

Rural Residential Land Use Strategy Bushfire Response Strathbogie Shire Council



Prepared for Strathbogie Shire Council – Bushfire Response 2025

Acknowledgements

Strathbogie Shire Council acknowledges the Taungurung and Yorta Yorta people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Strathbogie Shire.

We pay our respect to their rich cultures and to Elders, past and present, as well as other First Nations people who live, work and play in the area.



Disclaimer

The views expressed in the final localised report reflect the author's professional opinion at the time of writing. Information should be current at publication, but users must verify data sources (e.g. mapping, policy clauses). No liability is accepted for loss or damage arising from reliance on the report without independent verification.

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1 Executive Summary

Bushfire is a defining risk for Strathbogie Shire, shaping communities, landscapes, and the direction of future settlement. As Council advances its Rural Residential Land Use Strategy (RRLUS) and Urban Growth Strategy (UGS), it is essential that bushfire risk is embedded at the heart of decision-making. This Bushfire Response provides a strategic framework to ensure that community safety, resilience, and sustainable growth are planned in tandem.

The assessment examines bushfire risk across the Shire, focusing on existing townships and areas earmarked for growth. It considers historical fire events, local topography, vegetation patterns, and fire weather conditions, and identifies lower-risk sites for potential Rural Living Zone (RLZ) rezoning. In doing so, it directs growth to locations that can be defended, accessed safely, and supported by appropriate bushfire design measures.

A risk-based methodology has been applied, comparing settlement-edge rural living opportunities with isolated development in the Farming Zone. The assessment clearly finds that RLZ should only be directed to the edges of existing townships Euroa, Nagambie, Avenel, and Violet Town where infrastructure, services, and emergency response capacity already exist. This avoids fragmented, high-risk development and supports compact, sustainable settlement patterns.

Key benefits of this approach include:

- Enhanced community safety – locating growth where defensible space, access and egress, and CFA response can be supported.
- Agricultural protection – reducing pressure on small Farming Zone lots and safeguarding high-value farmland.
- Resilient growth – ensuring new rural living areas are strategically aligned with township boundaries, environmental constraints, and long-term infrastructure planning.
- Policy alignment – embedding Clause 13.02 (Bushfire) into strategic land use planning, consistent with the Hume Regional Growth Plan and the Regional Bushfire Planning Assessment.

Ultimately, this Bushfire Response ensures bushfire is not an afterthought but a central determinant of settlement planning. By integrating risk management with housing demand, agricultural protection, and environmental values, Strathbogie Shire can guide growth to safer, more resilient locations that provide lifestyle opportunities without compromising community safety.

2 Introduction

Bushfire is a defining risk for Strathbogie Shire, with the potential to significantly impact communities, landscapes, and future settlement patterns. As the Shire continues to plan for sustainable rural residential development and urban growth, it is essential that bushfire risk is assessed and embedded within strategic land use decisions.

This Bushfire Response has been prepared to provide a clear framework for integrating Urban Growth Strategy (UGS), with the focus of this report analysing Rural Residential Zone locations/ future development. The scope of this work requires a comprehensive assessment that:

- Examines the level of bushfire risk across the Shire, with a particular focus on existing urban areas and those earmarked for growth under recent settlement planning.

- Considers historical bushfire events, fire weather conditions, topography, and vegetation patterns that shape risk profiles within Strathbogie Shire.
- Identifies lower risk sites that could be investigated for future rezoning to Rural Living Zone.
- Identifies and applies planning strategies and bushfire protection measures to enhance the resilience of settlements, infrastructure, and communities.

By drawing together these elements, the assessment ensures that bushfire risk is not an afterthought but a central determinant of future land use planning. This approach aligns with state planning policy (Clause 13.02 – Bushfire) and regional frameworks such as the Hume Regional Growth Plan and the Regional Bushfire Planning Assessment.

The outcome will guide growth to safer, more resilient locations, balancing community safety with lifestyle opportunities, environmental values, and the protection of productive agricultural land.

3 Background

Strathbogie Shire Council is developing its key urban and rural land use strategies to guide settlement planning for the next several decades. The Urban Growth Strategy (UGS) and the Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy (RRLUS) have been prepared in unison to provide Council, referral agencies, and the community with long-term certainty about the location, form and scale of future growth across the municipality.

A central element of this strategic work is the identification of land for potential rezoning to Rural Living Zone to help meet projected housing needs. The UGS responds to updated population projections by refining the extent of land identified for future rural residential investigation in Euroa, Avenel, Violet Town and Nagambie. Compared to earlier township strategies, these areas have been reduced to ensure future residential land supply aligns with realistic demand and avoids oversupply or premature rezoning.

In parallel, the RRLUS recognises the ongoing demand for Rural Living Zoned (RLZ) land across the Shire. Strathbogie Shire currently has two areas subject to the Rural Living Zone. However, these two areas have not been developed since they were rezoned to RLZ as these areas have other issues such as flooding or vegetation.

The RRLUS is seeking to identify additional, perhaps less constrained, areas for identification for rezoning to RLZ.

By identifying new areas for RLZ investigation, the strategy seeks to:

- Divert housing pressure away from small Farming Zone lots, thereby supporting the long-term protection of productive agricultural land.
- Provide appropriately located and sized rural lifestyle opportunities that respect township boundaries, infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints.
- Reduce the risks associated with ad-hoc or fragmented rezoning proposals that could otherwise emerge in the absence of clear strategic direction.

Bushfire Response Context

Given Strathbogie Shire's designation as a Bushfire Prone Area, with extensive Bushfire Management Overlays applying to many rural and peri-urban areas, bushfire risk is a critical consideration in both the UGS and RRLUS. The strategic identification of residential and rural residential land provides an opportunity to ensure that Clause 13.02 Bushfire Planning policy is integrated at the earliest stages of land use planning.

This means directing growth to locations where:

- Bushfire risk can be mitigated to an acceptable level through siting, design and defensible space.
- Access and egress networks support emergency response and community evacuation.
- Future development can occur in line with best-practice bushfire design principles, reducing long-term risk to life, property and infrastructure.

By consolidating residential growth and carefully selecting new RLZ investigation areas, the UGS and RRLUS provide a strategic bushfire-resilient framework that balances housing needs, agricultural protection, and community safety for the decades ahead.

4 Methodology

Risk-Based Approach

Strathbogie Shire Council has undertaken a risk-based approach to determine where new RLZ growth should be directed in the municipality. This ensures that future rezoning decisions respond to both CFA advice, community demand and State policy, while prioritising community safety, agricultural protection, and bushfire resilience.

Approaches Considered

Stage 1:

In determining appropriate RLZ locations, two primary approaches were assessed:

1. **Settlement-Edge RLZ** – locating rural living land on the peripheries of existing townships or hamlets.
2. **Isolated RLZ** – locating rural living land in isolation within the Farming Zone.

Each approach carries distinct implications for land use planning, infrastructure provision, and long-term sustainability.

Comparative Assessment

- Settlement-Edge RLZ supports coordinated and efficient use of existing infrastructure, such as roads, water, power (where available), and access to community services including schools, healthcare, and retail.
- From a bushfire perspective, it provides safer and faster access to township centres and Neighbourhood Safer Places, enhancing emergency response and evacuation.

- Isolated RLZ often results in fragmented and inefficient land use patterns, increased pressure on productive agricultural land, and demand for infrastructure in areas not designed to support residential populations.
- Such dispersed development undermines bushfire resilience by increasing travel times, fostering car dependency, and complicating emergency service delivery.

Given these outcomes, the strategy recommends that RLZ expansion be directed only to the peripheries of existing townships, consistent with State planning policy and bushfire risk management principles.

Stage 1 has removed a number of locations, settlements and hamlets from consideration of where RLZ should be targeted. The locations remaining for consideration are Euroa, Nagambie, Avenel and Violet Town.

Stage 2:

Assessment Criteria

Potential RLZ locations were evaluated against the following components:

- **Efficient settlement patterns** – supports compact urban form, efficient use of infrastructure, and avoids leapfrog or ad hoc development.
- **Protection of agricultural land** – restricts RLZ expansion from high-value farming areas to safeguard productive resources and Victoria's food security.
- **Reduced environmental impact** – consolidates rural living in appropriate, less constrained peri-urban areas, reducing pressure on sensitive landscapes.
- **Access to services and facilities** – ensures rural living residents can access township services (schools, health, retail, community hubs) without creating excessive car dependency.
- **Consistency with settlement hierarchy** – aligns RLZ with township growth boundaries, maintains town centre viability, and supports the Urban Growth Strategy (UGS).
- **Improved bushfire safety and CFA response** – proximity to established road networks, water supplies, and fire services reduces CFA response times and enhances resident safety.
- **Supports bushfire risk management** – prioritises lower-risk areas, avoiding isolated high-risk environments, in line with Clause 13.02 – Bushfire of the Planning Policy Framework.
- **Enables community preparedness** – strengthens resilience by concentrating rural living near towns, keeping residents engaged with CFA education and township emergency planning initiatives.

Policy Alignment

This methodology aligns with State planning policy by emphasising strategically located and sustainable rural living opportunities. It reflects the intent of the Hume Regional Growth Plan, integrates findings from the Regional Bushfire Planning Assessment, and implements the Planning Policy Framework by directing rural living growth to locations that are safe, sustainable, and supportive of long-term settlement patterns.

5 Study Area

The study area for this report is the local government area of Strathbogie Shire. Neighbouring municipalities of Benalla Rural City, City of Greater Shepparton, City of Greater Bendigo, Murrindindi Shire, Mitchell Shire and Mansfield Shire are included in the broader study area for this report.

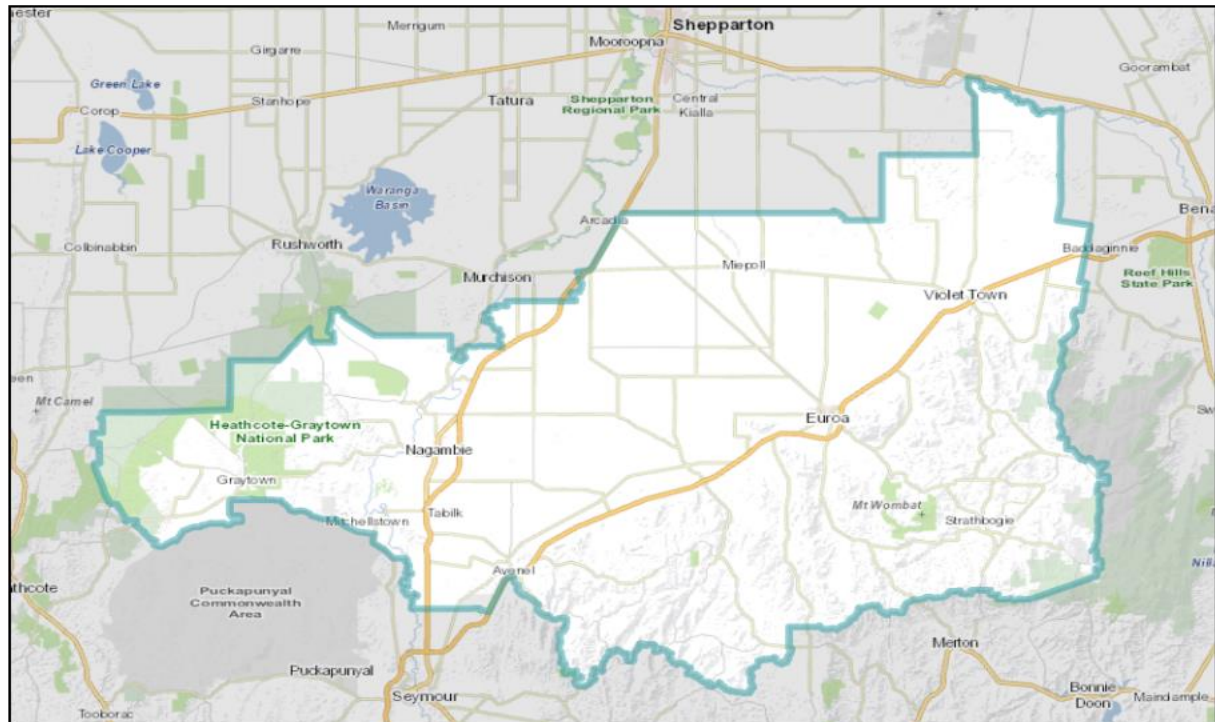


Figure 1: Strathbogie Shire map.

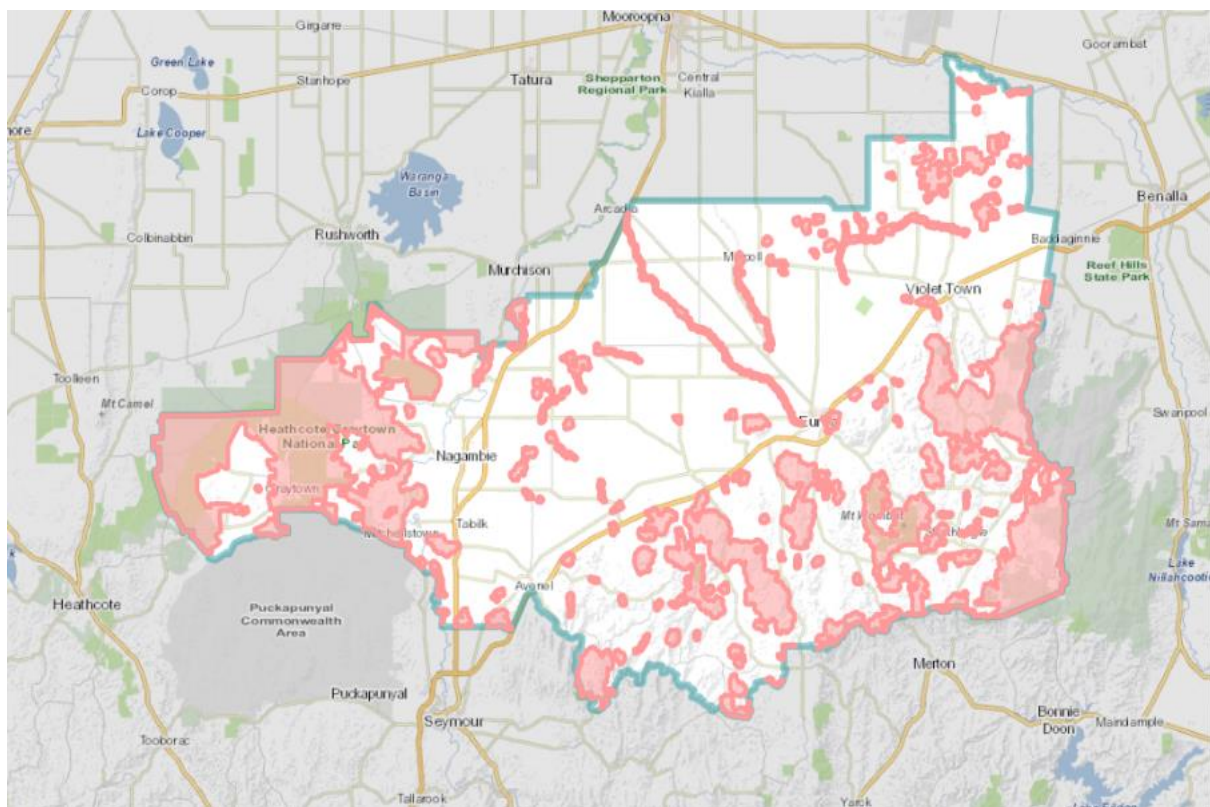


Figure 2: Bushfire Management Overlay mapping in Strathbogie municipality.

6 Strategic land use context

6.1 Plan for Victoria

Plan for Victoria housing targets. The Victorian Government has set a net new dwelling target of 2,400 homes for Strathbogie Shire by 2051. These local government targets are part of the statewide program to distribute 2.24 million additional homes and will be translated into planning schemes so it's clear where more homes will be built and where less change is expected over time. On a straight-line basis to 2051, Strathbogie's target equates to 92 dwellings per year.

Plan for Victoria explicitly says targets must be set and delivered while understanding and managing environmental risks such as bushfire. In Victoria's Planning Policy Framework, Clause 13.02-1S (Bushfire planning) and Clause 71.02-3 (Integrated decision-making) require that decisions prioritise the protection of human life above all other considerations. Growth will therefore be directed to low-risk locations that can demonstrate safe access/egress, defensible space, appropriate construction outcomes and feasible ongoing management particularly at township and settlement edges where risk can be reduced to an acceptable level. Human life is not a trade-off objective.

Strathbogie Shire could meet its housing target by focusing additional capacity in zoned, serviced settlements and townships in lower-risk bushfire parts of the municipality, avoiding isolated or highly exposed interfaces identified through bushfire hazard landscape and site assessments. Structure planning, rezoning and planning permits will apply bushfire management measures when required to secure water and access standards and use agreements and planning permit conditions where needed to lock in ongoing site management ensuring no net increase in bushfire risk while contributing to the housing target.

Whilst Strathbogie residentially zoned townships could accommodate the municipalities 2051 housing target, it is important to provide opportunities for rural living.

6.2 Hume Regional Growth Plan (2014)

The Hume Regional Growth Plan provides the overarching long-term strategic land-use direction for the Hume Region, including Strathbogie Shire, and is given statutory weight in the Strathbogie Planning Scheme.

The plan articulates a regional vision for settlement and infrastructure planning that balances residential growth with environmental, social, agricultural, and heritage values.

For Strathbogie Shire, the plan is particularly relevant in settlement planning:

- It identifies Nagambie as a key township suitable for residential growth, with a focus on logical settlement boundaries that reinforce township structure.
- It supports the consolidation of growth in designated areas to avoid urban sprawl, safeguard rural and environmental values, and ensure efficient infrastructure delivery.
- It underpins planning strategies that manage bushfire risk by directing growth towards locations where hazards can be more appropriately mitigated.

6.3 Hume Bushfire Management Strategy (2020)

Strathbogie Shire is part of the Hume region, which is one of the most bushfire-prone landscapes in Victoria. The Shire features vegetated rising hills and forested areas in the south (Strathbogie Ranges), which are long unburnt and environmentally significant.

- Bushfire history in the wider Hume region shows repeated large-scale events (2003 Alpine Fires, 2009 Black Saturday, 2019–20 Black Summer).
- Within the Strathbogie Municipal area, the mix of heavily vegetated ridges and growing peri-urban settlements creates a dual risk:
 - **Forest fires:** Intense, slower-moving but harder to suppress, impacting the Strathbogie Ranges.
 - **Grassfires:** Fast-moving, wind-driven fires across cleared agricultural and grazing land.

The Hume Bushfire Management Strategy identifies the following.

Settlement Planning:

- Rural residential growth should be directed to lower-risk areas on township edges with good access to services and evacuation routes.
- Avoid expansion into heavily forested ridgelines or long-unburnt bushland in the Strathbogie Ranges.

Bushfire Safety Measures:

- Enforce defensible space, building standards (BAL ratings), and access/egress requirements.
- Strengthen road networks and fuel breaks around rural residential clusters.
- **Agricultural Interface:** Protect high-value farmland from fragmentation while ensuring fuel management at the bush–farming interface.
- **Community Resilience:** Embed bushfire preparedness into local planning policy, recognising the reliance on volunteer brigades and the need for property-level responsibility.

6.4 Urban Growth Strategy (UGS)

The Strathbogie Shire Urban Growth Strategy (UGS) Provides a coordinated framework for managing settlement and strategic planning across the municipality to 2051. It responds to population pressures, housing demand, and infrastructure challenges while protecting the Shire’s agricultural land, rural character, and environmental values. The UGS establishes a township hierarchy, identifying Nagambie as the major growth town, Euroa, Avenel, and Violet Town as moderate growth centres, and smaller rural localities such as Strathbogie and Longwood as areas limited to infill development.

Growth is contained within defined township boundaries, guided by infrastructure capacity, environmental risk, and cultural heritage considerations. The UGS has found the municipality currently has sufficient zoned land already available to meet the State’s housing targets, the emphasis is on unlocking existing supply, promoting diverse housing types, and staging

development in line with infrastructure delivery. The strategy integrates with state, regional, and local policies, ensuring urban growth supports liveability, economic resilience, and climate adaptation while safeguarding the Shire's distinctive landscapes and cultural heritage.

6.5 Rural Residential and Land Use strategy

The Strathbogie RRLUS provides the strategic framework for guiding rural and settlement planning across the Shire in parallel with the Urban Growth Strategy. It recognises Strathbogie's diverse landscape, strong agricultural base, and growing demand for rural living, while balancing protection of farmland, natural assets, and rural character.

The strategy identifies two broad rural policy areas: an Agricultural Engine Area focused on protecting high-quality farmland and supporting large-scale agriculture, and a Diverse Agricultural Area that accommodates mixed farming, rural living, tourism, and environmental values. Key directions include reinforcing township boundaries, discouraging ad hoc small-lot housing in farming zones, supporting sustainable rural industries, and directing rural residential growth to appropriate low-risk locations near towns. The Strategy also embeds responses to bushfire and flood risks, climate change, and land use conflict, ensuring that future settlement patterns sustain agricultural productivity, rural character, and community safety while providing for housing diversity and economic growth.

Township Strategies

6.6 Avenel

The draft Avenel Township Strategy provides important context for strategic and settlement planning across Strathbogie Shire, positioning Avenel as a key lifestyle town within the regional network. Building on the earlier *Avenel 2030* framework, the Strategy responds to demographic change, population growth, housing pressures, and evolving community aspirations. It establishes a clear township boundary to manage growth sustainably, consolidates development within existing urban areas, and promotes diverse housing to support both younger families and an ageing population.

The strategy strengthens Avenel's identity through protection of its rural character, heritage, and landscapes, while enhancing the town centre as a community hub and tourism destination. It also prioritises improved community facilities, open space connectivity, movement networks, and infrastructure upgrades to support liveability. Overall, the Strategy reflects broader Shire-wide planning principles: protecting farmland and rural character, focusing growth within defined townships, and ensuring settlements remain resilient, connected, and attractive places to live and visit.

6.7 Euroa

The draft Euroa Township Strategy provides a long-term framework for guiding Euroa's growth and role within Strathbogie Shire, aligning with broader strategic and settlement planning across the municipality. It establishes a vision for Euroa as a compact, contained rural township that retains its landscape setting, heritage character, and community identity while accommodating modest, sustainable growth to 2050.

The Strategy prioritises infill development within existing residential areas over new rezoning, ensuring land supply matches projected low population growth and avoiding urban sprawl. It also strengthens Euroa's role as a key service and community hub, with strategies to enhance the Binney Street retail core, expand housing diversity to support an ageing population, and

encourage appropriate rural lifestyle development nearby. Key themes include improving connectivity and transport links, upgrading streetscapes, protecting natural and heritage assets, and planning for resilience to environmental risks such as flood and bushfire. Collectively, the Strategy reinforces Strathbogie's broader settlement approach of focusing growth within defined township boundaries while protecting rural land and maintaining liveability.

6.8 Nagambie

The draft Nagambie Township Strategy forms a key part of Strathbogie Shire's broader strategic and settlement planning framework. It updates the 2008 strategy in response to recent population growth, policy shifts, and infrastructure demands, setting out a vision for Nagambie to evolve as both an agricultural service hub and a visitor/lifestyle/retirement centre.

The strategy plans for growth to 4,000 residents by 2050, directing new housing, industrial, and tourism development to appropriate, serviced locations while protecting the town's lakeside character, environmental assets, and surrounding farmland. It is structured around five sustainability themes settlement, economic growth, environment, community services, and transport and provides a staged infrastructure plan to ensure development aligns with service capacity. In doing so, it integrates state and regional policy directions while reinforcing the Shire's settlement strategy of containing growth within defined township boundaries and safeguarding rural landscapes.

6.9 Violet Town

The draft Violet Town Plan provides a framework for guiding land use and settlement in Violet Town within the broader Strathbogie Shire planning context. Developed through extensive community input, the Plan establishes a vision for Violet Town as a sustainable, compact, and vibrant rural township that protects its country character, heritage, and landscape while supporting modest growth. It recommends replacing the broad Township Zone with more specific zoning for residential, industrial, business, open space, and public uses, to better manage land use conflicts and provide greater certainty for residents and investors.

The Plan directs residential growth towards infill and well-located lots near the town centre, supports medium-density and diverse housing options, and identifies a potential rural residential area for long-term investigation. It also consolidates the Cowslip Street town centre as the retail and community hub, establishes a defined industrial precinct to encourage employment, and protects open space along Honeysuckle Creek. Importantly, the Plan addresses flooding constraints and integrates resilience into future growth, ensuring Violet Town contributes to Shire-wide goals of compact, sustainable, and well-serviced settlement patterns.

6.10 Strathbogie Shire Municipal Fire Management Plan

The Strathbogie Shire Municipal Fire Management Plan (2023–2026) sets a coordinated framework for reducing bushfire risk across the municipality, with direct relevance to the planning and management of rural residential development.

Vision and Purpose

- **Vision:** A fire-prepared community across Strathbogie Shire.

- **Purpose:** To collaboratively identify fire risks and implement actions that reduce the likelihood, severity and impacts of bushfire on people, property, economy, and environment

Strategic Themes and Actions

The Plan is structured around five themes that inform bushfire response planning for rural residential growth:

1. **Community Resilience** – education, inclusion of bushfire awareness in new resident kits, and delivery of Local Emergency Action Plans (LEAPs) in townships such as Avenel, Euroa, Nagambie, Strathbogie, and Violet Town.
2. **Fuel Management** – roadside vegetation management, township fire prevention programs, joint fuel reduction burns, and improved roadside fuel load controls.
3. **Access and Egress** – maintenance of Priority Access Roads, Fuel Reduced Corridors, and Emergency Services Safer Areas (ESSAs) to ensure safe travel routes and emergency response capacity.
4. **Suppression** – ensuring water access (tanks, hydrants, dams), CFA pre-incident planning, and coordinated strike team deployment.
5. **Capability** – attracting and supporting CFA volunteers, strengthening local capacity, and regular review of planning frameworks.

Relevance to Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy

- **Siting and Growth Management:** Expansion of rural living areas must account for BMO controls, access/egress limitations, and the heightened risk in isolated landscapes.
- **Settlement Planning:** Directing rural residential growth to the edges of townships supports compact settlement patterns, better access to services, and improved bushfire response.
- **Community Preparedness:** New rural residential populations must be supported with fire awareness education, CFA engagement programs, and localised fire action planning.
- **Infrastructure Protection:** Roads, utilities, and critical agricultural assets must be integrated into bushfire planning, especially in high-risk areas such as the Strathbogie Ranges.

7 Planning Scheme

Bushfire policy and direction in the Strathbogie Planning Scheme

State Planning Policy Framework (13.02- Bushfire)

The objective of Clause 13.02 is to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfire through risk-based planning that prioritises the protection of human life.

Bushfire risk is given priority consideration in planning decisions, above all other land use and development objectives.

Key directions include:

- Directing population growth and development to low bushfire risk locations
- Avoiding development in areas where bushfire risk is extreme and cannot be effectively reduced.
- Ensuring new development (particularly subdivisions and dwelling applications) meet appropriate siting design and defensible space requirements.
- Supporting the role of the CFA in bushfire response, prevention and community education.
- Avoiding the creation of isolated rural residential lots that increase exposure to bushfire risk and limit emergency service access.

A more detailed response to Clause 13.02 for specific sites identified is provided below.

Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) - Localised Direction

The Strathbogie Planning Scheme has specific local strategies that reinforce state policy at the local level:

- Encourage development to be responsive to potential environmental risks.
- Discourage development in areas of bushfire risk.
- Retain areas of high-quality rural land for farming and agricultural purposes.
- Encourage consolidation of small rural lots within the Farming Zone.
- Prioritise productive farming development over residential development.
- Encourage rural residential development that is located and designed to protect existing agricultural uses, the natural environment and townships.
- Encourage rural residential development that can be efficiently serviced by social and physical infrastructure.

Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) Clause 44.06

Large parts of Strathbogie Shire are covered by the Bushfire Management Overlay.

Development within the BMO must meet stringent application requirements, including:

- **Bushfire hazard site assessment**
- **Bushfire hazard landscape assessment**
- **Bushfire management statement**

Clause 53.02 – Bushfire Planning

Clause 53.02 applies to new development in areas covered by the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) and sets mandatory requirements to ensure bushfire risk is reduced to an acceptable level. For the Rural Residential and Rural Land Use Strategy, the clause provides the key statutory framework for assessing the suitability of future Rural Living Zone (RLZ) land.

Key Provisions

Purpose: To ensure that planning decisions prioritise the protection of human life over all other policy considerations in bushfire-prone areas.

Application: Applies to subdivision, use, and development of land within the BMO, including rural residential growth areas.

Bushfire Protection Objectives:

- Ensure siting and design of new dwellings achieves defensible space standards.
- Require development to be located in areas where bushfire risk can be mitigated to an acceptable level.
- Ensure safe access and egress for residents, emergency services and fire appliances.
- Require development to have a reliable water supply for firefighting purposes.

Core Standards

- **Defensible space** must be provided around all new dwellings in accordance with specified Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) ratings.
- **Vegetation management** requirements apply to ensure defensible space is maintained.
- **Access** requirements mandate all-weather roads with sufficient width, gradient, and turning areas for CFA appliances.
- **Water supply** must meet minimum storage and access standards for firefighting.
- **Subdivision design** must minimise bushfire risk by locating lots and roads to support safe evacuation and CFA response.

Implications for the RRLUS

- New areas for RLZ investigation must be selected where compliance with Clause 53.02 can be reasonably achieved, avoiding isolated high-risk sites.
- Directing RLZ growth to township edges supports Clause 53.02 outcomes by:
- Allowing efficient CFA response times and access to water supply networks.
- Reducing exposure to extreme fire behaviour in remote or heavily vegetated landscapes.
- The clause reinforces the importance of strategic settlement planning that integrates bushfire risk at the rezoning stage, not just at development assessment.
- Ensuring safer access to township services and Neighbourhood Safer Places.

Clause 71.02-3

Key Local Implications for Policy Directions

Settlement Planning – New growth should be directed to low-risk township edges, consistent with Rural Residential and Rural Living planning directions.

Infrastructure Support – Locating development near towns ensures access to CFA brigades, hydrants, and road networks.

Risk Avoidance – Avoid rezoning or development in forested areas or remote areas where bushfire risk is unmanaged.

Resilience and Preparedness – Encourage subdivision layouts and building design that enhance defensible space, landscaping management, and emergency access.

8 Criteria of Assessment

As a result, this report and the Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy (RRLUS) recommend that future Rural Living Zone (RLZ) land be directed to the peripheries of existing townships, rather than isolated locations within the Farming Zone. This approach is supported by the following assessment criteria:

- **Efficient settlement patterns** – Locating RLZ on township edges supports compact urban form, promotes the efficient use of existing infrastructure and services, and avoids leapfrog or ad hoc development in remote areas.
- **Protection of agricultural land** – Restricting RLZ expansion away from high-value farming areas safeguards productive agricultural resources for ongoing use, consistent with State policy to protect Victoria’s food security and rural economy.
- **Reduced environmental impact** – Consolidating rural living opportunities in peri-urban areas reduces pressure on sensitive landscapes and biodiversity values by directing growth to less constrained locations.
- **Access to services and community facilities** – Residents in RLZ areas near townships benefit from easier access to schools, healthcare, retail, and community hubs, reducing car dependency and improving equity of access.
- **Consistency with settlement hierarchy** – Aligning RLZ with township growth boundaries supports the Urban Growth Strategy framework, strengthens the viability of town centres, and directs growth to locations where it can be appropriately managed.
- **Improved bushfire safety and CFA response** – Proximity to townships ensures better access to established road networks, water supplies, and fire services, thereby reducing CFA response times and improving resident safety.
- **Supports bushfire risk management** – Prioritising RLZ in lower-risk peri-urban areas avoids the siting of dwellings in isolated, high-risk bushfire environments, consistent with Clause 13.02 – Bushfire of the Planning Policy Framework.
- **Enables community preparedness** – Concentrating rural living near townships fosters stronger community resilience and supports CFA education and engagement programs, keeping residents connected to local brigades and township emergency planning initiatives.

8.1 Avenel

Council is not seeking to direct any further RLZ development to Avenel until a time that:

- The current RLZ development in Avenel has been completed.
- The new proposed strategic sites identified have been developed.

8.2 Euroa

Criteria	Response
Efficient Settlement Patterns	Support RLZ only where it directly adjoins Euroa’s settlement edge to maintain a compact form and avoid ad-hoc “leapfrog” lots. Prefer rezoning of already fragmented or partially serviced land; stage outward from the township to minimise exposure time for new residents during emergencies.

	Use perimeter roads and managed open space along the rural/bush interface to create a clear, defensible edge.
Protection of Agricultural Land	Focus RLZ on lower-productivity, already fragmented paddocks at the urban interface; avoid encroachment into high-value farming areas to reduce land-use conflict during Total Fire Ban/harvest periods. Provide vegetated or open-space buffers (fuel-managed) between rural living lots and adjacent farming to limit cross-boundary ignition and smoke impacts. Hume Freeway acts as barrier to prevent sprawl into productive agricultural land.
Reduced Environmental Impact	Prefer siting on cleared/modified land; avoid remnant native vegetation and waterway corridors that elevate ember and crown fire risk. Require landscaping with low-flammability species and ongoing fuel-load management via planning scheme schedules and planning permit conditions. Ensure sites avoid known flooding risks.
Access to Services and Community Facilities	Leverage proximity to Euroa for shorter response times and resident access to services; ensure two independent, all-weather egress points connecting to Euroa–Mansfield Road/Hill View Road (no long dead-ends) to the Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) standard. Design a looped internal road network with perimeter roads on bush-facing edges; provide compliant passing widths, turning heads and CFA access clearances. Where reticulated water exists, deliver hydrants to standard; otherwise require dedicated static water supply for firefighting at subdivision and dwelling stages.
Consistency with Settlement Hierarchy	The Urban Growth Strategy and township boundary identifies Euroa as a township to support. Sequence development so no net risk increases are incremental and matched by infrastructure, community education and emergency response capacity.
Improved Bushfire Safety	Locate building envelopes away from vegetated edges and slope; design lots deep enough to contain defensible space to achieve BAL 12.5 without relying on neighbours/public land. Use the Hume Freeway and interface roads as part of a broader evacuation and containment strategy (noting no new direct freeway access).
Supports Bushfire Risk Management	Require a precinct-level Bushfire Hazard Assessment and Bushfire Management Plan to support any rezoning, demonstrating compliance with Clause 13.02 and Clause 53.02 at rezoning, subdivision and dwelling stages.
Enables Community Preparedness	Keep rural living residents connected to Euroa CFA for faster turn-out, education and engagement (including local preparedness programs and seasonal briefings).

Bushfire hazard identification

Considering and assessing the bushfire hazard on the basis of the following:

Policy	Response
Landscape conditions - meaning conditions in the landscape within 20	Landscape conditions within 20 kilometres are characterised as flat and sparsely vegetated to the north and west. To the

kilometres (and potentially up to 75 kilometres) of a site	south and east of Euroa is undulating topography with state park and plantations. To the north and west of Euroa is Strathbogie Shire's larger farming areas, classified with larger than normal minimum lot sizes in the Farming Zone. The land is primarily cleared farmland, albeit with vegetated road reserves and creek lines. The land is predominantly flat with a few smaller hills throughout the assessment area. East across the Hume Highway and towards Boho the land begins to rise dramatically in elevation with several hills back south to Strathbogie and the Strathbogie State Forest just within the 20 kilometre assessment area. South and west are similar where the landscape is primarily vegetated with undulating hills. Figure 3 shows a 20 kilometre radius around the subject land.
Local conditions - meaning conditions in the area within approximately 1 kilometre of a site	Within one kilometre of the subject land is a mix of farming properties and residential properties in the Euroa township. One kilometre north of the assessment area is the southern residential section of Euroa. The residential section is located approximately 540 metres north of the assessment area. This section of the assessment area is flat and categorised with a mixture of planted road reserve and manicured gardens. Further north-east is the Hume Highway where Sevens Creek intersects the assessment area. The land slopes down to the creek which contains significant canopy vegetation. East of the assessment area is predominantly farmland, Sevens Creek and the start of Balmattum Hill. The Hume Highway makes up the assessment areas eastern and southern boundary. South of the assessment area is the continuation of Castle Creek which contains significant riparian vegetation. The landscape is predominantly flat aside from the overpass that was constructed for the

	Hume Highway. South of the Hume is larger farmland. West of the assessment area is Castle Creek, farmland and the eastern edge of Euroa Golf course. Figure 4 shows a one kilometre radius around the subject land.
Neighbourhood conditions - meaning conditions in the area within 400 metres of a site	Within 400 metres of the assessment areas western boundary is flat open grassland, currently farmed. The western boundary is Euroa-Mansfield Road which contains canopy trees along its entirety. North of the site are larger Farming Zoned properties with areas of approximately 2 hectares. All but two of these properties have existing dwellings. The site fronts Hillview Road to the north which is a small dirt road that contains significant sized road reserve canopy trees. East of the site is the Hume Highway containing vegetation on each side and dividing the north and southbound lanes. South of the assessment area is the Hume Highway overpass containing canopy vegetation within all road reserves. Either side of the overpass the land is flat. Figure 5 shows the 400m assessment of the surrounding area.
The site for the development.	The land for assessment has an area of approximately 38 hectares. The land measures 860 metres north to south and 730 metres east to west. The land is flat, contains multiple dams and farm infrastructure. The land contains a patch of woodland assess vegetation in the north as well as scattered canopy trees. Separating the two properties is a linear wind break extending east to west across the entirety of the assessment area. Figure 6 shows the subject site.

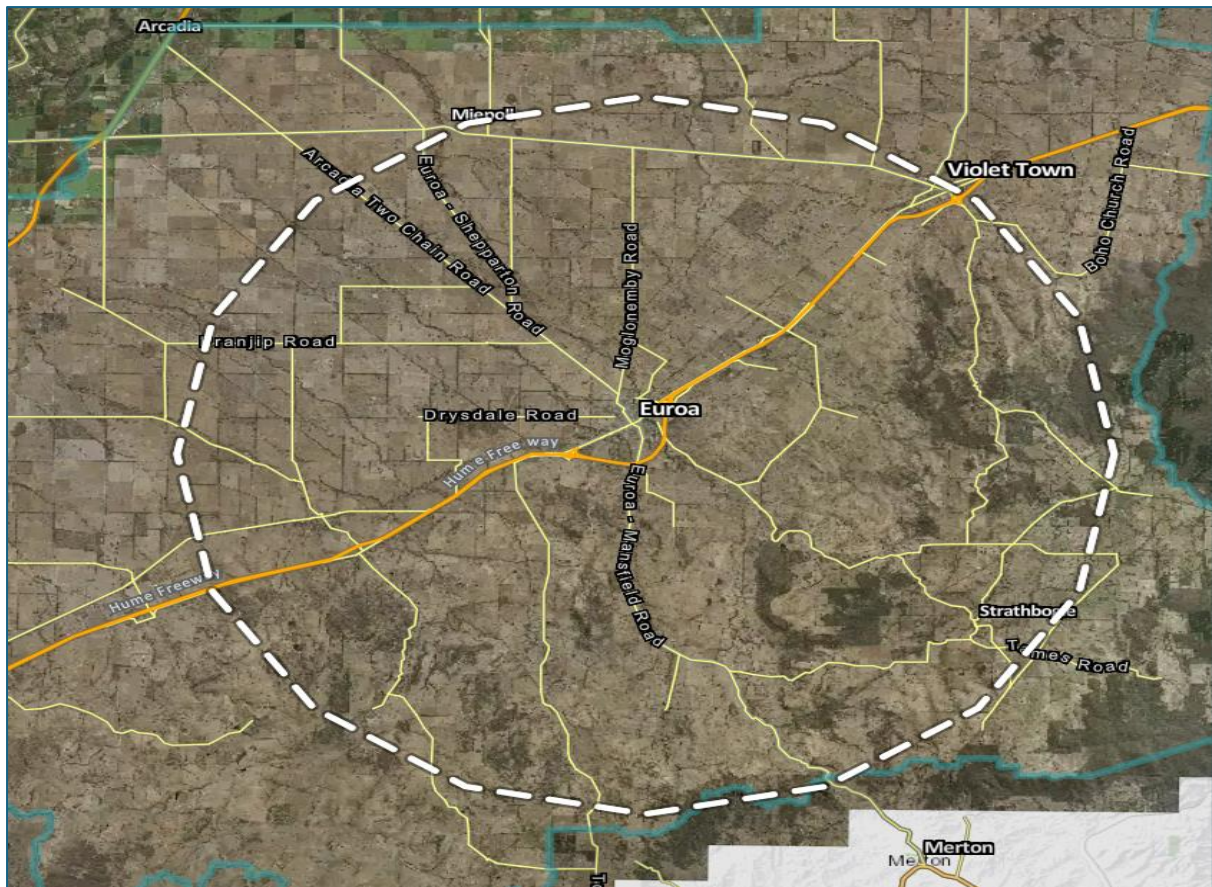


Figure 3: Twenty kilometre radius of the subject land



Figure 4: One kilometre radius of the subject land

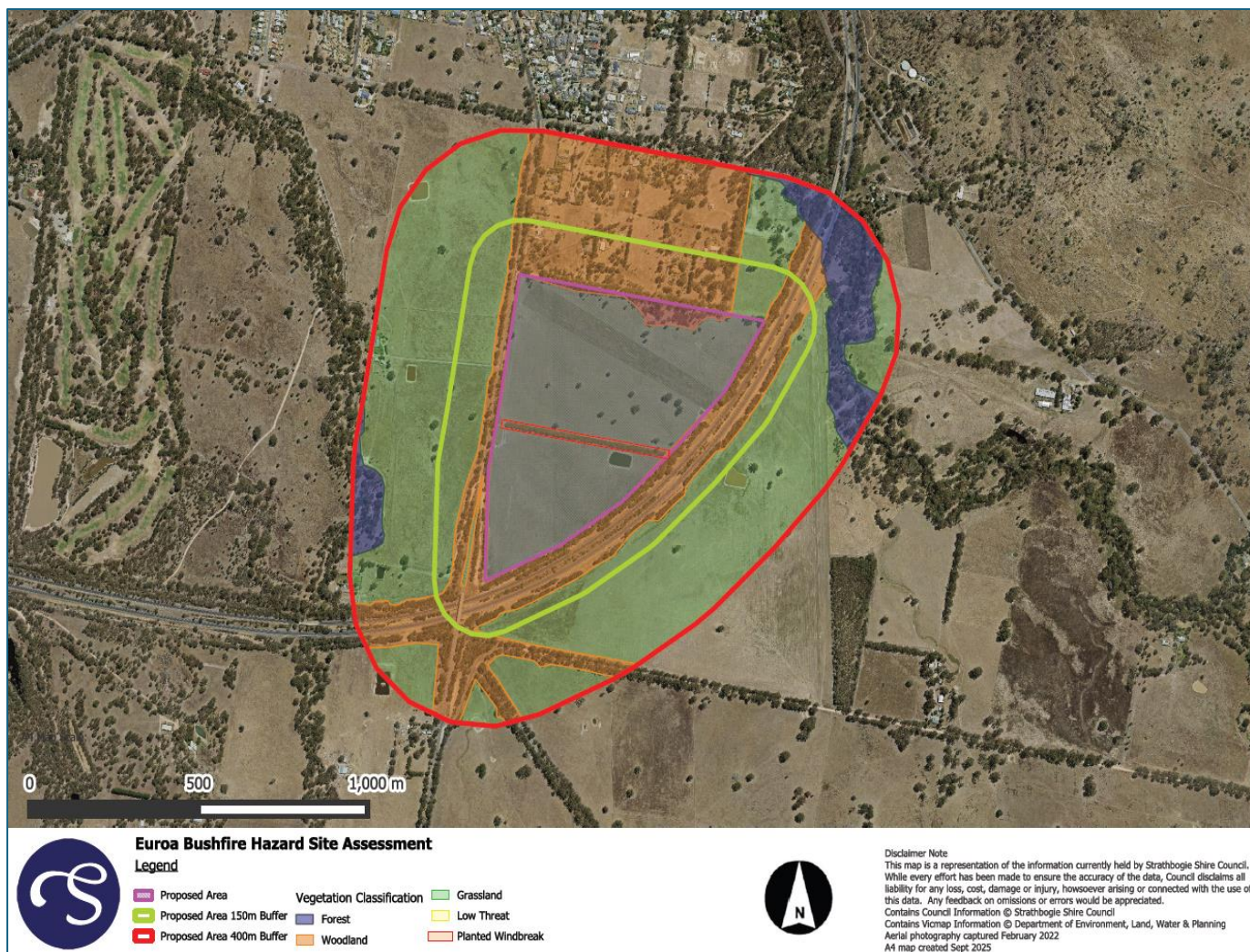


Figure 5: Four hundred metre radius of the subject land



Figure 6: Subject site

Bushfire Hazard assessment

During the site visit undertaken for Euroa each direction was reviewed to determine the slope, vegetation type and classifiable vegetation:

- **North** – is directed towards the Euroa township. The land is largely flat, except for the north-east of the assessment area sloping down to Seven Creeks where it flows under the Hume Highway. This section of assessment area has been considered as forest.

The Farming Zoned land between Hillview Road and Boundary Road South has been assessed as Woodland. All but two of these allotments contain dwellings, and during the site assessment it was noted that the vegetation on each lot is carefully managed, with little understorey present.

The Hillview Road reserve contains significant sized canopy trees. Its classification is woodland although it is to be noted that this applies only to the road reserve vegetation, which is modified as it has no understorey.

- **East** – is the Hume Highway which contains planted vegetation along each side as well as within the north and south bound lane divider. The Hume Highway makes up the easter and southern boundary for the assessment area. Further east is a mix of open farmland with the Sevens Creek containing significant canopy vegetation.
- **South** – is away from Euroa township. This direction includes the Hume Highway and overpass and also several local roads. Each road has vegetation along either side, which does not meet the exemption of low threat at Section 2.2.3.2 of AS3959:2018 and would therefore be considered as woodland.
- **West** – Euroa-Mansfield Road makes up the western boundary of the subject land. There is roadside vegetation on both sides of Euroa-Mansfield Road which has been assessed as Woodland, with several breaks containing only grassland. Further west across Euroa-Mansfield Road is Castle Creek which is surrounded by riparian vegetation assessed as forest, setback between 310 and 400 metres from the assessment area.

	North	East	South	West
Slope under the classified vegetation	Upslope/0°	Upslope/0°	Upslope/0°	Upslope/0°
Vegetation class	Woodland	Woodland	Woodland	Woodland
BAL-12.5 defendable space setback (metres)	33	33	33	33
Is the setback met offsite?	No	No	No	No

Landscape typology

DELWP's 2017 publication 'Planning Permit Applications Bushfire Management Overlay: technical guide' provides guidance on determining broader landscape types for assessment areas, rated on a sliding scale from one being the lowest risk to four being the highest risk.

The study area lies within a broader Landscape Type two. Beyond 150 metres from the assessment area is largely made up of the following observed features:

- Sevens Creek and Castle Creek containing significant riparian vegetation, including canopy trees. Areas assessed as forest.
- Farmland to the south, east and west.
- Euroa township to the north.
- Golf course further west.
- North and south transport links.

Past bushfire and planned burns

The NatureKit software provided by DEECA shows past planned burned activity has been concentrated on and around the Euroa Airport, west of Euroa. The identified planned burn occurred in 2024.

Past bushfire activity directly around Euroa is shown to have occurred between 2020 and 2024. Further south of Euroa has seen significant fires in both years 1990 and 2015 that impacted between Longwood East to south of Strathbogie and across the municipality boundary into Mansfield Shire. It is to be noted that the NatureKit software goes back only to the 1970's.

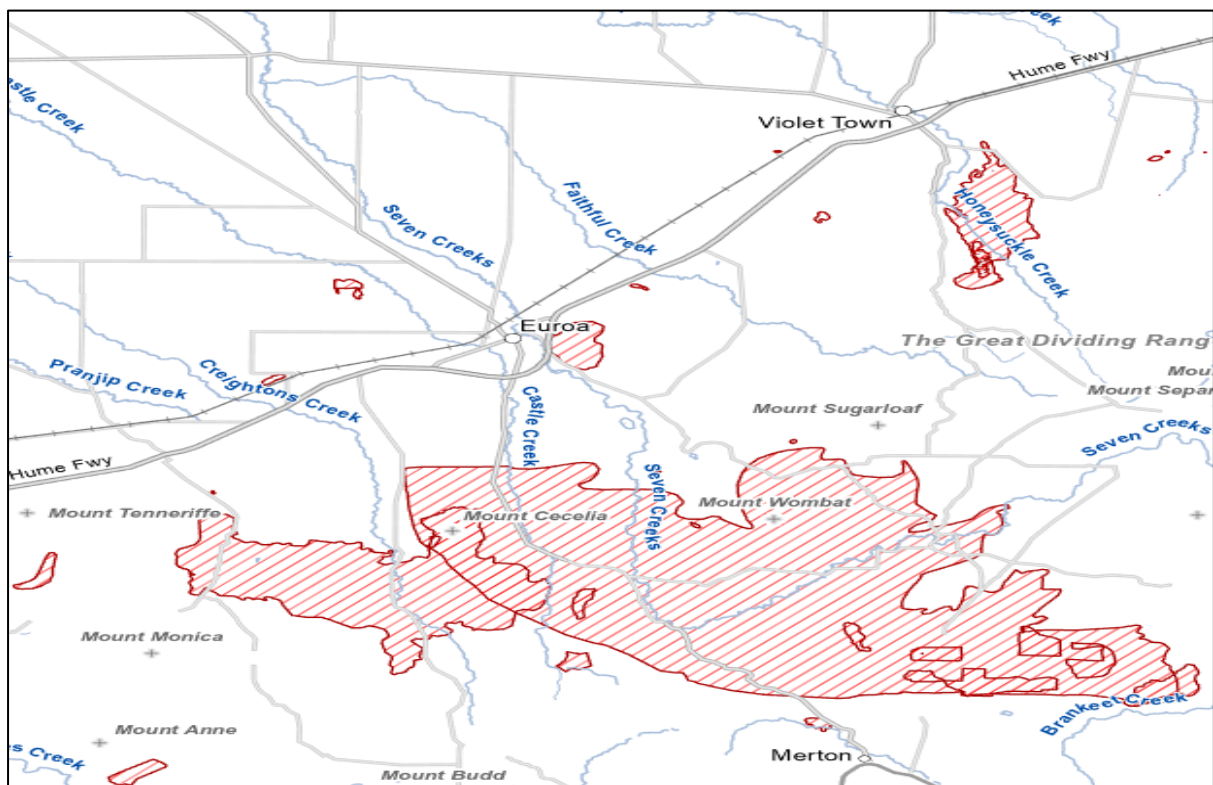


Figure 7: Past fire history (red hatched) around Euroa, NatureKit software.

Settlement planning

Plan to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities and prioritise protection of human life by:

Policy	Response
Directing population growth and development to low risk locations, being those locations assessed as having a radiant heat flux of less than 12.5 kilowatts/square metre under AS 3959-2009 <i>Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas</i> (Standards Australia, 2009).	The municipal wide assessment carried out earlier in this report has narrowed down lower risk areas to which it is recommended that Rural Living Zone be directed as part of the Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy. Euroa is one such area that has been identified as lower risk in the context of the municipality.
Ensuring the availability of, and safe access to, areas assessed as a BAL-LOW rating under AS 3959-2009 <i>Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas</i> (Standards Australia, 2009) where human life can be better protected from the effects of bushfire.	Access to BAL-LOW areas is along Euroa-Mansfield Road and approximately 450 metres north of the assessment area. Euroa-Mansfield Road is the primary southern access to Euroa from Merton. Further north along the road the speed limit reduces from 100km/hr to 60km/hr.
Ensuring the bushfire risk to existing and future residents, property and community infrastructure will not increase as a result of future land use and development.	The proposed Rural Living Zone area will help to eliminate the existing grassland threat on the Euroa side of the Hume Highway. The assessment area is on the southern side of the Euroa township, away from the more likely fire direction of north-west.
Achieving no net increase in risk to existing and future residents, property and community infrastructure, through the implementation of bushfire protection measures and where possible reducing bushfire risk overall.	The proposed direction of development for Euroa, seeks to increase the level of protection afforded to the existing township. and therefore, reduce the current risk from the south. Supporting growth in this area with strict design mechanisms including perimeter roads will provide Euroa with an increased level of protection.
Assessing and addressing the bushfire hazard posed to the settlement and the likely bushfire behaviour it will produce at a landscape, settlement, local, neighbourhood and site scale, including the potential for neighbourhood-scale destruction.	Refer to previous assessment above on landscape, local and neighbourhood conditions.
Assessing alternative low risk locations for settlement growth on a regional, municipal, settlement, local and neighbourhood basis.	Euroa is not specified in any regional bushfire strategy. Earlier in this report a municipal wide assessment was undertaken to determine areas that are more appropriate to have growth directed to. One of which is Euroa.

	The south of the township was chosen due to the relatively lower risk and other non-bushfire related matters.
Not approving any strategic planning document, local planning policy, or planning scheme amendment that will result in the introduction or intensification of development in an area that has, or will on completion have, more than a BAL-12.5 rating under AS 3959-2009 <i>Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas</i> (Standards Australia, 2009).	This assessment demonstrates, that with the inclusion of certain mitigation measures in the final subdivision layout, rural living zone can be supplied that provides developable land that can comply with BAL-12.5 requirements. Mitigation measures include, but are not limited to, perimeter roads, wider road reserves, building exclusion areas, vegetation management requirement and water supply. Further on in this report are suggested policy changes that would likely accompany any planning scheme amendment that rezones either of the three assessment site to Rural Living Zone.

Conclusion

Overall, Euroa has been identified as one of the few lower risk townships for which it is considered suitable to identify land for the further investigation of rezoning to Rural Living Zone within Strathbogie Shire. The south of the township has been chosen due to other non-bushfire considerations (such as flooding and impact on agricultural land), as well through the community panel process. Mitigation measures undertaken with the assessment area would allow for the attainment of all future lots to designate a building envelope for construction standards to meet the requirements of BAL-12.5 as per AS3959.



North-eastern boundary of assessment site looking west along Hillview Road.



North-western corner of assessment area looking south along the western boundary.



Looking across the southern boundary of the assessment areas intersection with the Hume Highway.



Forest alongside Sevens Creek north of the assessment area

8.3 Nagambie

Criteria	Response
Efficient Settlement Patterns	The site adjoins Nagambie's township boundary and benefits from existing infrastructure, avoiding leapfrog development in more remote locations. Directing RLZ here supports compact urban form and maximises the efficiency of existing road networks and service corridors.
Protection of Agricultural Land	The land is already fragmented and constrained by its proximity to township uses, meaning it no longer forms part of the broader high-value farming landscape. Directing rural living to this site protects more productive agricultural land on Nagambie's periphery.
Reduced Environmental Impact	The site is largely cleared and modified, reducing the need for native vegetation removal and minimising biodiversity impact. Rural living development here places less pressure on environmentally sensitive areas, with appropriate setbacks and fuel-managed open space providing an additional buffer.
Access to Services and Community Facilities	The land is within close proximity to Nagambie's schools, healthcare, retail centre, and community hubs. Residents can access township services by short vehicle trips or, in some cases, active transport, reducing car dependency and supporting community integration.
Consistency with Settlement Hierarchy	The proposal aligns with Nagambie's role as a higher-order settlement in Strathbogie Shire's hierarchy. Directing RLZ expansion to this township edge supports the Urban Growth Strategy framework, consolidating growth in strategic locations rather than dispersing it across the Shire.
Improved Bushfire Safety	Proximity to sealed roads (Racecourse Road and Grimwade Road/High Street) provides multiple, safe evacuation routes. Building envelopes can be sited away from vegetated edges and slope, with defensible space achievable within property boundaries, improving overall bushfire safety outcomes.
Supports Bushfire Risk Management	The land sits in a peri-urban setting with lower bushfire hazard compared with isolated rural locations. A Bushfire Hazard Assessment and Bushfire Management Plan can demonstrate compliance with Clause 13.02 and Clause 53.02 by securing water supply, CFA access, and ongoing vegetation management.
Enables Community Preparedness	Locating RLZ living close to Nagambie assists residents in being able to remain engaged with the local CFA brigade, emergency planning, and township-based education programs. Concentration new RLZ development here strengthens overall community resilience and preparedness.

Bushfire hazard identification

Considering and assessing the bushfire hazard on the basis of the following:

Policy	Response
Landscape conditions - meaning conditions in the landscape within 20 kilometres (and potentially up to 75 kilometres) of a site	Landscape conditions within 20 kilometres are characterised as farmland that is flat and sparsely vegetated to the south and east.

	The Goulburn River runs north-south through the 20km review area, containing significant vegetation. Stretching from the north to the west of the review area is the Heathcote-Graytown National Park, which encompasses a significant portion of the review area west of Nagambie. This national park presents a serious risk of fire, as evidenced in previous planned burns. Figure 11 shows past fire activity in the surrounds. The national park has an undulating topography with several elevated lookouts and extends south-west to Heathcote. Figure 8 shows a 20-kilometre radius around the subject land.
Local conditions - meaning conditions in the area within approximately 1 kilometre of a site	Within one kilometre to the south of the review area is the Nagambie township, the edge of Lake Nagambie and vacant farmland east of the railway line that makes up the assessment areas eastern boundary. West and south-west are greenfield sites that are zoned for residential but have not yet been subdivided. This area is flat with scattered canopy trees. Further north-west and north are larger equine focused farming properties. This area is characterised by wind break plantings along fence lines and grassland. In the north-west the land slopes more gradually up to isolated woodland pockets. The land elevates in the north where there are larger patches of woodland present on private allotments and more intensive vegetation in the road reserves. East is the Goulburn Valley Highway which bypasses the Nagambie township. The Highway is elevated in comparison to the surrounding landscape. The east comprises primarily of open farmland. Figure 9 shows a one kilometre radius around the subject land.

Neighbourhood conditions - meaning conditions in the area within 400 metres of a site	Within 400 metres south of the assessment area is the northern edge of the Nagambie township, classified as low threat vegetation. Lots in this vicinity are larger, however several have approved permit for further subdivision. The landscape is flat and extends to vacant grazing land east of the railway line. East of the assessment area are larger farming properties. Directly east of the assessment area is a farm that contains a residence and scattered canopy vegetation identified as woodland. The eastern neighbouring property slopes down to the assessment site. North of the assessment area continues to be flat with consistent plantings in the Grimwade Road reserve. A linear stretch of significant sized canopy trees stretched south from Coes Road to within 110 metres of the assessment areas northern boundary. Four hundred metres west of the assessment area is Grimwade Road which makes up the western boundary of the site and contains linear woodland assessed vegetation on each side of the road. Further west are farm properties containing scattered vegetation and planted windbreak within the property. Figure 10 shows the landscape within 150 metres and 400 metres of the assessment area.
The site for the development.	The subject land is located on the northern side of Racecourse Road bordered by Grimwade Road to the west and the Shepparton-Melbourne Railway line to the east. The site is flat and which containing several canopy trees and dams, is assessed as grassland. The subject land has an area of approximately 56 hectares, measuring 610 metres north south and 980 metres east west. The south-western corner of the site contains a residence whilst the remainder of the site is used for cropping. Figure 11 shows the subject land.

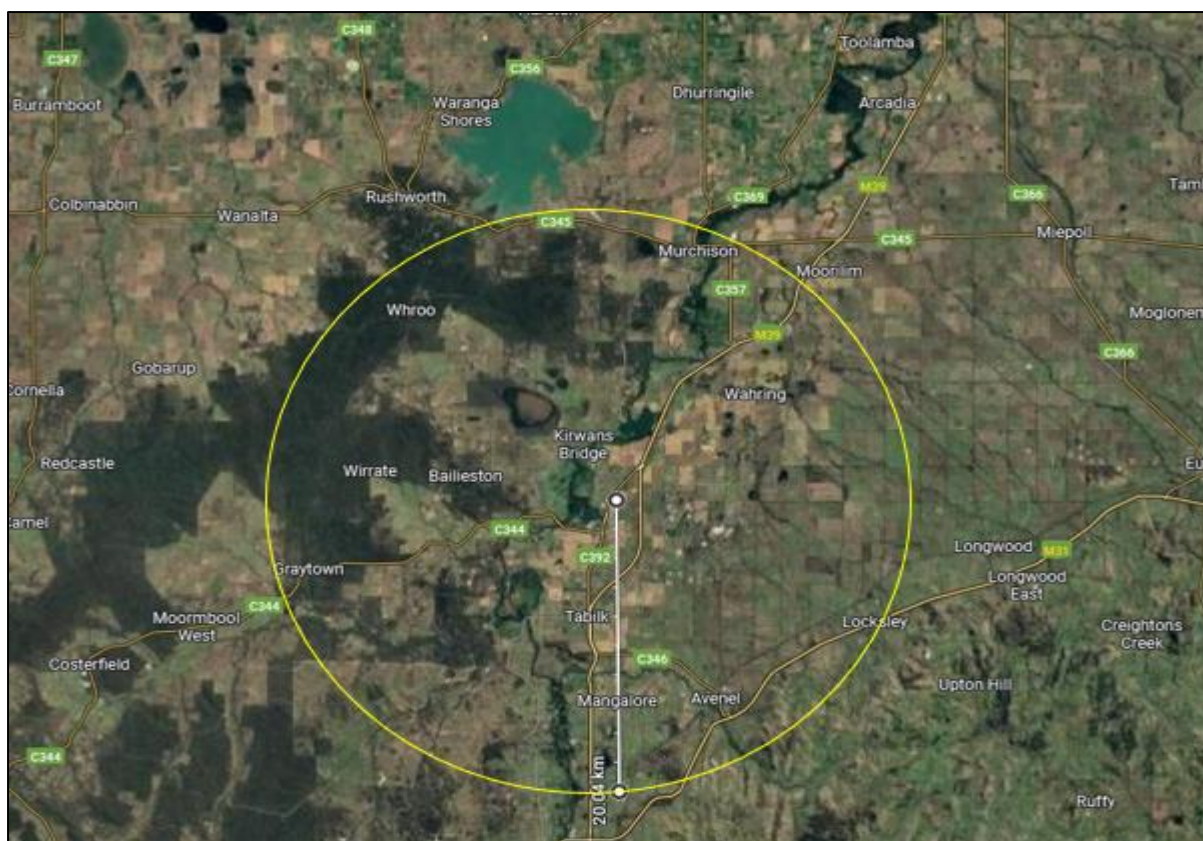


Figure 8: Twenty kilometre radius of the subject land



Figure 9: One kilometre radius of the subject land

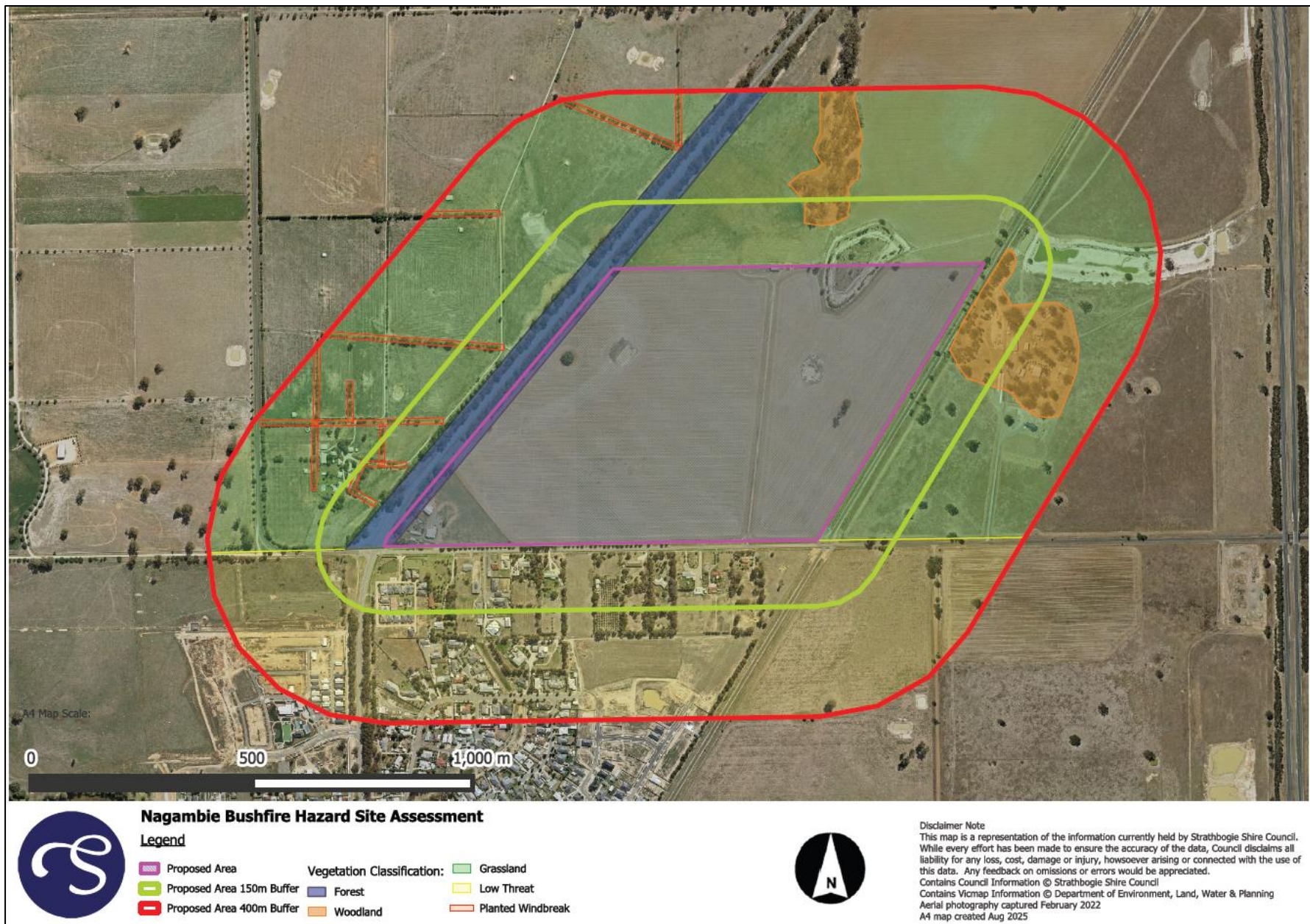


Figure 10: 400 metre radius of the subject land.



Figure 11: Subject land.

Bushfire Hazard assessment

During the site visit undertaken for Nagambie each direction was reviewed to determine the slope, vegetation type and classifiable vegetation:

- **North** – is directed away from the Nagambie township. The land is largely flat, however begins to slope upwards towards the end of the assessment area. The land slopes upwards more drastically on the western side of Grimwade Road where there is Woodland classified vegetation on the highest point. There is a linear section of Woodland classified vegetation setback approximately 100 metres from the subject land. The closest classifiable is grassland.
- **East** – is towards the railway line with further east being the Goulburn Valley Highway. Directly east of the subject land slope upwards to an area containing a tower and residence. Surrounding this area has been assessed as Woodland due to little or altered understorey. Close to achieving 33 metres setback required.
- **South** – is back towards Nagambie township with south of Racecourse Road being large (more than one hectare) General Residential Zone allotments which are likely to experience future infill developments. This direction is flat, and Council has record of several approved subdivision along Racecourse Road and further south into Kean Road. South-east of the subject land and across the railway line is flat grassland.
- **West** – Grimwade Road makes up the western boundary of the subject land. There is roadside vegetation on both sides of Grimwade Road which have been assessed as Forest, with several breaks with grassland.

	North	East	South	West
Slope under the classified vegetation	Upslope/0°	Upslope/0°	Upslope/0°	Upslope/0°
Vegetation class	Grassland	Woodland	Low threat	Forest
BAL-12.5 defendable space setback (metres)	19	33	0	48
Is the setback met offsite?	No	No	Yes	No

Landscape typology

DELWP's 2017 publication 'Planning Permit Applications Bushfire Management Overlay: technical guide' provides guidance on determining broader landscape types for assessment areas, rated on a sliding scale from one being the lowest risk to four being the highest risk.

The study area lies within a broader Landscape Type One. Beyond 150 metres from the assessment area is largely made up of the following observed features:

- Open farmland used for grazing or equine.
- Golf course to the east.
- Multiple planted windbreaks
- Heavily vegetated road reserves

- Directly south being the Nagambie township
- Strong north, south and east transport links
- Goulburn River and associated riparian vegetation to the west.
- Pockets of woodland further north

Past bushfire and planned burns

The NatureKit software provided by DEECA shows past planned burned activity has been concentrated west of Nagambie between Graytown and Whroo in the Heathcote-Graytown National Park. The identified planned burns occurred primarily between 2005 and 2012. There have been a small number of planned burns 18km north, 15km south and 14km east of Nagambie.

Past bushfire activity again is centred either within or close to the Heathcote-Graytown National Park between 2020 and 2023.

It is to be noted that the NatureKit software goes back only to the 1970's.

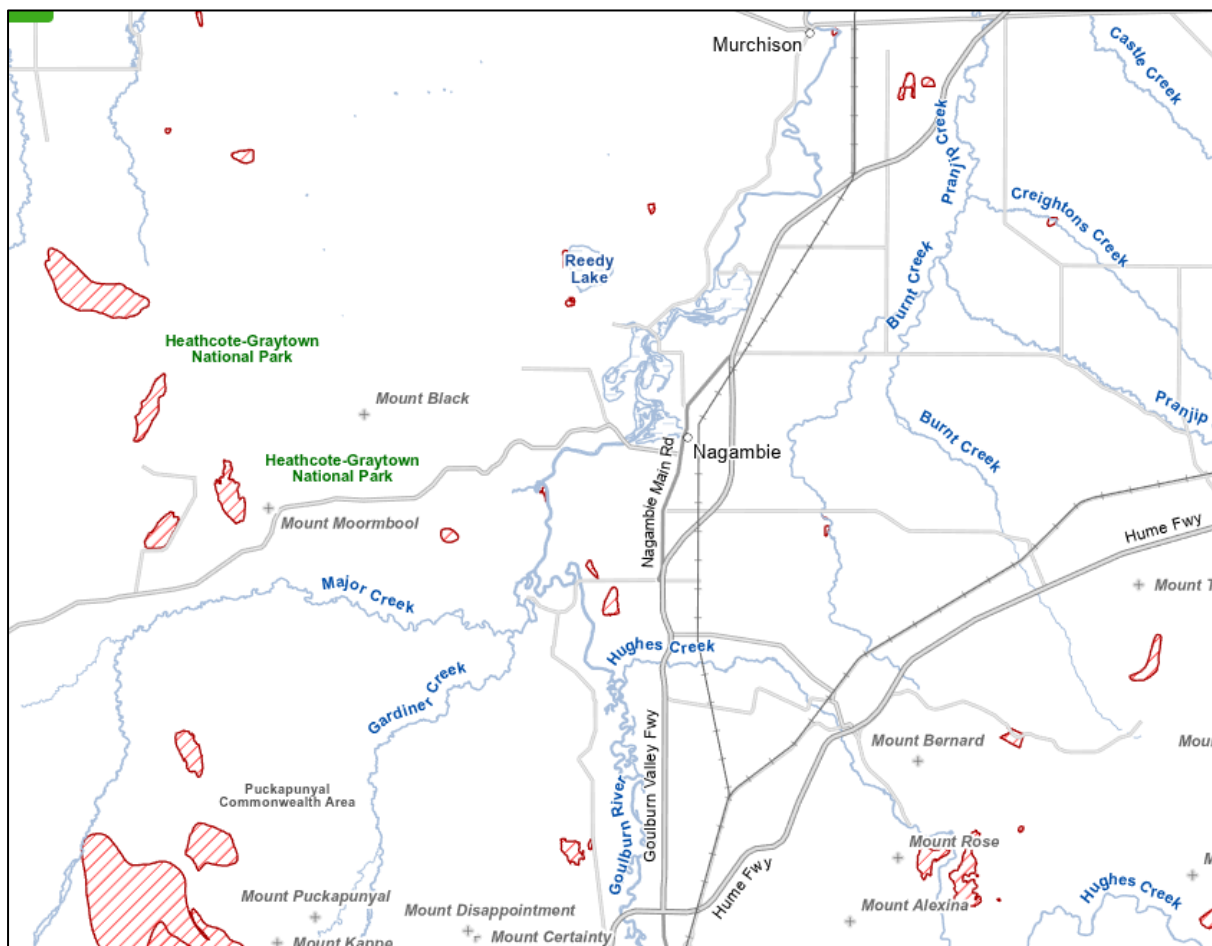


Figure 12: Past fire history (red hatched) around Nagambie, NatureKit software.

Settlement planning

Plan to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities and prioritise protection of human life by:

Policy	Response
Directing population growth and development to low risk locations, being those locations assessed as having a radiant heat flux of less than 12.5 kilowatts/square metre under AS 3959-2009 <i>Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas</i> (Standards Australia, 2009).	The municipal wide assessment carried out earlier in this report has narrowed down lower risk areas to which it is recommended that Rural Living Zone be directed as part of the Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy. Nagambie is one such area that has been identified as lower risk in the context of the municipality.
Ensuring the availability of, and safe access to, areas assessed as a BAL-LOW rating under AS 3959-2009 <i>Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas</i> (Standards Australia, 2009) where human life can be better protected from the effects of bushfire.	Given the proposals location is immediately adjacent to the township of Nagambie, egress to areas of BAL-LOW is readily accessible. The site has direct access to Racecourse Road and Grimwade Road which is the primary north-south road through Nagambie.
Ensuring the bushfire risk to existing and future residents, property and community infrastructure will not increase as a result of future land use and development.	The rezoning locations allows an additional buffer to the Nagambie township. Creating individual allotments north of Racecourse Road will allow for improved management of the north, north-western and north-eastern peripheries of Nagambie. This will allow for active surveillance for threat of fire from residents of the newly established rural living area. This can be predominantly achieved through subdivision design.
Achieving no net increase in risk to existing and future residents, property and community infrastructure, through the implementation of bushfire protection measures and where possible reducing bushfire risk overall.	The proposed direction of development for Nagambie, seeks to increase the level of protection afforded to the existing township. and therefore, reduce the current risk from the north. Supporting growth in this area with strict design mechanism including perimeter roads will provide Nagambie with an increased level of protection.
Assessing and addressing the bushfire hazard posed to the settlement and the likely bushfire behaviour it will produce at a landscape, settlement, local, neighbourhood and site scale, including the potential for neighbourhood-scale destruction.	The site is located on the peripheries of a settlement. Directly adjoining residential zoned to the south of Racecourse Road. The site and surrounds are relatively cleared when compared to land further north of the subject land. A bushfire hazard assessment has been undertaken earlier in this chapter for the Nagambie assessment area, including at the local and neighbourhood scales.
Assessing alternative low risk locations for settlement growth on a regional, municipal, settlement, local and neighbourhood basis.	Nagambie is not specified in any regional bushfire strategy. Earlier in this report a municipal wide assessment was undertaken to determine

	areas that are more appropriate to have growth directed to. One of which is Nagambie. The north of the township was chosen due to the relatively lower risk and other non-bushfire related matters.
Not approving any strategic planning document, local planning policy, or planning scheme amendment that will result in the introduction or intensification of development in an area that has, or will on completion have, more than a BAL-12.5 rating under AS 3959-2009 <i>Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone areas</i> (Standards Australia, 2009).	This assessment demonstrates, that with the inclusion of certain mitigation measures in the final subdivision layout, rural living zone can be supplied that provides developable land that can comply with BAL-12.5 requirements. Mitigation measures include, but are not limited to, perimeter roads, wider road reserves, building exclusion areas, vegetation management requirement and water supply. Further on in this report are suggested policy changes that would likely accompany any planning scheme changes.

Conclusion

Overall, Nagambie has been identified as one of the few lower risk townships for which it is considered suitable to identify land for the further investigation of rezoning to Rural Living Zone. The north of the township has been chosen due to other non-bushfire considerations, as well through the community panel process.

Mitigation measures undertaken with the assessment area would allow for the attainment of all future lots to designate a building envelope for construction standards to meet the requirements of BAL-12.5 as per AS3959.

8.4 Violet Town

Criteria	Response
Efficient Settlement Patterns	Subject area identified for RLZ is located on the immediate fringe of Violet Town, meaning it sits within a logical extension of the township's settlement pattern. Its proximity to the existing urban area supports compact development and minimises the risk of leapfrog or ad hoc rural living occurring in more remote locations. Development in this area would make use of existing road networks and town-based infrastructure, thereby aligning with objectives for efficient and sustainable settlement.
Protection of Agricultural Land	The subject site and surrounds are already fragmented into smaller rural-living sized allotments, with limited high-value agricultural potential due to lot sizes, existing lifestyle uses, and proximity to residential interfaces. Locating RLZ in this area helps direct rural living demand away from more productive farmland, safeguarding high-value agricultural areas elsewhere in the Shire. This is

	consistent with state policy to protect Victoria's agricultural resources.
Reduced Environmental Impact	The land is relatively unconstrained, with no immediate interface to sensitive environmental or biodiversity assets such as waterways, wetlands, or conservation reserves. Consolidating rural living here reduces the pressure on more environmentally sensitive peri-urban and remote landscapes. This supports a managed, low-impact pattern of rural residential development.
Access to Services and Community Facilities	The site benefits from close access to Violet Town's township services, including primary education, retail facilities, community hubs, and healthcare. Its location on the township edge reduces reliance on car travel compared to more isolated rural areas, improving connectivity for future residents and aligning with principles of sustainable rural settlement.
Consistency with Settlement Hierarchy	The Urban Growth Strategy (UGS) identifies Violet Town as a township capable of accommodating some incremental rural living growth. Aligning RLZ in this location is consistent with the settlement hierarchy framework, as it directs growth to an edge-of-town location where it can be more effectively planned and supported, while maintaining the viability of the township core.
Improved Bushfire Safety	The area's proximity to Violet Town ensures good access to established road networks, reticulated water, and local CFA resources. This allows for shorter response times compared to isolated rural living locations. It therefore supports improved bushfire safety outcomes for residents.
Supports Bushfire Risk Management	The area is not within a designated bushfire management area. Siting RLZ here avoids exposing future dwellings to isolated, high-risk bushfire-prone landscapes, aligning with Clause 13.02 of the Planning Policy Framework which seeks to prioritise human life in bushfire planning.
Enables Community Preparedness	Locating rural living opportunities close to Violet Town strengthens community ties and ensures residents remain connected to the local CFA brigade and township emergency planning initiatives. This fosters greater resilience and preparedness compared to dwellings located in isolated rural bush settings.

Bushfire hazard identification

Considering and assessing the bushfire hazard on the basis of the following:

Policy	Response
Landscape conditions - meaning conditions in the landscape within 20 kilometres (and potentially up to 75 kilometres) of a site	Landscape conditions within 20 kilometres are characterised as flat and sparsely vegetated to the north towards Shepparton. There are certain sections of significant bushland 9 kilometres north. North-east is the Jubilee swamp which intersects with multiple waterways and surrounding vegetation. To the east is where the flat farmland extends into the Strathbogie State Forest

	which a substantial park containing several mountains further east. The land rises significantly to these peaks. To the south the landscape slopes further upwards to the state forest that continues on and intersects with multiple plantations. To the west of the subject area is described as flat farmland with vegetated creeks and scattered paddock trees. Figure 13 shows a 20 kilometre radius around the subject land.
Local conditions - meaning conditions in the area within approximately 1 kilometre of a site	Within one kilometre of the north of the subject land is open farmland. The land is largely flat, aside from a small depression following a seasonal waterway. Hoskin Lane continues north and has substantial woodland I the road reserve. To the east of the assessment area is a mixture of farmland containing paddock trees, the Hume Highway and the railway line. The Hume and railway line contain linear vegetation plantings. Additionally, One Mile Creek flows along the eastern boundary of the site and contains substantial riparian vegetation. To the south of the assessment site is where the railway line and Hume Highway part, with in between being private properties. The majority of these properties contain dwellings with all properties having varying degrees of vegetation. To the west is Shadforth Reserve, with north-east being smaller Farming Zoned properties containing dwelling. South-west is the Violet Town township containing the neighbourhood safe place at the recreation reserve and the Honeysuckle Creek reserve which contains significant vegetation along each side. Figure 14 shows a one kilometre radius around the subject land.
Neighbourhood conditions - meaning conditions in the area within 400 metres of a site	Within 400 metres of the assessment area is open farmland with paddock trees. The land is largely flat with a small depression for a seasonal waterway.

	To the east is farmland and One Mile Creek with established canopy vegetation. To the south are residential properties along High Street. Most of these properties contain significant vegetation. Between these properties and the review site is the railway line and Foreman Street. Foreman Street contains canopy trees on the either side of the road. West of the subject land is Shadforth Reserve, which is flat. The road reserve has been assessed as being woodland and further west is Shadforth Reserve. The reserve contains several different vegetation classifications including two ovals, a golf course and a mixture of planted and non-planted canopy vegetation and shrubs. On a site inspection it was observed that understorey was pretty well managed, although shrubs are present further into the reserve. Shadforth Reserve has been considered as forest classification. Figure 15 shows the 400 metre radius of the subject land.
The site for the development.	The site has an area of approximately 44 hectares, measuring 980m wide from east to west and 740m long from north to south at its longest and 150m at its smallest. The subject land is largely flat and is made up of multiple parcels, three of which contain dwellings all facing the western boundary. The western section of the review area contains multiple windbreaks, manicured gardens and maintained woodland canopy trees. Figure 16 shows the subject site.



Figure 13: Twenty kilometre radius of the subject land

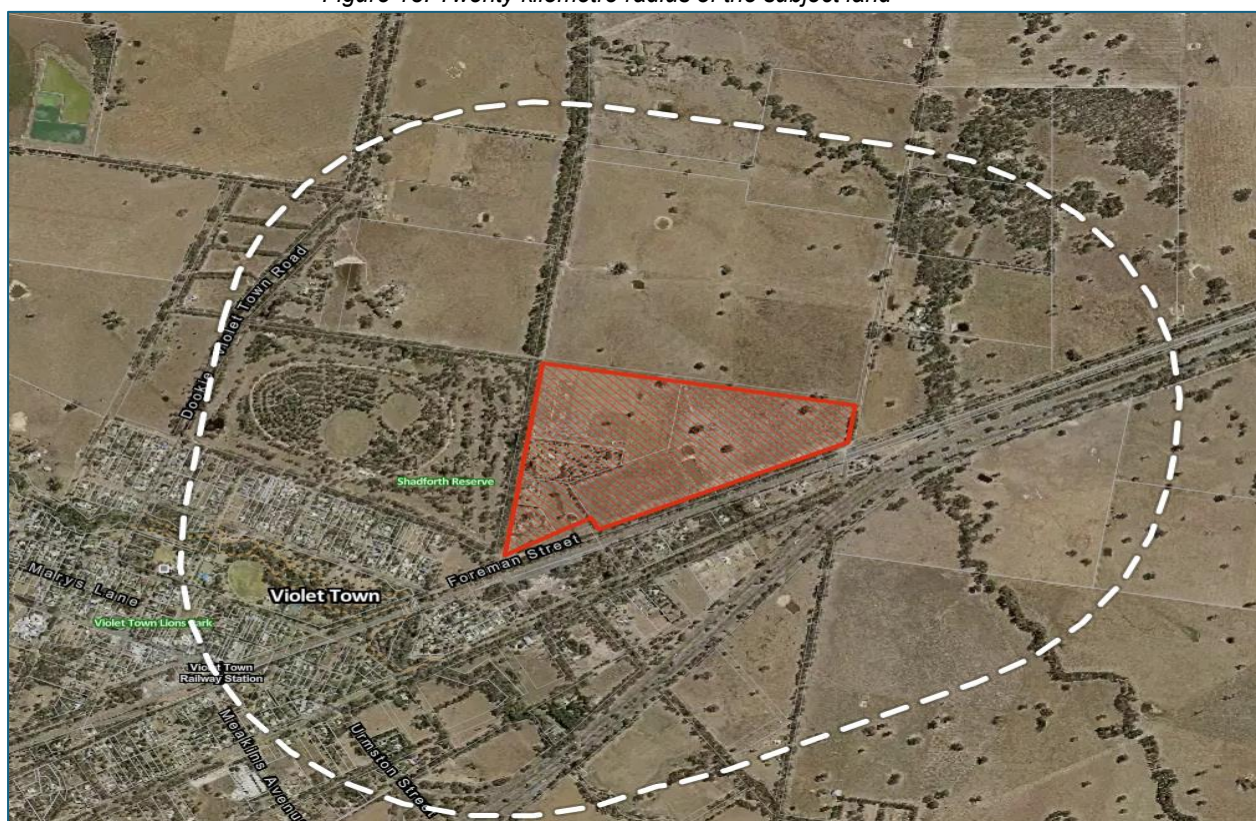


Figure 14: One kilometre radius of the subject land

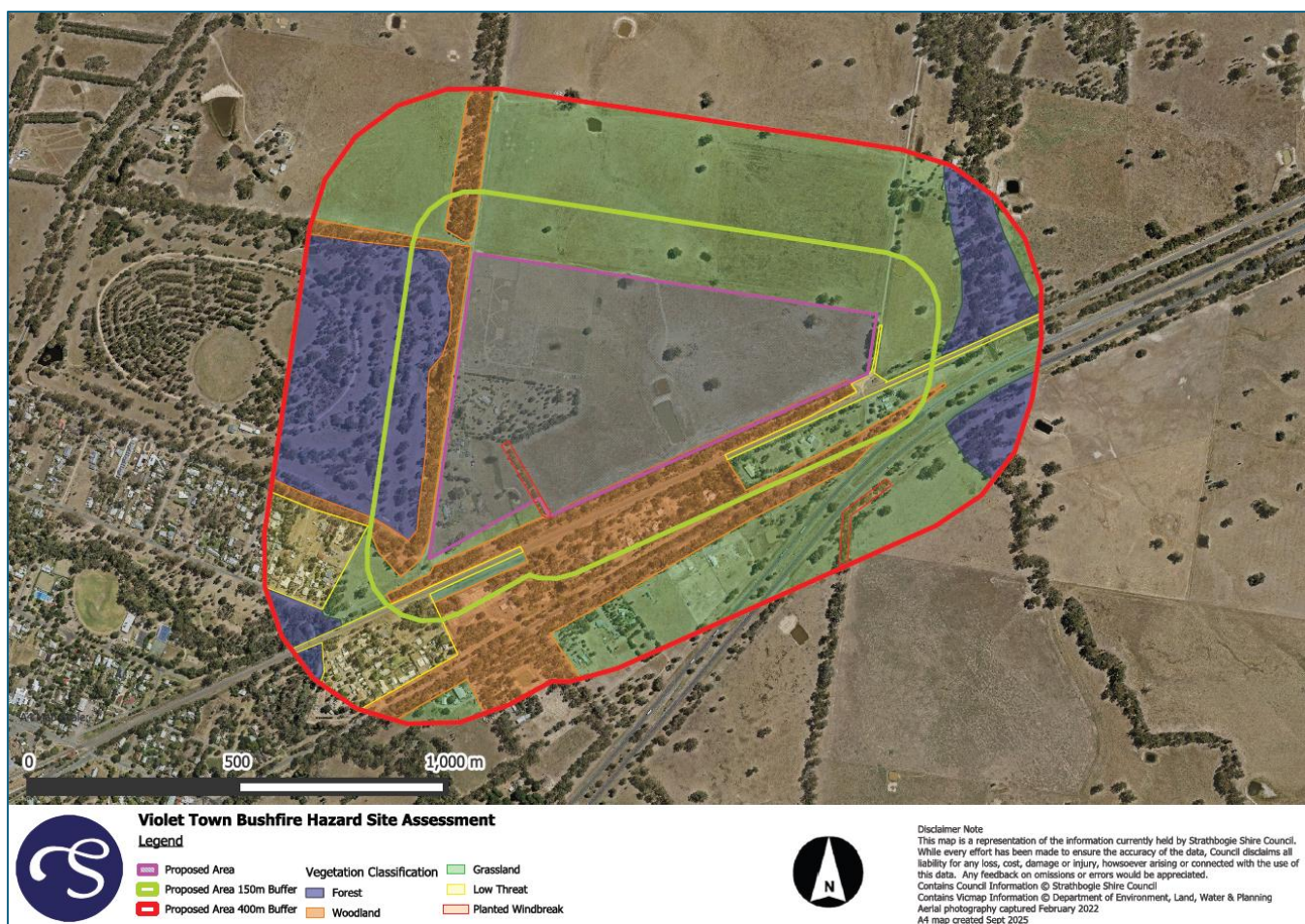


Figure 15: Four hundred metre radius of the subject land



Figure 16: Subject land

Bushfire Hazard assessment

During the site visit undertaken for Violet Town each direction was reviewed to determine the slope, vegetation type and classifiable vegetation:

- **North** – is directed away from the Violet Town township. The land is largely flat, with the exception of a small depression that leads further north into One Mile Creek. This section of assessment area has been considered as grassland. The section of Hoskin Lane continuing north of the assessment area contains road reserve vegetation also partially present on the private property on the western side of the road. The vegetation has been assessed as woodland.
- **East** – is the intersection of One Mile Creek and the Hume Highway. The Hume Highway contains vegetation along each side as well as within the north and south bound lane divider. This area is largely flat. Aside from waterway corridors and a small area north-east, the majority of land is open farmland and therefore considered as grassland. There is an isolated patch of vegetation in the southern corner of the Rampage Road reserve that has been assessed as being low threat.
- **South** – is towards the Violet Town township. directly south is Foreman Street and the railway line. Foreman Street road reserve has been assessed as woodland. Further south are Township Zoned properties containing scattered canopy trees with little understorey, assessed as woodland.
- **West** – Hoskin Lane makes up the western boundary of the subject land. West of the assessment area is flat. The road reserve has been assessed as being woodland and further west is Shadforth Reserve. The reserve contains several different vegetation classifications including two ovals, a golf course and a mixture of planted and non-planted canopy vegetation and shrubs. On a site inspection it was observed that understorey was pretty well managed, although shrubs are present further into the reserve. Shadforth Reserve has been considered as forest classification.

	North	East	South	West
Slope under the classified vegetation	Upslope/0°	Upslope/0°	Upslope/0°	Upslope/0°
Vegetation class	Grassland	Grassland	Woodland	Forest
BAL-12.5 defensible space setback (metres)	19	19	33	48
Is the setback met offsite?	No	Yes	No	No

Landscape typology

DELWP's 2017 publication 'Planning Permit Applications Bushfire Management Overlay: technical guide' provides guidance on determining broader landscape types for assessment areas, rated on a sliding scale from one being the lowest risk to four being the highest risk.

The study area lies within a broader Landscape Type three. Beyond 150 metres from the assessment area is largely made up of the following observed features:

- Honeysuckle Creek containing significant riparian vegetation, including canopy trees and understorey. Areas assessed as forest.
- Farmland surrounding Violet Town.
- Violet Town township to the south.
- South towards Boho is a mixture of plantations and state forest.
- North-east, west and south-west transport links.

Past bushfire and planned burns

The NatureKit software provided by DEECA shows past planned burned activity has been concentrated in the Hoskin Lane and the Dookie-Violet Town Road reserves. The section of Hoskin Lane bordering the assessment site is the extent of where the planned burns were undertaken. The identified planned burns occurred in 2022 and 2024. Significant planned burns occurred further east in Mount Samaria State Park.

Past bushfire activity directly around Violet Town is concentrated to the south-east of the township, with the most significant being in Boho in 2013. It is to be noted that the NatureKit software goes back only to the 1970's.

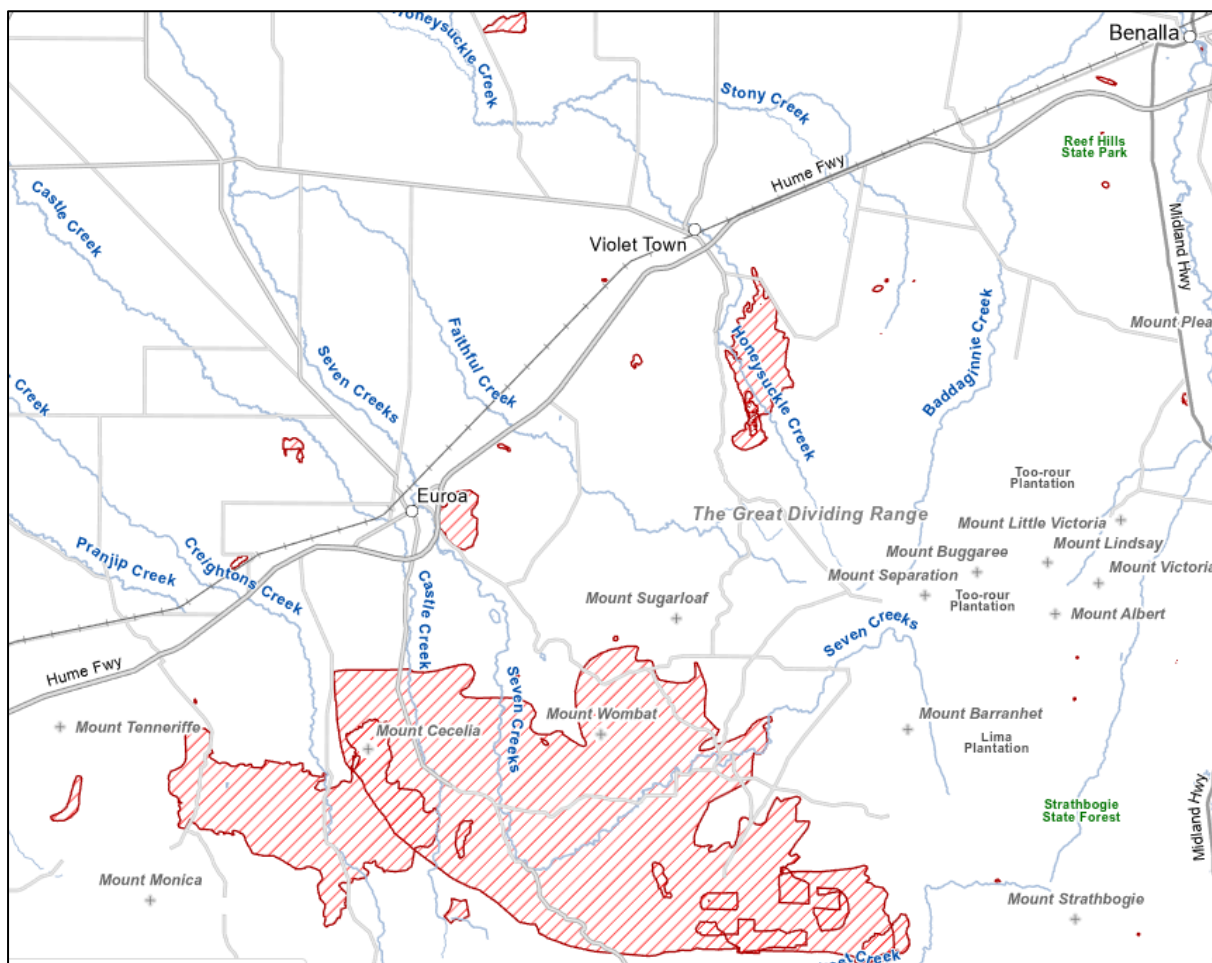


Figure 17: Past fire history (red hatched) around Violet Town, NatureKit software.

Settlement planning

Plan to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities and prioritise protection of human life by:

Policy	Response
Directing population growth and development to low risk locations, being those locations assessed as having a radiant heat flux of less than 12.5 kilowatts/square metre under AS 3959-2009 <i>Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas</i> (Standards Australia, 2009).	The municipal wide assessment carried out earlier in this report has narrowed down lower risk areas to which it is recommended that Rural Living Zone be directed as part of the Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy. Violet Town is one such area that has been identified as lower risk in the context of the municipality. The area chosen is close to the centre of the Violet Town township and close to the neighbourhood safe place. The western side of the township would have been the preferred location to identify for Rural Living Zone. However, due to the significant flood impacts identified this direction is now not considered to be appropriate.
Ensuring the availability of, and safe access to, areas assessed as a BAL-LOW rating under AS 3959-2009 <i>Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas</i> (Standards Australia, 2009) where human life can be better protected from the effects of bushfire.	Access to BAL-LOW areas is back south to the Violet Town township. This includes the recreation reserve which is the towns neighbourhood safe place and is within 650 metres of the site for review.
Ensuring the bushfire risk to existing and future residents, property and community infrastructure will not increase as a result of future land use and development.	The proposed Rural Living Zone area will help to eliminate the existing grassland threat on the northern side of Violet Town. The assessment area is adjoining Shadforth Reserve. Further development around the reserve will allow for better protection and surveillance of threats from the north to the township and the reserve.
Achieving no net increase in risk to existing and future residents, property and community infrastructure, through the implementation of bushfire protection measures and where possible reducing bushfire risk overall.	The proposed direction of development for Violet Town, seeks to increase the level of protection afforded to the existing township. and therefore, reduce the current risk from the north. Supporting growth in this area with strict design mechanisms including perimeter roads will provide Violet Town with an increased level of protection.
Assessing and addressing the bushfire hazard posed to the settlement and the likely bushfire behaviour it will produce at a landscape, settlement, local, neighbourhood	Refer to previous assessment above on landscape, local and neighbourhood conditions.

and site scale, including the potential for neighbourhood-scale destruction.	
Assessing alternative low risk locations for settlement growth on a regional, municipal, settlement, local and neighbourhood basis.	Violet Town is not specified in any regional bushfire strategy. Earlier in this report a municipal wide assessment was undertaken to determine areas that are more appropriate to have growth directed to. One of which is Violet Town. The township was chosen due to the relatively lower risk and the north of town due to other non-bushfire related matters.
Not approving any strategic planning document, local planning policy, or planning scheme amendment that will result in the introduction or intensification of development in an area that has, or will on completion have, more than a BAL-12.5 rating under AS 3959-2009 <i>Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas</i> (Standards Australia, 2009).	This assessment demonstrates, that with the inclusion of certain mitigation measures in the final subdivision layout, rural living zone can be supplied that provides developable land that can comply with BAL-12.5 requirements. Mitigation measures include, but are not limited to, perimeter roads, wider road reserves, building exclusion areas, vegetation management requirement and water supply. Further on in this report are suggested policy changes that would likely accompany any planning scheme amendment that rezones either of the three assessment sites to Rural Living Zone.

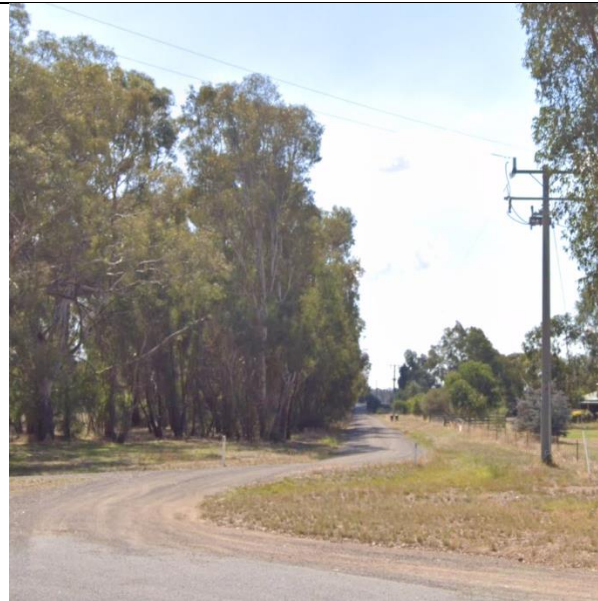
Conclusion

Overall, Violet Town has been identified as one of the few lower risk townships for which it is considered suitable to identify land for the further investigation of rezoning to Rural Living Zone within Strathbogie Shire. The east of the township has been chosen due to bushfire and non-bushfire considerations (such as flooding and impact on agricultural land), as well through the community panel process.

Mitigation measures undertaken with the assessment area would allow for the attainment of all future lots to designate a building envelope for construction standards to meet the requirements of BAL-12.5 as per AS3959.



Southern boundary of the assessment area – Foreman Street.



South-western corner of review site looking north along Hoskin Lane.



Example of vegetation along Honeysuckle Creek adjoining Honeysuckle Caravan Village.



Shadforth vegetation when viewed from Hoskin Lane.

9 Previous Rural Residential Land Use Strategy (2004) Identified Sites

The 2004 Rural Residential Strategy identified historically surveyed small lots within the Farming Zone. Since then, significant bushfire policy reform has reshaped how such properties are strategically assessed for dwellings.

The current Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy (RRLUS) directs Rural Living Zone (RLZ) opportunities to peri-urban edges of priority townships, where safer bushfire settings, access to services, and existing infrastructure can better support rural living. In contrast, scattered or remote hamlets, high-value agricultural areas, floodplains, and sensitive landscapes are intentionally excluded to avoid ad hoc expansion and to protect the established settlement hierarchy.

Area (2004 RRLUS)	Efficient Settlement Patterns	Protection of Agricultural Land	Environmental Impact	Access to Services	Settlement Hierarchy	Bushfire Risk
Euroa (1)	Township edges preferred; scattered pockets no longer supported	Some risk of fragmentation	Limited issues if outside sensitive areas	Good access in Euroa only	Supported only on edge	Moderate risk; safer near township
Gooram (2)	Remote, scattered	Within farming areas	Sensitive landscapes nearby	Poor access	Not a growth township	High bushfire risk
Strathbogie (3)	Remote, isolated	Adjacent farmland	Forested, high-value landscape	Limited services	Not priority township	Extreme bushfire risk
Violet Town (4)	Edges may be suitable; scattered allotments not supported	Some farming conflict	Low-moderate impact	Township services available	Secondary township only	Lower risk on edges

PROTECTED

Arcadia – Two Chain Rd (5)	Scattered rural	Productive land	Floodplain/sensitive	Limited services	Not identified as growth area	Moderate bushfire
McKindleys Rd (6)	Fragmented	High-value agriculture	Sensitive rural landscape	Limited services	Not priority township	Elevated bushfire
Goulburn Weir (7)	Scattered, ad hoc	Farming nearby	Waterway/sensitive environment	Limited access	Not supported	High bushfire/environmental constraints
Nagambie North (8)	Scattered outside growth boundary	Productive farmland	Environmental corridors	Good township access if close	Only supported near UGS edge	Moderate bushfire
Kirwans Bridge (9)	Scattered	Farming land conflict	Floodplain/riverine sensitivity	Poor services	Not growth township	Flood + bushfire hazard
Allowah Dr, Whroo (10)	Remote	Limited farming	Environmental/forest setting	No services	Not supported	High bushfire
Whroovale Ct, Whroo (11)	Remote	Limited farming	Environmental/forest setting	No services	Not supported	High bushfire
Gold Diggers Ct, Bailieston East (12)	Scattered, isolated	Adjacent farmland	Sensitive landscape	No services	Not supported	High bushfire
Graytown (13)	Very isolated	Little productive land	High environmental significance	No services	Not a township	Extreme bushfire
Costerfield (14)	Small hamlet	Surrounding farmland	Sensitive landscapes	Very limited	Not in hierarchy	High bushfire
Tabilk (15)	Scattered	Productive agriculture	Sensitive waterway	Limited	Not supported	Bushfire/flood
Mangalore (16)	Small settlement, fragmented	High-value farmland	Rural buffer values	Very limited	Not priority	Bushfire hazard
Avenel (17)	Edges supported,	Farming conflict	Sensitive areas near creeks	Township access	Growth township (UGS)	Safer on township edge

PROTECTED

	scattered outside not					
Old Longwood & Gap Rd (18)	Scattered	Farming land	Sensitive rural bush setting	Limited	Not priority	High bushfire
Ruffy (19)	Remote hamlet	Farming surrounds	High landscape values	Poor access	Not supported	Extreme bushfire
Longwood (20)	Small settlement	Farming conflict	Landscape values	Very limited	Not priority	Elevated bushfire

10 Rural Living Zone Policy

The following draft policy has been identified as necessary for inclusion in any planning scheme amendment that proposes to introduce additional Rural Living Zoned land. The planning scheme changes are proposed through the introduction of local policy and the use of an overlay such as the Design and Development Overlay to provide controls for subdivisional layout. The policy identified below is intended to be introduced at the same time that the rezonings identified in this report are lodged as a planning scheme amendment.

Whilst the bushfire hazard assessment earlier in this report helps to assess risk of bushfire to the municipality, further planning scheme changes are required to complement the rezonings and ensure that residents of new RLZ land are adequately protected.

Local policy

- Discourage residential buildings and group accommodation.
- Avoid courts and cul-de-sacs in neighbourhood subdivision design.
- Ensure that the design of development does not result in any increase in bushfire risk to existing development.
- Design any subdivision to ensure that all lots can achieve informed and appropriate setbacks from bushfire hazard interfaces to ensure future development can achieve a radiant heat level of no greater than 12.5KW/m².
- Require informed and appropriate setbacks from bushfire hazard interfaces to ensure future development is exposed to radiant heat no greater than 12.5KW/m².

Overlay controls

Require the design of subdivisions to demonstrate and achieve:

- A maximum of BAL-12.5 for all dwellings or building envelopes in accordance with AS.3959-2018.
- The incorporation of strategic communal water supply (tank/s) or fire hydrants to support bushfire suppression activities.
- The provision of defensible space to ensure all dwellings can achieve a BAL 12.5 rating in accordance with AS.3959-2018 (if applicable).
- The requirement that emergency vehicle can achieve access to each lot and to water supply in accordance with the requirements of Clause 53.02.
- Require staged subdivision to implement a logical staging and maintenance plan that avoids leapfrogging to reduce the level of bushfire exposure to newly developed land from undeveloped stages.
- The design of any landscaping or vegetated areas to contain bushfire resilient species and consider any on-going management requirements.

11 Conclusion and Recommendations

Having completed the landscape scale bushfire assessments and localised bushfire assessments, including an analysis of the suitability of identifying land to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone, the following recommendations are made to inform the development of the Strathbogie Shire Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy:

- Further investigation should be undertaken to the viability of rezoning land in Euroa, Nagambie and Violet Town to Rural Living Zone.
- Further bushfire assessment will need to be undertaken prior to a planning scheme amendment to rezone any land to Rural Living Zone.
- Any future planning scheme amendment will require additional policy to be included to ensure that future lots created can achieve a BAL 12.5 rating.
- Support should be given to developing existing Rural Living Zoned land.