices have resulted in a move to more intensive agricultural businesses such as poultry, nurseries and grape and a decline in traditional broadacre enterprises. It has also led to broadacre producers leasing land to grow their farm businesses as an alternative to land purchase. In the long-term broadacre producers looking to expand the farm business may look outside the municipality for more affordable land. The table below provides information on median sale prices for different farm land types in Greater Geelong, Golden Plains and Colac Otway municipalities.

Land Use	Greater Geelong (\$/ha)	Golden Plains (\$/ha)	Colac Otway (\$/ha)
Beef	14,609	7,059	1,730
Cereal	44,704	3,458	5,784
Farm land (without house)	17,745	6,995	5,339
Hobby farm (with house)	219,706	42,750	54,863
Hobby farm land (without house)	62,000	19,748	14,520
Sheep	7,345	-	-
Unspecified rural	10,215	9,363	7,399

Table 2 Comparison of Median Sales Prices (Valuer General 2004)

Urban Encroachment

The City of Greater Geelong continues to experience sustained population growth. Much of that growth has occurred on the fringes of the existing urban areas resulting in pressure in adjoining rural areas and land uses. Residential development was concentrated largely in South Barwon, Bellarine Peninsula Corio and Geelong East (G21 Region Plan). Urban (and other non-farm) encroachment often places pressure on farm businesses through:

- Upward pressure on agricultural land prices
- Hampering some farm operations, e.g. stock and machinery movement
- Conflict between urban and rural neighbours arising from farm activities, e.g. noise odour
- Broad perceptions of future land use change

Without suitable and active land use strategies and policies aiming to limit conflict between urban and rural activities, Council will be called on to resolve an increasing number of disputes, while farm businesses may consider relocation in the longer term. Design of residential areas adjoining farming areas should seek to minimise impact on farming operations.

4.7 Opportunities for the growth of agricultural value in Geelong

Aquaculture

Aquaculture has been identified in the City's economic development strategy as offering significant opportunities for Geelong.

The main form of aquaculture in the Geelong Arm Aquaculture Fisheries Reserves is mussel aquaculture and spat collection. There has also been some research and development in the grow-out of scallops and flat oysters and pilot scale abalone cage culture.

There are four aquaculture reserves in Geelong region:

- Clifton Springs Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve - 315 ha located approximately 1km offshore from the Bellarine Peninsula
- Grassy Point Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve - 252 ha located approximately 600m offshore from the Bellarine Peninsula
- Kirk Point – Werribee Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve - 200 ha located in the Geelong Outer Harbour
- Bates Point Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve - 25 ha located 700m from Point Lillias in the Geelong Outer Harbour

There are two land based aquaculture reserves to be declared at Point Lillias/Avalon. There is already one abalone farm established in the Avalon reserve. Great Southern Waters at Indented Head is the largest land based aquaculture enterprise in the state.

Large areas of the reserves are still to be developed and represent a significant opportunity for further production and processing. Rates of development of greenfield and unallocated sites will be set by Fisheries Victoria in consultation with key stakeholders.

Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve	Average value (\$million)	Average tonnage (t)
Bates Point	0.399	53
Clifton Springs	0.192	82
Grassy Point	0.191	35
Kirk Point	0.104	19

Table 3 Average commercial catch between 2000 – 2004

Irrigated Agriculture

A Business Case Study into a Balliang District Recycled Water Trunk Pipeline was undertaken to determine the feasibility of developing additional and new areas of irrigated agriculture and horticulture, utilising recycled water from the Werribee Wastewater Treatment Plant. The study found significant areas suitable for irrigation development of high value crops in the Balliang, You Yangs and Moorabool districts. Other opportunities for beneficial use of the recycled water may come from third-pipe developments and contribution to environmental flows. Key constraints to irrigation development (and other beneficial uses) are the requirement for further water treatment to reduce phosphorous and salinity levels and the high cost of construction of the pipeline and associated infrastructure. There are also opportunities for reuse of treated water on the Bellarine Peninsula, and these opportunities are currently being pursued by landowners. With the risks of climate change, increasing cost of water and challenging terms of trade for agriculture reuse of treated water in the region is a significant opportunity for enhancing agricultural land use and outputs.

4.8 Strategic issues

The G21 project has identified that the City’s rural industries and agricultural production is part of a wider regional economy which is undergoing considerable change and cost pressures. G21 has identified that there are further opportunities for intensification in some commodities based on better utilisation of soil resources and recycled water. The limitations in the City are based around economies of scale, other land use pressures and the cost of

land. As a result the pattern of agricultural production is not necessarily that found in traditional areas. The *Understanding the Region and the Challenges for the Future* report notes that 'only a few growers practice broadacre cropping, with a strong dependence on share farming, leasing land or providing contract services to achieve economies of scale' (p. 19). The G21 project notes that the overall agricultural outlook includes factors such as

- Need for increased scale
- Further leasing of land
- Adding value on site or nearby
- Energy costs and climate change
- Impacts of urban development
- Land owners motivated by rural living and lifestyle opportunities

The report particularly notes that planning scheme provisions are neither a cause nor a solution to many of the forces acting upon farming and agricultural land use in the region and particularly in the City. The City has maintained strong support for agriculture in the municipality through rigorous planning controls that have retained land in large parcels and minimised housing associated with land use change. These planning controls have preserved a legacy and engrained a mindset that offers agriculture a future.

Agriculture has also been maintained in Geelong due to land quality and opportunities for employment outside the sector, despite, or possibly supported by, the huge demand for rural lifestyle properties. The value of agricultural activity in the area remains significant in terms of economic contribution and contribution to the maintenance of valuable rural landscapes. Additionally, real opportunities for on going use, growth and diversification exist, and protection of the land as a resource, and the pattern of rural land settlement offers important benefits for future flexibility and existing farm businesses.



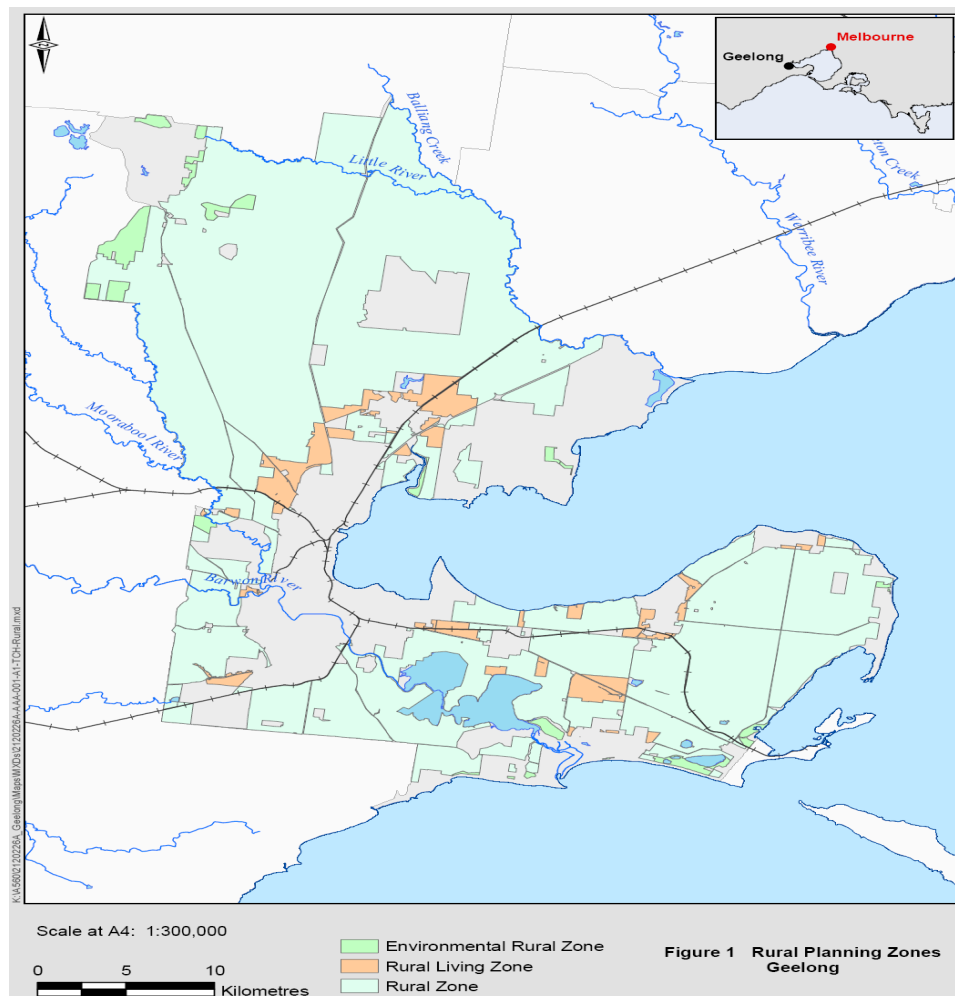
5. Rural Living in Greater Geelong

5.1 Overview

Rural living in Greater Geelong takes many forms; large scale residential subdivisions, scattered coastal developments and small farmlets, including those actively farming yet relying on economic and employment links to urban areas. In many ways the existing rural landscapes, including the broad range of agricultural activities in numerous areas, already offers scope for rural lifestyles with good connections to coastal centres and Geelong city.

Geelong has traditionally taken a conservative approach to planning for specific rural living development. It has held a strong position in relation to this form of development over time, and while it has provided a level of supply, it has not supported extensive areas of rural living lots, as have many other rural municipalities. The rural living development formally provided in Geelong is within a number of distinct nodes, and consists of lots of between 1ha and 3ha. This approach seeks to strike a balance between the inefficiencies of land use and infrastructure supply associated with rural living, and the genuine demand expressed.

The map below identifies the areas of land formally set aside for rural living development in Geelong



Map 2 Rural Zones in City of Greater Geelong

The areas set aside for, and zoned, Rural Living are coloured brown in the map. The Geelong Planning Scheme states that rural residential development will be concentrated at the designated nodes of Lara, Lovely Banks, Drysdale/Clifton Springs, Batesford and Wallington.

In addition to these formal rural living areas, a number of other rural areas are used more for residential purposes than farming purposes. This can be attributed to changing agricultural economics, lack of suitable supply of rural living land elsewhere and population trends such as “sea change” and “tree change”. Although Council seeks to prevent Rural zoned land changing from a farming use to a residential use through the planning approval process, the ability to manage the long term use of farms with existing houses is limited.

Rural living is considered to be the use of rural land primarily for residential purposes, and may or may not be associated with some form of agriculture. Farm dwellings or rural houses are those that are on properties that are primarily used for agriculture, and the residential function of the property is ancillary to the farming function. The evident movement of some large scale agricultural activities to areas beyond the municipality offers an opportunity for changes in the perceptions and use of agricultural land to provide rural lifestyle characteristics without increasing the overall intensity of residential development beyond the existing urban centres.

5.2 City of Greater Geelong Rural Residential Strategy 1994

In 1994, Council adopted a strategic position on Rural Residential Development that sought to accommodate a form of low density residential development. This strategy identified that the preferred areas for rural living expansion were at Lara, Batesford, Wallington and Drysdale. These nominated nodes were nominated based on access to infrastructure, and other planning considerations such as protection of urban growth options, high quality agricultural land and environmental qualities. The strategy also included a policy of providing for the demand for living in a rural environment through rural township growth and consolidation.

5.3 Supply and demand

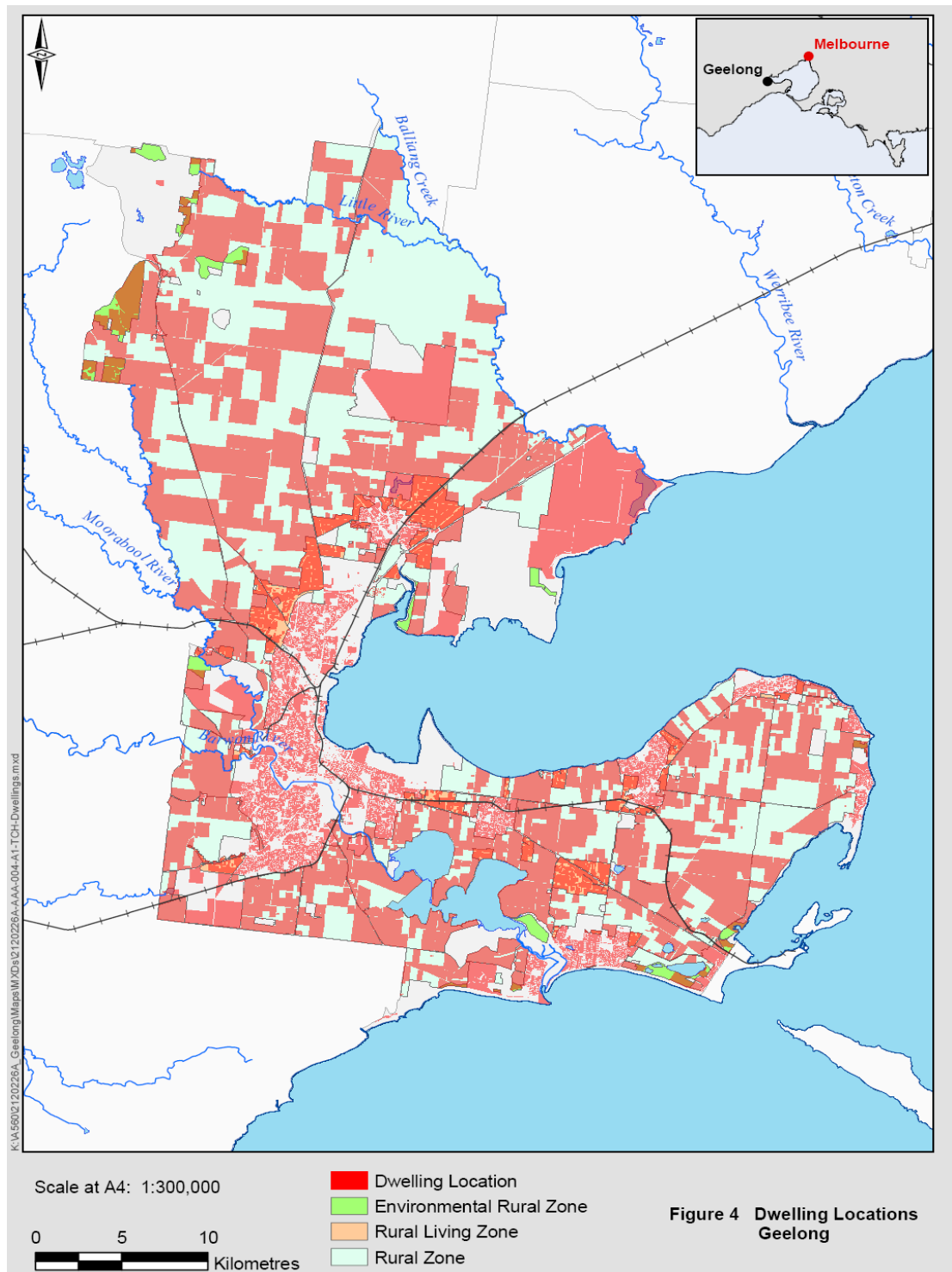
There is a strong demand for rural living development in rural areas generally within 100km of Melbourne, and within 50km of regional centres. The demand in this area is particularly strong due to the high amenity and proximity to the coast.

Discussions with local Real Estate Agents indicate that the majority of rural land sold within the City of Greater Geelong is sold to “lifestylers” regardless of lot size.

Unfortunately, Council does not have accessible data available that would assist in understanding of the level of demand for this form of land use, such as subdivision and building approval numbers. A review of lot sizes and dwelling locations within the Rural Living zoned areas indicates that most areas are near to fully developed.

A review of housing development throughout the rural areas of Geelong indicates that many rural lots are used for rural living purposes, or a combination of residential and small scale farming purposes, based on an understanding of lot size and the prevailing agricultural trends.

The map below shows dwelling locations across the relevant rural zones. It suggests that the rural areas of Geelong are not being farmed in a traditional manner, as the predominant dryland farming trend is consolidation and expansion. Information on the extensive share farming and leasing of land for cropping and grazing that occurs in the City's rural areas supports this finding.

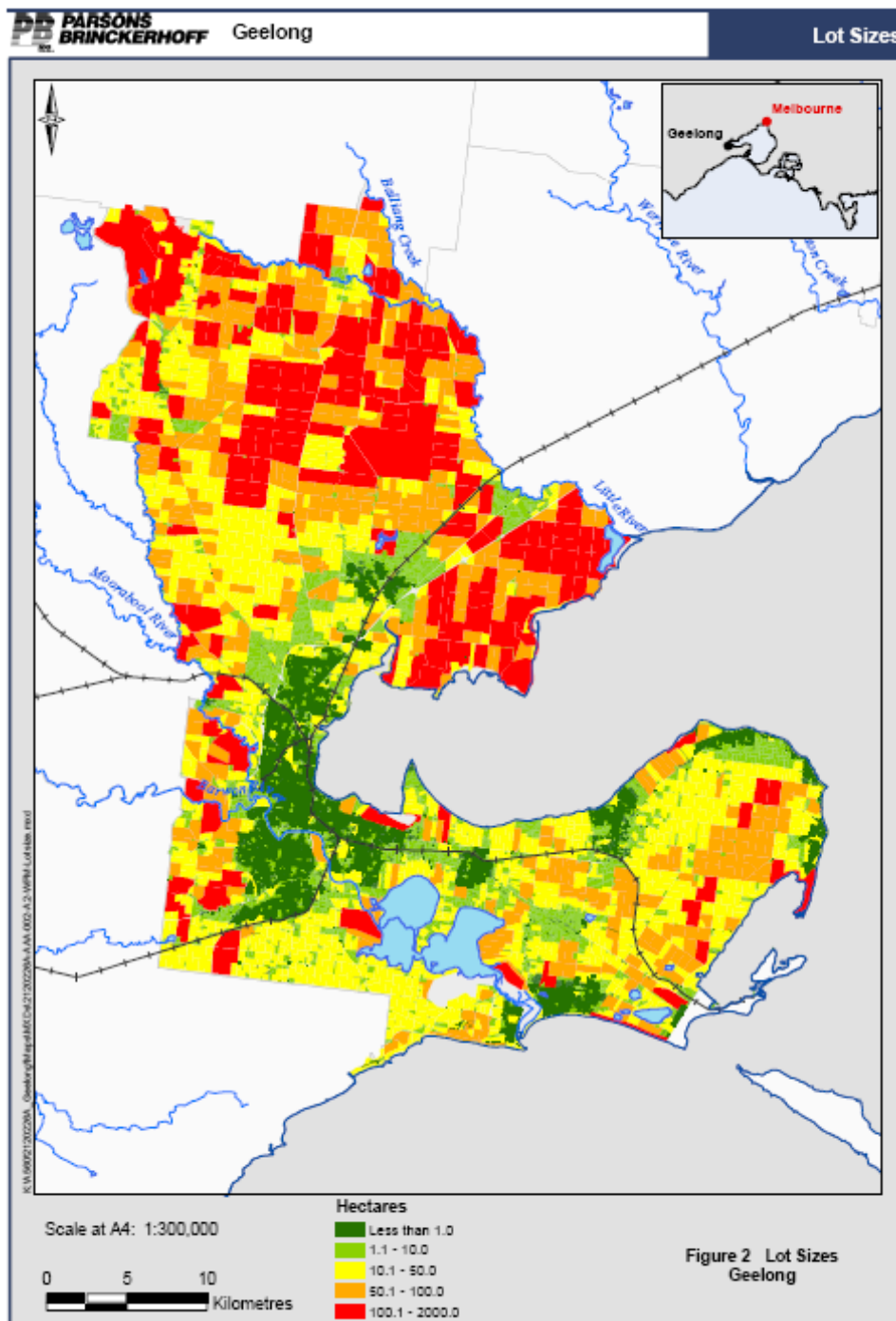


Map 3 Dwellings in Rural Areas

Council's relatively strong position on planned rural living development and the protection of agricultural land has resulted in the maintenance of large rural lots. Although as discussed

elsewhere in this report, most of these lots are too small to be used independently for a profitable, traditional farm business, and are not of a size that dissuades lifestyle purchasers.

The map below shows that most lots in the Rural Zone are over 10ha in area, with a significant number more than 50ha in area.



Map 4 Lot Sizes in Rural Areas

5.4 Minister's Direction 6 – Rural Residential Development

Minister's Direction 6 seeks to manage the provision of sustainable rural residential development so that it supports sustainable housing and settlements and does not compromise Victoria's agricultural, natural, environmental, landscape and infrastructure resources.

Minister's Direction No 6 requires a planning authority to demonstrate that the proposed rural residential development:

- is consistent with the housing needs and settlement strategy of the area
- is supported by and supports sustainable and viable settlements and communities
- does not compromise the sustainable future use of existing natural resources, including productive agricultural land, water, mineral and energy resources
- protects existing visual and environmental qualities of the area, such as landscape, water quality, native vegetation, habitat and biodiversity values
- avoids predictable adverse environmental processes and effects, such as flooding, erosion, landslip, salinity or wildfire
- can efficiently be serviced by social and physical infrastructure, at an acceptable and sustainable community cost.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment have recently released a practice note "Rural Residential Development Guidelines" (October, 2006) to support implementation of Minister's Direction 6.

The requirements of these documents seek to improve the consideration and assessment in planning for rural residential development.

5.5 Strategic considerations

The opportunity to live in an attractive rural area is an important part of Council's settlement and economic development strategy. It is recognised that the ability to live in an attractive environment is a key part of attracting highly skilled workers. Preservation of this high quality rural environment is dependant on maintaining development at low density, and encouraging farming activity. The density of the planned rural living development in Geelong, although offering a realistic opportunity for many to enjoy a pseudo rural environment, does not support this desired rural landscape.

Rural living development can change the amenity of the area through additional development and the associated pressures on landscapes, the environment and infrastructure, as well as placing pressures on the continued viability of agricultural activities. Rural living is more expensive and less efficient to service than conventional residential development and growth beyond existing urban areas places pressure on the integrity of the settlement structure in Geelong and the smaller communities – both coastal and inland.

The existing distribution of rural housing, and the planning scheme do make provision for rural lifestyle development. In Geelong this includes agricultural activity and relies strongly on access to urban employment. Much of this development has a shared role; as residential sites, as agricultural land and as a landscape asset. Protecting these roles can be

accomplished, but largely through recognising that these shared roles are at risk from further development at levels that alter the essential character of the areas. Zoning land as an agricultural and as a landscape asset still offers opportunities to meet the genuine market demand for rural lifestyles in this location.



6. Environmental Issues

6.1 Overview

The City of Greater Geelong's rural land is important not only for its productive capacity and landscape values but also for its environmental and biodiversity values. The condition of the environment will affect the productive capacity of farmland and landscape values. The Greater Geelong rural area is home to many significant environmental features and places, including the Barwon and Moorabool rivers, the Brisbane Ranges National Park, You Yangs Regional Park, Barabool Hills, Bellarine Peninsula and Corio Bay.

Particularly significant in Geelong, are 114 wetlands totalling 11,630ha that play an important role as part of the overall ecosystem of the region. Many of these wetlands are recognised under the Ramsar convention, identifying wetlands of international importance. These include Swan Bay which is approximately 3,000ha in size with a 170 square kilometre catchment, Lake Connewarre/Reedy Lake and the coastal wetlands on the northern shore of Corio Bay, including Limeburners Bay. The wetlands provide habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna, including migratory birds, many of which are included in the Australian international migratory bird agreements with China and Japan (CAMBA and JAMBA).

Unfortunately a history of settlement, development and farming activity has compromised many of the environmental values of the City. This rural strategy should be based on an understanding of the environmental values and threats and seek to plan for an improvement to environmental conditions.

6.2 Key environmental issues

6.2.1 Waterway degradation

Greater Geelong's waterways are in poor condition because of inappropriate land use practices including vegetation clearance, habitat destruction, and polluted runoff, along with increased water demand in urban and rural areas. The region's waterways are faced with high nutrient and sediment levels, degraded riparian zones, altered flows and polluted or saline surface and groundwater. The monitored rivers and creeks within the Greater Geelong area range from marginal to very poor condition, most being brackish to saline.

The Moorabool and Barwon Rivers are identified in the Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy (2003-2008) as the most flow stressed river systems in the region and both have high salinity, nutrient and sediment levels.

Increased numbers of dams within the catchment, associated with rural living, contributes to water quality and quantity issues. Land in the northwest of the City is part of a declared water supply catchment, heightening the reasons why land use must be appropriately managed to ensure the best possible water quality and quantity. The ongoing role of rural areas in general as a water supply catchment is a critical factor in determining the future use of rural land.

6.2.2 Soil degradation

The Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy (2003-2008) identifies that there are many serious soil degradation issues in the Greater Geelong area. Existing problems include soil erosion by water and wind, specifically in the City's northern rural areas; mass movements; landslides and soil creep; soil structure decline including soil sodicity and waterlogging; soil acidity; and soil fertility decline.

Acid sulphate soils, soils containing iron sulphides, were also identified and Department of Primary Industry mapping shows the estimated extent of these soils is around the coast on the northern stretches of Corio Bay and the Bellarine Peninsula, wetland areas around Lake Connewarre, along the southern stretches of the Barwon and Moorabool Rivers and around Breamlea. The disturbance of these soils can result in acid runoffs.

6.2.3 Salinity

Land affected by salinity is scattered throughout the Greater Geelong area – with the main problem areas being similar to those described as having acid sulphate soils on the lowlands close to wetlands and some coastal areas. There are also areas affected by salinity in the north of the City. Salinity has resulted from land clearing and land use practices (including irrigation) that result in a greater recharge of groundwater. Salinity affects the productive potential of the land, compromises native vegetation and habitat and affects water quality, all undermining the quality of the rural area.

6.2.4 Native vegetation degradation

The Geelong Planning Scheme highlights that vegetation clearing, spread of pest plants and animals, grazing and changed drainage patterns are the most significant threats to flora and fauna. Urban growth in Geelong presents another threat to existing native vegetation surrounding the urban areas. Only 5% of the pre-European indigenous vegetation remains, and what does is mostly severely degraded and limited to along roadsides.

Most remnant vegetation is located on public land throughout the City; however there is also significant native vegetation on some private land. The Biodiversity Management Strategy highlights that the most extensive vegetation remains in areas of high environmental significance such as the Brisbane Ranges and Lake Connewarre. Other remnant vegetation of high conservation significance includes in-stream vegetation of the Lower Barwon River, coastal salt marshes and mangrove shrub lands, along with some Scoria Cone woodland on Mt Anakie.

The majority of endangered, vulnerable, depleted and rare classed vegetation in the City of Greater Geelong is located in coastal areas, wetlands, waterways and large scale public parks. There are only a few small, isolated pockets of remnant native grasslands scattered throughout the Greater Geelong area. Protection, regrowth and establishment of wildlife corridors is important for flora, fauna, land and water system health.

The region needs effective corridors and links between patches of indigenous vegetation to enhance biodiversity. All rivers, waterways, coastal areas and wetlands within the City of Greater Geelong have been recognised for their importance as sensitive and rich biological systems, for the drainage and filtration functions and important role as biological linkages and corridors. In particular, communities on the Bellarine Peninsula have identified the need to enhance flora and fauna values through the development of wildlife corridors. Vegetation

enhancement brings benefits in terms of biodiversity, farmland productivity and landscape improvement.



6.2.5 Pest plants and animals

The presence of non native species in the Greater Geelong area has been attributed to decreased agricultural productivity and continued degradation of habitat and biodiversity values. Common species are Serrated Tussock, Chilean Needle Grass, Texas Needle Grass, Patterson's Curse and Gorse. Broadacre cropping is a strategy implemented to manage serrated tussock. Rabbits are the major pest animal in the area. Foxes and other feral animals are also an issue, along with domestic pets in rural areas, in particular cats, that are not appropriately managed.

6.2.6 Wildfire

Areas in the foothills of the Brisbane Ranges and parts of Anakie township in the City's northwest are very susceptible to wildfire occurrences as evidenced by recent events. A combination of the existence of fuel loads, proximity to State forest and access and egress issues in the area, along with the need to supplement water supplies, combine to place the area at risk of wildfire.

6.2.7 Flooding

During a 1 in 100 year event 775ha of land in the municipality is affected by flooding. The Moorabool River is of low flood risk and the Barwon River is of medium flood risk.

6.2.8 Coastal area degradation

Erosion, destruction of seagrass communities, saline wetland and coastal land degradation are major coastal issues. Coastal management needs to be on a catchment basis so that land activities are carefully planned to ensure that coastal environments are not degraded because of inappropriate activities that create polluted runoff or introduction of pest plants and animals to coastal areas.

6.2.9 Swan Bay

Swan Bay is one of the most intact areas of wetland and marine ecosystem in Port Phillip Bay and is approximately 3,000ha in size and part of a Ramsar wetland. The 170 square

kilometre bay catchment is largely rural but with rapidly growing areas. Uses in both rural and urban areas have the potential to adversely affect Swan Bay, with vegetation loss, erosion runoff, along with bird predation from foxes dogs and cats, all serious issues. There is only 3% of indigenous vegetation remaining in the Swan Bay catchment, with many species being endangered, rare or vulnerable. Adequate protection and enhancement of this vegetation is required, along with ensuring that development within the catchment does not result in unacceptable runoff. Proactive community groups and local residents have undertaken significant on ground works to improve this catchment.

6.2.10 Climate Change

Climate change has significant implications for the environment, settlement and agriculture in the region. Change in rainfall patterns could compromise agricultural or rural living opportunities and settlements could be threatened by sea level changes. Rural areas can be used for carbon sinks as part of a strategy to manage the local contribution to carbon emissions and climate change.

6.3 Environment Management and Policy

A range of environmental policy documents provide a context for managing the rural areas of Geelong, these include;

- Greater Geelong Planning Scheme
- Environment Management Strategy 2006-2011
- CoGG Environmental Management Policy
- City Plan 2006 - 2010
- Swan Bay Catchment Action Plan 2002
- Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan 2006-2016
- Biodiversity Management Strategy 2003
- Corio Bay Coastal Action Plan 2005
- Coastal Spaces Recommendation Report, April 2006
- Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy 2003-2008 and associated documents
- Port Phillip & Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy 2004 - 2009
- Victorian Coastal Strategy

6.3.1 Environment Management Strategy 2006-2011

The City of Greater Geelong Environment Management Strategy highlights biodiversity management, sustainable agriculture, coastal and marine and waterways and wetlands as the four natural environment focus areas.

Key environmental objectives include;

- zero tolerance to weeds and pest animals;
- net gain in the quantity and quality of indigenous vegetation;
- improving connectivity and long-term security of indigenous habitats and species;

- community education relating to biodiversity and indigenous flora;
- working with farmers and farming groups to protect indigenous bushland on private farmland;
- managing coastal erosion and undertaking revegetation to ensure long-term protection and rehabilitation of the City's waterways and wetlands;
- protecting the connectivity between major wetlands through protection of significant wetland chains;
- containing all new urban development within designated growth areas.

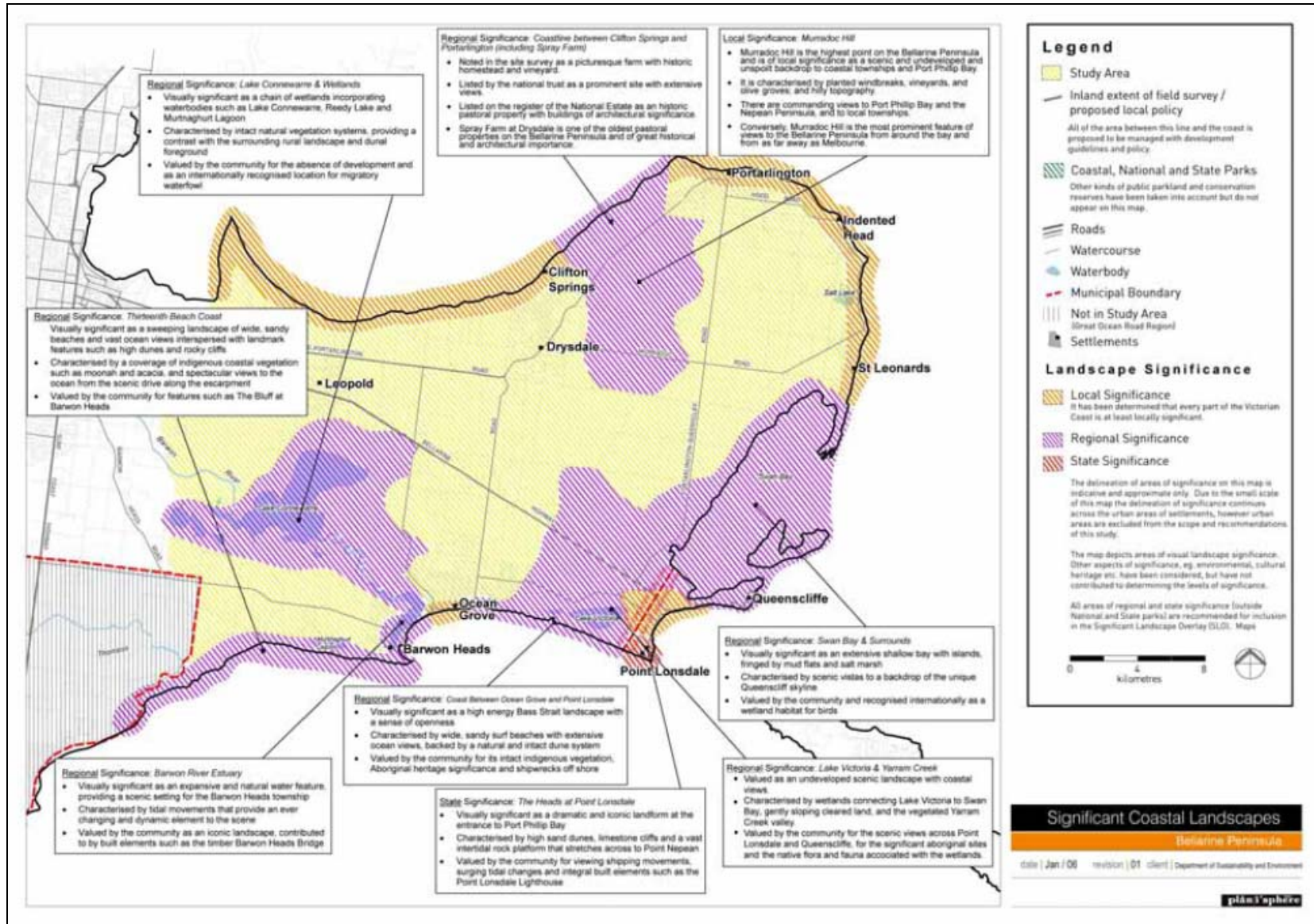
6.4 Landscape values: Coastal Spaces Recommendation Report, April 2006

The Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report (April 2006) prepared by the Department of Sustainability and Environment identifies issues and actions for locations across Victoria's coastal region. This report highlights the role of Geelong as a regional centre, with the capacity to accommodate the demand for growth associated with the coast. Bellarine Peninsula settlements also have capacity for growth, but clear settlement boundaries are required to maintain non urban areas between settlements.

The importance of the non-urban coastal landscape is identified, and a landscape assessment of the Bellarine Peninsula has concluded that all coastal areas and some inland locations of the Bellarine Peninsula are of local, regional or state visual significance. These are summarised below;

- State significance: the Heads at Point Lonsdale
- Regional significance: Lake Connewarre & wetlands, coastline between Clifton Springs and Portarlington, Thirteenth Beach coast, Barwon River Estuary, coastline between Ocean Grove and Point Lonsdale, Lake Victoria and Yarram Creek and Swan Bay & surrounds
- Local significance, Murradoc Hill and all remaining coastline on the Bellarine Peninsula

The implementation of rural zones is encouraged to avoid any further conflicting use, developments and negative impacts of these in a land-use sense and a coastal environment sense. The report calls for increased strategic management and planning direction to ensure that large scale residential / leisure developments are only developed in appropriate locations.



Map 5 Significant Coastal Landscapes (source: Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report, DSE, 2006)

6.5 Strategic considerations

From a land use planning perspective, the management of the rural environment in Greater Geelong has two key elements; landscape management in rural settings, including the management of native vegetation within farmed landscapes, and the management of coastal and wetland environments, particularly on the Bellarine Peninsula. This second element is challenged by a context of strong residential development trends in coastal areas throughout Victoria. Not only can this growth have an impact on the identity and form of the numerous coastal and near-coastal settlements in the area, but it can also be seen to present risks to coastal environments. This in turn has implications for the value of the coastal hinterland as a clearly rural landscape. Effective planning in this setting needs to be cognisant of the importance of the area as a tourism and environmental asset and implementation of any rural strategy should seek to protect and enhance the local environmental condition.

7. Economy

7.1 Overview

Originally the economy of Geelong was based on agricultural production in the rural areas. Geelong was settled in the colonial era, serving local pastoralists and a thriving wool trade. It expanded rapidly in the 1850s when it served as the principal port for the Victorian Gold Rush. The late nineteenth century saw the export of wool and textiles, before the industrial base shifted in the 1920s towards manufacturing, with the establishment of the Ford Motor Company plant 1925.



Figure 1 Moorabool Wharf, Geelong, c.1910
Geelong Historical Records Centre Collection

Today Geelong is the largest regional city in Victoria with a population of more than 200,000, which is expected to grow to about 270,000 by 2030. A large proportion of this population growth is forecast in what can now be termed 'rural areas', especially those areas on the fringes of existing coastal communities (e.g. Ocean Grove, Drysdale/Clifton Springs).

Geelong is well serviced by transport infrastructure that provides interstate and international linkages. It is approximately one hour by road to Melbourne airport while Avalon airport, which services domestic flight travel, is located just north of the city. Geelong is Australia's sixth largest seaport.

7.2 Geelong economy

With the recent restructuring of the Australian economy away from heavy industry, manufacturing has declined and has been replaced by service sectors such as retail trade, property and business services, and health and community services. Other population linked industries such as Construction have also grown strongly recently in unison with the population. The figure on the following page shows Geelong's employment structure in comparison to that of Victoria, and the local Average Annual Growth Rate from 1991 to 2001.

Manufacturing remains an important economic foundation for Geelong, even though it continues to decline in employment and share of economic output. Comparisons with the Australian economy also suggest that Geelong has significant strengths in construction, retail and health and community services.

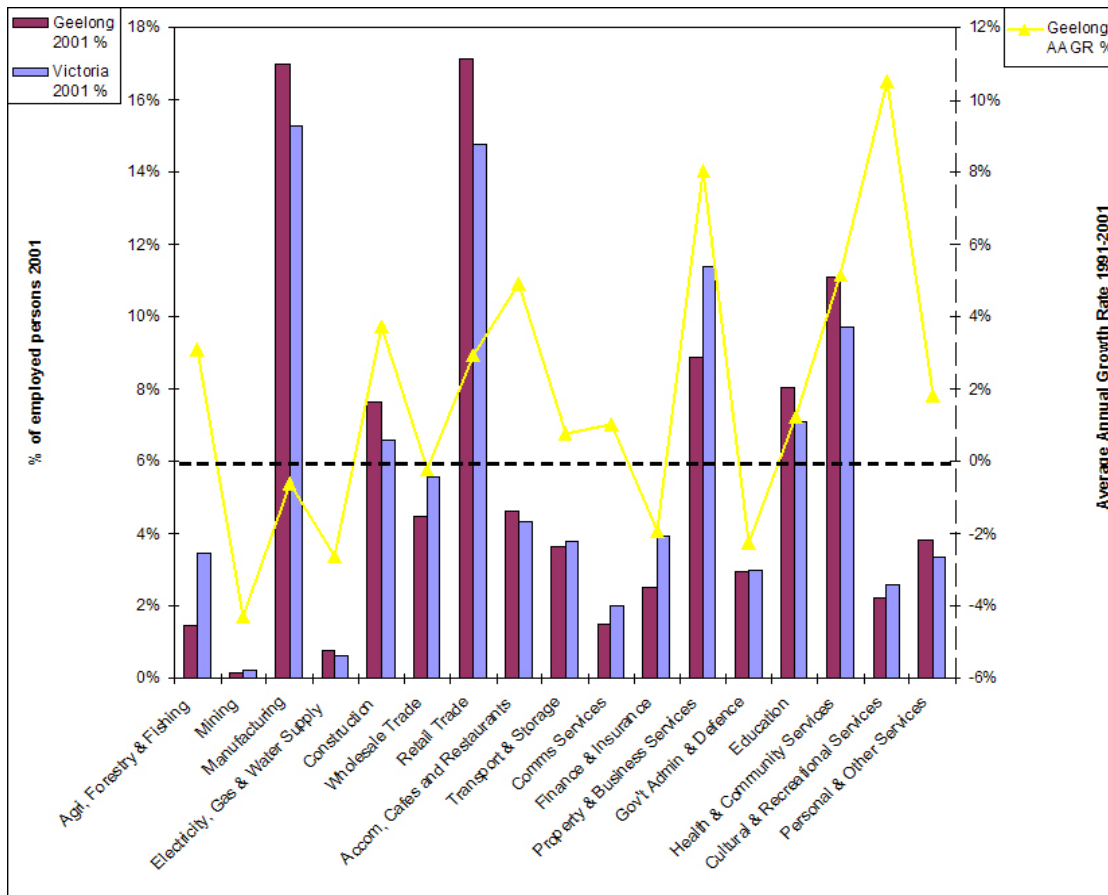


Figure 2 A comparison between the Geelong and Victorian Workforce, 2001

Source: ABS Census, 2001

7.2.1 Regional role

Geelong has long been recognised for its significant regional role not only in serving the immediate Geelong region but much of the wider western district of Victoria with goods and services and acting as a hub for agricultural product processing and export through the port. The City continues to expand on those functions as the capacity of the economy increases. It is though being recognised that not all these functions can necessarily occur within the City's urban area or indeed within the municipal boundaries.

Large scale land using functions such as processing or storage of agricultural commodities from the wider region need sites well buffered from residential areas but accessible to transport facilities. Other uses such as intensive animal industries may, because of their buffer distance requirements, need to be accommodated outside the City. As the population and economy of Geelong expand there is greater attention to the regional implications of key decisions about the investment in and major land uses. The relatively recent formation of G21 recognises that the hinterland of Geelong based around the four adjoining and nearby municipalities forms an area which includes a wider range of elements and attributes all of which contribute to the continued strength of the whole region. Much of the region's economic activity is integrated across that wider area. Some of the land uses which require a 'rural' area because of buffer distances such as intensive animal industries may well be able to be better accommodated in adjoining municipalities – in particular in parts of Golden Plains Shire where such sites can be found. Agriculture provides about 1.5% or 1,130 jobs of

the total jobs in the Greater Geelong municipality. In the northern section of the City (around Anakie) there is a greater percentage of people working in rural industry in comparison to the rest of the municipality.



7.3 Tourism and the economy

Tourism is an important contributor to the local economy, providing approximately 4,200 full-time positions within the local labour market and generating \$478 million to the local economy. Tourism also offers great potential for future growth if managed strategically. Conventions and conferences generate approximately \$56 million per annum, with the area capturing 29% of the regional Victoria day-meeting market. At the State level, it is the fastest growing job sector.

Visitor data for the wider Great Ocean Road region, which includes parts of the City, indicate that for the year ending June 2005, there were 4.36 million domestic daytrip visitors, 2.49 million domestic overnight visitors, and 172,000 international overnight visitors. Of the more lucrative overnight market, 80% of visitors came from within Victoria, 17% from interstate and 11% from the international market.

Unfortunately, data is not available at a more refined geographic level. It appears that the City currently fails to fully capitalise on these massive tourism flows. The Melbourne Surrounds Regional Tourism Development Plan 2005-2007, which also includes parts of the City, identifies Geelong as a Level 1 destination, the highest ranking. This is based upon its national and international appeal, proximity to Melbourne, range of accommodation, attractions and services, and high level of visitor satisfaction.

Tourism strategies in the Geelong area have traditionally focussed on the urban area and the City's coastal assets. Since the restructure of local government there has been an increasing recognition of the potential of tourism and recreation expenditure to be a major economic and investment element and that tourism must be linked to wider regional products.

As a total product region the City's tourist appeal is clearly focussed on the waterfront and the range of coastal towns and their bay and ocean frontages. The Geelong region is part of a 'package' of areas that surround Melbourne, but it also competes with places such as the Mornington Peninsula, the Dandenongs the Yarra Valley and the Macedon Ranges for day trippers and those looking for places to visit close to Melbourne. The car-ferry between Queenscliff and the Mornington Peninsula has provided Geelong and the Bellarine

Peninsula with an opportunity to be part of a circuit with other locations. A major component of the role of Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula is to be a 'stopover' place on the way to the attractions of the Great Ocean Road.

The rural areas of Geelong play an important role in the tourist economy as many people visit the area for the beaches on the Bellarine Peninsula, wineries, natural features such as the You Yangs and Brisbane Ranges. Weekender/ day trip markets are significant drivers in this area, as intermittent tourism blends with heightened demand for semi-permanent rural/ beach getaways. Tourism and associated industries such as food processing, retailing and hospitality are becoming increasingly important to Geelong's rural areas.

In terms of the Geelong region acting as a destination, the role of the many coastal towns on the Bellarine Peninsula is critical. With a wide range of accommodation these towns attract large numbers of visitors and those staying for extended periods particularly during the summer. Traditionally caravan and camping areas have played a strong role in providing accommodation. Cost pressures and the capacity for private operators to realise higher returns for their land for residential development has seen a number of caravan/camping parks close, placing greater pressure on existing accommodation facilities and demands for new facilities in some cases away from the coast. While there has been a long focus on the coast as the City's premier tourist attraction and this is expected to remain there is increasing attention being given to realising the contributions of rural areas as part of the product mix or as an attraction in its own right. Concepts such as farm stays, cabins or bed and breakfast on rural properties have gained greater interest. The proximity of the City's rural areas to other attractions particularly the coast has meant that sites in the rural areas are being examined for accommodation such as caravan parks and camping areas, upmarket tourist accommodation, tourist facilities linked with wineries and other rural produce and for activities such as equestrian facilities. While there is a tendency to focus rural tourist product on the Bellarine Peninsula there is unrealised capacity to develop a greater tourist profile associated with the You Yangs and Anakie – Brisbane Ranges area.

There is clearly scope for and a need to examine the City's rural areas as a feature that will be attractive for tourist and recreation investment. Throughout the consultation it was clear that the rural community do not support the transformation of rural areas such as the Bellarine Peninsula into an area dominated by tourist attractions and facilities. However, the City would not be realising its economic strengths if it precluded the rural areas from being an important contributor to the region's tourist and recreation product.

The reality is that it is the City's 'unspoilt' rural areas, the long sweeping views of agricultural land use against a backdrop of coastal areas that is a key element in the City's tourist product derived from the qualities of the rural areas. This important element can be quickly eroded by ad hoc poorly designed and sited and out of character tourist developments. A Rural Strategy that supports tourist development in the rural areas must be based on some very strong criteria which includes;

- Recognising that farming and agriculture are the predominant use
- The rural landscape and its maintenance is a prime quality to be protected
- Siting and high quality design are critical
- The scale of development should not be such that it transforms the important non-urban break between towns that is provided by rural areas

- Facilities should not be of a scale that mean that large numbers of people are reliant on services and facilities provided elsewhere
- The facilities should meet their own costs, that is they should be accessible by transport including ideally public transport and the cost of connection to infrastructure should be met by the proponent not the general community
- The overall design, layout and site works should make a substantial contribution to the improvement and maintenance of the environmental assets of the sites and lead to more sustainable natural resource management outcomes

The overall strategy should be a limited number of high quality facilities that strengthen the agricultural base and the rural landscape qualities and add to the City's economy and overall tourist and recreation product.

7.4 Economic development strategy 2005-10

At the heart of the City's Economic Development Strategy is a desire to promote dynamic and sustainable growth within the City. The Strategy identifies the following sectors as being capable of driving regional development and able to offer high quality and well remunerated employment:

- Knowledge, Innovation and Research
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Health
- Tourism
- Small, Micro and Home-based business
- Food and Horticulture

Of particular significance to rural areas within Greater Geelong are the Tourism, Food and Horticulture and Small, Micro and Home-based business sectors. Frequently these sectors are linked, e.g. vineyards often have a winery, and restaurant and gourmet produce shop serving tourists.

The Economic Development Strategy identifies a number of actions relevant to the Rural Strategy, including;

- Review zoning of land around West Connect to consider opportunities through improved transport connections to Geelong.
- Work with Barwon Water and other agencies to lobby for funds to investigate sustainable water recycling options in the Region particularly for food and horticultural related industries
- Support Small, Micro and Home Based Business and attract Small, Micro and Home Based Business to Geelong. Small businesses are particularly prevalent in farming, retail, tourism and hospitality sectors, which constitute the majority of employment opportunities in the rural parts of the municipality.
- Promote the ongoing development of Geelong's seafood and aquaculture industry.
- Facilitate opportunities for higher value added activities associated with the food and horticulture sector.

- Encourage options for niche markets in the food and horticulture sector.
- Encourage research and innovation in the food and horticulture sector.

Significantly, the Economic Development Strategy highlights the importance of providing attractive living, recreational and working environments in supporting a strong economy. This relates to the ability to attract creative and talented people. The rural areas are a fundamental part of the amenity of the municipality, and the ability to live in or near rural areas is an important part of its livability.

7.5 Strategic considerations

The agricultural use of the rural areas contributes to the local and regional economy directly through primary production and through related activities such as agricultural product processing, hospitality, tourism and the value of the landscape it maintains. From a land use planning perspective, maintaining these landscape values and a focus on sensitive siting and design within these areas is a central consideration in terms of the regional economy.

8. Population and Housing Growth

8.1 Overview

The Geelong region, including the City of Greater Geelong, has experienced sustained population growth and residential development since the early 1990s.

The table below shows that the City has grown by some 11,361 persons over the period 1991 to 2001, with an average annual rate of 1.0% in the 1996 - 2001 period. In 2005, the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated resident population for the whole City was 204,891.

Table 4 below shows the ABS figures for population distribution and change across the whole City during the 1991-2001 period including urban Geelong, other urban areas and the City's rural areas as defined by ABS. The ABS defines all the towns and built up areas on the Bellarine Peninsula as other urban areas.

City of Greater Geelong	1991	1996	2001
Urban Geelong	144,962	146,166	151,851
Other Urban Areas	22,154	23,483	26,310
Rural Geelong	5,824	5,760	6,170
Total City	172,940	175,409	184,331

Table 4 Population of the City of Greater Geelong 1991-2001

The population of the City's rural areas is dispersed. The rural areas essentially fall into one of four areas or precincts

- The rural areas of the Bellarine Peninsula
- The immediate periphery of the Geelong urban area – including areas bordering Surf Coast Shire to the south and Golden Plains Shire to the west
- The area to the north of the Geelong urban area and west of the You Yangs including the township of Anakie
- The area to the north east of the Geelong urban area and east and south east of the You Yangs

Each of these areas has different characteristics in terms of pressures for population growth or new housing. Most of the rural population is located on the Bellarine Peninsula. Population growth in what the ABS defined as the rural areas of the City has been modest with only an additional 350 people in the rural areas between 1991 and 2001.

Within the City of Greater Geelong population growth has been focussed in the urban areas of Geelong, however population increases have also occurred in a number of towns and settlements, particularly on the Bellarine Peninsula. While these towns are not part of the rural areas for the purposes of this study, the growth and popularity of these towns impacts on the adjoining rural areas.

The table below shows that significant population increases have occurred in a number of towns as defined by ABS including Clifton Springs, Lara, Leopold and Ocean Grove.

Defined township areas	1981	1991	2001
Barwon Heads	1245	1909	2600
Clifton Springs	2227	5847	7302
Drysdale	1127	1406	1731
Indented Head	421	551	597
Lara	4231	6318	9206
Leopold	2946	4432	6783
Ocean Grove	5532	8160	10055
Portarlington	1863	2553	2686
St Leonards	900	1206	1226

Table 5 Geelong 'Rural' Areas Population Change Defined Township Areas 1981 - 2001

Housing construction has been strong in the Geelong region particularly in the last five years. This has corresponded with rapidly rising house prices, government subsidies for first home buyers and a long period of relatively low interest rates on home mortgages.



The table below indicates the level of housing construction (house approvals) across the two areas of the City excluding the Geelong urban area (Part A) over the period 2000/01 – 2005/06 based on the ABS defined areas. These two areas are defined as Greater Geelong Part B (Bellarine Peninsula and peripheral areas on the east and south of the Geelong urban area) and Part C (areas to the north and north east of the City). Part B includes the towns on the Bellarine Peninsula. It should be noted that these ABS defined areas do not necessarily equate with the ABS defined areas referred to in Table 4.

ABS SLA	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
Part B	630	501	526	417	318
Part C	8	14	11	12	8

Table 6 Geelong ‘Rural’ Areas – New House Approvals 2001/02–2005/06

In this period the whole of the City of Greater Geelong had between 1292 (2005/06) and 2023 (2001/02) new house approvals.

8.2 Growth opportunities

The Bellarine Peninsula Land Use and Residential Lot Supply Report 2005 prepared by the City of Greater Geelong has identified that the whole of the Bellarine Peninsula will progressively, in a planned and staged manner, provide for an additional 19,000 persons in designated areas within existing urban areas and townships and adjoining areas.

The rural areas of the City of Greater Geelong have provided limited scope for development in terms of population growth and new housing construction. The City’s planning policies for rural areas and the administration of zoning provisions has not provided for the further subdivision of land into lots for residential, rural residential or rural living purposes. The City has cautiously exercised discretion in terms of granting planning permits for new houses in the rural areas. The City has sought to ensure that any residential development in the rural areas is closely linked to supporting and sustaining agricultural uses.

8.2.1 Lifestyle

While large numbers of people in the City’s rural areas are associated with continuing agriculture either on a full time or part time basis, it is evident that large numbers seek a rural location because of the lifestyle attributes of the areas.



In the rural areas of northern part of the City only 77 out of a total employed population of 1,086 at the 2001 census gave their industry of employment as agriculture. The community survey that was undertaken as part of the Bellarine Strategy reported that 41% of those surveyed identified lifestyle/amenity as the primary reason why they lived in the area.

Key characteristics of the population of the rural areas of the Bellarine Peninsula were reported in the Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan 2006 -2016 Demographic Profile for the Townships and Rural Areas of the Bellarine Peninsula prepared by the City of Greater Geelong. That report noted that 15% of the population were over 65 years in 2001, there are a large number of persons who have recently shifted to the rural areas - only 45% of the

population had lived there for more 5 years and that the population of the rural areas were projected to increase by about another 600 persons over the period to 2016.

Geelong reflects widespread and strong trends in rural living in areas of high amenity, close to Melbourne or regional centres where lifestyle and residential amenity is a key driver of housing choice instead of employment. This means that there is likely to be continued strong pressure for rural lifestyle living in the City.

8.2.2 Future growth

One of the most significant pressures on the City's rural areas is to provide for the expansion of urban areas. A large existing rural area on the southern periphery of the Geelong urban area (Armstrong's Creek) has been designated for future urban development and is currently undergoing extensive strategic planning. Other areas on the edges of Ocean Grove and Portarlington, for example, have been set aside for future urban development and are currently the subject of detailed planning investigations.

The City's adopted strategies and policies make no provision for other rural areas to be set aside for residential development. However, very long term, beyond the current planning period, it may be necessary to designate some additional areas on the periphery of urban Geelong and some townships for urban development. In the light of this situation it would be generally inappropriate to designate areas on the periphery of existing urban areas and townships for uses and development (for example rural living), which would compromise potentially suitable urban areas. However it is not proposed within the scope of this rural areas review that further areas will be identified or considered for urban expansion of the Geelong urban area or any of the towns and settlements that border the City's rural area.

In some cases rural areas of the City have been used for large scale uses which are likely to limit the attractiveness of an area for future settlement. A prime example of this is the correctional facilities on the Geelong – Bacchus Marsh Road and the Avalon Airport. While in other cases agricultural uses such as vineyards discourage closer settlement because they are associated with activities such as spraying which needs to be buffered from residential development.

8.2.3 Landscape

While the City's rural areas are used for variety of uses increasingly the dominant value in many people's eyes, both rural and urban dwellers, is the role of an attractive open landscape. Rural areas provide a 'relief' from the congestion of urban areas. The concept that one can move quickly from an urban setting to enjoy countryside is highly valued.

For the smaller settlements and towns a strongly held view is that there should be non-urban breaks between towns, which helps to retain their separate identity.

The concept of the rural landscape as a valuable urban commodity is present in many societies. The argument frequently put by those in the farming community is that this means that they are restricted in what they can do so as to provide attractive farmland for urban residents to drive through.

The appeal of the region is not only that most areas have easy access to the coast but also an attractive rural setting. Coastal Spaces (DSE, 2006) identifies that there are a number of landscapes on the Bellarine Peninsula that are of regional significance, including around

Spray Farm, Lake Connewarre, Swan Bay and Ocean Grove. This report recommends containing urban and residential development within existing township boundaries, to encourage sustainable development along the coastline.

8.2.4 Tourism and recreation development

An important consideration, in respect to planning and land use in the City's rural areas, is an increasing pressure to provide for 'one off' uses, some of which are associated with population growth and housing. The tourist and recreation pressure on the City is significant. The popularity of the Bellarine Peninsula in particular has prompted enquiries to Council for a number of possible developments including;

- Caravan/mobile home parks
- Golf courses with accommodation
- Conference/convention centres with accommodation and associated with uses such as wineries.

While some or most of these initiatives may largely provide for short stay tourist accommodation some are likely to provide options for permanent or semi-permanent accommodation. There has been a concern that proposals for caravan/mobile home park development could lead to effectively another settlement with permanent residents isolated from basic services and facilities.

At the same time the City is conscious of the need for ensuring that its housing and accommodation stock is affordable and accessible. As a general principle, and in respect to the rural areas review, the initial position has been taken not to support 'one-off' isolated accommodation uses which are likely to provide for long term residents or permanent living if it is not linked with services and facilities in established towns. Consideration could be given to tourist related developments where there is a strong basis for a rural location and where it can meet key criteria including, supporting rural and agricultural land use, being in harmony with the rural landscape, meeting all required infrastructure costs, not compromising existing agricultural uses and enhancing the environment significantly.

8.3 Strategic considerations

The City's long term planning agenda has been to provide for the majority of population growth in planned extensions of the existing urban area of Geelong, and in selected settlements such as Lara or townships on the Bellarine Peninsula. Very limited provision has been made for low density, rural residential or rural living development. Rural areas have not provided for ad hoc rural living development. The City has consistently adopted the approach of maintaining rural landscapes within the context of population growth in urban areas. Planning for non urban breaks between urban areas, particularly coastal settlements, is crucial in protecting the values that attract new populations, and offering a more sustainable form of settlement growth.

9. Consultation

9.1 Overview

Consultation was an important component of the study. Consultation with the community sought to inform about the need for managing rural land use with a defined vision and to gain understanding of their views and wishes.

A series of consultation activities were carried out in September 2006 including community open days, Farmer's workshops, agencies workshop and a workshop with Council staff. See the table below for details. In all it is estimated that about 200 persons attended the community consultation workshops.

Type of workshop	Venue	Date
Staff workshop	Council offices	Mon 11 Sep 2006 10-12pm
Agencies workshop	Council offices	Mon 11 Sep 2006 1pm-3pm
Community Open Day	Anakie-Staughton Vale Hall	Mon 11 Sep 2006 4pm-8pm
Farmer's Workshop	Anakie-Staughton Vale Hall	Mon 11 Sep 2006 8pm
Community Open Day	Marcus Hill Hill	Tue 12 Sep 2006 4pm-8pm
Farmer's Workshop	Marcus Hill Hall	Tue 12 Sep 2006 8pm

The workshops were conducted in a casual format without formal presentations or strict agendas. Compared to public meetings, workshops allow community members to provide their ideas and issues in a non-threatening one-on-one environment. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussions in private one-on-one conversations with the project team and/or Council officers. Consultations with the community and farming community were conducted in Anakie and Marcus Hill so that there was a balance of contribution from the main rural areas of Geelong.



The purpose of the workshops was to gather information about community values and attitudes. They also sought to

- assist in identifying opportunities and issues
- build trust and demonstrate transparency
- ensure a high level of community interaction to achieve a robust final Rural Strategy

9.2 Consultation activities

9.2.1 Issues papers

Background issues papers were prepared and displayed on Council's website prior to the consultation activities and were displayed at the workshops to assist in stimulating discussion. The background issues papers are included in this report as Appendix B and comprised

1. Summary of study
2. Population and housing
3. Environmental issues
4. Agriculture
5. Planning policy for rural areas
6. Rural living
7. Economic issues

A number of maps were also prepared to stimulate discussion which included

1. Aerial map of the municipality
2. Current zoning of rural Geelong
3. Lot sizes in rural Geelong
4. Dwelling locations in rural Geelong

The maps are included in this report at Appendix D

Feedback forms were also provided at both the community open days and farmers workshops for attendees to put their thoughts on the future of the rural areas down in writing. These feedback forms were reviewed by the project team and have been passed on to Council.

9.2.2 Staff workshop

A workshop with Council staff was held at Council offices to discuss the study and issues and ideas that staff had with their day to day work in the rural areas of Geelong. The discussions raised the question – how do we understand what is appropriate? The prevailing position from staff was for more definitive guidelines for decision making, in particular in relation to rural dwellings, tourist development, and intensive animal activities such as greyhounds and poultry farms.

9.2.3 Agency workshop

Discussions were held with key agencies identified by Council and the project team as having a significant role in determining the future of the rural areas of the Shire. These stakeholders included Government Agencies, Rural and Agricultural Lobby Groups, Rural Community Groups and environmental organisations. The stakeholder workshop was held at Council offices and discussions were based around relevant issues to the various agencies that might have a strategic bearing on rural development in the region. A number of agencies were invited to attend and on the day there were representatives from the Country Fire Authority (CFA), the Department of Sustainability & Environment (DSE), Regional Development Victoria (RDV) and VicRoads. Barwon Water provided comments in writing to the project team.

9.2.4 Community open days

The Community Open Days enabled interested community members to drop in at their convenience, view information about the project collected so far, speak to the consultants about their ideas about the future or particular issues that they think should be considered and record in writing their contribution to the project.

A range of questions were also developed which were included on the feedback sheets and used by the project team and Council officers to stimulate discussion such as the importance of the rural areas, what they should be used for and look like in the future and particular places that should be protected or have specific issues.



9.2.5 Farmer's workshops

The consultation activities program provided for workshops with local farmers with the objective of understanding their needs for ongoing operation. The Farmer's Workshops offered the chance for local farmers to discuss and debate what the future of farming is in Geelong.

The workshops were conducted in the evening on consecutive nights in Anakie and Marcus Hill. A brief presentation was given by one of the project team members that included an overview of recent agricultural trends in the City and explanation of the project process and format for the evening. Following the presentation, the attendees were broken into smaller focus groups to discuss and debate issues and ideas for the future of farming in Geelong. At the end of the evening the key points from discussions were presented to all in attendance

which prompted some further discussion. Project team members were available throughout the evening for one-on-one or small group discussions.

9.3 The prevailing community position

The consultations conducted highlighted the key issues that are facing Geelong's rural areas and farming in general. The clear message from people was that the rural areas are changing, that agriculture is under pressure and there is uncertainty about the future of agriculture but a desire to provide for it.

A number of farmers were particularly positive about the future of agriculture in the region, both on a full time and part time basis. There were also others who believed that the time for agriculture in the City had passed, and that planning controls should be changed to allow for a change of land use and more intensive development.

The prevailing theme through the consultation processes was that the local community are passionate about their rural areas and the value of these areas in terms of their agricultural function, landscape character, and biodiversity and importantly as a place to live.



Some common issues that were raised throughout the various consultation activities were

- The need to support and maintain agriculture-farming in Geelong
- Protection of the rural landscape from non-rural development (i.e. urban built form and urban uses)
- Development of more definitive guidelines for decision making
- Preservation and enhancement of the natural environment (e.g. protect coastal wetlands, develop biolinks-wildlife corridors)
- Maintenance of the urban-rural buffers (i.e. green wedges)
- Urban encroachment – support for residential growth within existing town boundaries
- Rates on rural land are too high and unrealistic
- Requests for subdivision of rural land as dwellings were required for family members or land was no longer viable for farming
- What to do about non-conforming lot sizes
- Allowing dwellings on existing titles
- Supporting for farm based tourism in rural areas
- Provision of infrastructure (predominantly water supply)
- Absentee landowners not managing land well.

10. Geelong Rural Land Strategy

The development of a land use strategy for Greater Geelong's rural areas requires consideration not only of the context for planning discussed in the preceding chapters, but also recognition of future perspectives for land use, agriculture, economic development, environmental protection and landscape. The following discussion sets out a broad *vision* for rural land planning in Greater Geelong, and sets out the strategic directions that, collectively, can meet that future.

10.1 Key strategic elements

This rural land use review has determined the following;

- Agricultural production is modest - but locally important and economically significant for some landholders
- There is further potential for the development of the City's agricultural production
- Farming activity for many landholders is essentially about maintaining a rural landscape and lifestyle
- Farming activity and the rural landscape is a very significant element in the identity, image and liveability of the City of Greater Geelong
- Farming and rural landscapes establish non urban breaks and are a critical element in the settlement strategy, tourism role and lifestyle for the Bellarine Peninsula
- Farming and agriculture are important and valued in the Anakie area
- Rural land in a number of urban fringe areas, enables the City to accommodate a range of uses and developments that the City needs but which require buffers from residential areas
- The City's rural areas contain important environmental assets. Well managed rural areas contribute to the health of the natural resource base
- The planning and development of the City's agricultural and rural areas has had a long history of clearly distinguishing and separating them from urban areas
- Tourism and recreation while focused on the coast values the rural setting and farming - managing tourism opportunities in the rural areas is a major opportunity and challenge



10.2 Vision

The Geelong Rural Land Strategy sets out a long term vision for the City's rural areas that

- Reinforces an rural and farmed landscape beyond the urban areas
- Continues to protect and provide opportunities for productive agriculture
- Enhances the condition of the environment and the natural resource base, and
- Contributes to the ongoing economic prosperity and quality lifestyle of the Geelong region

The rural areas of the City of Greater Geelong are highly valued for their contribution to the liveability and amenity of the whole municipality. Maintaining and supporting the agricultural uses is a key part of this liveability and the continued economic prosperity of the City. The rural areas provide green space around urban Geelong and the smaller towns. Importantly, the rural areas define the boundaries of the urban areas, provide them with a clear identity and reinforce the profile of the Geelong region. The rural areas are valuable as an environmental setting and as a resource for the production of food and fibre and although agriculture directly is not a major player in terms of the City's whole economy, it is an important within the respective local communities. Agriculture and rural production are important regionally with spin offs and multipliers in processing and in contributing significantly to recreation and tourism. The rural and farmed nature of much of the region plays a key role in the City's tourist product and provides an important element against which other enterprises can develop. Significantly, many people have chosen to live in the City's rural area in association with farming enterprises and these people highly value their lifestyle choice. The opportunity to be a part of a high quality environment is a key part of the City's ability to attract highly skilled and creative people.



10.3 Key strategic directions

The key strategic directions of the Geelong Rural Land Use Strategy are:

- Supporting preservation of the rural-farmed landscape beyond the urban areas for economic, environmental, and community reasons
- Continuing a planned approach to the rural areas so they are managed to contribute to the City's overall growth and development
- Maintaining a distinct separation between urban areas and farming - rural activities
- Not providing for ad-hoc residential subdivision or use of land in rural areas
- Only supporting the development of a house on existing vacant lots where it will not compromise the farming - agricultural use of land and the presentation of the landscape
- Removing the concept that there is a nexus between minimum lot size and 'viable' farming units - minimum subdivision sizes are about retaining a rural-farmed landscape and opportunities for productive agricultural use of the land
- Maintaining the role of rural living through the provision of zoned land and by recognising the use of large rural parcels for lifestyle living associate with the agricultural use of the land
- Planning for a range of uses that need to be accommodated in rural areas (such as tourism/recreation development, dog keeping and other uses) by requiring buffers to urban areas and rural uses through the application of definitive policy and implementation of location and siting criteria
- Providing for some new uses and developments in rural areas on the basis that they can demonstrate that they will
 - Support farming and not impose adverse impacts on agricultural use on adjoining and nearby uses
 - Be subservient to the quality of the rural landscape
 - Achieve substantial gains in the environmental condition of an area
 - Meet all their own development costs
 - Be designed and developed to a high quality
 - Be well served by the relevant infrastructure
 - Maintain the overall settlement strategy which reinforces the identity of urban areas, towns and communities and the concept of non-urban breaks between towns



10.4 Agriculture

This strategy proposes that there is a continuing future for farming and agriculture in the rural areas of Geelong, but it will be in a changing form from what has been traditionally known. In the future there is likely to be even fewer farms where the family is supported solely or mainly by agriculture. This does not necessarily mean there will be less land farmed or fewer farms. Many properties, even relatively small holdings, can and should still be productively farmed either by the landowner or another land owner as a part of a larger enterprise where land is leased or managed. These ongoing opportunities for agriculture are important in terms of the future economy, character and livability of the City.

The land types in the municipality are suited to cropping, grazing, horticulture and viticulture. Consistent with the vision of maintaining farming landscapes around the City, rural land will primarily be used for growing produce and raising stock. Markets will determine the commodities produced, and the amount of land engaged, but the planning system should protect opportunities through maintaining land in parcels with productive and management potential and minimising land lost to building development and non agricultural use. Intensive animal industries and other shed based agriculture should be carefully located so that rural and scenic non urban landscapes are preserved. Agriculture should not compromise the condition of the natural resource base.

10.5 Rural living

Rural living in the form traditionally provided in Geelong should be limited to the existing nodes, and no further nodes developed. Rural living in this form is contrary to the vision of a rural farmed landscape being maintained in the rural areas around the City. It is recognised that some rural land, although zoned for agriculture, is or will, in reality, be used for larger scale rural living.

10.6 Tourism

It is recognised that the rural amenity and landscape of the Greater Geelong municipality is a key part of its tourism package. It is envisaged that tourism in the rural areas will be at two levels. Primarily, tourism facilities within rural areas should be small scale, in conjunction with the agricultural use of the property and should be of a size and in a location so that rural and scenic non urban landscapes are preserved and the agricultural use and character of the property is maintained. It is also recognised there is the potential for a small number of larger, regional tourism facilities to be located within the rural areas to capitalise on the assets of the region and bring economic benefit. Large tourism facilities should only be located in rural areas where there is a demonstrated regional need, they are not suited to an urban area, they will not compromise the rural landscape character, they provide for net environmental gains and they meet their own infrastructure needs and costs.

10.7 Environment

Underpinning every land use direction of this strategy, is the objective of environmental improvement. Maintenance of the rural farming landscape is dependant on enhancement of the condition of the natural resource base. Any land use change or development in the rural areas should provide for the improvement in the condition of the local environment. Although there has been considerable local effort to address environmental issues, particularly within

the farming community, there is still considerable work required to provide for water quality improvement, enhancement of native vegetation and biodiversity, soil quality improvement and improved coastal management.

10.8 Northern area

The northern areas of the City comprise rural landscapes used for cropping, grazing and viticulture. The You Yangs and Brisbane Ranges are significant landscape features. Unique land uses including a prison complex, grain storage facility and a feedlot have capitalised on the larger land holdings which provide substantial buffers from urban development and more dispersed population in this area. Land is largely of Class 3 quality, with some areas of Class 2 quality land. Land is still largely in parcels of productive size, and there are a number of large properties comprising many parcels of land being farmed. There are a significant number of lots of over 100ha.

This strategy proposes that this area should be maintained in agricultural use, and opportunities for the use of reclaimed water around Balliang should be protected. There are opportunities for some intensive animal industries in this part of the City, subject to compliance with relevant Codes of Practice, and landscape impact considerations. Development adjacent to the You Yangs and Brisbane Ranges should be limited and carefully managed to protect these features.

10.9 Avalon

Avalon airport is a significant State and regional transport facility. In relation to the rural strategy for Geelong and its wider region there are significant opportunities for export of high quality produce. This strategy proposes that the integrity, operating capacity and potential for development of the facility should be protected and existing buffer areas for safe operation be maintained. In terms of rural land use land to the east and south of the Princes Highway and of the airport provides potential for shed based horticulture and agriculture that can use the airport for transportation to markets. Such activities should be supported as a part of the agricultural economy of Geelong.

10.10 Bellarine Peninsula

The Bellarine Peninsula contains a settlement structure of planned towns which are part of the extended urban area. Considerable strategic planning has been undertaken to provide for the managed expansion of some of these towns and all towns have been planned on the basis of clear settlement boundaries. The Peninsula retains unique, high quality rural landscapes associated with viticulture, horticulture, cropping and grazing around these towns as a result of previous planning strategies.

The Peninsula has an obvious tourism attraction with the coast and the rural landscapes are an important element of this package. It also supports significant environmental values including wetlands and coastal areas. Most of the rural land on the Peninsula is of Class 2 and 3, and is deemed suitable for some intensive uses (viticulture and horticulture) and extensive cropping and grazing. Most rural lots are retained in sizes that have productive potential.

Consistent with the findings of the Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan, this strategy proposes that the unique, high quality rural landscapes of the Bellarine Peninsula be maintained through the ongoing support for agriculture in the rural areas. This rural character of the Bellarine Peninsula is highly valued by local residents and visitors, and is a fundamental part of the livability and identity of Geelong.

Implementation of this strategy will involve supporting the “right to farm” of local land owners, preserving non urban breaks between towns, ensuring dwelling development and subdivision will not remove properties from agricultural use, managing the location and scale of tourist facilities so that they do not undermine the rural character of land beyond the towns and protecting and enhancing environmental assets to improve the overall condition of the natural resource base.

10.11 Western and southern rural peripheral areas

These rural areas immediately adjoin the Geelong urban area, to the west and south. They lie outside the new Geelong bypass, which is under construction, and the new planned urban extension at Armstrong Creek. They contain important agricultural-rural production properties, significant non-urban and agricultural-rural landscapes for Geelong and help to define the urban area.

These areas adjoin Golden Plains Shire to the west and Surf Coast Shire to the south. Both of these municipalities value the clearly defined non-urban break. Neither of these municipalities is providing for rural living areas on the fringes of Geelong. They, like Geelong, are planning for settlement in planned townships. Both see the rural landscape adjoining Geelong as a valuable farmed resource suitable for land use requiring such a setting. This strategy proposes that the western and southern peripheral rural areas of the City should be maintained as farmed landscapes so as to continue to support agriculture, environmental management and to provide a non-urban break and rural setting for the City. As a part of implementing this vision, adjoining residential development within the growth areas must be planned and designed so that it does not compromise the agricultural use of this land.

10.12 Anakie

The community of Anakie is keen to see some growth of the town to ensure its ongoing viability, but this growth needs to be limited to preserve the character of the town, and in light of the wildfire risk in this part of the municipality. Anakie offers the opportunity for rural living in the form of small township living. This strategy proposes that opportunities for some growth of Anakie should be investigated, but any growth should be carefully planned so as to preserve the small town character, protect adjoining productive agricultural properties and manage environmental values and issues, in particular wildfire.

10.13 Directions for planning

An important aspect of the planning response is the need to offer differentiation in applying planning controls, reflecting the past and future roles and processes of change in different parts of Geelong’s rural areas. While the selection of planning controls in Victoria is largely prescribed by the Victoria Planning Provisions, scope exists for a nuanced reflection of these different attributes and functions.

It should be recognised that land use planning provides only one aspect of a focussed delivery of this vision for rural land. Other actions of Council and other agencies in relation to infrastructure provision, property rating, economic development, environmental management and community planning are also crucial aspects, although largely beyond the scope of this report.

The following chapter provides an explicit rationale for the application of specific planning strategies and provisions in rural Geelong.

11. Delivering the Vision

This section of the report identifies the implementation options to deliver the vision and strategic directions for the Geelong rural areas.

As this study is a land use planning study, this section of the report focuses on how the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme should be amended to implement the Rural Land Use Strategy. There are, however, other initiatives that Council should consider to support this vision and some of these will also be outlined in this section.

This Rural Land Use Strategy does not depart significantly from the present land use policy position. The strategy highlights the significance of the farming landscape, and seeks to ensure that agriculture and other land uses operate in this context. As such, a significant policy shift in the planning scheme in response to management of rural areas is not required.

The revised rural areas strategy is based on the value of the rural landscape to the character, livability, well being and identity of Geelong and its residents. Although agriculture will be the primary land use of the rural areas, it should be considered within the context of landscape and environmental values. Privileging the preservation of the rural landscapes in planning policy offers considerable opportunity to enhance the condition of the environment and build upon the tourist product of the region, while still enabling the operation of agriculture at a variety of commercial scales.

To implement the strategic directions and vision it is proposed to conceive of the Greater Geelong Rural areas as three broad precincts; the area to the north of Geelong urban area, the area west and south of the city and the Bellarine Peninsula. Differences in the present (and desired future) characteristics of land use and landscape in each of these have emerged through the strategy development process.

11.1 Greater Geelong Planning Scheme

In summary, the application of planning controls (zones, zone provisions and overlays) has been assessed through a recognition of the landscapes, land uses and land use challenges in various parts of the municipality. In effect this means that the application of planning controls should reflect the primary aim of rural land management in an area, but not proscribe the flexibility to recognise that rural areas are not homogenous. A brief description of the available zones and the criteria for their selection and application is detailed below.

11.1.1 Farming Zone

The new State mandated Farming Zone should be applied to the areas currently zoned Rural located in the northern parts of the City, so as to provide ongoing opportunities for agricultural use and development. The Farming Zone should also be applied to the western and southern peripheral rural areas.

The basis of the application of the Farming Zone to these areas is the priority of preserving agricultural land for current and future agricultural use, providing opportunities for agricultural activity and maintaining a farmed rural landscape as a setting for the urban areas of Geelong. It also recognises that these rural areas are not offered as part of the settlement strategy for Geelong.

The stated purposes of the Farming zone as set out in the Victoria Planning Provisions are;

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To provide for the use of land for agriculture.
- To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.
- To ensure that non-agricultural uses, particularly dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.
- To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.
- To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.

The overall purposes most closely match the current and preferred future use and development of the City's northern, western and southern areas.

11.1.2 Rural Conservation Zone

The Rural Conservation Zone should be applied to the Bellarine Peninsula in recognition of the unique blend of its landscape, environmental and farming values.

The basis of the application of this zone to this area is to elevate the role and value of the environment and rural farmed landscape, and identify that agriculture and other activities should operate in this context. Application of this zone will not compromise existing agricultural activity and in some respects it will protect it. New farming activities should be supported where they are environmentally sound and they contribute to the farming landscape. Tourist accommodation proposals that are associated with, and subservient to, the agricultural use and character of the land can also be supported.

While the area is seen to be rural and agricultural in character, and the application of the Farming Zone could be seen to achieve a land use and development outcome suited to the location, landscape protection is not a priority of the Farming Zone. The Rural Conservation Zone includes landscape preservation as one of its purposes along with agriculture. The important environmental and landscape values on the Bellarine Peninsula mean that many uses allowed within the Farming Zone could not be considered as suitable in this area. These include intensive animal agricultural operations (eg. poultry farms, piggeries), many of which are industrial in nature. Additionally, the importance of the coastal and wetland environments in this setting would be best recognised through application of the RCZ.

The stated purposes of the Rural Conservation Zone as set out in the Victoria Planning Provisions are;

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To conserve the values specified in the schedule to this zone.
- To protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values.
- To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.

- To encourage development and use of land which is consistent with sustainable land management and land capability practices, and which takes into account the conservation values and environmental sensitivity of the locality.
- To provide for agricultural use consistent with the conservation of environmental and landscape values of the area.
- To conserve and enhance the cultural significance and character of open rural and scenic non urban landscapes.

These overall purposes most closely match the current and preferred future use and development of the Bellarine Peninsula.

11.1.3 Rural Living Zone

The existing zoned rural living areas should remain in the Rural Living Zone.

The stated purposes of the Rural Living zone as set out in the Victoria Planning Provisions are;

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To provide for residential use in a rural environment.
- To provide for agricultural land uses which do not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding land uses.
- To protect and enhance the natural resources, biodiversity and landscape and heritage values of the area.
- To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.

11.1.4 Rural Activity Zone

The Rural Activity zone (RAZ) is a new zone to the Statewide suite of rural zones.

The stated purposes of the Rural Activity Zone as set out in the Victoria Planning Provisions area;

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To provide for the use of land for agriculture.
- To provide for other uses and development, in appropriate locations, which are compatible with agriculture and the environmental and landscape characteristics of the area.
- To ensure that use and development does not adversely affect surrounding land uses.
- To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.
- To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.

The RAZ can be used to provide for a range of activities that may be considered appropriately located in rural areas, but are not consistent with the purpose of the Farming or Rural Conservation Zone.

It is not proposed that any areas in the City should be zoned RAZ at this time. However, it is envisaged that the RAZ may be used to support and provide for a small number of “one off” developments within the rural areas as part of a strategic rezoning proposal. This is particularly likely to be the case for a select range of strategically justified tourism developments.

These forms of development should only be supported in Greater Geelong’s rural areas, and the RAZ used where;

- There is a regionally demonstrated demand for such a facility;
- The land use is compatible with the use of adjoining and surrounding land for farming (generally cropping and grazing);
- The facility is consistent with the Rural Land Use Strategy;
- The facility is unsuited to an urban area;
- The facility builds on local attractions;
- The development will not compromise the rural farming landscape qualities and environmental features and constraints of the area.

Proposals for the application of the Rural Activity Zone in the City’s rural areas will need to be based upon a comprehensive, strategically justified rezoning submission which demonstrates that site selection requirements require a rural location and that the use and development is compatible and complementary to the rural setting.

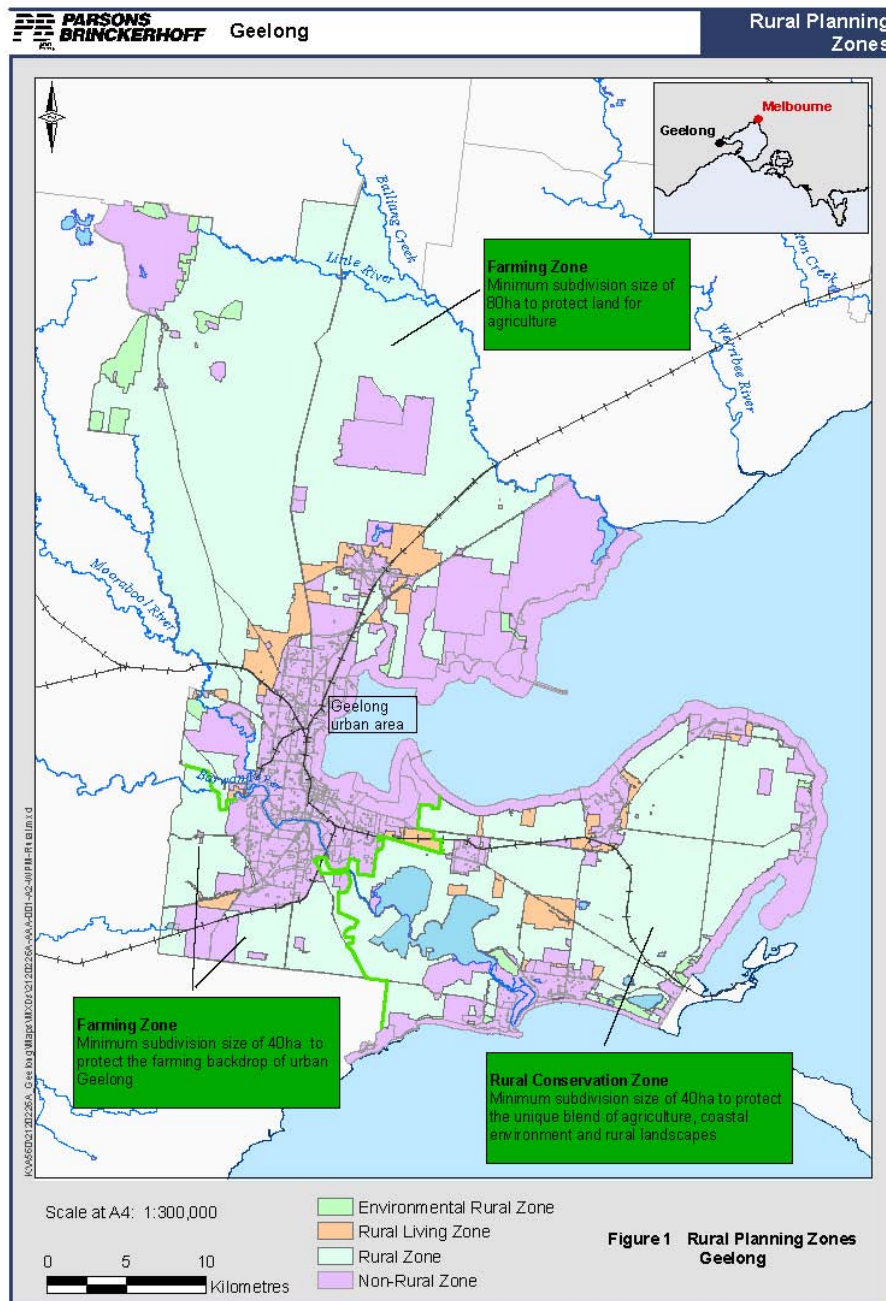
11.1.5 Implementation of the strategy through the Rural Zones

Table 7 below provides a summary of the capacity of the suite of Rural Zones to implement key strategies.

Key Strategies	RCZ	FZ	RLZ	RAZ
Enhancing rural landscapes	✓✓	✓		
Enabling extensive farming	✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Enabling intensive animal agriculture		✓✓		
Focus on rural lifestyle	✓		✓	
Strong environmental protection	✓✓	✓	✓	
Focussed non-agricultural development				✓
Capacity to implement	✓✓ Strong		✓ Moderate	

Table 7 Strategic Direction Implementation Through the Rural Zones

Within this framework, it is evident that each of the rural zones allows for the ongoing use of land for cropping and grazing, however each also offers a clear direction for the form and character of development. Existing farming uses can continue in each zone, however clear consideration will need to be given for significant land use change in the RAZ, RCZ and RLZ zones. The purposes of these zones are to support rural land uses in the context of other objectives, either environmental, landscape or lifestyle.



Map 6 Proposed Rural Zones

11.2 Managing specific rural developments and activities

11.2.1 Subdivision and house lot excisions

Appropriate rural land subdivision controls need to be based upon the size required to maintain the farmed landscape and provide opportunities for productive agricultural uses.

- In the Northern Area this size should be 80ha.
- On the Bellarine Peninsula this size should be 40ha.
- In the Southern and Western Area this size should be 40ha.

These sizes are based on an understanding of the agricultural opportunities in these areas, and the current minimum subdivision sizes.

Based on the strategy, house lot excisions are considered inappropriate in Geelong as they;

- will result in an increased density of development;
- will create a lot that is contrary to the purpose of the zone and the vision for the area;
- and the form of farm restructure associated with house lot excisions is highly unlikely to occur due to the value of land and its comparative productive potential.

These proposals should be implemented through the zone schedules, and the development of a local planning policy.

11.2.2 Rural dwellings

Within the Farming zone dwellings are required to be associated with the agricultural use of the land.

Within the Rural Conservation Zone dwellings must be consistent with the environmental, landscape and farming objectives of the zone.

A Local Planning Policy will be prepared that identifies that dwellings should only be permitted on vacant rural parcels where;

- Council is satisfied that that, in the long term, the house will positively promote farming operations on the land and it is demonstrated by the applicant that the primary use of the land will continue to be agriculture;
- Existing agricultural activity on adjoining land will not be compromised;
- The proportion of the property used for the dwelling and ancillary infrastructure is minimal, and such development is directed to the area of lowest agricultural quality;
- The productive capacity of the land will be enhanced. This should be achieved through addressing issues such as pest plants and animals and erosion of the land;
- The environmental condition of the land will be enhanced. This should be achieved by fencing off remnant vegetation, revegetating strategic areas such as between remnant stands to develop wildlife corridors and along waterways;
- The house and associated farming activity supports the maintenance of the rural farmed landscape.

11.2.3 Intensive animal husbandry

There are limited opportunities for intensive animal industries (eg poultry, piggeries) within Geelong due to the density of housing in most rural areas, and the high value placed on the quality of the amenity of the rural areas. Although Geelong does include a number of animal processing facilities in the region, it does not have any other particular qualities that highlight its particular value for intensive animal industries. The need for such facilities to be located in the City to contribute to the local economy is also not high. The sheds associated with intensive animal industries are also likely to compromise the landscape qualities of the area.

Relevant Codes of Practice for such industries will influence appropriate locations and determine acceptable buffers.

11.2.4 Shed based agriculture

Geelong does offer a significant opportunity for some forms of shed based agriculture, including aquaculture and horticulture. In the case of aquaculture it is proximity to the coast and in the case of both aquaculture and horticulture it is access to Avalon airport, which offers export opportunities.

Shed based agriculture such as aquaculture and horticulture offer significant benefit in terms of contribution to the local economy. Such forms of agriculture should be supported but carefully managed in terms of siting so that they do not compromise the landscape objectives of the rural strategy. They should also be sited where they can gain access to existing water and sewer infrastructure.

11.2.5 Tourism

There are opportunities for tourism development within the rural areas of Geelong, in particular on the Bellarine Peninsula. As previously discussed, in most cases, for tourism development in rural areas to be supported under this strategy it should be clearly rural in character and not an urban land use, operate in conjunction with the agricultural use of the land and should respect the landscape values. Council will consider the approval of a small number of proposals of a substantial size that are not associated with the existing agricultural use of the land and these should be subject to a rezoning proposal for the application of the Rural Activity Zone.

In considering applications where a commercial use such as tourism is to be established in conjunction with a rural-agricultural use, VCAT has generally found that the following elements need to be considered;

- Has the primary agricultural use already been established;
- The link between the primary agricultural use and the balance of uses should not be vague and elusive. Mere co-location is not sufficient;
- The mix of uses should not be disproportionate and out of balance, and result in an unreasonable loss of productive agricultural land;
- The match of the uses should not be unconvincing, inviting the conclusion that the accommodation and commercial activities are likely to function independently;
- The scale of the entire enterprise should not be completely over the top, resulting in unnecessary and unreasonable visual and environmental impacts;

- The location of the proposal on the wrong side of the urban fringe should not exacerbate the perception, reality and further risk of unwanted urban expansion.

A key consideration in the determination of any application is 'an acceptable outcome'.

In *O'Donoghue v Mornington Peninsula Shire Council* [2003] VCAT 1472 at paras 29-30: the Tribunal stated *...the fact that the proposed use falls within section 2 of the table does not mean that a permit ought to be granted simply because of this. Rather, the provisions make it clear that the Responsible Authority (and the Tribunal standing in its place) must decide whether the proposal will produce an acceptable outcome in terms of the planning scheme's policies, the purpose of the zone, the overlays and the various decision guidelines...there needs to be substantial reliance on the planning scheme's policies for guidance as to whether the proposed use is one that is acceptable.*

In the same case the Tribunal went on to identify that:

- Highly regarded landscape and environmental values should be protected, and sustainable uses of land which achieve this are encouraged.
- Continued use of rural land for agricultural production is encouraged, and contribution of rural production to the economy of the region is recognized.
- Tourism and recreational opportunities which are the basis for tourism, are to be promoted and protected, and the contribution of tourism and recreation to the economy of the region is recognized.
- The historic fragmentation of rural land is recognized as an obstacle to the continued viable use of rural land for agricultural purposes.

In *Vidoni v Mornington Peninsula Shire Council* [2005] VCAT 1445, the Tribunal stated para 38:

Even if it can be established that the proposed restaurant would operate in conjunction with one of the other required uses, that does not mean that the use is acceptable. The proposal must be considered on its merits having regard to the various matters raised in the decision guidelines. This includes the purpose of the zone and the planning scheme's policies.

In *Department of Sustainability and Environment v Moira Shire Council* [2006] VCAT 1917 at para 56&57 , The Tribunal noted that:

the Council policies support both agriculture and tourism as key drivers of the local economy. ...based on the paucity of any direct tourism policy reference to this site or the corridor in general we consider if there is to be tourism it should have a closer relationship with the agricultural practices of the locality or have tourism facilities that will not undermine, deplete, or replace current agricultural land. We are not satisfied that there is sufficient policy basis to support the loss of Rural zoned land for a non rural purpose which will have virtually no relationship with the rural activities that take place on adjoining or nearby land.

In the same case the Tribunal raised concerns about developments likely to lead to ribbon or linear development and isolated facilities dependent on other facilities elsewhere:

We could see the council being placed under increasing pressure to approve other non-agricultural development and uses in the locality.

It is not difficult to envisage the presence of such an intense development like this amongst rurally zoned land used as justification for further non-rural based use and development. Alternatively, justification for other new use and development in the area might be sought on the basis that such proposals would service or complement the present proposal, such as food and drink premises. With the potential to attract up to 1000 tourists at peak times, the distance from Yarrowonga, the limited range of complementary facilities proposed on the land and existing within the Bundalong township, the continued spread of development along the corridor is a very real prospect. That outcome would only perpetuate the cycle of poor planning decisions in the corridor. It is an outcome that must be avoided

A local planning policy should be developed that reflects these principles and provide clear guidance about the form of tourist development acceptable in the rural areas, and that generally tourist development needs to be related to, and subservient to, the agricultural use of the land, and compatible with the farmed landscape.

11.2.6 Greyhounds

The appropriate response to managing greyhound keeping is considered to be the development of a local planning policy which defines the criteria for such facilities. The key issues associated with such facilities are;

- Noise;
- Landscape impact;
- Loss of agricultural land;
- Consistency with adjoining land use.

The identification of an area specifically for greyhounds keeping is not considered a sound planning approach as it severely limits options for existing land owners in such an area, and limits options for new residents seeking to keep dogs. Such an approach is also based on an assumption that people in these areas should accept a lower level of amenity, and a less rigorous management of a dog training/keeping facility in terms of noise management would be accepted. In seeking to accommodate such a land use it also needs to be recognised that the suitability of a site or an area is heavily dependant on the size and scale of the facility. Development of a number of considerations and criteria for the assessment of greyhound keeping facilities would offer a more transparent and consistent response to the land use planning issue.

VCAT have consistently advised that the Rural Zone (now Farming Zone) is the appropriate zone for greyhound keeping and training facilities. Appropriate criteria should be established through a local planning policy that identifies;

- Greyhound keeping and training facilities should be located in the Farming Zone;
- Appropriate buffers must be provided and the facility be designed so that the Responsible Authority is satisfied that the facility can comply with State Environment Protection Policy N1 (Control of Noise from Commerce, Industry and Trade). A Noise Impact Assessment must be undertaken and report prepared and submitted with the planning permit application.
- Noise should be minimise by;

- Locating and constructing kennels and other facilities to visually screen dogs from external stimuli such as other dogs, animals, traffic or passers-by;
- Use of earth banks and or vegetation and or manually constructed sound barriers;
- Management regimes that minimise opportunities for noise generated by external stimuli;
- Controlling access to the kennels;
- Restriction of feeding to within the hours of sunrise to sunset where practicable.
- The facility is designed so that the loss of agricultural land is minimised;
- Use of the land for greyhound keeping and training will not compromise the use of adjoining and surrounding land for agriculture;
- Buffers appropriate to the size of the facility and based on the requirements for ongoing compliance with the above noise controls must be largely provided within the boundaries of the property;
- The facility must be designed so that it does not compromise the non urban and farmed nature of the landscape.
- The facility must be designed and operated so that it is generally in compliance with the Code of Practice: Operation of Greyhound Establishments.

11.2.7 Equine facilities

Horse breeding, raising and training are legitimate rural activities, generally suited to the Farming Zone and the Rural Conservation Zone and the objectives of this strategy.

11.3 Other implementation options

11.3.1 Rates

Given the high rural land values in the City of Greater Geelong, and the rapid increase in values especially in recent years, there is a widespread concern among rural landowners that the level of rates has become disproportionate. This was a point that was strongly put by rural landowners during the consultation program.

Council should maintain its existing policy of providing a lower level of rate for agricultural properties, reflecting the benefit of this land use to the broader community and its lower service demands. Lower rate levels will also be supported through Council consistently supporting and implementing this strategy, reducing speculative value on rural land.

11.3.2 Farm land leasing register

The benefits of leasing farmland are widely recognised by farmers as a cost effective way to grow their business. In Geelong, despite many farms being sold for lifestyle purposes, they are still farmed by local farmers through leasing and share farming arrangements. Council should facilitate such activity through developing and maintaining a register of property owners with land they wish to have farmed and farmers wishing to lease land to farm.

11.3.3 Environmental management and improvement

There are considerable benefits to individual landowners, to rural communities and to the city as a whole in the managed improvement of the environmental base and a sustainable natural resource base. Council should further develop initiatives to support environmental improvements to the rural landscape at a property and community level.

11.3.4 Maintenance of Agricultural Infrastructure

Ongoing use of rural land for agriculture is dependant on, in part, access to supporting and associated infrastructure for example sale yards and organisations like the VFF. In support of the strategy of retaining the rural areas in agricultural use, Council should also support farming related infrastructure and services in the region.

11.3.5 Farmers Markets

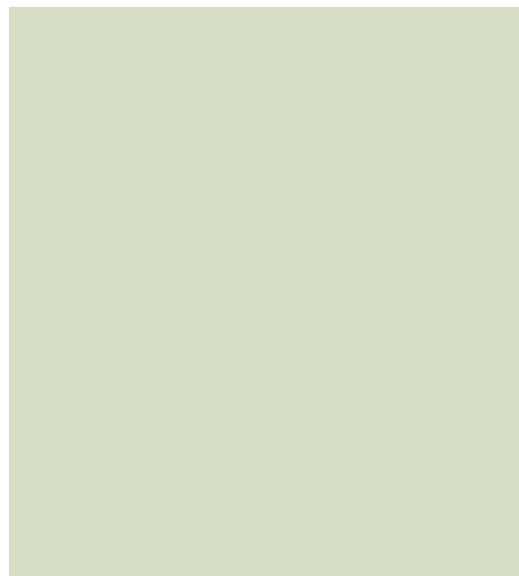
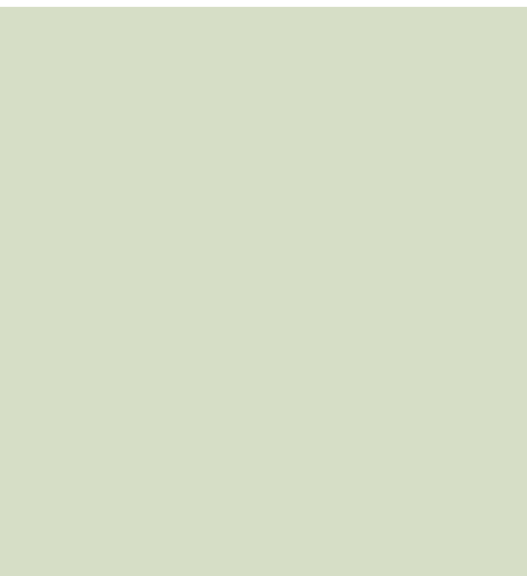
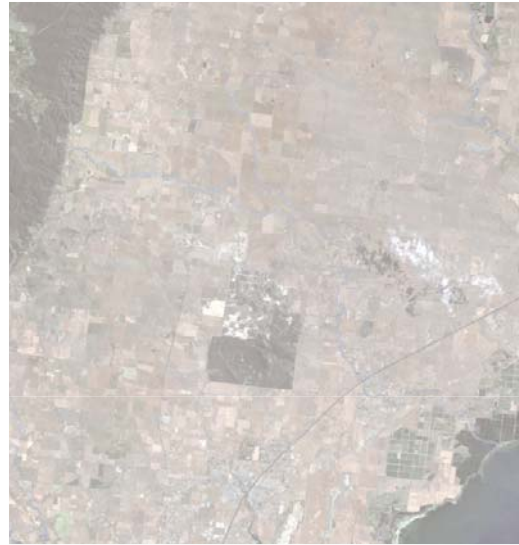
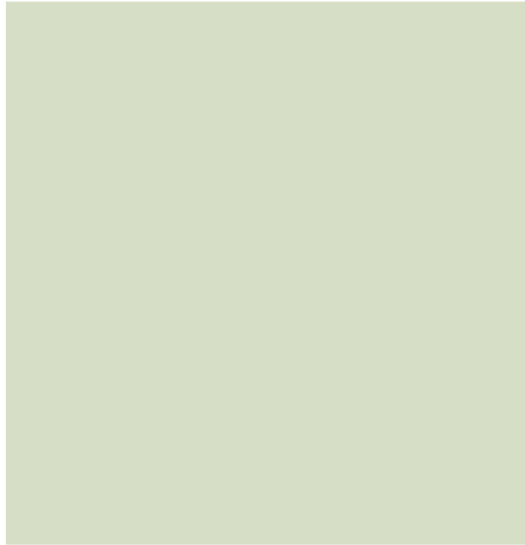
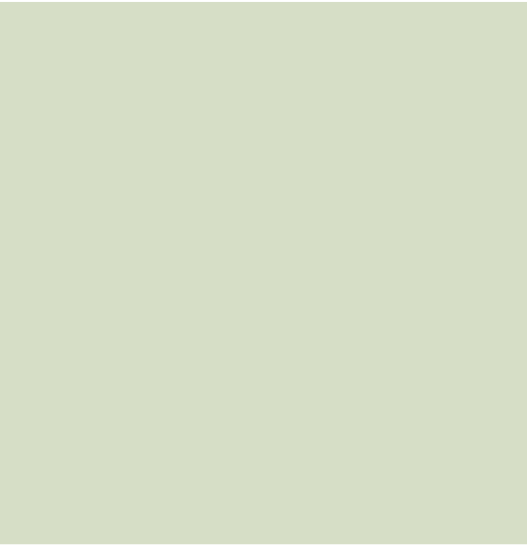
Farmers markets provide the opportunity for local product to be marketed locally. The ability to promote and sell local product would support the ongoing use of rural land for agriculture. Farmers markets within the Greater Geelong area should be supported.

11.3.6 Visitor and Community Access to Rural Landscapes

Development of recreational trails through rural areas to link settlements and improve community access to rural landscapes will enhance ownership and appreciation, and capitalise on their benefits in terms of liveability and tourism attraction. Appropriate design and siting is essential to ensure that agricultural activity is not compromised.

APPENDIX

A



Appendix A

Land Capability Review



Background Paper

Status Report on Land Capability in the City of Greater Geelong

*Prepared by Darrel Brewin and Associates
Pty Ltd*

For Parsons Brinckerhoff

August 2006

Summary

The purpose of this Background Paper is to provide a “snapshot” analysis of the Rural Land Use Strategy (RLUS) prepared in 1997, regarding the adequacy of its land capability assessment to guide strategic decisions by the City in implementing the new rural zones.

The pressures from more intensive human activities are creating increased complexity in managing land resources. As the pressures on land become less sustainable the need for science based strategic land use planning increases.

The purpose of the RLUS was *to provide a strategic land use and management approach for the municipality’s rural base to secure the agricultural and productive use of rural land for its economic value.*

The RLUS used a well-accepted land capability assessment methodology. The criteria used for agricultural land quality classification integrated environmental features such as rainfall, geology, topography, soils and indigenous vegetation to determine unique mapping units or land units. The scope of the land capability assessment was limited to broadacre agricultural uses at a very large scale.

In the strategic context the VPP’s Clause 17.05 for Agriculture states in part, that:

Land capability is a fundamental factor for consideration in rural land use planning.

....In considering a proposal to subdivide or develop agricultural land, the following factors must be considered (inter alia):

- *Assessment of the land capability.*
- *Etc(?)*

Land capability assessment and mapping should provide spatial coverage of the whole of the City of Greater Geelong. To develop future rural land use policy, land capability should be established for agriculture and engineering and related urban-type development purposes including . urban subdivision and rural residential development.

Mapping should be produced at a scale appropriate for strategic planning, particularly for determining the new rural zones.

The authors of the RLUS recognised that *“more detailed land capability analysis is often required either where the intensity of agricultural practices increases, or where urban intrusion becomes greater”.*

It is concluded that:

1. As pressures for urban and rural residential development increase, there is a need for broad land capability assessment in the rural areas to meet the contemporary planning standards identified in the VPP’s.
 - The scope of the RLUS did not deal with rural land uses other than agriculture in any depth Land capability analysis in the RLUS was only undertaken for agricultural land classification.
 - Land capability analysis did not occur for the broad spectrum of engineering uses associated with urban subdivision, rural residential living, extractive industries etc.
- 2.
3. While the RLUS land capability mapping does cover the whole of the Greater City of Geelong , it was prepared at a scale considered too large for the definition required in contemporary strategic planning.

Status Report on Land Capability in the City of Greater Geelong

- The mapping scale provides ill-defined boundaries and no provision is allowed for internal variability within broad land units.
4. Any future mapping for land capability should be done at a scale of 1:40 000 or 1:50 000.

Contents

Summary	1
Introduction.....	4
Summary of trends in rural land use in CoGG	4
Implications	4
Strategic context.....	4
Land capability assessment.....	4
Land capability requirements of the VPP's	5
What land capability should provide	7
The CoGG Rural Land Use Strategy, 1997	7
Purpose and Scope	7
Does the RLUS meet the requirements of the VPP and the Council's strategic planning purposes.....	7
Agricultural land quality classification	8
Mapping	8
Conclusions.....	9
References	9

Introduction

The City of Greater Geelong is implementing a complete review of its MSS and local planning policies. As part of the review Council has resolved to complete a new Rural Strategy to guide the implementation of the new rural zones.

The purpose of this Background Paper is to provide a “snapshot” analysis of the Rural Land Use Strategy prepared in 1997, regarding the adequacy of its land capability assessment to guide strategic decisions by the City in implementing the new rural zones.

Land capability was assessed for planning purposes for the City by Perrott Lyon Mathieson Pty Ltd with Phillips Agribusiness in 1997 and published in their report titled “City of Greater Geelong Rural Land Use Strategy”.

Summary of trends in rural land use in CoGG

Urban growth is progressing from Geelong in a corridor towards Mt Duneed and residential density is expanding along the Bellarine Peninsula. In these areas there is strong demand for urban subdivision and rural residential living. For example, in the last decade, the Bellarine Peninsula has experienced strong population growth and is subject to incremental development pressures. Its population is one of the fastest growing in the municipality with a growth rate of approximately 1.3% per annum. This is twice the rate of Victoria and Geelong.

Some forms of soil-based agriculture are intensifying in production systems and activity while others are diminishing. Raised bed cropping has developed rapidly over the last eight years and farmland allocated to broadacre winter crop growing has experienced large increases. Small and medium -scale horticulture and viticulture are seeking out new pockets of land with suitable soil and water, close to transport routes and labour. Shed-based hydroponic tomato production is also expanding from a low base, while the potato industry is shrinking.

Shed-based intensive animal industries such as egg production, broiler farms and piggeries that require buffers for amenity and biosecurity are being displaced by the growth of urban areas around Geelong and the Bellarine.

These trends were evident in 1997.

Implications

There is growing competition for land resources, more pressure on soils, water quality and biodiversity and increased demand for quarry products. Land use conflicts may grow between residential owners and agricultural producers and legitimate agricultural pursuits may be compromised as a result. Strategically important agricultural land maybe fragmented, with associated industries being displaced.

The pressures from more intensive human activities are creating increased complexity in managing land resources. As the pressures on land become less sustainable the need for science based strategic land use planning increases. The soundest and most practical tool for landscape analysis to underpin strategic land use planning is rural land quality and associated land capability assessment. This is reflected within various clauses and practice notes of the Victoria Planning Provisions.

Strategic context

Land capability assessment

Land capability assessment examines the inherent capability of the land to support specified land uses through identifying the physical land constraints and hazards and the feasibility of addressing them for reasonable environmental and economic outcomes.

It assesses suitability for a range of uses (including engineering and primary production), identifies the level of constraints to development and specifies a regime for managing hazards and risk for land degradation or infrastructure damage.

Agricultural land quality assessment uses land capability criteria as its scientific basis.

Land capability requirements of the VPP's

DSE released a draft planning practice note in 2005 entitled '*Draft for Consultation: Sustainable Rural Use and Development Guidelines- General Practice Note September 2005*'. The Draft guidelines state the following principles for identification of what is *productive agricultural land*.

Productive agricultural land generally has one or more of the following characteristics:

- *A present pattern of subdivision favourable for sustainable agricultural production*
- *Can be used for a variety of agricultural pursuits*
- *Suitable soil type*
- *Suitable climatic conditions*
- *Suitable agricultural infrastructure, in particular irrigation and drainage systems.*

Of importance are the basic physical characteristics of climate and soil type. Issues such as tenure and infrastructure may change to support agricultural use in the future.

Clause 17.05 Agriculture has the following objective:

*To ensure that the State's agricultural base is protected from the unplanned loss of **productive agricultural land** due to permanent changes of land use and to enable protection of productive farmland, which is of strategic significance in the local or regional context.*

The Clause requires responsible authorities to encourage sustainable agriculture and to give very serious consideration to the retention of all productive agricultural land prior to any decision that may impact on the use of the land.

Prior to June 2004 Clause 17.05 referred only to avoidance of unplanned loss of '*high quality productive agricultural land*'. The change of consideration to '*productive agricultural land*' has greatly broadened the scope of the State government's policy intentions regarding the future of productive agricultural land. It must be inferred that within any given area, *high quality agricultural land* retains its elevated protection status.

The VPP's define '*high quality productive agricultural land*' as:

Land which is used for animal husbandry or crop raising, and is capable of continuing to sustain agricultural production, and:

- *Is of prime, or very good agricultural quality having regard to soil type, growing season and availability of infrastructure, and is of sufficient extent to support agricultural activities on an economically viable scale*
- *Has been identified through a regional, sub-regional or local study as being of particularly good quality and strategic significance for agriculture in the regional or local context.*

As of 11 June 2004, the General Implementation section of Clause 17.05 has stated the following.

Land capability is a fundamental factor for consideration in rural land use planning.

Planning authorities should consult with the Department of Primary Industries and utilize available information to identify areas of productive agricultural land.

Regional and State, as well as local, issues and characteristics should be taken into account in the assessment of agricultural quality and productivity.

Permanent removal of productive agricultural land from the State's agricultural base must not be undertaken without consideration of its economic importance for the agricultural production and processing sectors.

Planning should support effective agricultural production and processing infrastructure, rural industry and farm-related retailing and assist genuine farming enterprises to adjust flexibly to market changes.

Planning and responsible authorities should encourage sustainable land use.

Planning should provide encouragement for sustainable agriculture and support and assist the development of innovative approaches to sustainable practices.

Subdivision of productive agricultural land should not detract from the long-term productive capacity of the land.

In assessing rural development proposals, planning and responsible authorities must balance the potential off-site effects of rural land use proposals (such as degradation of soil or water quality and land salinisation), which might affect productive agricultural land against the benefits of the proposals.

In considering a proposal to subdivide or develop agricultural land, the following factors must be considered:

- *The desirability and impacts of removing the land from primary production, given its agricultural productivity.*
- *The impacts of the proposed subdivision or development on the continuation of primary production on adjacent land, with particular regard to land values and to the viability of infrastructure for such production.*
- *The compatibility between the proposed or likely development and the existing uses of the surrounding land.*
- *Assessment of the land capability.*

Where inappropriate subdivisions exist on productive agricultural land, priority should be given by planning authorities to their re-structure.

Planning and responsible authorities should consider the potential impacts of land use and development on the spread of plant and animal pests from areas of known infestation into agricultural areas.

The entirety of this clause is critical to the development and outcomes of the new Rural Strategy.

The Guidelines to the Ministerial Direction 6 provide (with other requirements) that:

An amendment must not provide for rural residential use or development of land which [...] is high quality productive agricultural land and has a present pattern of subdivision favourable for sustainable agricultural production.

Conversely some land currently zoned Rural Use / Farming Zone may as a result of successive rezoning for urban development or rural living, have been compromised in terms of its productive potential for agriculture. This may have rendered it of less strategic importance for agriculture.

What land capability should provide

Land capability assessment and mapping should provide spatial coverage of the whole of the City of Greater Geelong. To develop future rural land use policy, land capability should be established for agriculture and engineering purposes. Land capability for engineering purposes should encompass the infrastructure needs of urban subdivision and rural residential development.

Mapping should be produced at a scale appropriate for strategic planning, particularly for determining the new rural zones. It should be sufficiently accurate to provide:

1. On ground definition of land units of different capability
2. A capacity for spatial analysis to:
 - a. Establish zone boundaries,
 - b. Identify areas where the primacy of agriculture is compromised by other development
 - c. Identify areas where untapped resources could benefit agriculture, eg water resources,
 - d. Identify areas suitable for intensive animal industries;
 - e. Identify areas suitable for rural residential living;
 - f. Identify areas suitable for extractive industries.

The CoGG Rural Land Use Strategy, 1997

Purpose and Scope

The City of Greater Geelong initiated the RLUS in 1997 in order to enhance the role of and contribution of the rural area to the regional economy as well as to ensure the conservation of environmentally sensitive areas. The purpose was *to provide a strategic land use and management approach for the municipality's rural base to secure the agricultural and productive use of rural land for its economic value.* (The inference here is the securing of agricultural and productive use from in the main, residential encroachment.) *Conservation and protection of natural habitats in rural areas were a complementary part of the study.*

The study objectives were as follows:

1. *To identify and protect agricultural land to ensure it is retained in productive use;*
2. *To ensure sound and orderly planning of rural, agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas;*
3. *To ensure rural land development occurs in a manner consistent with efficient and environmentally sustainable practices;*
4. *To conserve and protect natural habitats, remnant indigenous vegetation, rural and coastal features and areas of environmental sensitivity, that enhance the City's rural character; and*
5. *To identify a package of techniques which can be employed by the City, in partnership with the community, to maintain and encourage productive rural land uses*

Does the RLUS meet the requirements of the VPP and the Council's strategic planning purposes

Matters addressed in the scope of the RLUS now require updating for the purpose of developing a new Rural Strategy to guide the implementation of the new rural zones.

In the RLUS, the land and rural industries review along with the Geelong community's perception of rural issues provided strategic directions for rural land use policy in 1997.

Effective development of the new Rural Strategy will require a further review of changes in agriculture, settlement and development pressures on rural land in the succeeding eight years and predictions for the future.

The authors of the RLUS recognised that *“more detailed land capability analysis is often required either where the intensity of agricultural practices increases, or where urban intrusion becomes greater”*.

The scope of the RLUS did not deal with rural land uses other than agriculture in any depth. Pressures for urban and rural residential development have increased remarkably in this period and require stronger efforts in land resource analysis to aid policy development on these issues.

Agricultural land quality classification

The methodology and criteria used for agricultural land quality classification integrates environmental features such as rainfall, geology, topography, soils and indigenous vegetation to determine unique mapping units or land units. In this case 15 land units were identified.

To determine the agricultural quality of each land unit a commonly used five-class land classification system was applied. This system described land qualities that determine the agricultural production and versatility potential of the land for each of the five classes. The 15 land units in the CoGG were classified and described on this 1-5 scale.

The methodology is based on the widely accepted technique devised by the Victorian Soil Conservation Authority in the 1950's and remains acceptable today.

Mapping

The mapping was produced at a scale considered adequate for delineating extensive farming activity at the time. There was no brief to account for other land uses in the mapping.

The VPP's require a high level of reliance on land capability assessment as a tool in planning policy development. The key issue is whether the land capability documentation and mapping in the RLUS adequately identifies quality agricultural land sufficiently for planning and policy development, zoning definition and other spatial requirements for contemporary planning purposes. From this perspective the following observations apply to the RLUS:

1. The RLUS land capability mapping does cover the whole of the Greater City of Geelong.
2. The mapping appears to have been prepared at a scale of 1:200 000. This scale is considered too large for the definition required in contemporary municipal strategic planning.
3. It provides ill-defined boundaries and no provision is allowed for internal variability within broad land units.
4. The generally accepted scale for land capability mapping for this purpose is 1:40 000 or 1:50 000.
5. Land capability analysis was only undertaken for agricultural land classification.
6. No land capability analysis exists for the broad spectrum of engineering uses associated with infrastructure for urban subdivision, rural residential living, extractive industries etc.

Conclusions

1. There is a need for more detailed work on land capability in the rural areas to meet the contemporary planning standards identified in the VPP's.
2. The scope of the RLUS did not deal with rural land uses other than agriculture in any depth.
3. Land capability analysis in the RLUS was only undertaken for agricultural land classification.
4. No land capability analysis exists for the broad spectrum of engineering uses associated with urban subdivision, rural residential living, extractive industries etc.
5. Human activities are creating increased complexity in managing land resources. As the pressures on land become less sustainable the need for science based strategic land use planning increases.
6. Pressures for urban and rural residential development have increased markedly in the last eight years and these issues require stronger efforts in land resource analysis to aid policy development.
7. The RLUS land capability mapping does cover the whole of the Greater City of Geelong. However it was prepared at a scale considered too large for the definition required in contemporary strategic planning.
8. The mapping scale provides ill-defined boundaries and no provision is allowed for internal variability within broad land units.
9. Any future mapping for land capability should be done at a scale of 1:40 000 or 1:50 000.

References

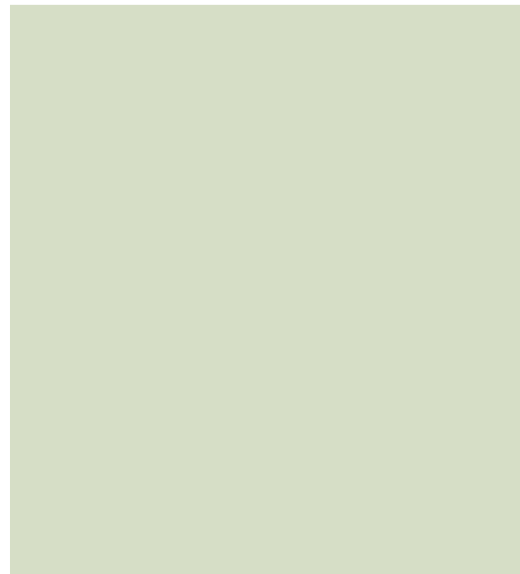
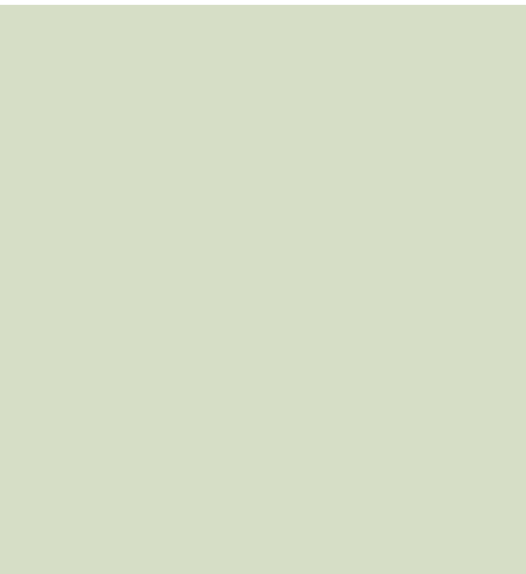
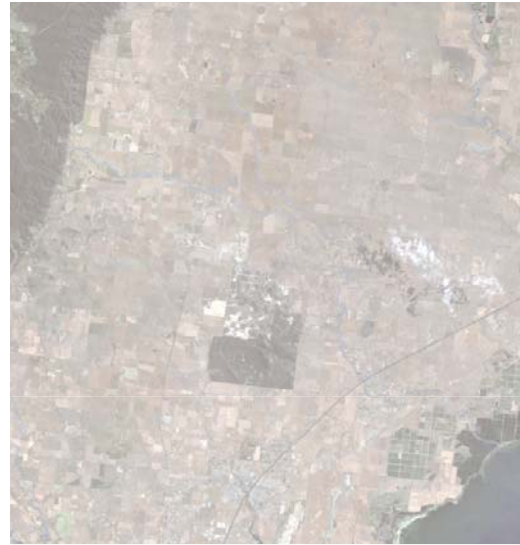
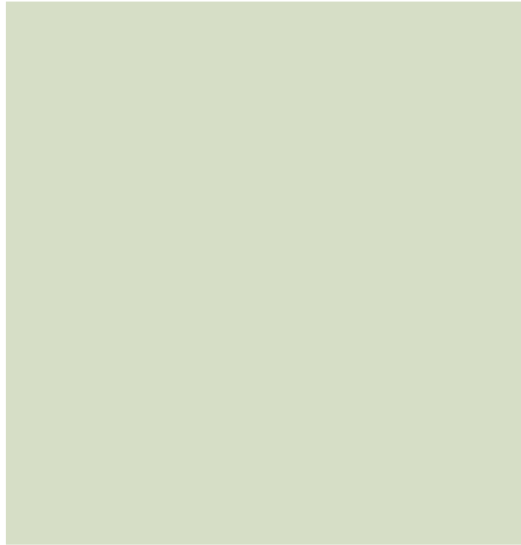
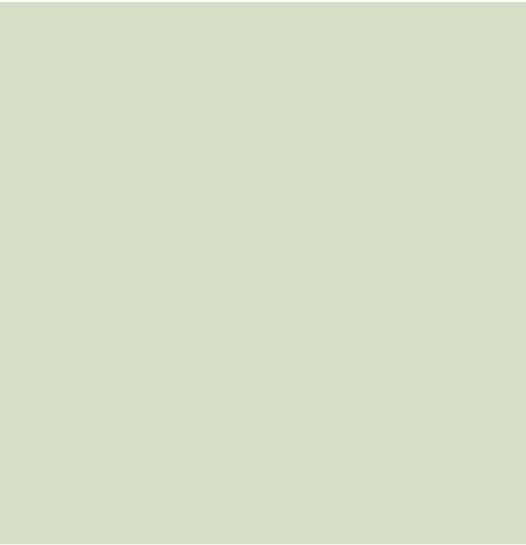
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APPENDIX

B



Appendix B

Background Issues Papers

City of Greater Geelong

RURAL STRATEGY

1. Summary of Study

What is the Study about?

The Rural Strategy is to establish a new policy regime for appropriately regulating rural land use and development in the context of changing agricultural practices and continued rural land development pressures.

More specifically, the strategy is to address a number of key land use and development issues in the City's rural areas, including:

- The emergence of new agricultural industries, including new forms of horticulture, viticulture and aquaculture and other value adding rural activities;
- The impact of, and appropriate locations for animal keeping and training in rural areas;
- The impact of, and appropriate locations for intensive animal industries;
- The impact of, and appropriate locations for tourism activities and accommodation development in rural areas;
- The impact of, and appropriate locations for rural lifestyle living; and
- Minimum subdivision allowances in rural areas.



Rural land can have a number of functions, including;

- Agriculture;
- Landscape;
- Environment;
- Residential.

This project will assess which of these functions should be supported in Geelong, and where.

In the case of agriculture the project will consider which forms of agriculture will offer the greatest benefit to the City. The ability to continue to respond to demand for rural living, and whether it should be in a form associated with agriculture or be a purely residential land use, will also be assessed.



Who is undertaking the Study?

The City of Greater Geelong has engaged Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) to undertake the study. PB staff are rural land use planning specialists. RM Consulting Group (agricultural change management and natural resources), SGS Economics and Planning (economic development) and Darrel Brewin (Land Capability) are working with PB to provide specialist expertise.

What is the Study area?

The study area is generally defined as those areas currently zoned Rural or Rural Living within the City of Greater Geelong. The study area extends from Anakie in the north of the municipality to the end of the Bellarine Peninsula.

The study will be working with the outcomes of the recently produced Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan 2006-2016 to ensure that the outcomes of this study are reflected in the Geelong Planning Scheme.



The Bellarine Strategic Plan 2006 – 2016, City of Greater Geelong

What will be the outcomes of the Study?

The key purpose of the Study is to update the Geelong Planning Scheme with respect to rural land use management.

The study will produce the following;

- A Rural Land Use and Development Framework (RLDF) which defines, explains and justifies strategically preferred locations for different rural land uses and development types in the City.
- Expression of Council's strategy and policy with respect to the future function of its rural areas to go into the Local Planning Policy Framework of the Geelong Planning Scheme.
- Identification of the areas to which the Farming Zone, Rural Living Zone and Rural Conservation Zone will be applied to implement the Rural Land Use Framework and Strategy.
- Determination of appropriate minimum subdivision sizes and approval requirements for dwellings in the different rural zones.



The Bellarine Strategic Plan 2006 – 2016, City of Greater Geelong

Examples of Issues to be Addressed

The rural areas of Geelong pose a number of complex planning questions with respect to their appropriate future function. Geelong is a vibrant, growing regional City and the rural areas may be required for population growth, or industrial activity. The rural areas of the City are also recognised for their contribution to the amenity and character of the City. The City is at the gateway to the nationally significant Great Ocean Road area, and is a tourist attraction in its own right. The rural areas are an important part of the local tourist package. Many people wish to live in and visit the rural areas. The rural areas also have inherent values for agricultural production, and as such are an important natural resource and farming is a part of the local economy. Significantly the rural areas of Geelong contain important environmental assets including Swan Bay, Lake Conewarre, Brisbane Ranges, You Yangs and the Barwon and Moorabool Rivers.

This strategy must consider the above potentially competing interests and determine a sustainable function for the rural areas that benefits the current and future population.

The study will consider the following matters;

How important are the rural areas of the City in terms of its character, liveability, environment and economy?

What role should agriculture play in the City's development and economy?

What types of agriculture are best suited in the City's various rural areas and what opportunities are there for new agricultural industries?

What are the housing and subdivision requirements to support such agricultural activities?

How many people should be able to live in the rural areas?

What role do the City's rural areas play in tourism and recreation, and should opportunities be provided for these developments?

What is the Consultation Program?

Community Open Day	Anakie / Staughton Vale Hall	Monday, 11 th September 4pm-8pm
Farmer's Workshop	Anakie / Staughton Vale Hall	Monday, 11 th September 8pm
Community Open Day	Marcus Hill Hall	Tuesday, 12 th September 4pm-8pm
Farmer's Workshop	Marcus Hill Hall	Tuesday, 12 th September 8pm

The **Community Open Days** will enable interested community members to drop in at their convenience, view information about the project that has been collected so far, speak to the consultants about their ideas about the future or particular issues that they think should be considered and record in writing their contribution to the project.

The **Farmers Workshops** will offer the chance for local farmers to discuss and debate the future of farming in the Shire.

City of Greater Geelong

RURAL STRATEGY

2. Population and Housing

Population and Housing Growth

The Geelong region, including the City of Greater Geelong, has experienced sustained population growth and residential development since the early 1990s.

Table 1 below shows that the City has grown by some 11,361 persons over the period 1991 to 2001, an average annual rate of 1.0% in the 1996 - 2001 period. In 2005 Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated resident population for the whole City was 204,891.

Table 1 below shows the population change across the whole City during the 1991-2001 period distributed between urban Geelong, other urban areas and the City's rural areas.

Population growth in the rural areas of the City has been modest with only an additional 350 people in the rural areas between 1991 and 2001.



Within the City of Greater Geelong population growth has been focussed in the urban areas of Geelong, however population increases have also occurred in a number of towns and settlements, particularly on the Bellarine Peninsula. While these towns are not part of the rural areas for the purposes of this study the growth and popularity of these towns impacts on the adjoining rural areas.

Table 2 shows that significant population increases have occurred in a number of towns including Clifton Springs, Lara, Leopold and Ocean Grove.

City of Greater Geelong	1991	1996	2001
Urban Geelong	144,962	146,166	151,851
Other Urban Areas	22,154	23,483	26,310
Rural Geelong	5,824	5,760	6,170
Total City	172,940	175,409	184,331

Table 1 Population of the City of Greater Geelong 1991-2001

The population of the City's rural areas is dispersed. The rural areas essentially fall into one of four areas or precincts

- The rural areas of the Bellarine Peninsula
- The immediate periphery of the Geelong urban area – including areas bordering Surf Coast Shire to the south and Golden Plains Shire to the west
- The area to the north of the Geelong urban area and west of the You Yangs including the township of Anakie
- The area to the north east of the Geelong urban area and east and south east of the You Yangs

Each of these areas has different characteristics in terms of pressures for population growth or new housing. Most rural population is located on the Bellarine Peninsula.

Defined township areas	1981	1991	2001
Barwon Heads	1245	1909	2600
Clifton Springs	2227	5847	7302
Drysdale	1127	1406	1731
Indented Head	421	551	597
Lara	4231	6318	9206
Leopold	2946	4432	6783
Ocean Grove	5532	8160	10055
Portarlington	1863	2553	2686
St Leonards	900	1206	1226

Table 2 Geelong 'Rural' Areas Population Change Defined Township Areas 1981 - 2001
September 2006

Housing construction has been strong in the Geelong region particularly in the last five years. This has corresponded with rapidly rising house prices, government subsidies for first home buyers and a long period of relatively low interest rates on home mortgages.



Table 3 below indicates the level of housing construction (house approvals) across the whole City and the rural areas of the City over the period 2000/01 – 2005/06. The Geelong Rural Areas are defined as Greater Geelong Part B (Bellarine Peninsula and peripheral areas on the east and south of the Geelong urban area) and Part C (areas to the north and north east of the City). These areas include some small towns and settlements where most of the housing development has taken place.

ABS SLA	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	2005/06
Part B	630	501	526	417	318
Part C	8	14	11	12	8

Table 2 Geelong 'Rural' Areas – New House Approvals 2001/02–2005/06

In this period the whole of the City of Greater Geelong had between 1292 (2005/06) and 2023 (2001/02) new house approvals.

Growth Opportunities

The Bellarine Peninsula Land Use and Residential Lot Supply Report 2005 prepared by the City of Greater Geelong has identified that the ***whole of the Bellarine Peninsula will provide for an additional 19,000 persons in designated areas within and in areas adjoining existing urban areas and townships.***

The rural areas of the City of Greater Geelong have provided limited scope for development in terms of population growth and new housing construction. ***The City's planning policies for rural areas and the***

administration of zoning provisions has not provided for the further subdivision of land into lots for residential, rural residential or rural living purposes. The City has cautiously exercised discretion in terms of granting planning permits for new houses in the rural areas. The City has sought to ensure that any residential development in the rural areas is closely linked to supporting and sustaining agricultural uses.

Lifestyle

While large numbers of people in the City's rural areas are associated with continuing agriculture either on a full time or part time basis, ***it is evident that large numbers seek a rural location because of the lifestyle attributes of the areas.***



In the rural areas of northern part of the City only ***77 out of a total employed population of 1,086 at the 2001 census gave their industry of employment as agriculture.***

The community survey that was undertaken as part of the Bellarine Strategy reported that ***41% of those surveyed identified lifestyle/amenity as the primary reason why they lived in the area.***

Key characteristics of the population of the rural areas of the Bellarine Peninsula were reported in the Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan 2006 -16 – Demographic Profile for the Townships and Rural Areas of the Bellarine Peninsula prepared by the City of Greater Geelong. That report noted that ***15% of the population were over 65 years in 2001, there are a large number of persons who have recently shifted to the rural areas - only 45% of the population had lived there for more 5 years and that the population of the rural areas were projected to increase by about another 600 persons over the period to 2016.***

Research undertaken by RPD Group (2005) has indicated ***strong trends in rural living in areas of high amenity, close to Melbourne or regional centres.*** Lifestyle and residential amenity is a key driver of housing choice instead of employment. This means that there will continue to be strong pressure on the City's rural areas.



Future Growth

One of the most significant pressures on the City's rural areas is to provide for the expansion of urban areas. A large existing rural area on the southern periphery of the Geelong urban area (Armstrong's Creek) has been designated for future urban development and is currently undergoing extensive strategic planning. Other areas on the edges of Ocean Grove and Portarlington, for example, have been set aside for future urban development and are currently the subject of detailed planning investigations.

The City's adopted strategies and policies ***make no provision for any other rural areas to be set aside for residential development.*** However, very long term, it may be necessary to designate some additional areas on the periphery of urban Geelong and some townships for urban development. In the light of this situation it would be generally inappropriate to designate areas on the periphery of existing urban areas and townships for uses and development, which would compromise potentially suitable urban areas. However it is not proposed within the scope of this rural areas review that further areas will be identified or considered for urban expansion of the Geelong urban area or any of the towns and settlements that border the City's rural area.

Rural Living

Other than at Lovely Banks, the City's current strategies and policies do not propose that any land within the rural areas be set aside for planned rural living development such as 1-3ha lots. However scope may exist for some lots currently zoned and developed for Rural Living purposes to be re-subdivided to provide for planned residential

development in a semi rural landscape. Comment and opinion on such an initiative will be sought in the consultative phase of the review.

The focus for any such consideration must be those areas where the existing levels of residential and rural amenity will not be compromised, that legitimate agricultural uses are not impacted, that the rural ambience sought by residents is maintained and that these areas have suitable infrastructure and land capability to support more intensive residential development.

In some cases rural areas of the City have been used for large scale uses which are likely to limit the attractiveness of an area for future settlement. A prime example of this is the correctional facilities on the Geelong – Bacchus Marsh road and the Avalon airport. While in other cases agricultural uses such as vineyards discourage closer settlement because they are associated with activities such as spraying which needs to be buffered from residential development.



Landscape

While the City's rural areas are used for variety of uses increasingly the dominant value in many people's eyes, both rural and urban dwellers, ***is the role of an attractive open landscape.*** Rural areas provide a 'relief' from the congestion of urban areas. The concept that one can move quickly from an urban setting to enjoy countryside is highly valued.

For the smaller settlements and towns a strongly held view is that there should be ***non-urban breaks between towns, which helps to retain their separate identity.***

The concept of the rural landscape as a valuable urban commodity is present in many societies. The argument frequently put by those in the farming community is that this means that they are restricted in what they can do so as to provide attractive farmland for urban residents to drive through. It is relevant to this review that

part of the appeal of the region is not only that most areas have easy access to the coast but also an attractive rural setting.

Coastal Spaces (DSE, 2006) identifies that there are a number of landscapes on the Bellarine Peninsula that are of regional significance, including around Spray Farm, Lake Connewarre, Swan Bay and Ocean Grove. This report recommends containing urban and residential development within existing township boundaries, to encourage sustainable development along the coastline.

Tourism and Recreation Development

An important consideration, in respect to planning and land use in the City's rural areas, is an increasing pressure to provide for 'one off' uses, some of which are associated with population growth and housing. ***The tourist and recreation pressure on the City is significant.*** The popularity of the Bellarine Peninsula in particular has prompted enquiries to Council for a number of possible developments including;

- Caravan/mobile home parks
- Golf courses with accommodation
- Conference/convention centres with accommodation and associated with uses such as wineries.

While some or most of these initiatives may largely provide for short stay tourist accommodation some are likely to provide options for permanent or semi-permanent accommodation. There has been a concern that proposals for caravan/mobile home park development ***could lead to effectively another settlement with permanent residents isolated from basic services and facilities.***



At the same time the City is conscious of the need for ensuring that its housing and accommodation stock is affordable and accessible. As a general principle, and in respect to the rural areas review, the initial position has been taken not to support 'one-off' isolated accommodation uses which are likely to provide for long term residents or permanent living if it is not linked with services and facilities in established towns. The review provides an opportunity to consider a range of views on this issue.



Consideration could be given to tourist related developments where there is a strong basis for a rural location and where it can meet key criteria including, supporting rural and agricultural land use, meeting all required infrastructure costs, not compromising existing agricultural uses, and enhances the environment significantly.

City of Greater Geelong

RURAL STRATEGY

3. Environmental Issues

Introduction

The City of Greater Geelong's rural land is important not only for its productive capacity and landscape values but also for its biodiversity values and must be managed correctly to ensure a healthy environment. Without a healthy environment productive capacity and landscape values suffer. The Greater Geelong rural area is home to many significant environmental features, including the Barwon and Moorabool rivers along with many smaller rivers and creeks, the Brisbane Ranges National Park, You Yangs Regional Park, Barabool Hills, Bellarine Peninsula and Corio Bay.

There are also 114 wetlands totalling 11,630ha that play an important role as part of the overall ecosystem of the region. Many of these wetlands are recognised under the Ramsar convention, identifying wetlands of international importance. These include Swan Bay which is approximately 3,000ha in size with a 170km² catchment, Lake Connewarre/Reedy Lake and the coastal wetlands on the northern shore of Corio Bay. The wetlands provide habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna, including migratory birds, many of which are included in the Australian international migratory bird agreements with China and Japan (CAMBA and JAMBA).



City of Greater Geelong

Key environmental issues

Water degradation

- Greater Geelong's waterways are in poor condition because of inappropriate land use practices including vegetation clearance, habitat destruction, and polluted runoff, along with increased water demand in urban and rural areas.
- The Greater Geelong Planning Scheme highlights that the region's waterways are now faced with high nutrient and sediment levels, degraded riparian zones, altered flows and polluted or saline surface and groundwater.
- The monitored rivers and creeks within the Greater Geelong area range from marginal to very poor condition, most being brackish to saline.

- The Moorabool and Barwon Rivers are identified in the Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy (2003-2008) as the most flow stressed river systems in the region and both have high salinity, nutrient and sediment levels.
- Land in the northwest rural areas of the City is part of a declared water supply catchment, heightening the reasons why land use must be appropriately managed to ensure the best possible water quality.



Environmental Management Strategy, City of Greater Geelong

Soil degradation

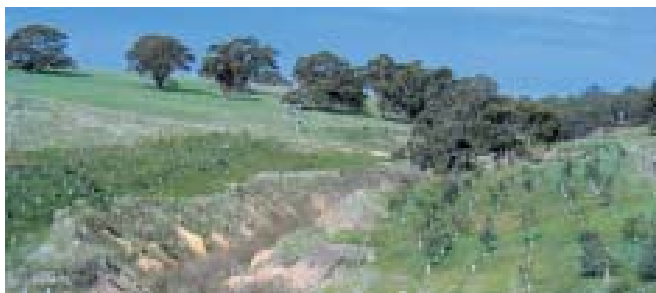
- The Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy (2003-2008) identifies that there are many serious soil degradation issues in the Greater Geelong area.
- Existing problems include soil erosion by water and wind, specifically in the City's northern rural areas; mass movements; landslides and soil creep; soil structure decline including soil sodicity and waterlogging; soil acidity; and soil fertility decline.
- Good management of land activities is required to reduce and repair these problems.
- Acid sulphate soils – soils containing iron sulphides, were also identified and Department of Primary Industry mapping shows the estimated extent of these soils are mainly around the coast on the northern stretches of Corio Bay and the Bellarine Peninsula, wetland areas around Connewarre Lake, along the southern stretches of the Barwon and Moorabool Rivers and around Breamlea. The disturbance of these soils can result in acid runoffs.

Salinity

- Land affected by salinity is scattered throughout the Greater Geelong area – with the main problem areas being similar to those described for acid sulphate soils.

Native vegetation loss and degradation

- The Planning Scheme highlights that vegetation clearing, spread of pest plants and animals, grazing and changed drainage patterns are the most significant threats to flora and fauna. Urban growth in Geelong is another threat to existing native vegetation surrounding the urban areas.
- Most remnant vegetation is located on public land throughout the City; however there is also significant native vegetation on some private land. The most prominent areas of this is private land in the northern rural areas of the City, which includes along waterways, with some significant areas also in the south of the Bellarine Peninsula
- The majority of endangered, vulnerable, depleted and rare classed vegetation in the City of Greater Geelong is located in coastal areas, wetlands, waterways and large scale public parks. There are only a few small, isolated pockets of remnant native grasslands scattered throughout the Greater Geelong area. Protection, regrowth and establishment of wildlife corridors is important for flora, fauna, land and water system health.



City of Greater Geelong

Pest plants and animals

- The presence of non native species in the Greater Geelong area has attributed to decreased agricultural productivity and damaged habitat and biodiversity values. Common species are Serrated Tussock, Chilean Needle Grass, Texas Needle Grass, Patterson's Curse and Gorse. Rabbits are the major pest animal in the area. Foxes and other feral animals are also an issue.

Wildfire

- Areas in the foothills of the Brisbane Ranges and parts of Anakie township in the City's northwest are very susceptible to wildfire occurrences.

Flooding

- 775ha of land in the municipality is affected by flooding in a 1 in 100 year event. The Moorabool River is of low flood risk and the Barwon River is of medium flood risk. It is important to avoid inappropriate development in these areas.

Coastal area degradation

- Erosion, destruction of seagrass communities, saline wetland and coastal land degradation are major coastal issues. Coastal management needs to be on a catchment basis so that land activities are carefully planned to ensure that coastal environments are not degraded because of inappropriate activities that

create polluted runoff or introduction of pest plants and animals to coastal areas.

Environmental policy

The City of Greater Geelong recognises these environmental issues and there are a variety of policy and strategy documents that govern management of the rural areas in the City of Greater Geelong. These include the City of Greater Geelong Planning Scheme; Geelong's Environmental Management Strategy 2006-2011; Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy 2003-2008 and associated documents; specific area strategies such as Swan Bay Catchment Action Plan and the Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan 2006-2016.

Council has also developed the 'Rural Land Management Kit' which is an interactive guide on Council's website designed for new residents, hobby farmers, agricultural enterprises and individuals. The kit addresses many of the issues identified here, and is a reference point and practical tool to increase land management knowledge and guide property owners in undertaking best practice management of land, waterways and biodiversity. There are also many other state and national policy documents that are relevant for land management in the City of Greater Geelong. These include the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act and Victoria's Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action.



City of Greater Geelong

In general these documents provide the following policy context that may influence the Geelong Rural Strategy;

- Net gain principle of vegetation management
- Designated growth areas
- Specific areas requiring land management protection and enhancement for biodiversity / waterway health / native flora and fauna
- Land use restrictions in other sensitive areas such as coastal regions, wildfire and flood prone land

Implications for rural land use planning

In developing a rural land use strategy for the City of Greater Geelong the impact on the natural environment is a fundamental issue. The environmental, social and economic health of the region is interrelated; each depends on the other to survive. Consideration of each part is important to achieve the best land use outcomes that will maintain and enhance the health of the region.

City of Greater Geelong RURAL STRATEGY

4. Agriculture

Overview

The Agricultural Industry within the City of Greater Geelong comprises three broad sectors:

- Production of a range of commodities
- Manufacturing and processing
- Research and education

Agricultural Commodities

There are approximately 55,000 hectares of land farmed across the municipality by about 300 producers. The most significant commodities in terms of gross value of agricultural production are:

Poultry (eggs and meat)	\$25 million*
Cut flowers and turf	\$18 million
Meat and wool	\$10 million
Grain	\$9 million
Vegetables	\$3 million

*ABS 2004

Other commodities include dairy, pigs and grapes for wine.

Since 1983, commodities showing the most significant growth were poultry, nurseries and grain. Sheep and beef production have remained steady while the dairy industry has shown a gradual decline, with few dairy producers remaining in the municipality.



Agricultural Capability

Agricultural capability of the land within the municipality has been classed, with Class 1 land considered to have very high agricultural quality and Class 5 land considered unsuitable for agriculture. Most of the land within the municipality is of Class 3 capability, or moderate agricultural quality. This means it is generally suited to grazing but is unsuitable for cropping or horticulture.

Land of Class 2 or high agricultural quality can be found on the northern side of the Bellarine Peninsula, and around Lara. In the past, better quality land on the Bellarine Peninsula was used for vegetable production, particularly potatoes. Grape production for wine is now a more common use.



Agricultural Manufacturing and Processing

The municipality has a number of agricultural manufacturing and processing businesses that provide significant employment in the region. Some of the major businesses and the number of employees are listed below.

- Food Processing

Bulla Dairy Foods	(200)
Bonlac Foods	(143)
Bartter Enterprises	(620)

These businesses process food from across south-west Victoria. There is an extensive poultry industry based in the Golden Plains Shire and dairy production is focused around Colac and Warrnambool.

- Timber Processing

AKD Softwoods	(180)
Calco Timbers Pty Ltd	150)

These businesses process timber from across south-west Victoria, with the only other significant timber processors based in Colac.

- Agricultural Product Suppliers

Incitec Pivot	(100)
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This is a major supplier to retailers and farmers across Victoria.

Agricultural Education and Research

- **Marcus Oldham College**

Marcus Oldham College is the only independent agricultural college operating in Australia. The courses focus on business management, and the academic programs delivered include a Bachelor of Business (Agricultural Management), Advanced Diploma of Farm Business Management and a Diploma of Agribusiness.

- **CSIRO - Geelong: Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL)**

The Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) is a major facility of CSIRO Livestock Industries and plays a vital role in maintaining Australia's capability to quickly diagnose exotic (foreign) and emerging animal diseases.

- **CSIRO - Division of Textile and Fibre Technology**

CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology Centre invents, develops and commercialises technologies for new and improved products and processes, quality control, and environmental safety at every stage of the wool, cotton, textile and leather processing pipelines.



Issues

- **Farm Viability**

For a full-time farming household, the viability of the farm is based on its capacity to provide a living for the family, service debt, invest in farm production and provide for farm succession and growth over time. It is generally accepted that an independently viable farm will generate a minimum of between \$270,000 and \$300,000 gross income per annum.

An analysis of the estimated value of agricultural operation of producers in the City of Greater Geelong indicates that 14% of the 300 farms in the municipality are generating sufficient income to be considered independently viable, with a few large and dynamic businesses.

The remaining 86% of farms generate less than \$200,000 per annum and fall into the part-time and small category and would not be considered independently viable. This may include lifestyle and boutique farms where some income is generated off-farm and older businesses with little or no debt.

Since 1983 the total area farmed and the number of producers has dropped by 14% and 33% respectively. In light of the viability of many farm businesses in the municipality, this trend is likely to continue.

Agricultural industry structure by estimated value of agricultural operations (ABS 2001)

Industry Name	Part Time Properties (<100k)	Small Properties (\$100k - \$200k)	Medium Properties (\$200k - \$500k)	Large Properties (\$500k - \$1mill)	Dynamic Properties (>\$1mill)	Total Properties
Poultry	1	1	1	1	2	7
Plant Nurseries	4	2	5	2	1	14
Vegetables	11	7	8	3	-	30
Grapes	12	5	-	2	-	19
Beef	69	5	-	1	-	76
Dairy	3	1	1	1	-	6
Mixed Farming	25	8	7	-	-	39
Grain	4	1	2	-	-	7
Flowers	2	3	1	-	-	6
Sheep	46	2	1	-	-	49
Other	45	3	2	-	-	49
Total	222	39	29	12	3	305
% of Total	73	13	10	4	1	100

• **Farm affordability**

A comparison of median sales prices for rural land in Greater Geelong, Golden Plains and Colac Otway indicates that significantly higher prices are paid for all types of rural land in Greater Geelong. This has a significant impact on investment in farm businesses.

For example, 75% of the farm capital of a beef grazing business is the land value. For a business to grow by investing profit (as opposed to capital growth), high land values will pose a significant risk as only highly profitable businesses will be able to generate sufficient return on capital to service borrowings.

In the City of Greater Geelong increase in land prices has resulted in a move to more intensive agricultural businesses such as poultry, nurseries, grape and a decline in traditional broadacre enterprises. It has also lead to broadacre producers leasing land to grow their farm businesses as an alternative to land purchase.

In the long-term broadacre producers looking to expand the farm business may look outside the municipality for more affordable land.



• **Urban Encroachment**

Between 2000 and 2002, the City of Greater Geelong experienced a 121.7% increase in building approvals and population changed by 1.3%, in line with the State average (National Sea Change Taskforce 2005). Residential development was concentrated largely in South Barwon, Bellarine Peninsula Corio and Geelong East (G21 Region Plan).

Urban encroachment places pressure on farm businesses by:

- Driving up land prices
- Restricting farm operations, e.g. stock and machinery movement
- Conflict between urban and rural neighbours arising from farm activities, e.g. noise odour

Without suitable buffers to separate urban and rural activities, Council will be called on to resolve an increasing number of disputes and farm businesses may relocate elsewhere.

• **Land Management**

Ad hoc urban development has occurred where there is fragmentation of lots and high land values. This has seen the land change from primarily agricultural in use to an urban or lifestyle use. New land owners frequently do not have the skills or resources to manage the land appropriately which may result in weed infestations, diseased or maltreated stock, fire hazard etc. Over time, property owners may look to subdivide to overcome the difficulties and costs of managing large parcels of land.



Comparison of Median Sales Prices (Valuer General 2004)

Land Use	Greater Geelong (\$/ha)	Golden Plains (\$/ha)	Colac Otway (\$/ha)
Beef	14,609	7,059	1,730
Cereal	44,704	3,458	5,784
Farm land (without house)	17,745	6,995	5,339
Hobby farm (with house)	219,706	42,750	54,863
Hobby farm land (without house)	62,000	19,748	14,520
Sheep	7,345	-	-
Unspecified rural	10,215	9,363	7,399

Opportunities

• Aquaculture

The main form of aquaculture in the Geelong Arm Aquaculture Fisheries Reserves is mussel aquaculture and spat collection. There has been some research and development in the grow-out of scallops and flat oysters and pilot scale abalone cage culture.

There are four aquaculture reserves adjoining the Greater Geelong region:

- Clifton Springs Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve - 315 ha located approximately 1km offshore from the Bellarine Peninsula
- Grassy Point Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve - 252 ha located approximately 600m offshore from the Bellarine Peninsula
- Kirk Point – Werribee Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve - 200 ha located in the Geelong Outer Harbour
- Bates Point Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve - 25 ha located 700m from Point Lillias in the Geelong Outer Harbour

Large areas of these reserves are still to be developed and represent a significant opportunity for further production and processing. Rates of development of greenfield and unallocated sites will be set by Fisheries Victoria in consultation with key stakeholders.

Average commercial catch between 2000 – 2004

Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve	Average value (\$million)	Average tonnage (t)
Bates Point	0.399	53
Clifton Springs	0.192	82
Grassy Point	0.191	35
Kirk Point	0.104	19

• Irrigated Agriculture

A Business Case Study into a Balliang District Recycled Water Trunk Pipeline was undertaken to determine the feasibility of developing additional and new areas of irrigated agriculture and horticulture, utilising recycled water from the Werribee Wastewater Treatment Plant. The study found significant areas suitable for irrigation development of high value crops in the Balliang, You Yangs and Moorabool districts. Other opportunities for beneficial use of the recycled water may come from third-pipe developments and contribution to environmental flows.

Key constraints to irrigation development (and other beneficial uses) are the requirement for further water treatment to reduce phosphorous and salinity levels and the high cost of construction of the pipeline and associated infrastructure.



Questions for Consideration

- What is the long-term future of agriculture in the City of Greater Geelong?
- Are there particular industries that the municipality should actively encourage?
- How can quality agricultural land be used productively within the context outlined above?
- What are the opportunities for part time / small scale agricultural businesses, which productively use land and contribute to the economy?
- Is there a future for full time, commercial agriculture in the municipality? If so, in what industries?

City of Greater Geelong

RURAL STRATEGY

5. Planning Policy for Rural Areas

Overview

The key purpose of the study is to update the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme with respect to rural land use management. The study will produce a Rural Land Use and Development Framework (RLDF) that will guide rural land use and development in the City.

What are planning schemes?

Planning schemes define the preferred use of land. They include policies and provisions that guide decision making. Planning schemes are legal documents prepared by the local council or the Minister for Planning, and are approved by the Minister.

State planning policy

Every planning scheme includes the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF). The SPPF comprises general principles for land use and development in Victoria and specific policies that relate to settlement, environment, housing, economic development, infrastructure and particular uses and development. Council must adhere to the principles and policies contained in the SPPF.

There are a number of State policies that apply to rural land:

- **Protect productive agricultural land**

Protect the State's agricultural base. Ensure productive agricultural land is not lost due to permanent changes to land use.

- **Intensive animal industries**

Support their establishment and expansion provided they are consistent with relevant Codes of Practice and protection of the environment.

- **Forestry and timber production**

Council should identify appropriate areas for this use. Forestry and timber production uses required to be consistent with the National Forest Policy Statement and relevant Codes of Practice.

- **Promote growth of Geelong as a regional city**

Encourage planning for Geelong that will deliver an appropriate supply of land for housing and industry in appropriate areas. Protect the natural resource base and limit the impact of urban development on non-urban areas.

- **Rural residential development**

Control development in rural areas to protect agriculture and the natural resource base. Encourage further development in existing settlements and discourage isolated small lots in rural zones.

Local planning policy

Each planning scheme includes a section for local Council strategy and policies which is the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF). The LPPF is made up of the Council's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) which is the Council's key strategic planning objectives for land use and development, and a number of policies that deal with specific issues.

The Geelong MSS sets out clear guidelines for the protection and use of rural areas. These include maintaining non-urban breaks, rural residential only in preferred nodes and protecting high quality agricultural land and areas of environmental significance.

Council is required to review their MSS periodically. Greater Geelong is currently conducting a review of their MSS.

Council currently has local policies that relate to rural areas. These include:

- **Subdivision, excisions and dwellings in rural areas**

Protect the agricultural and environmental resource base. Limit dwellings and other development on prime or high quality agricultural land or where the dwelling will be incompatible with the sustainable use of the land.

- **Rural living development**

Protect the amenity of rural residential locations and maintain rural character and low density nature of the zone

- **Waurin Ponds rural living – quarry environs**

Ensure extractive operations of the quarry do not have a negative impact on residential development. Policy includes buffer distances for new residences.

Existing Council strategies for rural areas:

- *Rural Land Use Strategy 1997*
- *Rural Residential Strategy 1994*
- *The Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan 2006 - 2016*

The strategies listed above include Council's existing directions for its rural areas and these strategies are the current basis for the rural planning controls.

This study will include analysis of these strategies to assess whether the objectives and actions that were developed have been implemented and if appropriate outcomes have been achieved, and, further, whether those directions are still relevant. The Rural Land Use Strategy will be replaced by the Rural Land Use and Development Framework (RLDF) as a result of this study.

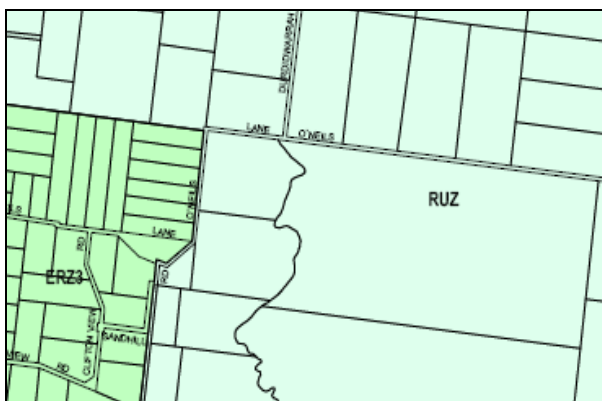
The Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan 2006 - 2016

This Plan identifies issues in the area and establishes some key objectives and actions for the Bellarine Peninsula rural areas including preserving rural land and preventing further rural residential areas, avoiding non-agricultural uses that are incompatible and only agriculture in agricultural areas.

This study will build on existing Council strategies and plans.

Zones

Planning schemes are based on zones that are standard across the state, and designate preferred land use. There is no ability to vary the zones or to introduce local zones. Some of the zones have schedules to provide for local circumstances. Greater Geelong's Rural Zone includes a schedule that enables different subdivision sizes in different areas, based on land capability.



Overlays

Planning schemes have overlays that are standard across the state. They usually apply to specific issues such as heritage, salinity or areas of environmental significance such as watercourses.



Council determines where zones and overlays are applied to its land. This requires a change to the planning scheme and is subject to approval by the Minister for Planning.

New rural zones

There are now new zones for rural Victoria. The existing rural zones required a review as it was considered that they did not recognise the importance of agriculture and had created some land use conflicts between non-farming and farming uses in rural areas.

The new rural zones are clearly focussed, protect the rights of farmers to farm and prevent ad hoc development. Councils are currently going through the process of implementing these new zones. These new zones are detailed in Figure 1 below;

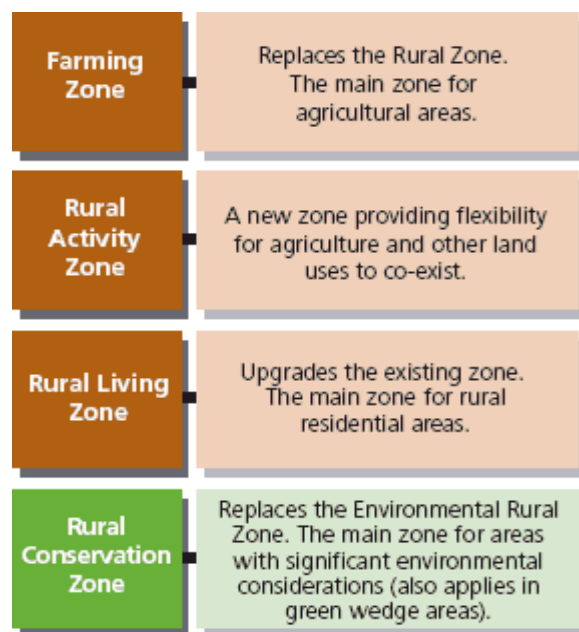


Figure 1 New rural zones
Department of Sustainability and Environment

Councils across Victoria are in the process of translating their existing rural zoned land to the new rural zones.

What changes will be made to the Geelong Planning Scheme?

This strategy will

- Provide updated strategic directions and objectives for rural areas that will be included in the revised MSS.
- Determine where the new farming zones will apply and requirements for subdivision and housing.
- Develop clear directions on appropriate locations for housing and other uses (such as greyhound keeping or tourism) in rural areas.

Changes to the planning scheme can only be made if Council strategically justifies the change. Any change is subject to a lengthy consultation process that is set out in the Planning and Environment Act and is subject to the approval by the Minister for Planning.

City of Greater Geelong

RURAL STRATEGY

6. Rural Living

Overview

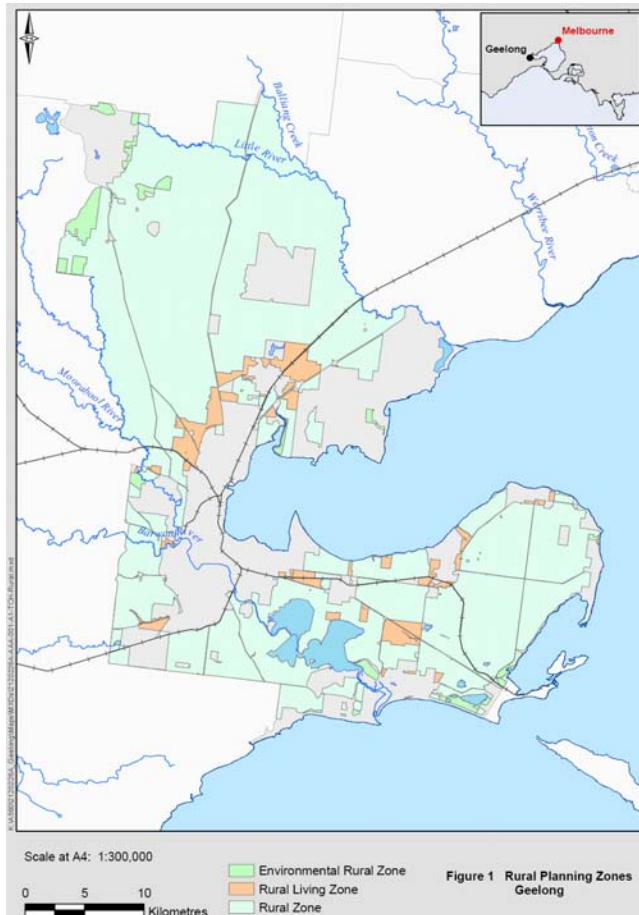
Geelong has traditionally taken a conservative approach to rural living development. It has held a strong position in relation to this form of development over time, and while it has provided a level of supply, it has not supported extensive areas of 20 acre subdivisions, as have many other rural municipalities. The form of rural living development formally provided in Geelong is within a number of distinct nodes, and consists of lots of between 1ha and 3ha. This approach seeks to strike a balance between the inefficiencies of land use and infrastructure supply associated with rural living, and the genuine demand expressed.

The map below identifies the areas of land formally set aside for rural living development in Geelong.

The areas set aside for, and zoned, Rural Living are coloured brown in the map. The Geelong Planning Scheme states that rural residential development will be concentrated at the designated nodes of Lara, Lovely Banks, Drysdale/Clifton Springs, Batesford and Wallington.



Photo courtesy Landmark



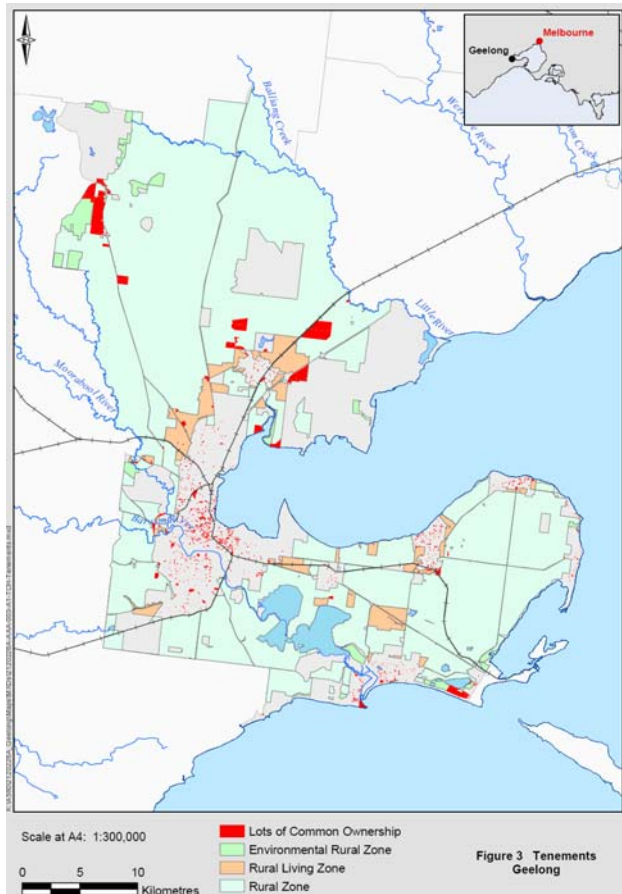
In addition to these formal rural living areas, a number of other rural areas are used more for residential purposes than farming purposes. This can be attributed to changing agricultural economics, lack of suitable supply of rural living land elsewhere and population trends such as “sea change” and “tree change”. Although Council seeks to prevent Rural zoned land changing from a farming use to a residential use through the planning approval process, the ability to manage the long term use of farm houses is limited.

Rural living is considered to be the use of rural land primarily for residential purposes, and may or may not be associated with some form of agriculture. Farm dwellings or rural houses are those that are on properties that are primarily used for agriculture, and the residential function of the property is ancillary to the farming function.

Issues

Some of the issues the Rural Strategy will need to consider in relation to the ongoing supply of rural living land are;

- There is a strong demand for rural living development in rural areas generally within 100km of Melbourne, and within 50km of regional centres. The demand in this area is particularly strong due to the high amenity and proximity to the coast.
- Although most of the rural areas of Geelong are zoned Rural, the primary purpose of which is agriculture, and Council has maintained a strong position on rural housing and subdivision, many rural lots are used for residential or small scale farming purposes due to declining productivity of traditional farming industries.



- The majority of lots within the rural areas are in separate ownership, as indicated by the map above. This further suggests that the rural areas of Geelong are not being farmed in a traditional manner, as the predominant dryland farming trend is consolidation and expansion.

- Rural living development can change the amenity of the area through additional development.
- Rural living is more expensive and inefficient to service than conventional residential development.



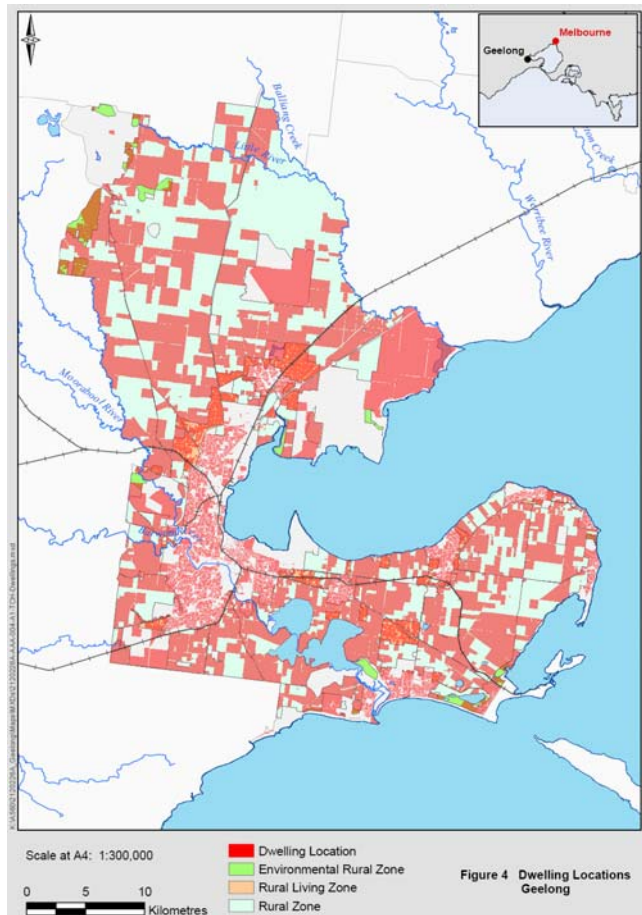
Photo courtesy Realestate.com.au

- Discussions with local Real Estate Agents indicate that the majority of rural land sold within the City of Greater Geelong is sold to "lifestylers" regardless of lot size.
- Rural living development can lead to land degradation, mismanagement or inefficient use and can displace agriculture.
- The formal rural living areas (those specifically zoned for the purpose) are largely fully developed, with few vacant lots.

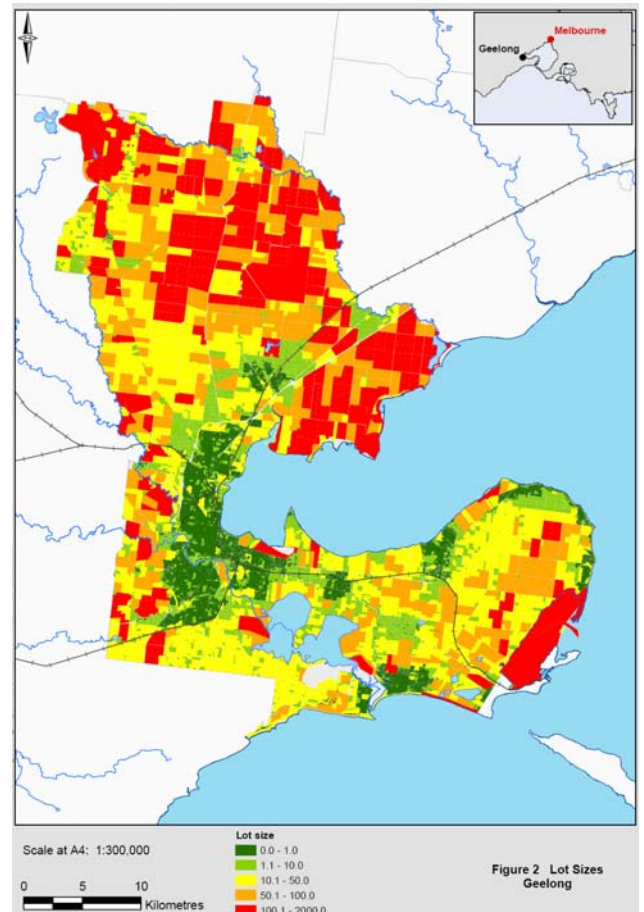
Opportunities

- The Rural Living zone can provide the opportunity for the productive use of agricultural land, and meet the demand for rural residential development through the use of larger lots.
- Rural living can support more intensive agriculture.
- Rural living development can improve land management through more intensive management.
- The opportunity to live in an attractive rural area is an important part of Council's settlement and economic development strategy. It is recognised that ability to live in an attractive environment is a key part of attracting highly skilled workers.

- Rural living at an appropriate density can preserve rural landscapes.
- As indicated by the map below, although many Rural zoned lots support dwellings, there are still a number of vacant rural lots. This indicates the strength and success of Council's policy for rural land and agriculture, given the strong demand present.



- Despite strong demand for rural living development, Council has retained significant areas of rural land in large lots. The map below identifies the lot sizes within rural areas. It shows that most lots in the rural areas are over 10ha in area, with a significant number more than 50ha in area.



Questions

We will be considering the following questions as a part of this study;

- Should any more of the rural areas of Geelong be used for rural living, and in what form?
- Should existing rural living areas be further subdivided?
- Should some farming areas be converted to larger scale rural living development, which provides for some agricultural uses as well as residential?
- At what point, in terms of agricultural activity, is a property considered to be used for rural living instead of farming?

City of Greater Geelong

RURAL STRATEGY

7. Economic Issues

Introduction

Originally the economy of Geelong was based on the rural areas. It was settled in the colonial era, serving local pastoralists and a thriving wool trade. It expanded rapidly in the 1850s when it served as the principal port for the Victorian Gold Rush. The late nineteenth century saw the export of wool and textiles, before the industrial base shifted in the 1920s towards manufacturing, with the establishment of the Ford motor plant 1925.



Moorabool Wharf, Geelong, c.1910, Geelong Historical Record Centre Collection

Today Geelong is the largest regional city in Victoria with a population of more than 200,000, which is expected to grow to about 270,000 by 2030. A large proportion of this population growth is forecast in what can now be termed 'rural areas', especially those areas on the fringes of existing coastal communities (e.g. Ocean Grove, Barwon Heads).

Geelong is well serviced by transport infrastructure that provides interstate and international linkages. It is approximately 1 hour by road or rail to Melbourne and Avalon airport, which services domestic flight travel, is located just north of the city. Geelong also has a seaport which is Australia's sixth largest.

Influences

With the recent restructuring of the Australian economy away from heavy industry, Manufacturing has declined and has been replaced by service sectors such as Retail Trade, Property & Business Services, and Health & Community Services. Other population linked industries such as Construction have also grown strongly recently in unison with the population. Figure 1 shows Geelong's

employment structure in comparison to that of Victoria, and the local Average Annual Growth Rate from 1991 to 2001.

Manufacturing remains an important economic foundation for Geelong, even though it continues to decline. Comparisons with the Australian economy also suggest that Geelong has significant strengths in Construction, Retail and Health & Community Services.

Agriculture and the economy

Agriculture only provides about 1.5% of total or 1,130 jobs in the Greater Geelong municipality. In the northern section of the City (around Anakie) there are a greater percentage of people working in rural industry in comparison to the rest of the municipality.

The Geelong region is home to the following agricultural industries;

- broad acre cropping and grazing
- vineyards
- aquaculture and fishing
- local food processors of poultry, rabbits and pigs (sourced from neighbouring municipalities)
- olive oil production and processing
- cut flowers and turf cultivation

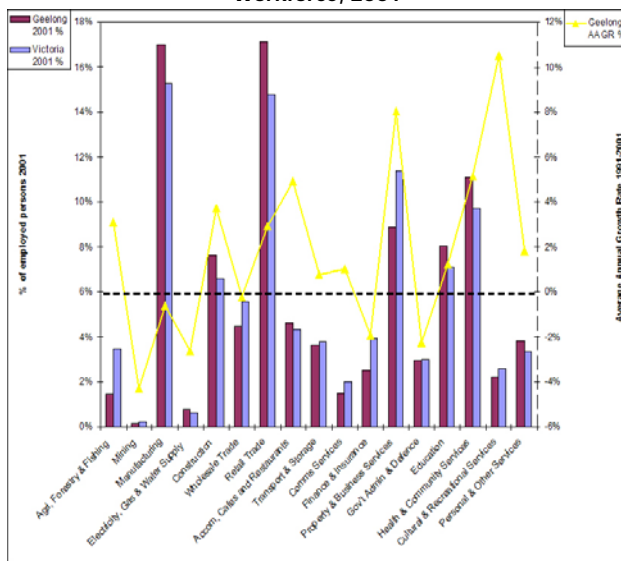
There are promising opportunities for growth, as new forms of horticulture, viticulture and aquaculture develop. The presence of a strong local research sector, including institutions such as the CSIRO, PIR Vic Marine and the Freshwater Institute, has the potential to bolster future agricultural competitiveness.



Agricultural land uses can also play an important stewardship role in preserving rural landscapes, appealing to residents and visitors alike. Tourism and associated industries such as food processing, retailing and hospitality are becoming increasingly important to Geelong's rural areas with much of this generated by the City's location, i.e. on route to the Great Ocean Road. and proximity to the Goldfields region. The challenge is to tap these entrenched tourism trails in order to maximise visitor spending locally.

The Bellarine Peninsula is a significant tourist magnet. Weekender/ day trip markets are significant drivers in this arena, as intermittent tourism blends with heightened demand for semi-permanent rural/ beach getaways. This demand has created pressure on land availability. Greater yields associated with residential uses may have an adverse affect on the future viability of low value added rural uses.

Figure 1 – A comparison between the Geelong and Victorian Workforce, 2001



Source: ABS Census, 2001

Economic Development Strategy 2005-10

At the heart of the City's Economic Development Strategy is a desire to promote dynamic and sustainable growth within the City. The Strategy identifies the following sectors as being capable of driving regional development and able to offer high quality and well remunerated employment:

- Knowledge, Innovation and Research
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Health
- Tourism
- Small, Micro and Home-based business
- Food and Horticulture

Of particular significance to rural areas within Greater Geelong are the Tourism, Food and Horticulture and Small, Micro and Home-based business sectors. Frequently these sectors are linked, e.g. vineyards often have a winery, and restaurant and gourmet produce shop serving tourists.

The Economic Development Strategy identifies a number of actions relevant to the Rural Strategy, including;

- Review zoning of land around West Connect to consider opportunities through improved transport connections to Geelong.
- Work with Barwon Water and other agencies to lobby for funds to investigate sustainable water recycling options in the Region particularly for food and horticultural related industries
- Support Small, Micro and Home Based Business and attract Small, Micro and Home Based Business to Geelong. Small businesses are particularly prevalent in farming, retail, tourism and hospitality sectors, which constitute the majority of employment opportunities in the rural parts of the municipality.
- Promote the ongoing development of Geelong's seafood and aquaculture industry.
- Facilitate opportunities for higher value added activities associated with the food and horticulture sector.
- Encourage options for niche markets in the food and horticulture sector.
- Encourage research and innovation in the food and horticulture sector.

Interestingly, the Economic Development Strategy highlights the importance of providing attractive living, recreational and working environments in supporting a strong economy. This relates to the ability to attract creative and talented people. The rural areas are a fundamental part of the amenity of the municipality, and the ability to live in the rural areas is an important part of its livability.



Tourism

Tourism is an important contributor to the local economy, providing approximately 4,200 full-time positions within the local labour market and generating \$478 million to the local economy. Tourism also offers great potential for future growth if managed strategically. Conventions and conferences generate approximately \$56 million per annum, with the area capturing 29% of the regional Victoria day-meeting market. At the State level, it is the fastest growing job sector.

Visitor data for the wider Great Ocean Road region, which includes parts of the City, indicate that for the year ending June 2005, there were 4.36 million domestic daytrip visitors, 2.49 million domestic overnight visitors, and 172,000 international overnight visitors. Of the more lucrative overnight market, 80% of visitors came from within Victoria, 17% from interstate and 11% from the international market.

Unfortunately, data is not available at a more refined geographic level. It is believed that the City currently fails to optimally capitalise on these massive tourism flows.



The Melbourne Surrounds Regional Tourism Development Plan 2005-2007, which also includes parts of the City, identifies Geelong as a Level 1 destination, the highest ranking. This is based upon its national and international appeal, proximity to Melbourne, range of accommodation, attractions and services, and high level of visitor satisfaction.

The rural areas of Geelong play an important role in the tourist economy as many people visit the area for the beaches on the Bellarine Peninsula, wineries, natural features such as the You Yangs and Brisbane Ranges.

Many people also pass through the rural areas on the way to visit attractions beyond the municipality, including the Great Ocean Road. The Rural Strategy must recognise the value of these rural based attractions to the local economy, particularly the amenity of the rural areas which is what attracts people to the area.



Potential Opportunities

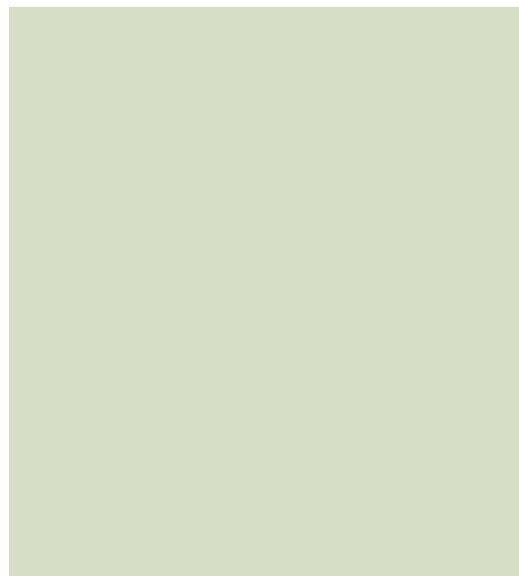
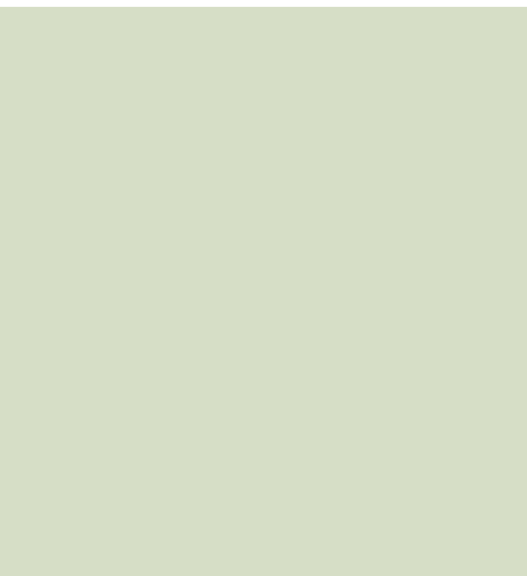
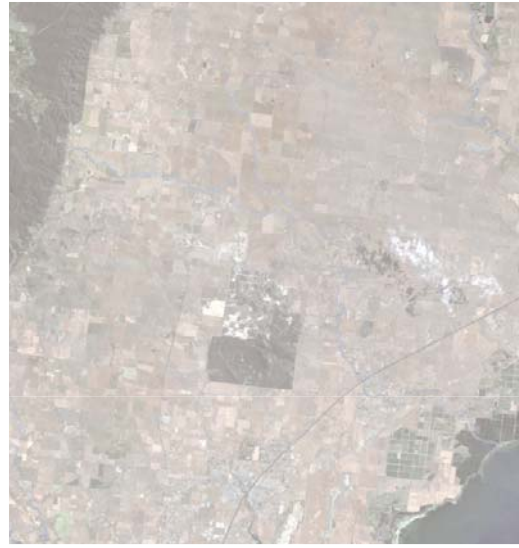
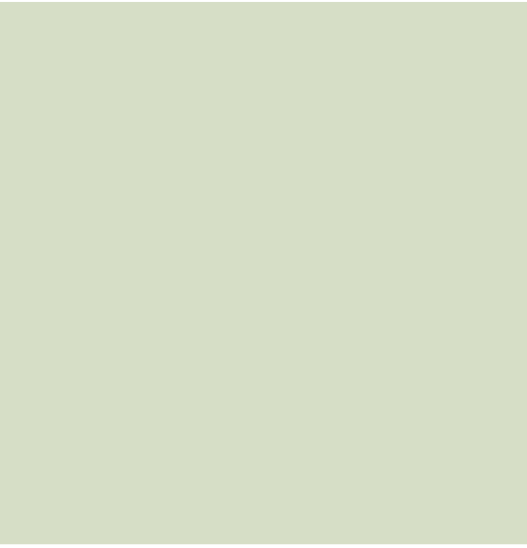
- Use productive land to grow products that can be processed locally, and capitalise on competitive advantages associated with supplier proximity and better road links to Avalon and Melbourne via West Connect;
- Develop a Southern Bay wineries region, amalgamating the Mornington and Bellarine Peninsulas as a super region, offering greater diversity and choice to rival the Yarra Valley.
- Rezone land around West Connect to accommodate new industrial, research and development opportunities for rural Geelong, thus transforming the rural economy by adding more 'urban' sectors to rural locations.
- Encourage Farm-stay accommodation to offer a local cultural experience.
- Develop a working farm educational and visitor experience.
- Support Pick Your Own fruit & vegetable farms catering to the day touring market.
- Develop a greater awareness of local gourmet produce in conjunction with a well signed Gourmet Trail to local deli destinations.
- Preserve rural landscapes as a key tourist attraction, in particular along major routes.
- Provide attractive living options, including rural settings, to attract creative and talented people.

The Rural Strategy will review the actions in the Economic Development Strategy relevant to rural areas and may provide greater direction for implementing these actions.

The Rural Strategy will consider the economic value and opportunities of Geelong's rural areas in determining future strategies.

APPENDIX

C



Appendix C

Community Open Days – key issues raised

Community open days

Key issues raised

A range of views and ideas were raised during the workshops. Some of the views and ideas that people contributed included

Geelong's rural areas are important for

- farming
- crops, sheep and wool
- grazing
- habitat
- lifestyle
- open areas
- intensive farming
- extraction industries
- sport
- as a green wedge to preserve wildlife habitat
- a breathing space between high density living and rural landscape

What Geelong's rural areas should look like in the future

- retain the rural landscape
- provide aesthetic relief for urban dwellers
- farming
- not industrial
- recreational
- Anakie to remain the same
- Maintain and protect locally peculiar/diverse environments

What Geelong's rural areas should be used for in the future

- No change to Anakie
- Grazing (northern parts of Anakie)
- Best practice farming
- Dryland farming
- Agricultural pursuits

Are there special places which should be protected?

- Bellarine Hills
- The coast
- Rural landscape of Bellarine Peninsula
- Wetlands of Point Richards
- Rural area around Portarlington should not be rezoned/developed for residential
- Biodiversity – rural land use rather than residential provides better protection
- Rare or endangered flora or fauna (such as the growling grass frog)
- Swan Bay catchment

Particular issues

Farming

- Rate farm land in relation to earning potential of the land rather than capital value
- Support establishment of local farmer's markets and salesyards
- Encourage activities such as bed and breakfast and farm-stay tourism to supplement farm income
- Phase out activities that conflict with farming such as sand mining (and resulting heavy traffic) in Bellarine Peninsula
- Buffer zones around towns
- Access to recycled water

Anakie

- Grow Anakie in a sustainable way
- Protect large farm land holdings through limiting subdivision
- We like Anakie the way it is
- A sports complex for Anakie (including a pool)
- Public transport access

- A medical service (on rotation)
- Speed zone restrictions in certain areas to protect wildlife
- Protect the Brisbane Ranges and its animals

Bellarine Peninsula – general

- The Drysdale landfill located on a waterway is inappropriate
- Council to honour its commitment to establish a park at the landfill site
- Enhance the landscape value of Murradoc Hills
- Establish a park at Murradoc hills
- Landfill and sand mining should be minimised

Marcus Hill

- Rural living in Rural Use zoned land (Princess St north of Andersons Road, Jurgens Road)
- Council reserve in Malpas Drive, Rhinds Road – issues with the sale

Lovely Banks

- Rezone parts of Lovely Banks from Rural to Rural Living

Farming workshop**Key issues discussed**

- Support productive use of quality agricultural land
- Opportunities for part time – small scale agricultural business (Council to support)
- Farm viability difficulties with higher rates
- Honour the rural zones – rural use/development in rural zones
- Building approvals should be allowed on existing titles (smaller holdings) where appropriate
- Stop urban uses in rural areas
- Preserve the rural areas
- Maintain the right to farm (including working at night and noise)
- Uses in designated areas
- The need for provision of infrastructure for rural communities (particularly water supply)
- Small acreages can be viable
- The rural-urban interface – causing issues
- Proliferation of weeds – absentee farming and roadside
- Adhere to the planning rules
- Buffer zones between residential – full time farming and allow smaller lot sizes in rural zone

What is the future of farming?

- Intensive agricultural industries
- Lifestyle farming

New agricultural industries

- Poultry industries increasing west of Geelong – processing industries located in Geelong to support
- Encourage particular industries

What industries should be encouraged?

- Horticulture
- Based on whether there is water supply
- Is not the role of Council to determine particular industries
- Intensive farming
- What does not undermine amenity
- Boutique farm based tourism
- Eco tourism
- What is existing
- Drysdale-Geelong – smaller lifestyle farms, coastal parks, tourism
- Swan Bay – larger acreages, greenbelts
- Windfarms

What Council/community should do to encourage

- Remove interference
- Liaison / facilitator in decision making
- Council to recognise change in rural areas (agriculture trends, market influence)
- Apply rating that is appropriate
- Consistency with zoning
- Diesel/ethanol plant in Geelong
- Rebates for farming activities

- Reticulated water around peninsula and recycled water access
- Maintain rural integrity
- Technical support from staff with relevant expertise to help establish new enterprises
- Enhance environment with wildlife corridors – provide incentives to landowners

Other

- Increases in land prices
- 1997 subdivision size based on soil type – not correct

Agency workshop

Key issues discussed

- Supporting the food and wine industries in the Bellarine Peninsula
- Requirements for aquaculture (coastal location and provision of infrastructure)
 - Corio Bay is a shallow, protected bay and requires designated areas
- Impact of the Geelong bypass on the Deakin-Waurn Ponds area
- Pressure to develop the rural areas
- Proposed east-west arterial in Armstrong Creek and bypass for Heales Rd
- Land management problems for fire-fighting
 - Absenteeism
 - Difficulty in accessing small holdings (fenced and denser vegetation)
 - Safety issues with hot-house industries (water supply)
 - CFA ratings for rural buildings (i.e. warehouses versus outbuildings)
- The rural-urban interface
- Amendment C76 (Rezone land in Lovely Banks, from Rural Zone to Rural Living Zone and application of a Development Plan Overlay Schedule)
- Coastal pressures (Coastal Spaces Strategy)
- Melbourne 2030 principles and the pressure for retirement housing
- Translation of new Significant Landscape Overlays (SLOs)
- Existing Rural Living Strategy does not indicate boundaries of nodes – requires more definition
- Status of erosion and landslip mapping

Staff workshop

Key issues discussed

Planning

- Animal keeping – guidelines for location and site layout
- Poultry farms – assistance in dealing with new applications
- Amenity issues with residential uses in rural areas (support for agricultural use)
- Farming Zone (FZ) – not to be implemented as a ‘default’ zone for rural areas
- Difficulties with small lots, <10 acres without existing dwellings, in FZ – what is appropriate?
- Direction for subdivisions (layout, lot sizes) in rural areas
- The percentage of land used for agriculture
- VCAT overturning Council refusals for houses <10 acres
- Environment constraints should be determined on a catchment basis
- Industry – when does agriculture become an industrial use?
- Provision of industrial land
- Maintain the internal road networks and avoid a Great Ocean Road type linear development along coast
- Use of a Section 173 with housing in the rural zone to be linked with farming
- Traffic issues with rural industry – big trucks on rural roads

Environmental Health

- Graduated buffers (for odour) in rural-residential zoning
- Issues with disposal of waste on site by rural industries (minimum lot sizes)
 - Difficulties with lots <2000m² (Ceres, Anakie, Breamlea)
- Use of floodplains (Batesford) for intensive grazing
- The preparation of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) in conjunction with Golden Plains

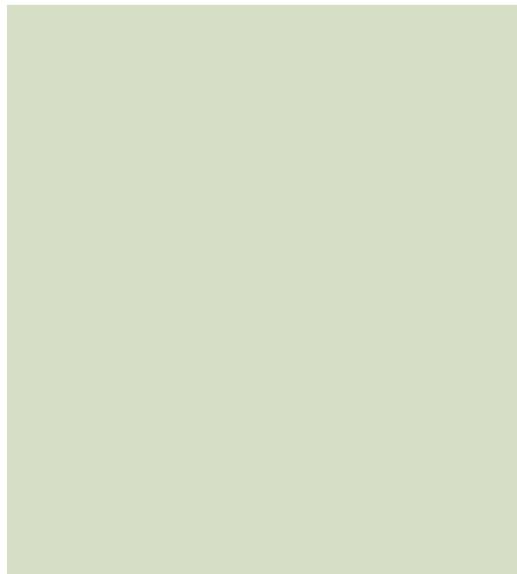
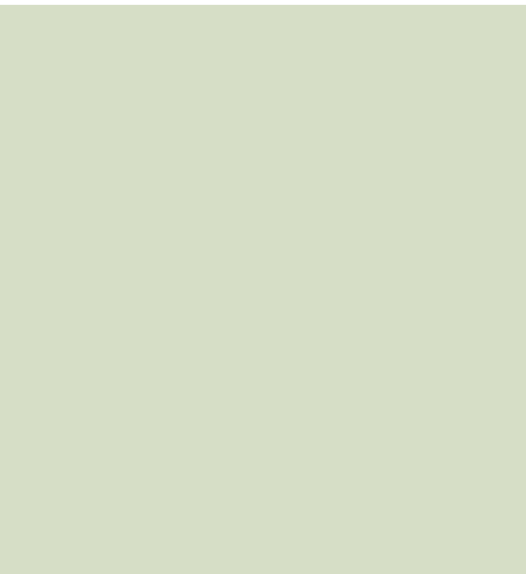
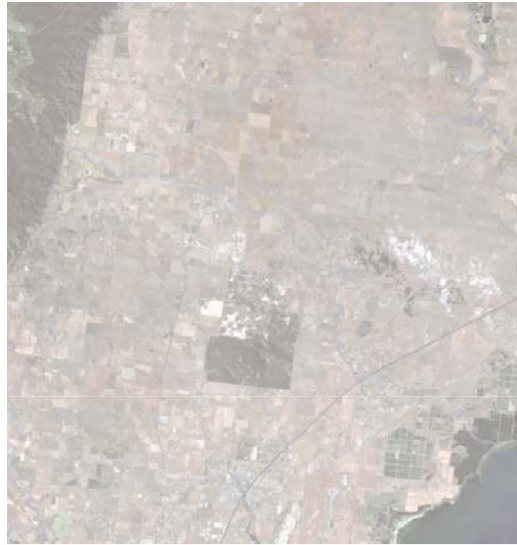
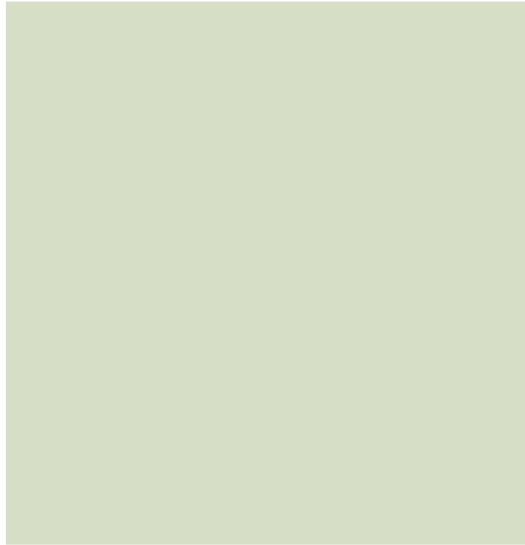
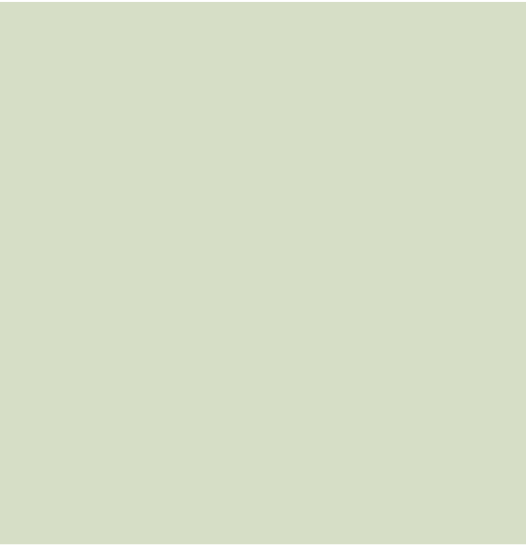
Tourism & Recreation

- Encourage accommodation with existing rural activity
- Do not want a Mornington Peninsula
- Criteria needed

- What the use/development is related to
- What is its form (is it an urban activity and therefore is the building suitable in a rural landscape)
- Link to zone purpose
- Landscape assessment (scale and impact)
- Pressure for caravan parks

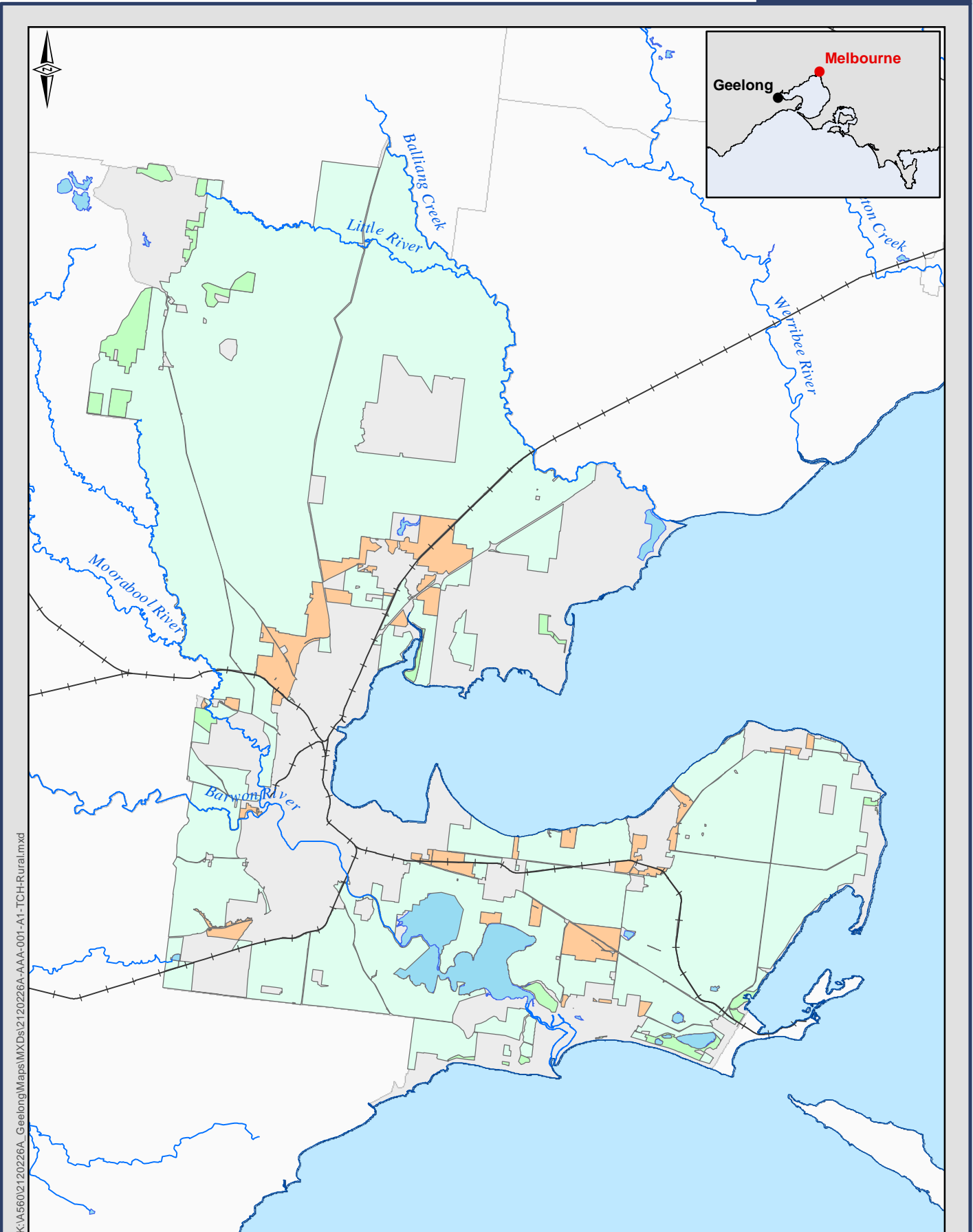
APPENDIX

D



Appendix D

Maps



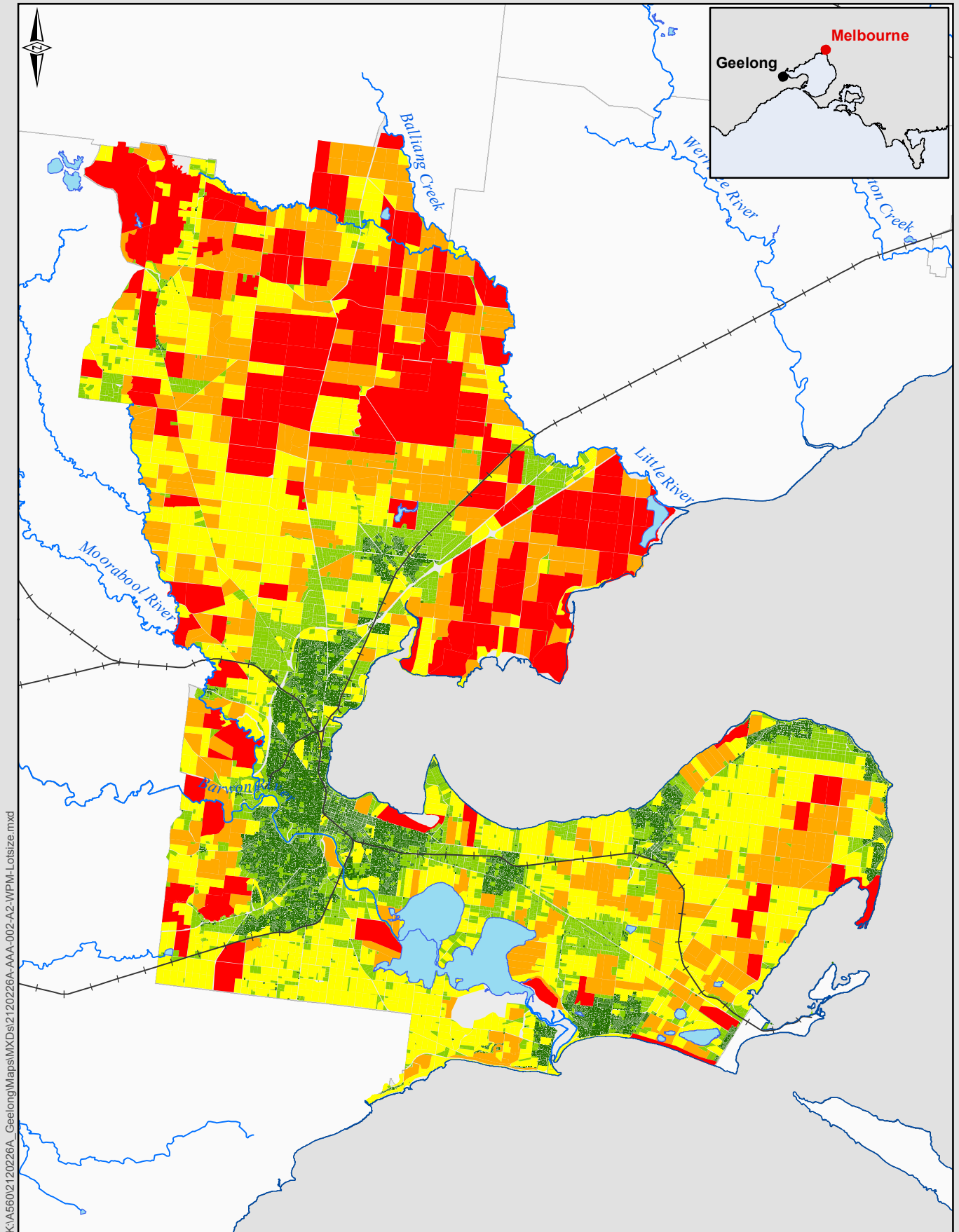
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- Environmental Rural Zone
- Rural Living Zone
- Rural Zone

Figure 1 Rural Planning Zones Geelong



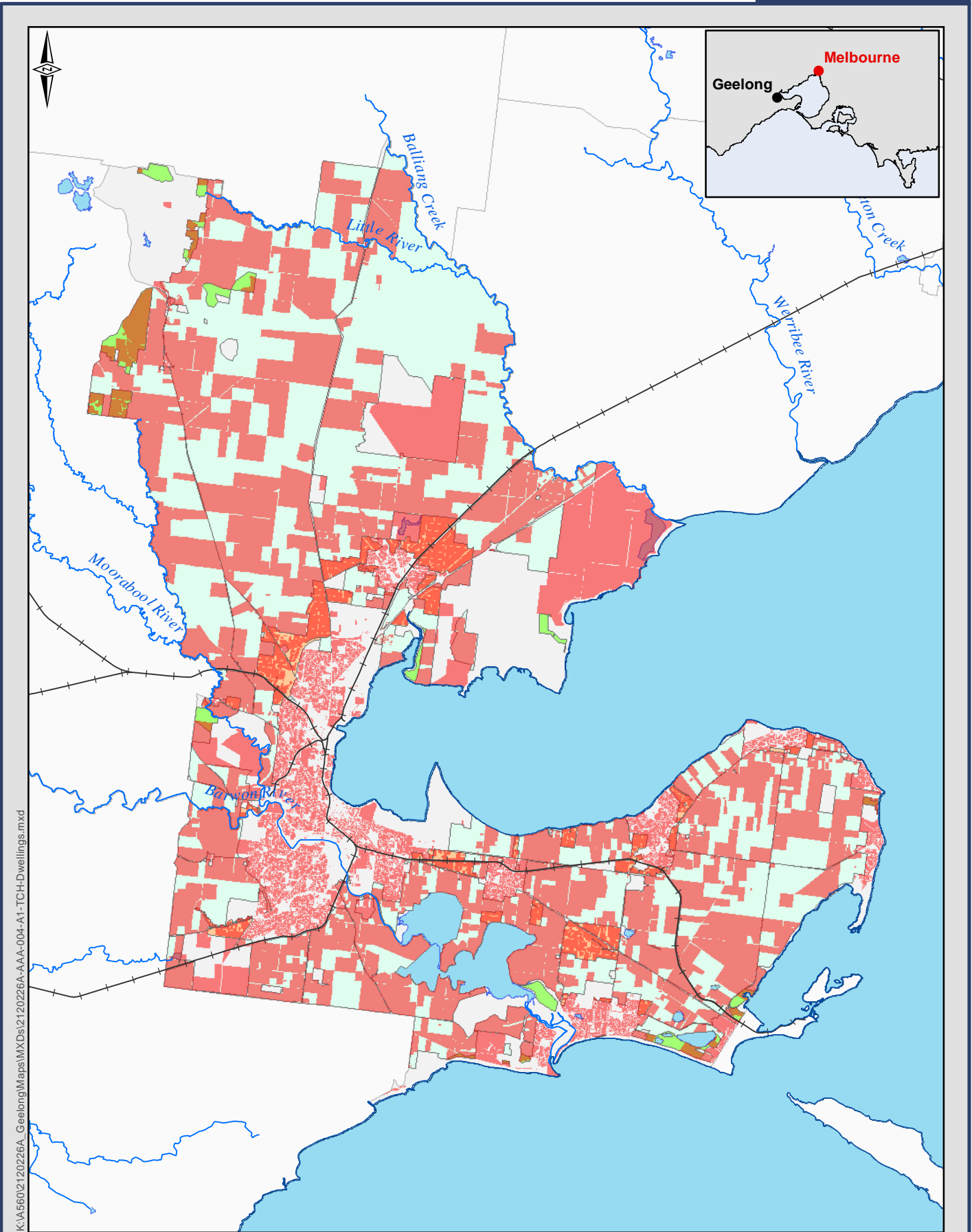
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Scale at A4: 1:300,000



Hectares	
Less than 1.0	Green
1.1 - 10.0	Light Green
10.1 - 50.0	Yellow
50.1 - 100.0	Orange
100.1 - 2000.0	Red

**Figure 2 Lot Sizes
Geelong**



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Scale at A4: 1:300,000



- Dwelling Location
- Environmental Rural Zone
- Rural Living Zone
- Rural Zone

Figure 4 Dwelling Locations Geelong



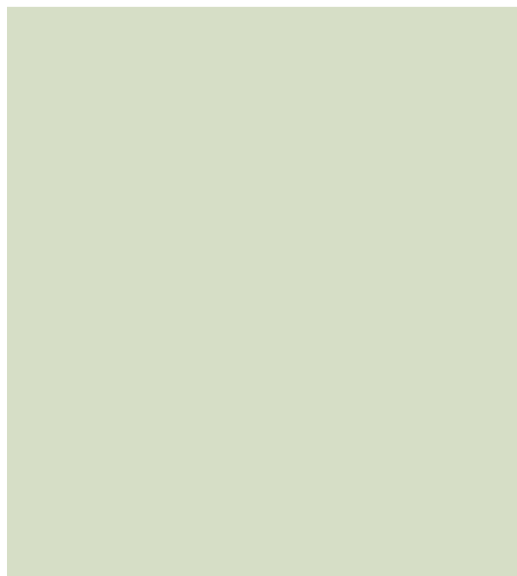
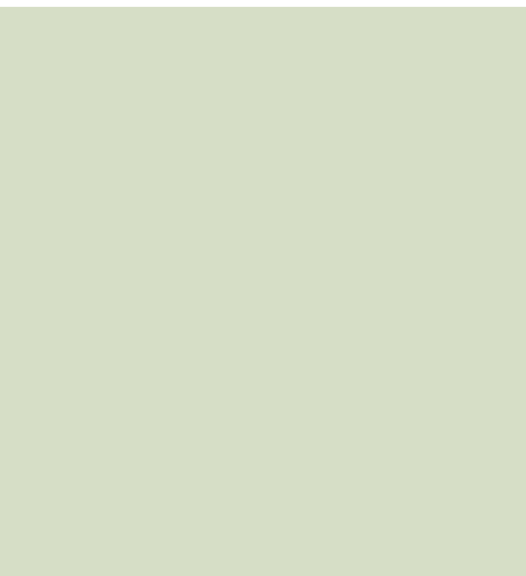
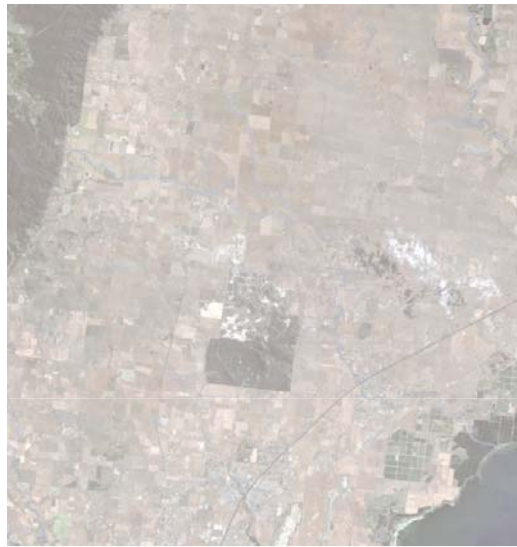
Scale at A4: 1:300,000



**Figure 5 Imagery
Geelong**

APPENDIX

E



Appendix E

New Planning Scheme Provisions

21.09 RURAL AREAS

21.09-1 KEY INFLUENCES

The key influences on **RURAL AREAS** within the City of Greater Geelong are listed below.

- Agricultural production is modest - but locally important and economically significant for some landholders
- There is potential for the growth of the City's agricultural production, in particular aquaculture and irrigated agriculture
- Farming activity for many landholders is essentially about maintaining a rural landscape and lifestyle
- Farming activity and the rural landscape is a very significant element in the identity, image and liveability of the City of Greater Geelong
- Farming and rural landscapes establish non urban breaks and are a critical element in the settlement strategy, tourism function and lifestyle for the Bellarine Peninsula
- Farming and agriculture are important and valued in the Anakie area
- Rural land in a number of urban fringe areas, enables the City to accommodate a range of uses and developments that the City needs but which require buffers from residential areas
- The City's rural areas contain important environmental assets. Well managed rural areas contribute to the health of the natural resource base
- The planning and development of the City's agricultural and rural areas has had a long history of clearly distinguishing and separating them from urban areas, and non agricultural development in rural areas has been limited
- Tourism and recreation, while focused on the coast, values the rural setting and farming
- There is a strong demand for rural living development at a range of sizes and scales
- Part time agriculture associated with larger scale rural living and rural lifestyle contributes to the agricultural economy and farming landscape
- A number of the landscapes of the Bellarine Peninsula are of regional significance, and the peninsula contains environmental features of national significance, eg. Swan Bay.

21.09-2 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Objective 1

To support the use of the northern, western and southern rural areas of the City for productive agriculture, and to ensure these rural spaces provide an attractive setting for the City through preserving a rural and farmed landscape beyond the urban area.

Strategies

Maintain rural land in large and productive parcels;

Minimise non agricultural development on rural land;

Minimise non farming land uses in rural areas, and ensure that any non farming land uses will not compromise farming activity in the area;

Ensure development in these rural areas respects the landscape character of a rural farmed landscape;

Address environmental issues, such as pest plants and animals;

Protect significant landscape features, such as the You Yangs and the Brisbane Ranges, and ensure development on land surrounding these features does not detract from them;

Ensure that any new dwellings constructed in the rural areas will not compromise the productive potential of land and are associated with the productive use of the land;

Support intensive animal industries where buffers can be provided and the rural farmed landscape character will not be unduly compromised;

Support the reuse of treated waste water at Balliang;

Objective 2

To protect and enhance the Bellarine Peninsula as a rural area, with highly significant landscapes based on farming and environmental features.

Strategies

Maintain rural land in large and productive parcels;

Minimise development on rural land;

Support farming land uses in rural areas that have minimal environmental impact and support the open farmed landscape values;

Recognise and preserve environmental values including Swan Bay and its catchment, remnant vegetation, coastal areas and Lake Connewarre.

Ensure development in rural areas respects the landscape character of an open farmed landscape, particular significant landscapes identified through Coastal Spaces (DSE, 2006);

Limit tourism uses and developments in the rural areas to those that are clearly rural in nature, ancillary to or associated with farming activity on the land and maintain the rural farmed landscape character;

Ensure that any new dwellings constructed in the rural areas will not compromise the productive potential of land and are associated with the productive use of the land;

Limit rural living development at current densities to the planned nodes with access to infrastructure as a part of the settlement strategy of the City.

Address environmental issues as a part of planning approval to use and develop land;

Direct urban development into existing towns;

Support the reuse of treated waste water for agriculture;

Maintain clear urban growth boundaries and non urban breaks between towns.

Objective 3

To support agricultural land use around Avalon airport, that can capitalize on access to this transport infrastructure, while preserving the rural character of the area and the ongoing function of the airport.

Strategies

Support shed based agriculture in this area, including aquaculture and horticulture;

- Maintain rural land in large and productive parcels;
- Minimise non agricultural development on rural land;
- Minimise non farming land uses in rural areas;
- Ensure development respects the landscape character of a rural farmed landscape.

22 GREYHOUND KEEPING AND TRAINING

Policy Basis

Geelong includes a large greyhound racing facility, and as such attracts residents who wish to keep and train dogs on their properties. Although such facilities are appropriate in the rural areas, they need to be carefully sited and designed. Key issues that needs to be addressed in relation to the use and development of rural land for greyhound keeping and training facilities in rural areas are; noise; landscape impact; loss of agricultural land; and consistency with adjoining land use.

Policy Objective

To provide for the appropriate use and development of land for greyhound keeping and training facilities.

Policy

It is policy that;

- Greyhound keeping and training facilities should be located in the Farming Zone;
- Appropriate buffers must be provided and the facility be designed so that the Responsible Authority is satisfied that the facility can comply with State Environment Protection Policy N1 (Control of Noise from Commerce, Industry and Trade). A Noise Impact Assessment must be undertaken and report prepared and submitted with the planning permit application.
- Noise should be minimised by;
 - Locating and constructing kennels and other facilities to visually screen dogs from external stimuli such as other dogs, animals, traffic or passers-by;
 - Use of earth banks and or vegetation and or manually constructed sound barriers;
 - Management regimes that minimise opportunities for noise generated by external stimuli;
 - Controlling access to the kennels;
 - Restriction of feeding to within the hours of sunrise to sunset where practicable.
- Buffers appropriate to the size of the facility and based on the requirements for ongoing compliance with the above noise controls must be largely provided within the boundaries of the property;
- The facility is designed so that the loss of agricultural land is minimised;
- Use of the land for greyhound keeping and training should not compromise the use of adjoining and surrounding land for agriculture;
- The facility must be designed so that it does not compromise the rural farmed nature of the landscape.
- The facility must be designed and operated so that it is generally in compliance with the Code of Practice: Operation of Greyhound Establishments.

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22.0 AGRICULTURE, RURAL DWELLINGS AND SUBDIVISION

Policy Basis

The rural areas of the City of Greater Geelong are highly valued for their contribution to the economy, liveability and amenity of the whole municipality. Agriculture is and will continue to be the main rural land use in all non urban parts of the municipality, including on the Bellarine Peninsula. Agriculture plays a significant part in the economic prosperity of the City, both directly through production and indirectly through its contribution to the rural landscape and character of the area and the role this plays in tourism and liveability. Land use and development in rural areas must be carefully managed to ensure that the ongoing use of land for agriculture is supported and the farming character of the area is preserved.

Policy Objective

To support the ongoing use of the rural areas for agriculture and to preserve the farming character and landscape.

Policy

Rural Dwellings

It is policy that;

- Council will only support the construction of a dwelling on a lot zoned Farming or Rural Conservation (Bellarine Peninsula) where;
 - Council is satisfied that that, in the long term, the house will positively promote farming operations on the land and it is demonstrated by the applicant that the primary use of the land will continue to be agriculture;
 - Existing agricultural activity on adjoining land will not be compromised;
 - The proportion of the property used for the dwelling and ancillary infrastructure is minimal, and such development is directed to the area of lowest agricultural quality;
 - The productive capacity of the land will be enhanced. This should be achieved through addressing issues such as pest plants and animals and erosion of the land;
 - The environmental condition of the land will be enhanced. This should be achieved by fencing off remnant vegetation, revegetating strategic areas such as between remnant stands to develop wildlife corridors and along waterways;
 - The house and associated farming activity supports the maintenance of the rural farmed landscape;
 - The lot has legal frontage to a road and is suitable for a dwelling and farming activity by way of its shape, configuration and means of access;
 - A report is provided, pursuant to Clause 35.06-2 or 35.07-2, which demonstrates that the dwelling site is capable of supporting an appropriate waste treatment system. This report should include either a Soil Percolation Test in accordance with Appendix B of the Code of Practice – Septic Tanks On-Site Domestic Wastewater Management, EPA Publication No. 451, March 1996 (or as amended); or an “Approval of

Waste Treatment System” form completed by an Environmental Health Officer;

- The watertable is not within one metre of the surface or the land is not subject to flooding, where wastewater needs to be treated and retained on site;
 - The lot was created under a plan of subdivision approved by the responsible authority prior to 17 December 1975 and there are no other dwellings on the lot.
 - The lot existed as a separate tenement on 17 December, 1975 and there are no other dwellings on the lot.
 - The lot existed as part of a tenement on 17 December 1975 and there are no other dwellings on that tenement.
 - The lot existed as part of a tenement on 17 December 1975, and was added to the tenement after 17 December 1975, and there are no other dwellings on the lot.
- A report or series of reports should be submitted with an application for a dwelling that demonstrates the primary land use will continue to be agriculture, and the development of a dwelling on the land will not compromise the strategy of maintaining rural land in farming use and preserving the farming landscape. Such reports to support such an application may include;
 - A land capability assessment that explains the agricultural productive potential of the property;
 - A business plan for the farm which indicates the type of agricultural production to be undertaken on the land, trends and prospects for that industry, how the business will be developed and operated, the estimated yields, returns and costs, and a program for capital reinvestment into the property to support ongoing production;
 - A farm management plan which identifies how the property will be managed to enhance its productive potential and environmental condition. This plan may include stocking rates, paddock rotations, identification and management of pest plant and animal issues, remnant vegetation management and enhancement, water quality management and enhancement, erosion management, pasture renovation and soil fertilization program;
 - An assessment of the water yield of the property and how this can support both the agricultural use and the dwelling in all seasons;
 - A landscape assessment of the proposed dwelling and farming operation that demonstrates the proposal is consistent with the strategy of preserving the rural farmed landscape which is characterised by a low density of development and broad acre soil based agricultural activities such as cropping, grazing, viticulture and horticulture. This assessment should consider the use of natural topographical features to screen the proposed development, the effect of any development on attractive views of the landscape and the importance of maintaining undeveloped natural vistas along major roads and highways.
 - Council may require the applicant to enter into an agreement registered on title, pursuant to Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), regarding the ongoing use of the land in accordance with the above report or reports.
 - A permit issued for a dwelling on a tenement comprising more than one lot should include a condition requiring the consolidation of all of the lots in the tenement prior to the commencement of the dwelling.

- Second dwellings on properties zoned Farming or Rural Conservation (Bellarine Peninsula) will generally not be supported as additional on site accommodation is not considered necessary to support the use of land for agriculture in this area, and additional dwellings will compromise the rural farmed landscape. This does not include small scale tourist accommodation secondary to the agricultural use of the land.

Excisions, Realignments and Subdivision

It is policy that;

- House lot excisions are considered inappropriate in Geelong as they will result in an increased density of development, will create a lot that is contrary to the purpose of the zone and the vision for the area, and the form of farm restructure associated with house lot excisions is highly unlikely to occur due to the value of land and its comparative productive potential.
- Subdivision and boundary realignments will only be supported where it can be clearly demonstrated that the outcome will significantly improve the prospects for farming on all of the resulting lots, consistent with the purpose of the Farming or Rural Conservation Zone and the City of Greater Geelong Rural Land Use Strategy (2007). Where the benefit of the subdivision or realignment for agricultural land use is not clear, obvious or significant, Council will apply the precautionary principle and refuse the application. Council may require information similar to that required for a dwelling to support an application for subdivision or boundary realignment.

Rural Conservation Zone and Agriculture on the Bellarine Peninsula

It is policy that;

- Within the Rural Conservation Zone on the Bellarine Peninsula, the main land use to be supported is agriculture.
- Crop raising and extensive animal husbandry are considered consistent with the purpose of the Rural Conservation Zone and the City of Greater Geelong Rural Land Use Strategy (2007) and will be supported on the Bellarine Peninsula.
- Council considers that notice of an application, pursuant to Section 52 (1) (a) of the Planning and Environment Act, for planning approval for the use and or development of land for crop raising and extensive animal husbandry pursuant to the provisions of the Rural Conservation Zone will generally not be required as this land use is consistent with the strategy for the area, the purpose of the zone and is unlikely to cause material detriment to any person.
- Council will waive the planning permit application fee required for a planning permit application for the use and or development of land for crop raising and extensive animal husbandry pursuant to the provisions of the Rural Conservation Zone.

Farming Advisory Committee

It is policy that;

- Council may refer an application under the Farming Zone or the Rural Conservation Zone to the Farming Advisory Committee for advice.

22.0 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Policy Basis

Tourism is a key part of the economy of the Geelong region, in particular on the Bellarine Peninsula. Council supports the ongoing development of tourism in the City, including the enhancement of accommodation and other facilities to encourage longer stays in the region. The rural areas play a key part in the tourism market. They are a fundamental part of the amenity of the area, they are also home to many attractions. Tourism development within the rural areas must be carefully managed so that it does not compromise the open farmed landscape or existing agricultural activities that are part of the tourism attraction of the area, or undermine the settlement strategy for the Peninsula that clearly directs urban development to the existing towns. Appropriate tourism development in rural area can support existing farming businesses and most tourism development within rural areas should be in conjunction with agricultural use of land. It is recognised that there is the opportunity for a small number of larger non farm based tourism enterprises in the rural area, and these also need to be carefully designed and located so as not to compromise the vision for the rural areas that involves preserving an open rural –farmed landscape.

Policy Objective

To support tourism development in rural areas that respects the farmed landscape of the area, and contributes to the economy.

Policy

It is policy that Council will support the use and development of rural land for tourism activities where;

- It will be ancillary (secondary) to and in conjunction with an existing farming activity on the property and it can be demonstrated that the primary land use will continue to be agriculture;
- The mix of uses will not be disproportionate and out of balance and change the rural farming character and nature of the property or area or result in an unreasonable loss of productive agricultural land;
- The scale of the enterprise will respect the rural farming nature of the area, and be small, unobtrusive and not detract from the rural farmed landscape character of the area;
- Existing agricultural activity on adjoining land will not be compromised;
- The proportion of the property used for the development and ancillary infrastructure is minimal, and non agricultural development is directed to the area of lowest agricultural quality;
- The productive capacity of the land is to be enhanced. This should be achieved through addressing issues such as pest plants and animals and erosion of the land, and can be demonstrated through the development and implementation of a management plan;
- The environmental condition of the land will be enhanced. This could be achieved by fencing off remnant vegetation, revegetating strategic areas such as between remnant stands to develop wildlife corridors and along waterways.

Rural Activity Zone

Council recognises that there are opportunities to enhance the tourist economy in the region through the provision of a small number of rural based, larger scale, high quality tourism developments that are not ancillary to or in conjunction with the farming or rural use of the land. These facilities must be provided for through the rezoning of the land to Rural

Activity Zone, as they will be inconsistent with the provisions of the Rural Conservation or Farming Zone.

Council will support use of the Rural Activity Zone for a small number of larger tourism developments within rural areas where;

- The site selection criteria for the business requires a rural location;
- The development will not compromise the vision for the area that is based on preserving the farmed rural landscape;
- The development will not contribute to the urbanization of the area and change the rural farming character of the area;
- The land use is compatible with the use of adjoining and surroundings land for farming (generally cropping and grazing) and complementary to the rural setting;
- The facility is consistent with the City of Greater Geelong Rural Land Use Strategy (2007);
- There is a regionally demonstrated demand for such a facility;
- The facility will contribute to the tourism economy of the region, the accommodation options and markets, in particular high end and luxury markets, and is consistent with tourism strategies for the area;
- The site is strategically located with respect to tourist routes, tourist attractions and other infrastructure. Consideration may be given to areas along the Bellarine Highway where there is already a greater mix of non-rural activities;
- The site has access to all relevant servicing infrastructure and the development will meet all costs for infrastructure provision to the site;
- A request for rezoning must be accompanied by a comprehensive application for planning approval for the proposed land use and development. Council will consider such a proposal pursuant to Section 96A of the Planning and Environment Act.
- The submission to Council seeking a rezoning to Rural Activity Zone for such a facility must address these policy requirements, in particular the submission must;
 - Explain why the proposed land use cannot be located within a town, and that a rural location is required, and why the particular site selected is suitable for a tourist development with respect to proximity and access tourist features and infrastructure;
 - Demonstrate how the development is to be sited and designed so that it will not compromise the vision for the rural areas that involves preserving the farmed rural landscape;
 - Explain how the land use is consistent with tourism strategies for the area, is required to serve the region and will enhance to the regional tourist economy.

NOTE: DRAFT ONLY – TO BE FURTHER REFINED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

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SCHEDULE TO THE RURAL CONSERVATION ZONE

Shown on the planning scheme map as **RCZ** (*show **number** if more than one schedule*).

Conservation Values

The values that this zone seeks to conserve are;

Agriculture, in particular crop raising and extensive animal husbandry, as the main land use on the Bellarine Peninsula and as an integral part of the rural economy and character of the area and the region.

The farmed rural landscape of the Bellarine Peninsula characterised by the unique blend of agriculture, coastal environmental features, wetlands, remnant vegetation, limited rural living and rural based tourism.

	Land	Area/Dimensions/Number
Minimum subdivision area (hectares).	All land	note: to be further refined in discussions with stakeholders
Residential hotel (number of bedrooms).		note: to be further refined in discussions with stakeholders
Restaurant (number of patrons).		note: to be further refined in discussions with stakeholders
Minimum area for which no permit is required to alter or extend an existing dwelling (square metres).		note: to be further refined in discussions with stakeholders
Minimum area for which no permit is required to alter or extend an existing building used for agriculture (square metres).		note: to be further refined in discussions with stakeholders

Permit requirement for earthworks	Land	
Earthworks which change the rate of flow or the discharge point of water across a property boundary.	All land	
Earthworks which increase the discharge of saline groundwater.	All land	

