

**RMCG**

JULY 2025

# Strathbogie rural residential and land use strategy

Strathbogie Shire Council

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Corporation

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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.

# Introduction

Council is preparing a Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy to safeguard rural values important to the economy and liveability of Strathbogie Shire and provide for rural residential development in appropriate locations. Parallel with the Urban Growth Strategy (UGS), the two Strategies will guide land use planning decisions within the Strathbogie shire for the next 15 to 30 years. The strategies will work together in directing development across the municipality with the aim of maximising amenities for residential uses while not compromising the ongoing viability of agricultural, industrial and commercial businesses or future opportunities.

The Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy (Strategy) was created with contributions from the community, rural industries, key stakeholders, and government agencies. It:

- Defines a vision for rural areas, outlining desired land use and development outcomes.
- Establishes objectives and strategies for sustainable land use and growth.
- Details specific actions to bring the Strategy to life.
- Serves as a guiding framework for Council's future decision-making.

## STUDY AREA

The study area incorporates all privately owned rural land in Strathbogie, including land in the Farming Zone (FZ) and Rural Living Zone (RLZ) (Figure 1).

## STRUCTURE

The Strategy comprises:

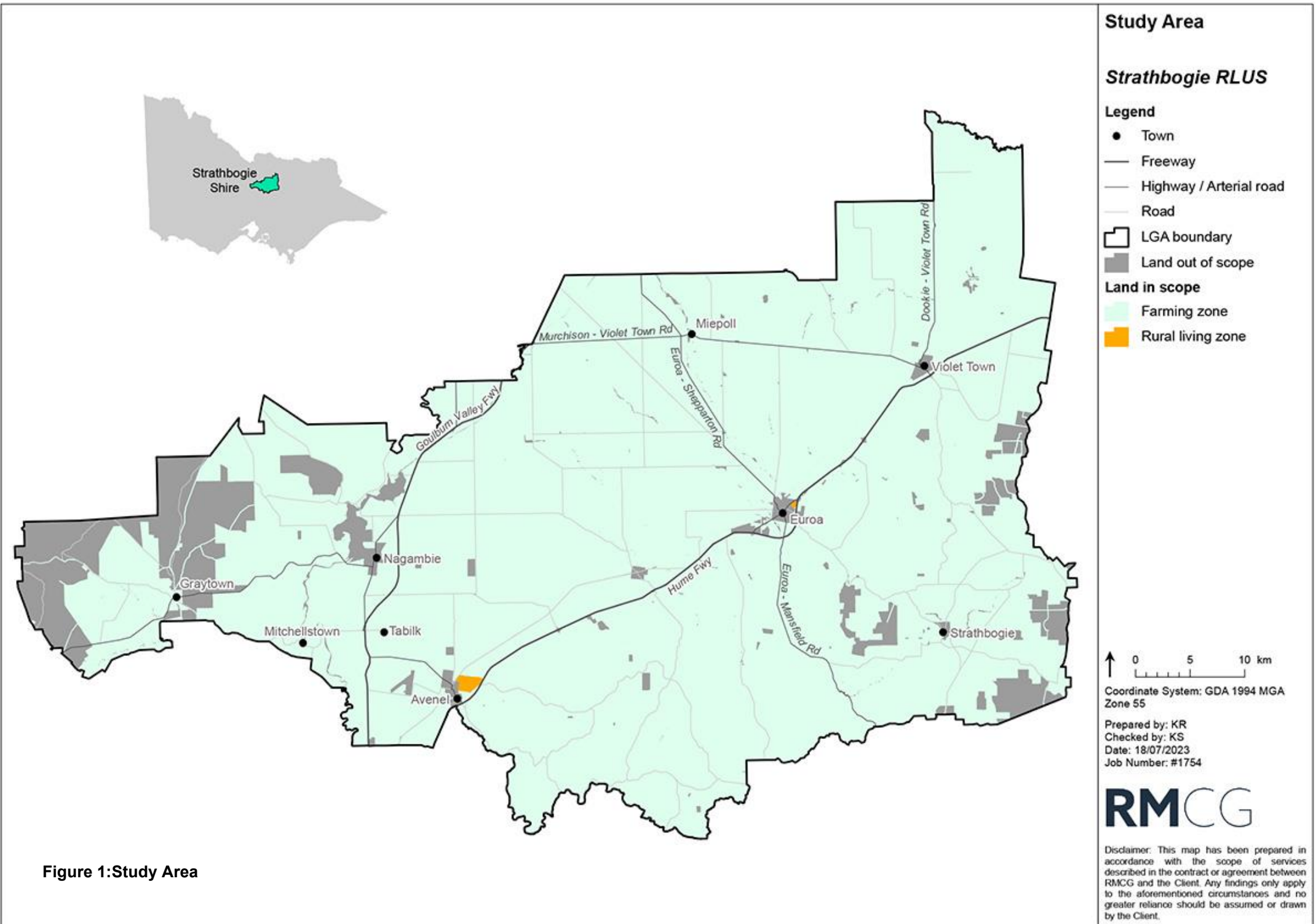
**Part 1: Context** – outlines the current strategic and policy context and the major drivers, issues and opportunities that inform the Strategy recommendations.

**Part 2: Strategic Framework** – comprises a vision, principles and rural framework plan and defines rural policy areas.

**Part 3: Strategic directions** – details planning policy recommendations, including objectives, strategies and implementation measures across the following themes:

- Building a strong economy
- Recognising and protecting natural values
- Preparing for a changing climate
- Providing housing for the future.

**Part 4: Implementation** – details recommended changes to the Strathbogie Planning Scheme to enable implementation of strategic directions.



## APPROACH

The Strategy responds to the findings of:

- Research and analysis of Strathbogie shire’s rural land use and development circumstances which are documented in the **Existing Conditions Report**.
- Community and stakeholder consultation which is documented in the **Engagement Report**.

This strategy is to be read in conjunction with the ‘Rural and Residential Land Use Strategy Existing Conditions Report’ and the ‘Rural and Residential Land Use Strategy Issues and Opportunities’ report prepared by RMCG.

The Strategy is one of a suite of land use planning documents currently being developed for Strathbogie Shire. As far as possible, the Strategy will align with the UGS, which is also being developed.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Following adoption, the policy recommendations endorsed through this Strategy will need to be incorporated into the Strathbogie Planning Scheme (SPS) through a formal amendment process. Details of the proposed changes can be found in the ‘Implementation’ section of each relevant part of the Strategy.



**Strathbogie Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy development and implementation process and timeline**

# Part 1: Context



# Strathbogie Shire

## OVERVIEW

Strathbogie Shire covers around 3,300 square kilometres and is located approximately 125 kilometres to the north of Melbourne CBD. It is a diverse geographical region, bordered to the east by the Strathbogie Ranges and to the west by the lakes district, which includes significant natural assets such as the Goulburn River and Lake Nagambie.

Strathbogie Shire is positioned toward the centre of the state and is proximate to the key regional centres of Shepparton and Wangaratta. These centres, as well as Melbourne, are accessible via major transport routes, including the Hume Freeway and Goulburn Valley Freeway and play an important role in the economy of Strathbogie Shire. For example, 34% of Strathbogie Shires working residents work outside the Shire. The role of the shire's towns is, in part, as dormitory towns for larger regional centres, including Shepparton, Seymour and Wangaratta where employment opportunities are concentrated.

The estimated resident population of Strathbogie Shire was 11,500 as of June 2022, with most residents living in Euroa, Nagambie, Violet Town and Avenel. There has been modest population growth over the last five years, with an increase of 971 residents since 2017<sup>1</sup>. Strathbogie shire's accessibility to Melbourne has facilitated population growth in the Shire, including city dwellers seeking a lifestyle change. This trend was evident during 2020 and 2021 when regional Victoria experienced a population growth of 15,700 people in contrast to a decline in Melbourne.

Leveraging the region's natural landscapes and locational context, the Strathbogie Shire economy, in terms of output and employment, is driven by three key sectors:

- Primary industries and trade (agriculture, manufacturing and transport)
- Population growth (property construction and real estate, retail trade, accommodation and food services)
- Knowledge and public sector industries (education and training, health care and social assistance, public administration and safety).

The Gross Regional Product of the Shire was an estimated \$583 million in 2021. Agriculture is the primary driver of the local economy, employing nearly 1,055 people in 2021<sup>1</sup>. The large tracts of farming land support cropping and livestock production, as well as localised areas of horticulture and horse breeding. Intensive agriculture includes the production of chicken meat and eggs.

The popularity of the region as an overnight and day-trip destination is increasing. The visitor economy is an important component of the local economy, contributing almost 4.3% of total output and employing around 5% of the local workforce<sup>9</sup>. The Shire's high-quality landscapes, natural environment, and proximity to Melbourne attract weekenders and tourists. Nature and water-based assets include the Heathcote-Graytown National Park, Lake Nagambie and the Goulburn River and Weir.

North of the Hume Highway, the landscape is dominated by extensive areas of farmland and remnant native vegetation on private land along road reserves and watercourses, interspersed with scattered pockets of open grassland in a relatively flat landscape. South of the Hume Highway, the topography is steeper

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<sup>1</sup> <https://app.remplan.com.au/strathbogie/economy/summary?state=IWPoFNEb7UjWoAac6qVkzETAhPhpy2>

and undulating, with scattered and fragmented woodlands as part of the Strathbogie Ranges.

The Taungurung people of the Eastern Kulin Nation and the Yorta Yorta Nation are the Traditional Owners of the land and waters of Strathbogie Shire which is rich in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage places.

## PLANNING CONTROLS

This section of the report documents the current policy, zone and overlay controls that apply to rural land throughout Strathbogie Shire, as well as the findings and recommendations arising from a review of the performance of the planning controls.

## MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY

Strathbogie shire's Municipal Planning Statement (MPS) recognises that the shire is supported by an economic rural base of wool, grain, cattle production, and vineyards and identifies a number of specialist rural enterprises, including equine, poultry and cool climate horticulture. The agricultural industries are supported by the four major towns: Euroa, Nagambie, Avenel and Violet Town. The Shire's natural values include parks, forests, and waterways, and endangered species are recognised as important features of the area.

Land use and development directions within the MPS which have guided the development of the Strategy include:

### 02.03-1 Settlement

This clause sets policy objectives for planning residential settlements in Strathbogie. The clause identifies Strathbogie's principal towns as Euroa, Nagambie, Avenel and Violet Town.

Strategic directions for settlements include:

- Facilitate rural and low density residential zoned land in locations that won't negatively impact productive agricultural land.

- Preserve and protect small settlements from residential development.
- Encourage the expansion of small settlements with reliable water supply and sewerage.

### 02.03-2 Environmental values and biodiversity

Protecting Strathbogie's environment and biodiversity is guided by Council's strategic directions. Strategic directions include:

- Protect and enhance native vegetation, fauna and waterways, including riparian areas.
- Encourage connectivity between vegetation corridors including roadsides and waterways.
- Protect medium to high-quality roadside vegetation.

### 02.03-3 Environmental Risk

In relation to environmental risk, Council recognises the increasing threat of extreme weather events, including, flood, bushfire and drought. Strathbogie ranges is recognised as an area particularly at threat from bushfires.

Council's strategic directions for environmental risks are to:

- Support use and development that adapts to the impacts of climate change.
- Encourage development to be responsive to potential environmental risks.
- Protect floodplains and their role in conveying and storing floodwater, to preserve and minimise the deterioration of environmental values.
- Discourage development in areas of bushfire risk.

### 02.03-4 Natural Resource Management

#### Agriculture

Land use conflicts between lifestyle properties and rural and industrial is recognised as an issue in Strathbogie. The Shire's predominant agricultural

activities are livestock grazing and broadacre with increases in intensive animal husbandry, horticulture and the equine industry which have emerge due to the Shire's proximity to Melbourne.

Council's strategic directions for agriculture are to:

- Retain areas of high-quality rural land for farming and agricultural purposes.
- Encourage consolidation of small rural lots within the Farming Zone.
- Encourage emerging rural enterprises, such as intensive animal husbandry, horticulture and the equine industry.
- Prioritise productive farming development over residential development.
- Encourage value adding rural industries.
- Protect, maintain and grow environmentally sustainable intensive agriculture.
- To promote the clustering of co-dependant uses.

### Water

The Strathbogie Shire has significant water assets including Goulburn River, Lake Nagambie, Seven Creeks and Hughes Creek. The many spring fed waterways start in the Strathbogie Ranges and subsequently flow down into the main creeks and rivers eventually running from the shire into the neighbouring shires and forming a part of the Murray Darling Basin.

Council's strategic direction for water is to:

- Protect proclaimed water supply catchments (and water quality) from development that would compromise water catchments.

### **02.03-6 Housing**

This clause acknowledges that the Shire has experienced increasing demand for low density residential and rural living development, particularly in Strathbogie Ranges, Avenel and Nagambie and recognises the conflicts of urban expansion into agricultural areas.

Council's strategic directions for housing are to:

- 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.

## **PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) outlines Victorian State Government strategy and policy directions for land use planning. Planning for Strathbogie shire's rural areas needs to be consistent with the relevant state, regional and local policy objectives, which the following section briefly outlines:

### **Clause 11 – Settlement**

Identifies planning's role in settlement planning as anticipating and responding to the needs of existing and future communities through the provision of zoned and serviced land for housing. Whilst this is achieved in the Urban Growth Strategy, provision can be made for the identification of additional Rural Living Zoned land where appropriate.

**Clause 11.01-1S Settlement** provides key strategies to minimise exposure to natural hazards and ensuring land that may be required for future urban expansion is not compromised and balancing strategic objectives to achieve improved land use and development outcomes at a regional, catchment and local level.

The regional level settlement policy further reinforces the state policy requirement to direct growth to existing settlements. The Nagambie side of Strathbogie Shire is identified as strategic agricultural land in the Hume Regional growth Plan (2014).

Local level planning policy identifies further investigation areas for Rural Living Zone for Avenel, Euroa, Longwood, Nagambie, Strathbogie and Violet Town. The RRLUS will further review these areas identified for further

investigation and whether they are still appropriate for rural residential land uses.

### **Clause 12 – Environmental and landscape values**

Identifies planning's role to protect, restore and enhance the health of ecological systems and the biodiversity they support.

**Clause 12.01 Biodiversity** provides the key objective of protecting and enhancing Victoria's biodiversity. This is reinforced by strategies that support siting and design measures, identification and protection of important areas of biodiversity and the protection and re-establishment of links between important areas of biodiversity.

**Clause 12.03 Water bodies and wetlands** has the key objective of protecting and enhancing waterway systems including river and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs. Strategies identified to achieve this objective include the consideration of the siting and designing of development, subdivision and use, protection and promotion of waterways and their enhancement through indigenous revegetation, riparian plantings and focusing on waterway health. Strathbogie Shire has two designated special water supply catchment areas.

**Clause 12.05 Significant environments and landscapes** provides an objective to protect, conserve and enhance significant and sensitive areas. Strathbogie Shire contains several significant landscapes that require further protection.

### **Clause 13 – Environmental Risks and Amenity**

Identifies hazards and risks that land use planning must address when assessing development.

**Clause 13.01 Climate change impacts** has the objective to minimise impacts of natural hazards and adapt to the impacts of climate change through risk-based planning when assessing rezoning. Strategies identified to achieve this include the direction of population growth to low risk locations

and for strategic land use planning decisions to be made using best available data and climate change science.

**Clause 13.02 Bushfire** has the objective to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfire through risk-based planning that prioritises the protection of human life. Risk-based planning is a key concept in planning for settlements, where growth is to be directed to low risk locations through the identification of bushfire hazards and having strong strategies in place to discourage inappropriate growth. Any future growth identified in the RRLUS is undertaken with consultation with the relevant fire authority and the preparation of appropriate shire wide and/or site specific bushfire and landscape assessments/strategies. The RRLUS identifies areas of the municipality where the Rural Living Zone could be identified, subject additional planning controls and policy.

**Clause 13.03 Floodplains** provides the objective of assisting with the protection of life, property and community infrastructure from flood hazard. Strathbogie Shire's townships are all impacted to some degree by way of overland or riverine flooding. In planning for the future, it is imperative to do so without further subjecting residents to the threat of flood.

The RRLUS does this by reiterating the importance of the need to introduce updated flood controls for Euroa, Nagambie and Violet Town and a new flood study for Avenel. In addition, land identified for further Rural Living Zone investigation will require consultation with the relevant floodplain manager to ensure that land identified rural residential considers flood risk.

**Clause 13.04 Soil degradation** has the sole objective of ensuring that contaminated and potentially contaminated land is used and developed safely. Strategies to achieve this objective include ensuring that potentially contaminated land is appropriately investigated, facilitating remediation of contaminated land to ensure that it is suitable for future development.

## **Clause 14 - Natural resource management**

Identifies the need for planning to assist in the conservation and appropriate use of natural resources and ensuring that agricultural land is managed appropriately and given appropriate protection within the planning system to limit encroachment.

Clause 14.01 Agriculture has the overall strategy of protecting the state's agricultural base by preserving productive farmland. State policy has the direction of limiting new housing development in rural areas by:

- Directing housing growth into existing settlements.
- Discouraging development of isolated small lots in the rural zones from use for dwellings or other incompatible uses.
- Encouraging consolidation of existing isolated small lots in rural zones.

The policy seeks to avoid the permanent removal of productive farmland from the state's agricultural base without appropriate considerations.

At a regional level, the Hume Regional Growth Plan 2014 identifies the western side of the municipality as having strategic agricultural land for the northeast area that the plan covers.

**Clause 14.02 Water** has the objective for planning to assist in the protection and restoration of catchments, waterways, estuaries, bays, water bodies, groundwater, and the marine environment. Strategies to do this include coordinating planning decisions with catchment management authorities to ensure that impacts on entire catchments are considered, retention of vegetated buffer zones, and floodplains are preserved. Strathbogie Shire has two areas that are designated as special water supply catchments.

## **Clause 15 – Built environment**

Identifies that planning has a number of key roles in the delivery of built design and heritage conservation.

**Clause 15.01 Built environment** has the objective to achieve siting and building design that positively contributes to the local context, enhance the public realm and support environmentally sustainable development. It does this with strategies identifying the need to minimise impacts on the natural environment and public realm.

Acts to ensure that development respects rural character through considerations of siting, scale and appearance of buildings and use of materials that minimise visual impact on the landscape.

**Clause 15.03-1S Heritage conservation** has the objective to ensure the protection and conservation of places of heritage significance and man made resources. This is achieved through strategies of protecting heritage sites and encouraging development that respects identified heritage values.

**Clause 15.03-2S Aboriginal cultural heritage** identifies strategies to provide for the protection and conservation of pre-contact and post-contact Aboriginal cultural heritage places. Additionally, strategies identify the need to ensure that permit approvals align with permissions under separate legislation.

## **Clause 16 Housing**

Identifies that planning should provide for diverse and affordable housing.

**Clause 16.01 Residential development** has the objective of facilitating well located, integrated, diverse housing that is suitable for rural residential and residential development. This is achieved by strategies that aim to manage development in rural areas to protect productive agricultural land. Demonstrate need/benefit to the land for rural residential development, avoid rezonings where it will adversely impact natural resources.

Strategy also seeks to ensure that land is not rezoned to rural residential unless it is located close to existing towns and that can be supplied with electricity, water and good quality road access.

## **Clause 17 Economic development**

Identifies that planning is to provide for a strong and innovative economy through providing land to accommodate economic development.

**Clause 17.01 Employment** has the objective to strengthen and diversify the economy. Strategies identified to achieve this are to protect and strengthen employment areas to grow and diversify.

Local and regional policy seek to encourage new and developing forms of industry, agriculture, tourism and alternative energy production.

**Clause 17.04 Tourism** has the objective to encourage tourism development to maximise economic, social and cultural benefits. It provides strategies to achieve this such as promotion of tourism facilities, encouraging investment that supports tourism growth, and ensuring facilities are well designed and sited.

## ZONES

A planning scheme identifies zones to designate land for a specific purpose and requirements for land use, development and building. Each zone guides how land can be used, what types of development are permitted, and what must be considered when making decisions about planning permits. Figure 2 shows how the rural zones are applied in Strathbogie shire.

The Farming Zone (FZ) aims to encourage the retention of productive agricultural land and support agricultural activities. The Farming Zone (FZ) currently applies to most rural land in the Shire, with a total area of 295,272 ha. The schedule to Farming Zone (FZ) currently specifies three minimum lot sizes for subdivision and for the use of land for a dwelling being 40 ha, 80 ha or 100 ha, according to Figure 2.

The Rural Living Zone (RLZ) provides for residential use in a rural setting and is designed to offer allotments that are large enough to accommodate a dwelling and an agricultural use. The agricultural use is likely to be carried out for reasons other than the need to provide a significant source of household income. There is approximately 261.4 ha of land zoned Rural Living Zone (RLZ) in the Shire. This land is located around Avenel and Euroa (Figure 1). The state-

mandated normal minimum area for subdivisions is 2 ha. The minimum area of a lot where a dwelling can be constructed without a permit is 2 ha. Councils can alter these minimums. Strathbogie Shire has two Rural Living Zone pieces of land.

The two Rural Living Zone (RLZ) pieces of land in Avenel and Euroa that have lot sizes specified in approved plans are:

- 7 titles at Avenel Longwood Rd, Avenel, which is subject to Development Plan Overlay Schedule 2
- Lot TP815794, Racecourse Rd, Euroa. Any future development on this site must be in accordance with a proposed plan of subdivision by Reed Consulting, plan number 21683/PP.

The Rural Activity Zone (RAZ) and the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) have not been applied to land in Strathbogie Shire.

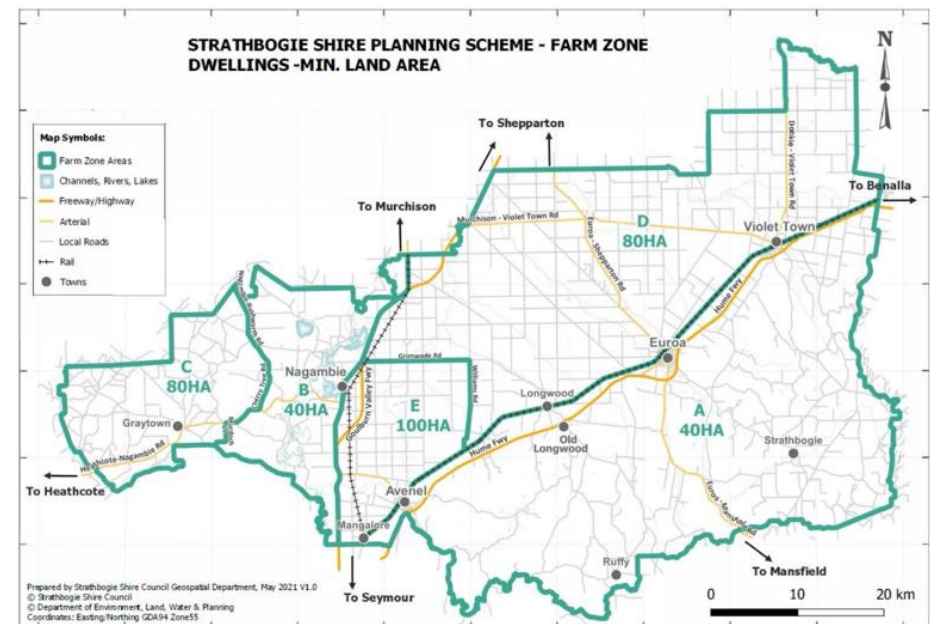


Figure 2: Farm zone areas

## OVERLAYS

Overlays controls support the underlying zoning of the land and provide additional levels of controls primarily around built form and site responses to particular characteristics of the land. An Overlay may trigger assessment of a permit application where this may not be required through the zoning of the land. The 2023 Planning Scheme Review<sup>2</sup> recommended that overlays applied in Strathbogie shire should be updated to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Direction on form and content. In particular, it was recommended to:

- Introduce additional exemptions to reduce triggers for permits associated with:
  - Clause 42.01 Environmental Significance Overlay (all schedules)
  - Clause 44.01 Erosion Management Overlay.
- Update policy with respect to applying overlays for buffers around wastewater treatment plants and identifying areas of potable water.
- Review of Development Plan Overlays.

Table 1 summarises the overlays that apply to land within rural areas of the shire as shown in Figure 2.

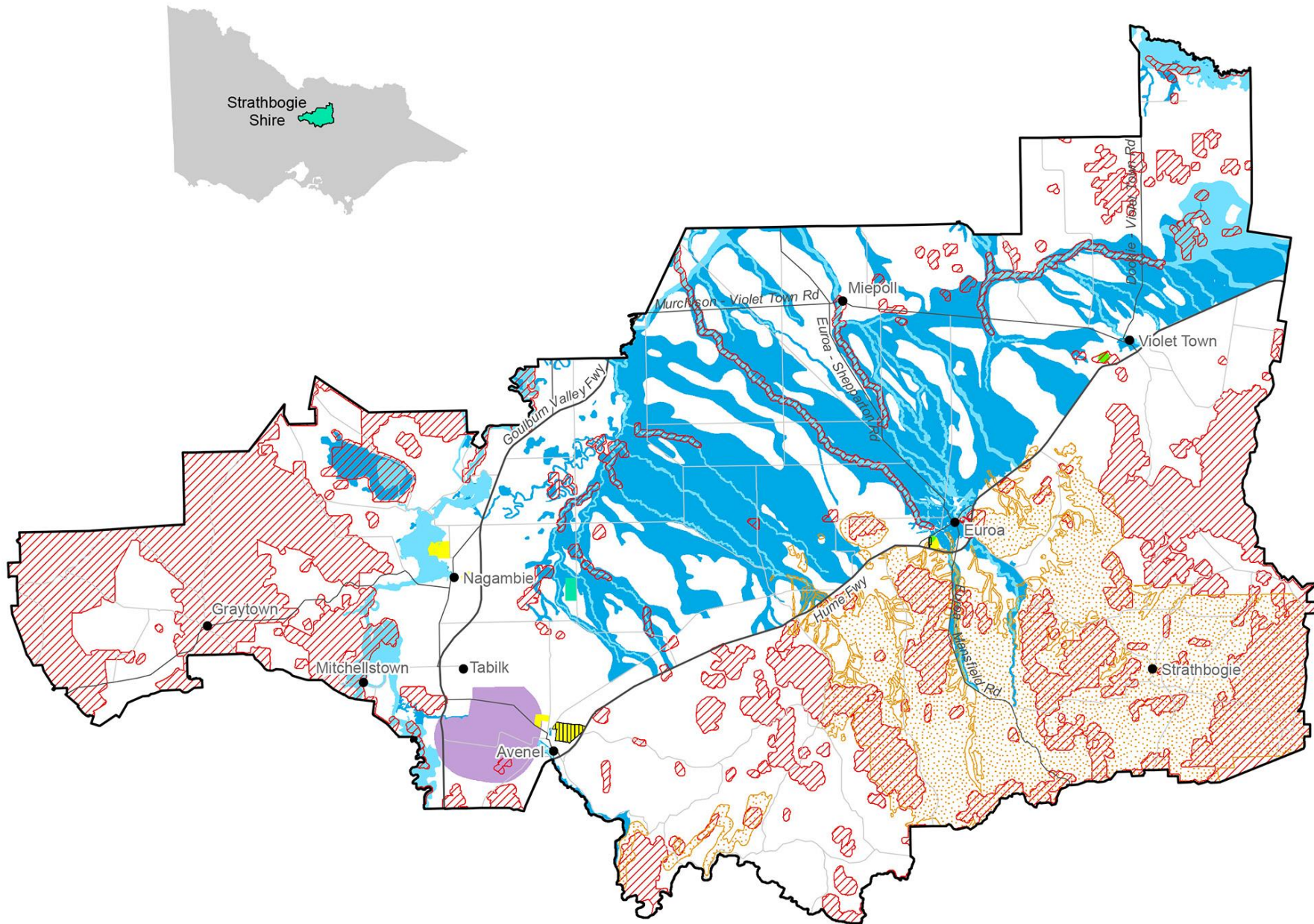
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<sup>2</sup> Strathbogie Planning Scheme Review (2023) SD Planning



**Table 1: Overlays that apply to rural areas of Strathbogie Shire**

OVERLAY	PURPOSE
<b>Environmental Significance Overlay</b>	
Schedule 1 – Buffer area for rural activities	Discourage development of dwellings that may conflict with rural industrial activities. Encourage the development of rural industrial activities that require large buffer distances.
Schedule 2 – Euroa Wastewater Management Facility buffer area	Discourage development of dwellings that may be impacted by odour emission.
<b>Vegetation Protection Overlay</b>	
Schedule 1 – Lovers Hill, Avenel	Protect remnant native vegetation in the Lovers Hill area of Avenel. Native vegetation includes two grass threatened communities that area listed under the EPBC Act.
Schedule 2 – Significant remnant Indigenous vegetation	Conserve and ensure development minimise the removal of indigenous vegetation. Maintain and enhance a linear network of vibrant indigenous vegetation connecting remnant patches of indigenous vegetation.
<b>Development Plans</b>	
Schedule 2 – Lovers Hill, Avenel	A development plan must be prepared to guide future subdivision of land within the RLZ.
Schedule 4 – Eastern Gateway, Euroa	Before any new use, development or subdivision commences a development plan must be prepared. Part of this area is in the FZ.
<b>Specific Control Overlay</b>	
Schedule 2 – Costa Exchange Mushroom Farm and Composting Facility, Nagambie 2012 Incorporated document	Specifies the exemptions from certain controls on the site of the Costa Exchange Mushroom Farm and Composting Facility.
<b>Land Management Overlays</b>	
Erosion Management Overlay	No objectives specified.
Floodway Overlay	Identifies high hazard areas with greatest frisk and frequency of being affected by flooding and minimise risk to development from flooding.
Land Subject to Inundation Overlay	Identifies areas affected by the 1 in 100-year flood and minimise risk to development.
Bushfire Management Overlay	Identifies areas of the highest level of bushfire threat which warrant bushfire protection measures to be implemented to reduce the risk of bushfire to people, property and buildings.



## Planning Overlays

### Strathbogie RLUS

#### Legend

- Town
- Freeway
- Highway / Arterial
- Road
- LGA boundary

#### Planning Overlays

- Bushfire management
- Erosion management
- Vegetation protection
- Floodway
- Land subject to inundation
- Environmental significance
- Airport environs
- Development plan
- Specific controls: schedule 2

0 5 10 km

Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Prepared by: KR  
 Checked by: KS  
 Date: 8/11/2023  
 Job Number: #1754

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Disclaimer: This map has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services described in the contract or agreement between RMCG and the Client. Any findings only apply to the aforementioned circumstances and no greater reliance should be assumed or drawn by the Client.

Figure 3: Overlays that apply to Strathbogie Shire

# Major Drivers

This section highlights the key issues and opportunities influencing the use and development of Strathbogie shire's rural land based on background research and community consultation. The Strategy aims to address these factors of change, offering both planning recommendations and suggestions for other actions that Council can take.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

State and local government strategies that influence land use and development in the shire's rural areas include:

- Strathbogie Shire Council Plan 2025-2029
- Sustainable Strathbogie 2030 Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027
- Hume Regional Growth Plan 2014.

Economic development, a focus on sustainability, and supporting population growth are central themes to these strategies. The Strategy should align with and support these objectives, including:

- Stimulating investment across the Shire and promoting efficient use of land to foster local economic growth.
- Mitigating and adapting to a changing climate through strategy development, revised mapping and urban design, community knowledge-sharing, and incentives to manage climate risk in agriculture.
- Establishing Strathbogie Shire as a desirable and high-value visitor destination that drives year-round visitation and generates economic benefits for the region.
- Aligning townships and economic development opportunities to maximise efficient use of infrastructure and population growth potential.

## PRINCIPLES

Land use planning principles relevant to rural Strathbogie shire include:

- Align with state and regional policies and strategies.
- Ensure rural land use planning balances economic growth and protection of environmental, landscape and cultural heritage values.
- Support rural industries in adapting to changing climate and economic drivers and adopting new technology.
- Protect life and property from natural hazards, including flood and bushfire.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND DIRECTIONS

Land use planning directions relevant to rural Strathbogie shire include:

### Agriculture

- Protect high-quality agricultural land.
- Consider the impacts of climate change and support adaptation to climate change.
- Discourage dwellings not required for agriculture or rural uses that are not compatible with rural industries.
- Reinforce urban settlement boundaries.

### Rural tourism

- Support rural tourism that leverages the region's iconic attractions.

### Environment and landscape

- Protect waterways and other significant environmental assets from rural land use change and development.
- Ensure sensitive landscape are protected and new development does not detract from their natural quality.
- Ensure growth and development is directed to locations with a low risk of natural hazards and will not increase the risk of natural hazards.

### **Rural industries**

- Support rural industries that diversify the rural economy, including timber, tourism and renewable industries that leverage existing infrastructure and do not compromise the region’s agricultural, environmental and cultural heritage values.
- Support for rural industries should leverage existing infrastructure and not compromise the region’s agricultural, environmental and cultural heritage values.

## **PLANNING SCHEME PERFORMANCE**

The 2023 review of the Strathbogie Planning Scheme (SPS) identified that, overall, the SPS is operating effectively with a clear settlement narrative. The review also identified strategic gaps in the planning scheme including the need to better understand and identify the strategic direction for use of rural land within Strathbogie Shire.

Council has previously undertaken reviews of rural land. In 2004, a Rural Residential Strategy, was developed by Council which identified locations for rural residential development, subject to further detailed assessment and implementation measures in accordance with policy and Ministerial Directions. The Strategy was adopted by Council, and since then only one rezoning to rural living zone has occurred.

Rural policy in Strathbogie is currently underpinned by the Strathbogie Sustainable Land Use Strategy (2011). The overarching objectives of the Strategy: protection of agricultural land and environmental values and support for rural industries; remains relevant today, as are the issues the Strategy sought to address: particularly demand for rural lifestyle and residential development of rural land. However, there has been significant change in the rural policy framework in the last 15 years, including, but not limited to:

- New form and content of the VPP (2018)
- Reform of land use definitions for animal industries (2017)
- Reform of bushfire planning provisions (2017)
- Plan for Victoria (2025)
- Hume Regional Growth Plan (2014)
- Reform of the suite of rural zones (2013).

Added to this is the changing nature of agriculture, emerging opportunities in rural tourism and the impacts of climate change.

Council is concurrently preparing the UGS which will establish township boundaries to provide for urban residential growth. It is timely therefore for Council to review its rural strategy and test whether the current suite of planning tools are fit-for-purpose and ensure alignment with the UGS. The need for a rural and rural residential strategy was a key recommendations of the 2023 planning scheme review.

## **POPULATION GROWTH**

Through the Covid-19 pandemic, the Strathbogie Shire Council received a significant increase in planning permit applications for dwellings on small lots in the FZ resulting in development that is inconsistent with the objectives of supporting agriculture and protecting environmental and landscape values, and inefficient development of land identified for rural residential development.

The 2023 review of the SPS highlighted the need to define and deliver on a strategic vision for rural land use and residential development so that Council's position on small lot development is clear, and rural areas are protected from inappropriate uses and development.

Planning policy should support long-term investment in agricultural businesses, ensuring that food and fibre production remains sustainable and that farm operations are protected from conflicts with amenity concerns. New residential development should be directed towards infill within existing townships and areas zoned for rural living.

Bushfire risk poses a significant threat, especially in and around the Strathbogie Ranges, where there is growing demand for rural living and tourism. Mitigation strategies for bushfire risk may sometimes conflict with efforts to protect ecological values. Therefore, planning for rural residential development will avoid high-risk areas and prioritize both human safety and the protection of ecological assets.

## AGRICULTURE

The Shire's location, accessibility and agricultural infrastructure are significant competitive advantages for food and fibre producers.

Strathbogie Shire, as part of the Hume region takes in the Goulburn Valley, one of the major food producing regions in the state. The shire's agricultural industry is a significant contributor to regional food production, particularly meat production. In 2021, it contributed 37% of the regions gross value of sheep and lamb and 8% of the gross value of beef cattle. Livestock are processed in the region as well as at abattoirs in Melbourne.

Land within the FZ is being used appropriately for mixed farming agriculture focused on livestock production and cropping, with smaller volumes of intensive poultry meat production and eggs, and horticultural production where there is access to water.

Key to maintaining mixed farming systems is availability of appropriately priced unencumbered land to enable farm businesses to increase scale of operations to offset declining terms of trade. As outlined in the Existing Conditions Report farm businesses in Strathbogie shire are increasing in business scale and holding size indicating a willingness and ability to invest in business growth and expansion. Analysis of property ownership within the FZ identifies that farms have been able to amalgamate lots to create farms of sufficient size to run viable mixed farming enterprises (as shown in Figure A-1 in Appendix 1).

Planning policy can foster flexibility and growth in the agricultural industry by:

- Clearly designating areas where commercial agriculture will be the primary land use and implementing policies to prevent land fragmentation.
- Ensuring parcel sizes are suitable for modern agricultural practices, free from unnecessary infrastructure, particularly residential developments.
- Maintaining a clear separation between commercial agriculture and sensitive land uses, such as urban and rural residential areas, to reduce offsite impacts and support efficient agricultural operations.
- Supporting on-farm infrastructure for vertical integration and value-adding, including facilities like cool stores, sorting sheds, and worker accommodation.

## LAND USE CONFLICT

The development of dwellings on small rural lots introduces residential uses into areas where farming is the main activity, and with the residential use, new amenities and service expectations. When not properly managed or located, the introduction of dwellings can bring land use conflicts and detrimentally impact both the nearby agricultural activity and the dwelling itself. Dispersed rural dwellings can also be an unnecessary burden on Council resources due to the increased cost of servicing them. This also inflates the value of rural land,

making it more difficult for agricultural activities to expand or remain<sup>3</sup>.

During the 2023 review of the SPS, consultation with community members identified ongoing conflict between residents and farmers in the FZ, the impact of motorbikes and cars on livestock, and the complaints by residents about farming practices<sup>2</sup>.

Analysis of building and planning permits (from 2015 to 2022) conducted for the Existing Conditions Report identified that on average, 20 new dwellings are constructed in the FZ each year with just over half issued to landholders who are not residents in Strathbogie shire. This suggests that many dwellings in the FZ are being constructed as weekenders or rural lifestyle purposes.

Dwellings in the FZ that are used for lifestyle purposes and are largely unoccupied have implications for local housing markets, the community and economy. Research in South Gippsland Shire and Mansfield Shire<sup>4</sup>, which both have high numbers of dwellings owned by people who live outside the municipality found that there are some benefits, but also significant issues:

- Research regarding holiday homes (in South Gippsland) found that this type of housing tended to be larger and not meeting the housing needs of permanent residents.
- Tensions are also apparent between the use of residential housing stock as holiday accommodation and the importance of holiday letting to the tourism industry. Offering choice in holiday accommodation is important for attracting tourists to the municipality. However, the higher rates obtained from holiday letting can result in more landlords removing housing from the longer-term rental market in favour of short-term holiday accommodation. Short supply of long-term rentals can place upwards pressure on rental prices with implications for housing affordability in the Shire.
- A fundamental issue in relation to the maintenance of sustainable communities in rural areas is the extent to which the stock of residential

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<sup>3</sup> Strathbogie Planning Scheme Review (2023) SD Planning

dwellings in any community is fully occupied. Dwellings may be empty or irregularly unoccupied for a variety of reasons, impacting the overall sense of community and other social factors.

- Holiday homes let by owners who live elsewhere results in money earned from accommodation fees and rents not being retained in the local community.

Land use conflict between rural residential landholders and farm business owners arise because there is a divergence in what rural landholders anticipate they will experience in a rural environment. These conflicts can also arise from a lack of understanding about agricultural practices or the legal and regulatory framework that governs them.

Landholders may hesitate to report issues to maintain good relations with their neighbours and there may not be formal records of conflict. Common examples of land use conflicts, both at the property level and along the urban-rural interface, include:

- Amenity impacts (such as odour, noise, and visual disturbances) from everyday agricultural activities, which lead to complaints from rural residential neighbours.
- Restrictions on agricultural practices, like aerial spraying or irrigation, due to residential encroachment, which can increase costs and reduce farm efficiency.
- Rural lifestyle neighbours affecting agricultural operations, such as removing lambs from paddocks mistakenly thinking they've been abandoned, livestock attacks by domestic dogs, weed and disease spread from gardens, or trespassing.

To reduce the risk of land use conflict, the following measures can be implemented:

<sup>4</sup> SGS Economics and Planning (2021) Mansfield 2040: Background and Discussion Paper

- Designating specific areas where agriculture will be the primary land use.
- Offering clearer guidelines on what types of non-agricultural uses may be considered in rural areas and under what conditions they'll be supported.
- Council advocacy on behalf of the agricultural industry, educating rural landholders about “normal” agricultural practices and promoting good neighbour principles.
- Introducing attenuation measures, like buffers and setbacks, between agricultural and non-agricultural developments, with the responsibility for these measures resting with the agent of change.
- Careful consideration of approving dwellings on small FZ lots.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Based on CSIRO and Deakin University modelling, the climate of the Goulburn Broken region is expected to change in the future due to the effects of climate change, including:

- An increase in average temperature and extreme heat events into the future.
- A reduction in average rainfall into the future.
- A change in rainfall patterns (e.g. declining spring rainfall).
- An increase in extreme weather events (e.g. storms, flooding, bushfires and heatwaves)<sup>5</sup>.

While climate change will bring some changes to the mix and distribution of agricultural commodities in Strathbogie Shire, the industry will continue to be dominated by mixed farming systems that focus on livestock and fodder production.

In the southern parts of Strathbogie Shire, the future climate will increase productivity and land suitability with milder winters and less waterlogging, which may facilitate expansion of grain production. Northern parts of the Shire are forecast to experience more frequent seasons of reduced rainfall which may result in insufficient water held on farm and reducing the grazing capacity. For intensive horticulture, high-value crops will require protection from sun and extreme weather events through the use of protected cropping structures. Intensive animal production will need to consider increased risk for animal welfare issues associated with higher average temperatures and extreme heat events.

All of Strathbogie Shire is designated a Bushfire Prone Area with extensive areas of high bushfire hazard across the Strathbogie Ranges. Future planning for rural tourism and rural residential development will need to consider how and where this development occurs to best manage risk to human life. Consultation during the 2023 SPS review highlighted concern by the community on how future planning for settlements was considering flooding and other risks that may increase due to climate change<sup>2</sup>.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

The Strathbogie Shire contains significant aquatic and terrestrial habitat and biodiversity values. These values are ecologically important for maintaining ecosystem services (such as water quality), their intrinsic value and socially important for cultural heritage and recreational use including tourism.

During the 2023 review of the SPS consultation with stakeholders highlighted concern regarding the lack of commentary within the Scheme on recognition and protection of biodiversity assets within the Shire. It was suggested that local policies should recognise the importance of promoting land use and development that encourages and protects native vegetation (particularly in areas of important biodiversity) through, for example, encouraging design solutions that minimise the removal of native vegetation. Stakeholders also

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<sup>5</sup> <https://gbcma.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=50b1ec366f9a4c79850e29c0c105c9fc#>

suggested a range of changes to the planning scheme, including a review of the application of Environmental Significance Overlays (ESOs) and Vegetation Protection Overlays (VPOs) across the municipality<sup>2</sup>.

In planning for growth and future land use change, cultural heritage is considered to be a community, economic and social asset<sup>6</sup>. The Strathbogie Shire's cultural heritage assets, both Aboriginal and historic, are important to contemporary communities and heritage is integral to creating a sense of place. Ongoing consultation with the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council to inform land use planning policy is important to ensure the protection and management of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage places within Strathbogie shire.

## **STRATHBOGIE SHIRE COMMUNITY**

Extensive engagement with the Strathbogie community was undertaken as part of the 2023 review of the Strathbogie Planning Scheme, and included consultation with Council, government agencies and the general public. The topics discussed included rural housing and rural land use and therefore the outcomes and key themes of this consultation have been used to inform this Strategy.

Consultation with the general public and relevant government agencies on this Strategy occurred during late 2024 and 2025 with a range of drop-in sessions and the formation of a Community Panel. This consultation sought feedback on the principles used to guide development of this Strategy and the UGS, and the potential for new rural residential zones within Strathbogie Shire. The key messages from this consultation were that this Strategy should aim to:

- Discourage new, additional and increased housing supply in locations with bushfire and flooding hazards, to avoid risk to life, property and environmental systems.

- Protect visual, environmental, economic, and infrastructure qualities by minimising impacts of residential development on rural areas with consideration of township character and heritage values.
- Sustainably use existing natural resources, including productive agricultural land and water.

The Panel had a diversity of views on the need to protect farmland and farming industries of significance, and the need to avoid conflicts between farming and other land uses. This was largely due to a desire to see greater flexibility in planning for residential development in the FZ.

The Panel identified that new RLZ areas could be considered near Strathbogie town, Violet Town, Euroa, and Nagambie, with due consideration to natural hazards and protection of biodiversity.

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<sup>6</sup> Hume Regional Growth Plan (2014) Victorian State Government

# Part 2: Strategic Framework



# Strathbogie Rural and Residential Land Use Strategy

## STRUCTURE

The Strathbogie Shire RRLUS comprises:

- Vision and Principles
- Rural framework plan
- Objectives, strategies and actions for:
  - Building a strong economy
  - Recognising and protecting natural values
  - Preparing for a changing climate
  - Providing housing for the future.
- Implementation.

## VISION

A vision statement has been developed articulating how Strathbogie shire's rural areas will look and function in 2035. The vision for Strathbogie shire's rural areas is underpinned by the Strathbogie community vision 2035 (as articulated in the Council Plan 2025–2029):

*We will create a thriving place to live, work, and explore – where history and Country are honoured, innovation is welcomed, our collective spirit makes us stronger, and our natural environment is sustained for future generations.*

Strathbogie Shire is a rural shire with a thriving agricultural sector that underpins the local economy. Innovation and sustainable management enable the sector to adapt to changing market and climate conditions. Protection of agricultural land facilitates investment and growth in commercial-scale agricultural enterprises and agribusiness.

Strathbogie Shire is a rural tourism destination that embraces its rich history, agriculture, and natural and cultural heritage. Considered planning has guided the growth of rural tourism, ensuring developments respect and enhance the area's unique character.

The region's significant environmental and landscape values are carefully identified and safeguarded. Rural development prioritizes high-quality environmental outcomes while balancing bushfire risk and contributing to improved habitats.

The deep and ongoing connection of the Taungurung and Yorta Yorta people to their land is acknowledged, celebrated, and protected. Important cultural landscapes and heritage sites are preserved, ensuring their significance endures.

The RLZ provides opportunities for those seeking a rural lifestyle, small-scale farming, and artisan agriculture. Planning ensures that rural towns and rural living complement the surrounding landscape while minimizing conflicts with nearby agricultural activities.

A clear and consistent approach to planning has helped to balance competing demands for land use and development, fostering harmony between rural industries, communities, and the environment.

## PRINCIPLES

Decision-making prioritizes the protection of human life, productive agricultural land, significant landscapes, biodiversity, and water catchments above all else.

A precautionary approach is taken when considering bushfire and flooding risks. Development will be steered towards low-risk areas, while high-risk

locations will be avoided to ensure community safety and the protection of human life.

Housing and employment growth will be contained within established towns, maintaining clear settlement boundaries to prevent unchecked expansion.

Planning policies will remain focused on land use and development and will not be used to address matters best managed through business planning, such as farm succession and financial viability.

Past planning decisions will not serve as justification for maintaining outdated or unsuitable policies, nor will they set a precedent for future planning directions.

## **RURAL POLICY AREAS**

Strathbogie shire's rural landscape is varied, with differences in topography, agricultural land use, fragmentation, natural values, hazards, and associated issues and opportunities. The rural strategic framework must address these variations and offer a foundation for balancing competing land use and development interests.

The Strategy proposes two distinct rural policy areas (Figure 4) to tailor policies that support the achievement of desired future outcomes for rural land. These areas reflect differences in agricultural productivity, land demand, and workable boundaries, based on the following criteria:

- Land capability
- Strategic significance of farmland
- Land fragmentation – considering lot size and ownership patterns
- Current land use
- Development pressures, both existing and anticipated

- Future growth potential
- Logical boundaries.

Identification of the policy areas was informed by the mapping of technical inputs including land fragmentation and land capability (as shown in Appendix 1). Further information on the agricultural capability of land within Strathbogie Shire and the factors influencing this is provided in the Existing Conditions Report.

### **POLICY AREA 1 – AGRICULTURAL ENGINE AREA**

Policy Area 1 (as shown in Figure 4) encompasses the most productive and least fragmented agricultural land in the Shire, including farmland of strategic importance<sup>7</sup>. Agricultural activities such as livestock grazing, fodder production, horticulture, and poultry farming dominate this area. Surface and groundwater resources are used to irrigate fruit, vine, and grain crops. In alignment with the Hume Regional Growth Plan, the Strategy prioritises the ongoing operation and viability of commercial-scale agricultural enterprises.

The FZ will remain in place where it is currently applied aside from possible RLZ investigations. Development of a new schedule and local policy will ensure that new dwellings and subdivisions are only permitted where they provide a direct and genuine benefit to agricultural operations. Non-agricultural uses, including tourism, that conflict with the objectives of Policy Area 1 will be strongly discouraged.

### **POLICY AREA 2 – DIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

Policy Area 2 (as shown in Figure 4) is characterised by diverse land types and a fragmented land ownership pattern. The agricultural potential here varies, supporting a mix of commercial-scale enterprises and hobby farms. Extensive

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<sup>7</sup> Hume Regional Growth Plan (2014) Victorian Government

areas of native vegetation add to the bushfire risk in the region. This area has also seen significant development of rural dwellings and rural tourism.

Agriculture will remain the primary land use, encompassing a broad range of agricultural activities, including small-scale artisan and innovative operations. Rural tourism that capitalizes on the area's agricultural strengths and environmental features will be encouraged. The area is also ideal for landholders interested in conserving and enhancing environmental values, or those looking to actively manage land for environmental markets like carbon capture and native vegetation offsets.

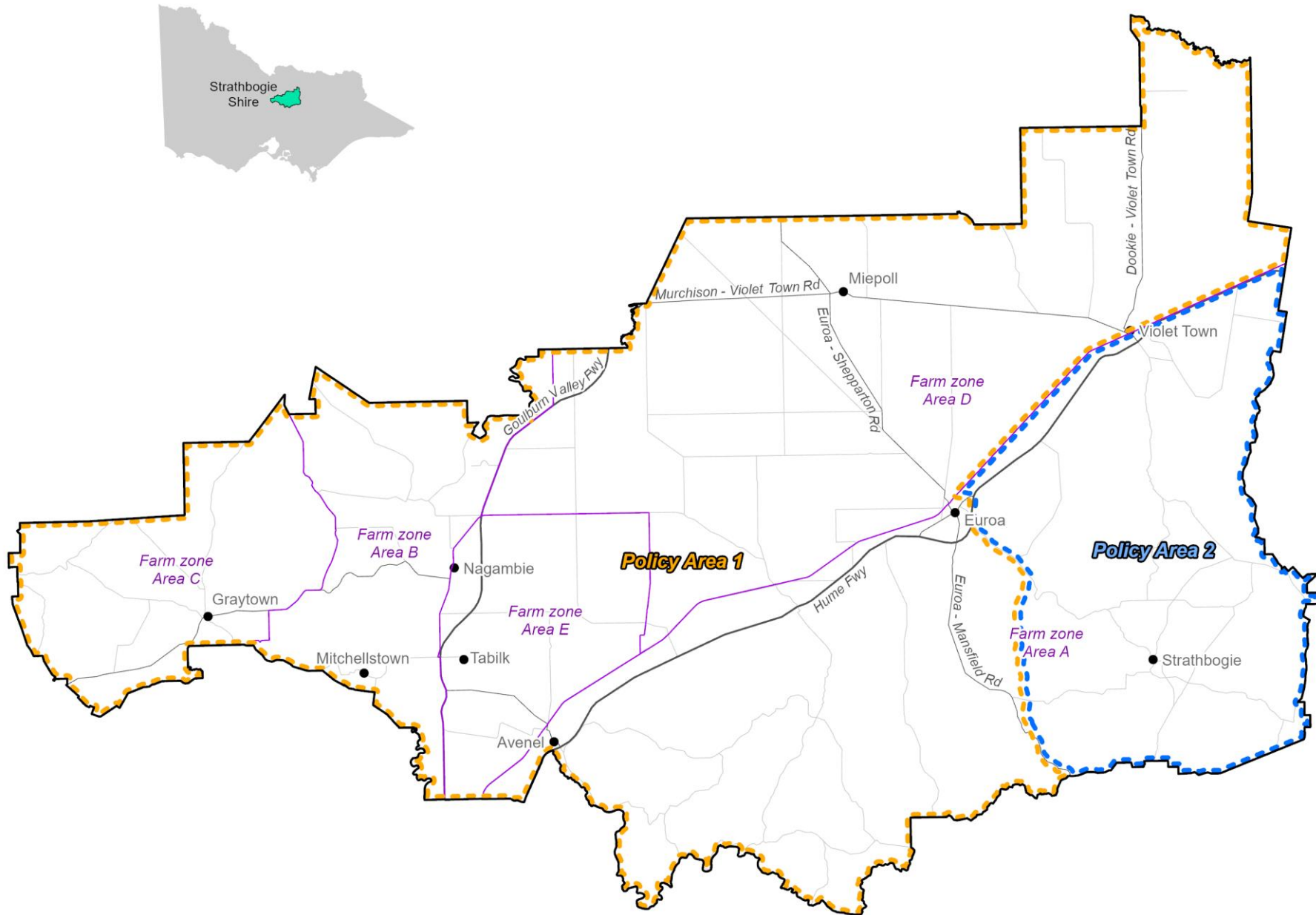
The FZ will remain in place where it is currently applied aside from possible RLZ investigations. Development of new local policy will ensure that new dwellings and subdivisions are only approved if they provide a clear and legitimate benefit to agriculture. The needs of existing agricultural enterprises will remain a key consideration in planning decisions. Any new rural uses will need to demonstrate a connection to agriculture or offer a significant environmental benefit.



# Policy Areas

## Legend

- Town
- Freeway
- Highway / Arterial road
- Road
- LGA boundary
- Farm zone area
- Policy Area**
- ▭ Policy Area 1
- ▭ Policy Area 2



Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Prepared by: KR  
Checked by: KS  
Date: 1/04/2025  
Job Number: #1754



Disclaimer: This map has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services described in the contract or agreement between RMCG and the Client. Any findings only apply to the aforementioned circumstances and no greater reliance should be assumed or drawn by the Client.

**Figure 4: Policy Areas, Strathbogie Shire (Farm zone areas (shown in pink) are existing as identified in the Strathbogie Planning Scheme)**

# Part 3: Directions



# Build a strong economy

Key to building Strathbogie Shire's economy is leveraging its natural landscapes and locational advantages. Primary production (including agriculture, forestry and equine) is the Shire's number one economic driver. Building the capacity of this sector is critical to sustaining the economic future of the Shire. A number of the Shire's tourism offerings are also based on this sector (such as food and wine experiences). Protecting farmland within Strathbogie Shire will ensure the future of the agriculture sector, and strengthen the existing tourism offer.

## AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the primary driver of the local economy employing nearly 1,055 people and generating \$184 million in Gross Value of Agricultural Production (GVAP) in 2021 (Table 2).

Food and fibre production in Strathbogie Shire is predominately focused on mixed farming systems for livestock production, with smaller amounts of intensive poultry meat production and eggs and a number of horticultural commodities (Table 3). The gross value of agriculture in Strathbogie Shire has risen consistently over the last 20 years associated with improved prices for meat and wool (Figure 6). The market outlook for meat, wool and grains is strong. Further detail on the performance of the agriculture sector in Strathbogie Shire is provided in the Existing Conditions Report.

Strathbogie Shire, as part of the Goulburn Valley, is a key region for horse breeding in Victoria and home to high-quality stud farms. Climate, access to Melbourne and important local infrastructure, such as veterinary services, are key drivers of this industry. The development of a number of breeding enterprises over time has established the core of a local industry that in turn, has supported new breeding businesses and associated businesses that

support the equine industry. Within Victoria, the broader thoroughbred racing industry, which encompasses breeding, racing, and associated activities, contributes more than \$3.1 billion to the state's economy<sup>8</sup>.

Farm businesses in Strathbogie Shire have increased in business scale and in holding size indicating that businesses are investing in business growth and expansion (Figure 5 and Figure 6). Key to maintaining the viability of mixed farming systems (businesses focussed on production of livestock and cropping) is maintaining and increasing the scale of operations. This is in response to declining terms of trade where increasing costs of inputs need to be offset by increasing the level of outputs. In areas with land considered to be of lower agricultural capability larger farms sizes are required to maintain stocking rates (number of livestock that can be supported per hectare).

Future climate will bring some changes to agriculture in Strathbogie Shire, but mixed farming systems for livestock production will continue to dominate. In the southern parts of the Shire, the future climate will increase productivity and land suitability with milder winters and less waterlogging which may facilitate expansion of grain production. Northern parts of the Shire are forecast to experience more frequent seasons of reduced rainfall with insufficient water held on farm, restricting the grazing capacity. For intensive horticulture, high-value crops will require protection from sun and extreme weather events through the use of protected cropping structures. Intensive animal production will need to consider the increased risk for animal welfare issues associated with higher average temperatures and extreme heat events.

Strathbogie Shire contains a number of intensive agricultural businesses focussed on poultry meat and egg production. These businesses are significant contributors to the Shire's GVAP (Table 3) however upset conditions in intensive agricultural operations has the potential to impact on residents of

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<sup>8</sup> [https://ier-study.racingaustralia.horse/state-and-territory-impacts/victoria/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://ier-study.racingaustralia.horse/state-and-territory-impacts/victoria/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

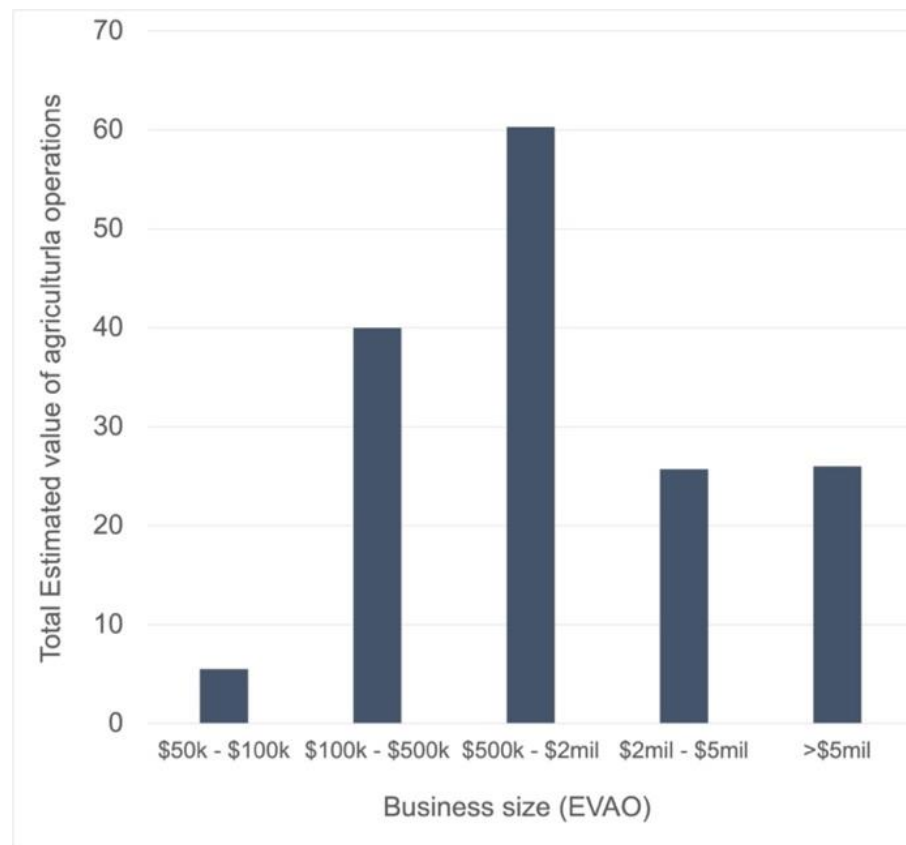
surrounding properties. Clause 35.07-6 Decision guidelines for assessing planning permits for new dwellings in the FZ includes the following tests:

- Whether the site is suitable for the use or development and whether the proposal is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses.
- The potential for the use or development to limit the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.
- Whether the dwelling will be adversely affected by agricultural activities on adjacent and nearby land due to dust, noise, odour, use of chemicals and farm machinery, traffic and hours of operation.
- Whether the dwelling will adversely affect the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.

ESO1 – Buffer Area for Rural Industrial Activities has been applied to some, but not all intensive agricultural operations in the Shire. The overlay seeks to discourage the development of dwellings that may conflict with rural industrial activities and references guidelines and codes associated with intensive animal husbandry, amenity and buffers. The Buffer Area Overlay (BAO) is a newly designed planning tool that’s primary purpose is to manage buffers through the planning system and replaces the use of the ESO’s for buffer purposes. Any investigation of future buffers should focus on the use of the BAO as the primary tool. Council may also consider the replacement of the current ESO1 with an equivalent BAO as this is the most appropriate tool to avoid encroachment by sensitive receptors and protect the continuing operation of this important agricultural operations.

Rural living is in high demand, and the community has expressed interest in housing that supports small-scale farming, rural tourism, and environmental initiatives. However, an increase in dwellings and non-agricultural activities can lead to land use conflicts, reduced amenity, and challenges for legitimate farming operations. Ensuring access to affordable, unencumbered land is crucial for commercial agriculture to expand, intensify, and remain viable by achieving economies of scale. Once a dwelling is built, the likelihood of the land being taken out of productive agricultural use increases.

Designating policy areas enables a differentiated and graduated policy framework to assist in balancing competing demands for rural land. Unlocking existing RLZ and identifying additional RLZ will help to provide for rural housing needs.



**Figure 5: Value of agricultural operations by business size 2021, Strathbogie Shire**

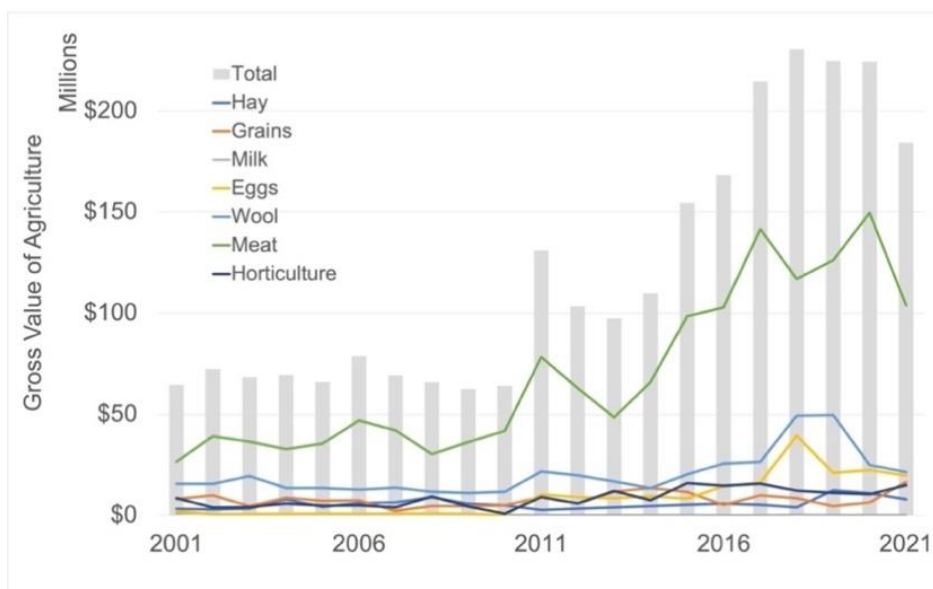


Figure 6: Gross value of agriculture 2001–2021, Strathbogie Shire<sup>9</sup>

Table 2: Industry output and jobs 2021, Strathbogie Shire

INDUSTRY SPECIALISATION	ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION		
	Output	Exports	Local Jobs
Primary industries and trade	48%	83%	26%
Population driven industries	28%	6%	22%
Knowledge and public sector	12%	3%	22%

Table 3: Gross Value of Agricultural Production 2021

COMMODITY	GROSS VALUE (\$M)
Sheep and Lambs	\$55.5
Poultry - meat	\$24.2
Cattle	\$24.1
Wool	\$21.3
Eggs	\$19.7
Wheat	\$8.5
Cherries	\$8.2
Hay	\$7.9
Canola	\$6.2
Grapes	\$5.2
Nurseries	\$1.2
Barley	\$1.0
Oats, Milk, Cut Flowers, Olives	Each less than \$1 million
Lupins, Pigs, Peaches, Apples	Each less than \$50,000

<sup>9</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census data provided by Kynetec

## POLICY AREA 1

Policy Area 1 encompasses the most productive and least fragmented agricultural land in the Shire, including farmland of strategic importance<sup>10</sup>. Agricultural activities such as livestock grazing, fodder production, horticulture, and poultry farming dominate this area. Surface and groundwater resources are used to irrigate fruit, vine, and grain crops. In alignment with the Hume Regional Growth Plan, Policy Area 1 prioritises the ongoing operation and viability of commercial-scale agricultural enterprises.

## OBJECTIVE

Support the production of food and fibre, and add value to industries.

## STRATEGIES

- Support large-scale agriculture, including livestock grazing, cropping, and soil-based horticulture.
- Protect and preserve productive agricultural land to maintain its long-term value for farming.
- Protect intensive agricultural areas from encroachment by incompatible uses.
- Maintain large land holdings to prevent fragmentation and limit the spread of dwellings that could impact agricultural productivity.
- Encourage innovation by supporting new technologies and sustainable practices that help agriculture adapt to climate change.
- Strengthen settlement boundaries by focusing on population growth and housing development within existing towns and designated rural residential areas.
- Allow new dwellings only when directly linked to a legitimate agricultural enterprise.

- Discourage non-agricultural activities that are not related to farming.
- Support complementary uses like tourism ventures—such as farm gate sales, farm stays, and agri-tourism—that enhance and align with agricultural operations.

## IMPLEMENTATION

In Policy Area 1, retain:

- Land in the FZ where it currently applies.
- Minimum subdivision size of 40 ha (Area B), 80 ha (Area C and D) and 100 ha (Area E).

Revise the Schedule to the FZ to a minimum lot size to construct a dwelling without a permit to 80 ha in Area B.

Investigate and apply as required BAO – Buffer Area for Rural Industrial Activities to all intensive agricultural operations.

Update local policy to reflect the land use and development outcomes of Policy Area 1.

## Dwellings in Policy Area 1

The minimum lot size required to construct a dwelling in the FZ in Areas C and D is currently 80 ha and 100 ha in Area E. Increasing the minimum lot size to construct a dwelling in Area B will provide a consistent approach. The basis for this increase has taken into consideration:

- The needs of Strathbogie shire’s agricultural industries
- The range of lot sizes in the FZ
- A need to break the nexus between subdivision and dwelling
- Demand for rural lifestyle opportunities on small and large lots in Strathbogie shire.

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<sup>10</sup> Hume Regional Growth Plan (2014) Victorian Government

For the agricultural sector to expand and adapt to evolving industry trends—such as increasing scale and technological advancements—it requires access to land free from unnecessary infrastructure, particularly dwellings.

To prevent the fragmentation of productive farmland, a shift in mindset is needed regarding the expectation that every rural lot should accommodate a dwelling. The minimum lot size provisions will help decouple subdivision from residential development, allowing the Council to assess whether new dwellings in the FZ are genuinely necessary for agricultural purposes.

Although there is currently limited demand for housing in Policy Area 1, this pressure may grow in the future due to its proximity to Shepperton, key transport routes, and the expanding influence of peri-urban Melbourne. Implementing planning controls now will help safeguard productive agricultural land for the long term.

An example of a local policy addressing dwellings in the FZ is provided in Appendix 2. This example illustrates how new local policy could be structured to align with and support the intent of a multi-policy area rural strategic framework.

### Subdivision in Policy Area 1

There is currently a sufficient diversity of lot sizes, with a significant number of small lots, to rarely warrant the further subdivision of land (Table 4).

Land in Policy Area 1 is relatively unfragmented and is held in relatively large ownerships, with many larger than 100 ha in size. It will be important that this position is maintained to protect agricultural land and encourage investment in agriculture into the future.

Therefore, it is recommended that within Policy Area 1, the minimum subdivision areas of 40 ha (Area B), 80 ha (Area C and D) and 100 ha (Area E) are retained.

Re-subdivision that results in creation of rural residential size lots and house lot excisions will be strongly discouraged.

An example of a local policy addressing subdivision in the FZ is provided in Appendix 2. This example illustrates how new local policy could be structured to align with and support the intent of a multi-policy area rural strategic framework.

**Table 4: Number of lots and farms (multiple lots held by one owner) by size range in the farming zone\***

SIZE RANGE (ha)	POLICY AREA 1		POLICY AREA 2	
	LOTS	FARMS	LOTS	FARMS
0 – 10	2,770	1,204	602	198
10 – 20	771	255	226	64
20 – 40	1,237	335	399	172
40 – 100	1,626	419	433	187
> 100	556	609	101	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,960</b>	<b>2,822</b>	<b>1,761</b>	<b>783</b>

\* Table 4 shows the relative number of individual lots and farms (multiple lots held by one owner) at each size range. At the smaller size range (<10 ha) significantly more individual lots (than farms) can be found in both policy areas. At the larger size range (>100 ha) significantly more farms are present in Policy Area 1 than Policy Area 2.

## POLICY AREA 2

Policy Area 2 includes land of mixed agricultural capability. There are areas of higher agricultural capability around the town of Strathbogie and areas of lower agricultural capability due to the topography and soil types found in this area (Figure 13 – Appendix 1). Native vegetation consists of scattered and fragmented woodlands as part of the Strathbogie Ranges and significant sections of this area are covered by an Erosion Management Overlay. This area has also seen significant development of rural dwellings and rural tourism.

Livestock grazing occurs across most of this area and continues to be an appropriate use of land (even on land of lower agricultural quality). Given the diversity of quality of agricultural land, and the natural value of the Strathbogie ranges, there is an opportunity to use land in this area to:

- Conserve and enhance environmental values or actively manage environmental markets such as carbon capture and native vegetation offsets subject to meeting requirements for development in areas of high bushfire hazard.
- Encourage a more diverse mix of agricultural activities, including commercial-scale broadacre agriculture through to small-scale artisan agricultural enterprises.
- Rural tourism is also a significant land use encompassing accommodation and on-farm activities in conjunction with agriculture and the environment.
- Facilitate rural tourism opportunities that leverage the area's agricultural sector and environmental values.

## OBJECTIVE

Support a mix of rural uses, including agriculture, rural tourism and the green economy.

## STRATEGIES

- Encourage a diverse range of agricultural enterprises that thrive on smaller landholdings, such as market gardens, wineries, and on-site processing of farm produce—while carefully considering environmental and amenity impacts.
- Support land use for environmental benefits, including carbon storage, native vegetation offsets, and enhancing ecological connectivity.
- Consider legitimate environmental benefits in areas with significant environmental values that may be proposed as part of the construction of a dwelling within Policy Area 2.
- Recognise legitimate environmental gains when assessing proposals for new dwellings in areas with significant environmental value within Policy Area 2.
- Foster tourism development that complements both agricultural operations and the natural landscape.
- Discourage land uses that create urban-style activity levels or infrastructure demands.
- Strengthen settlement boundaries by guiding population growth and housing development into existing town areas.
- Limit new dwellings to those directly linked to a legitimate agricultural purpose or where they deliver clear environmental benefits.
- Safeguard declared water supply catchments to ensure long-term resource protection.

## IMPLEMENTATION

In Policy Area 2 retain:

- Land in the FZ where it currently applies
- Minimum subdivision size of 40 ha (Area A).

Review and update local policy as required to reflect the land use and development outcomes of Policy Area 2.

## Subdivision in Policy Area 2

The minimum lot size of 40 ha applies to land in Policy Area 2. There is currently a sufficient diversity of lot sizes, with a significant number of small lots, that supports the mix of uses envisaged for Policy Area 2. Further subdivision will, therefore, be strongly discouraged.

An example of a local policy addressing subdivision in the FZ is provided in Appendix 2. This example illustrates how new local policy could be structured to align with and support the intent of a multi-policy area rural strategic framework.

## Dwellings in Policy Area 2

In Policy Area 2, there are broader circumstances under which new dwellings may be considered, aligning with objectives to support diverse agricultural activities, rural tourism, and environmental benefits. However, this does not imply that the Farming Zone functions as a rural residential area.

The use of the land for a dwelling within the Farming Zone on allotments less than 40 hectares in this area requires a planning permit, with strict assessment criteria that consider agricultural fragmentation and land-use compatibility. This approach ensures that new dwellings align with the purpose of the zone while minimizing or mitigating impacts on agriculturally and environmentally significant areas.

An example of a local policy addressing dwellings in the FZ is provided in Appendix 2. This example illustrates how new local policy could be structured to align with and support the intent of a multi-policy area rural strategic framework

## DWELLINGS IN RURAL AREAS

New dwellings in rural areas have a significant impact on agricultural productivity, environmental sustainability, and the overall landscape character. An increasing number of dwellings can limit economies of scale in farming, create land-use conflicts, and discourage investment in agriculture by fuelling

speculation that land will transition to residential use. Unnecessary dwellings pose one of the most significant threats to agriculture that planning regulations can address.

This strategy introduces several measures to balance the needs of the agricultural sector with the growing demand for rural living.

## POLICY APPROACH

Establishing designated policy areas allows for a structured, tiered framework that helps manage competing demands for rural land while maintaining agricultural viability.

## PLANNING PERMIT ASSESSMENT

Assessing whether a dwelling is genuinely linked to agricultural use is one of the most challenging aspects of rural planning. Council planners often struggle to evaluate the legitimacy of proposed agricultural activities, and in cases where an application appears unjustified, they may lack sufficient backing to refuse it. To address these challenges, the following measures are proposed:

- **Agriculture Victoria Planning and Advisory Service:** This service offers independent advice to councils and landowners on planning rules for new and expanding agricultural enterprises. It provides technical reviews of agricultural land-use applications under Section 52 Notices and delivers written recommendations to councils.
- **Farm Plan Requirement:** Applicants seeking approval for new dwellings or non-agricultural uses within the Farming Zone must submit a Farm Plan using a standardised template. This plan should include a physical description of the property, financial projections, and details on how the proposed activity will support agricultural operations (see Appendix 3 for an example plan).
- **Independent Expert Panel:** A panel of agricultural experts will assist in evaluating the legitimacy of proposed farming enterprises, ensuring that applications align with genuine agricultural purposes.

- **Environmental Plan Requirement:** Applications for new dwellings or non-agricultural uses associated with green economy initiatives or environmental benefits must include an Environmental Plan. Using a standardised template, this plan should describe the land, outline the expected environmental benefits, and demonstrate how the proposed use contributes to ecological sustainability.

## TOURISM

The popularity of Strathbogie Shire as an overnight and daytrip destination is increasing and is driven by water and nature-based assets that attract visitors and contribute to the visitor economy. There is also a growing wine industry providing specialty food and wine experiences. Key tourism nodes and offerings include:

- The Goulburn River and Lake Nagambie region for water sports, wineries and horse breeding
- Euroa for historic buildings, Euroa show and agricultural events
- Strathbogie Ranges for camping, hiking and birdwatching.

Agricultural tourism and value adding to agricultural produce is already established in Strathbogie Shire and includes selling primary produce or processed products through road-side sale and cellar doors, pick your own and online direct sales. Accommodation in conjunction with an agricultural business such as farm stays and farm to table dining are also opportunities to value add to primary production.

Tourism uses that are permitted in the FZ include bed and breakfast (for less than ten people), primary produce sales and rural stores. Other uses that can be considered, subject to a planning permit, include camping and caravan park, group accommodation, host farm, residential hotel, restaurant and winery. Some of these uses e.g. camping and caravan park, residential hotel may be better suited to a township which have the infrastructure services to support developments of this scale. Large scale tourism developments in rural areas also have the potential to impact the operation of surrounding agricultural businesses, landscape and biodiversity values.

A review of planning permits for tourism uses in the Existing Conditions Report found that most permits were for accommodation (Table 5), followed by festivals, rural stores and wineries.

**Table 5: Farm zone planning permits (2015–2022)**

USE	NUMBER OF PERMITS
Group accommodation	6
Festivals	4
Dwelling/house lot excisions	6
Rural store	3
Winery	2

Examples of farm-related tourism uses considered appropriate in Policy Area 1 include:

- Pick-your-own and farmgate sales.
- Repurposing of established agricultural buildings, e.g. redundant shearing sheds, dwellings for short-stay accommodation.
- Accommodation within the primary farm residence (e.g. bed and breakfast).

Examples of tourism uses considered appropriate in Policy Area 2 include:

- Pick-your-own and farmgate sales.
- Farm stays, bed and breakfast.
- Accommodation including cabins, glamping, and tiny houses in conjunction with an agricultural activity or natural values.
- Wedding venue in conjunction with an agricultural activity such as a winery of natural values.
- Adding value to agricultural experiences such as cookery schools and farm management education.

Examples of tourism uses considered inappropriate in rural areas include:

- Camping, caravan parks
- Group accommodation
- Markets
- Residential hotels.

These uses are more appropriately located in or adjacent to towns where there are relevant services and infrastructure.

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Encourage tourism use and development that builds on the existing assets within the shire.
- Encourage rural tourism that leverages the Shire's agricultural strengths and environmental, landscape and cultural values.
- Ensure tourism uses are consistent with Policy Area Objectives.

## **STRATEGIES**

- Ensure tourism use and development is at an appropriate scale and sited to:
  - Avoid the operation of surrounding agricultural enterprises
  - Appropriately consider impacts on environment and landscape values.
- Focus on tourism development along key tourist routes and near tourism assets.
- Locate large-scale tourism development within existing settlements.
- Avoid tourism development in areas of bushfire hazard unless the risk can be mitigated to an acceptable level.
- Provide support for appropriately located nature-based tourism close to natural assets.

## **In Policy Area 1:**

- Only support tourism uses and development where it is associated with, and will remain subordinate to, an existing agricultural enterprise.
- Strongly discourage large-scale tourism development outside of townships.

## **In Policy Area 2:**

- Encourage tourism buildings and ancillary infrastructure to be clustered together on the property and screened from view from neighbouring dwellings.
- Support the use and development of land for tourism if it will result in net environmental benefit or rehabilitation of degraded land.
- Support large-scale tourism developments only where:
  - The tourism enterprise requires a rural location.
  - The development will not contribute to the urbanisation of the area.
  - The land use is compatible with the use of adjoining and surrounding land for agriculture or forestry and is complimentary to the rural setting.
  - The facility will significantly contribute to the local and regional tourism economy.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Review and update local policy as required to reflect the land use and development outcomes specified for Policy Area 1 and Policy Area 2.

# Recognise and protect our natural values

The Strathbogie Shire contains significant aquatic and terrestrial habitats and biodiversity values. These values are ecologically important for maintaining ecosystem services (such as water quality), their intrinsic value and socially important for cultural heritage and recreational use including tourism. Ongoing dialogue with the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council, and improved recognition of biodiversity assets is required to ensure the protection of the landscape and character of the region.

## BIODIVERSITY

Aquatic assets include the Goulburn River, the Lower Goulburn River Floodplain and the Lower Broken River Floodplain. These waterways and wetlands provide high quality habitat for fish and support significant stands of River Red Gums. The River Red Gums provide important habitat such as large hollows for many species (small mammals such as the squirrel glider, migratory birds) and contribute to riverine food webs (carbon, leaves and debris).

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Biodiversity Strategy 2016–2021 has identified the Strathbogie Tablelands and Longwood Violet Town Plains as areas with high biodiversity value. The Strathbogie Tablelands includes the Strathbogie State Forest, a large contiguous area of high-quality core habitat for many significant species of flora and fauna in the region such as the Southern Great Glider, the Brush-tailed Phascogale and the Euroa Guinea-flower. The Longwood Violet Town Plains has grassy landscape with scattered trees that contains high quality habitat to support a range of significant species. There are fragmented remnants of the nationally threatened ecological community, Box-Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Grasslands within this area.

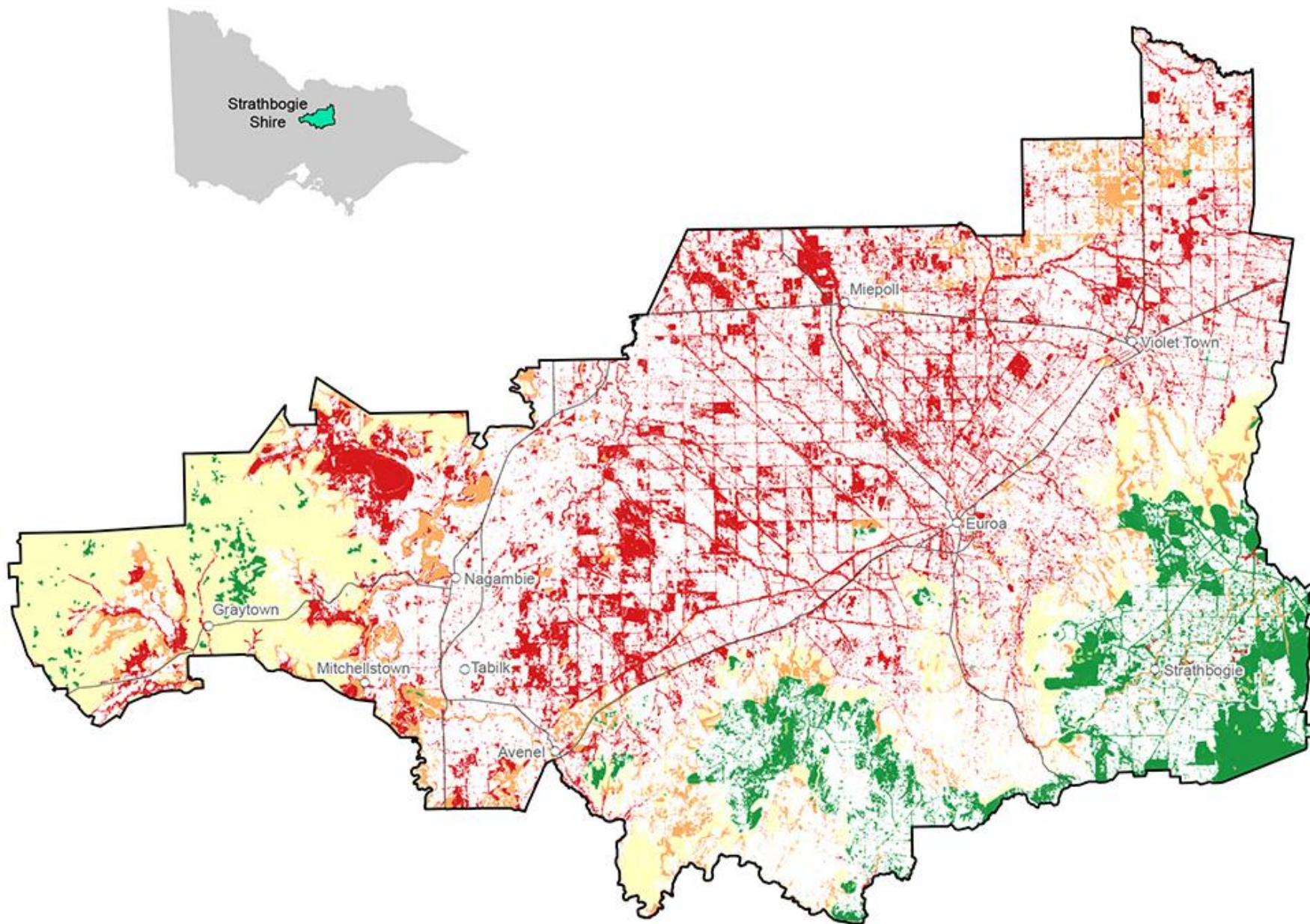
Mapping of the conservation status of vegetation shows that there are extensive areas of endangered vegetation across the Strathbogie Shire (Figure 7). Particularly along roadsides and fence lines and on the less fertile foot slopes. There are larger contiguous patches of endangered vegetation on both public and private land in the northern parts of the shire. Approximately 35 per cent of all private land in the shire has remnant vegetation considered high value, having a strategic biodiversity value score of between 60–100 based on NaturePrint<sup>11</sup>.

The recognition and protection of biodiversity values in the Strathbogie Planning Scheme is limited. There are two discrete areas where a vegetation overlay has been applied (Figure 3) to protect EPBC listed remnant native vegetation and remnant indigenous vegetation. Within the Farm Zone much of the vegetation has been historically cleared for agriculture and timber supply resulting in a patchy, fragmented distribution of native vegetation. Some of the most ecologically valuable vegetation in Victoria occurs along roadsides in the shire.

During the 2023 review of the SPS consultation with stakeholders highlighted concern regarding the lack of commentary within the Scheme on recognition and protection of biodiversity assets within the Shire. It was suggested that local policies should recognise the importance of promoting land use and development that encourages and protects native vegetation (particularly in areas of important biodiversity) through, for example, encouraging design solutions that minimise the removal of native vegetation. Stakeholders also suggested a range of changes to the planning scheme, including a review of the application of Environmental Significance Overlays (ESOs) and Vegetation Protection Overlays (VPOs) across the municipality<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://discover.data.vic.gov.au/dataset/natureprint-v4-0-strategic-biodiversity-values>



## Ecological Vegetation Classes

### Strathbogie RLUS

#### Legend

- Town
- Highway / Arterial road
- LGA boundary

#### EVC Conservation Status

- Endangered
- Vulnerable
- Depleted
- Rare
- Least Concern

↑ 0 5 10 km  
 Coordinate System: GDA2020 MGA Zone 55

Prepared by: KR  
 Checked by: KS  
 Date: 13-Dec-22  
 Job Number: #1754

# RMCG

Disclaimer: This map has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services described in the contract or agreement between RMCG and the Client. Any findings only apply to the aforementioned circumstances and no greater reliance should be assumed or drawn by the Client.

Figure 7: Conservation status of Ecological Vegetation Classes, Strathbogie Shire

## WATER

Strathbogie Shire has two declared potable water supply catchments (Figure 8); Honeysuckle Creek and Seven Creeks. These catchments provide water for Violet Town and Euroa. Seven Creeks was identified in the Strathbogie Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (SDWMP) as being at risk of cumulative impacts from domestic wastewater.

Development, if not carefully managed, poses a threat to the sustainability of water resources and the quality of waterways and wetlands. The Environmental Significance Overlay is commonly applied to declared water supply catchments in Victoria but has not been applied to these two water supply catchments.

Key recommendations from the 2023 SPS review and the SDWMP which have not yet commenced included:

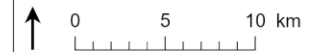
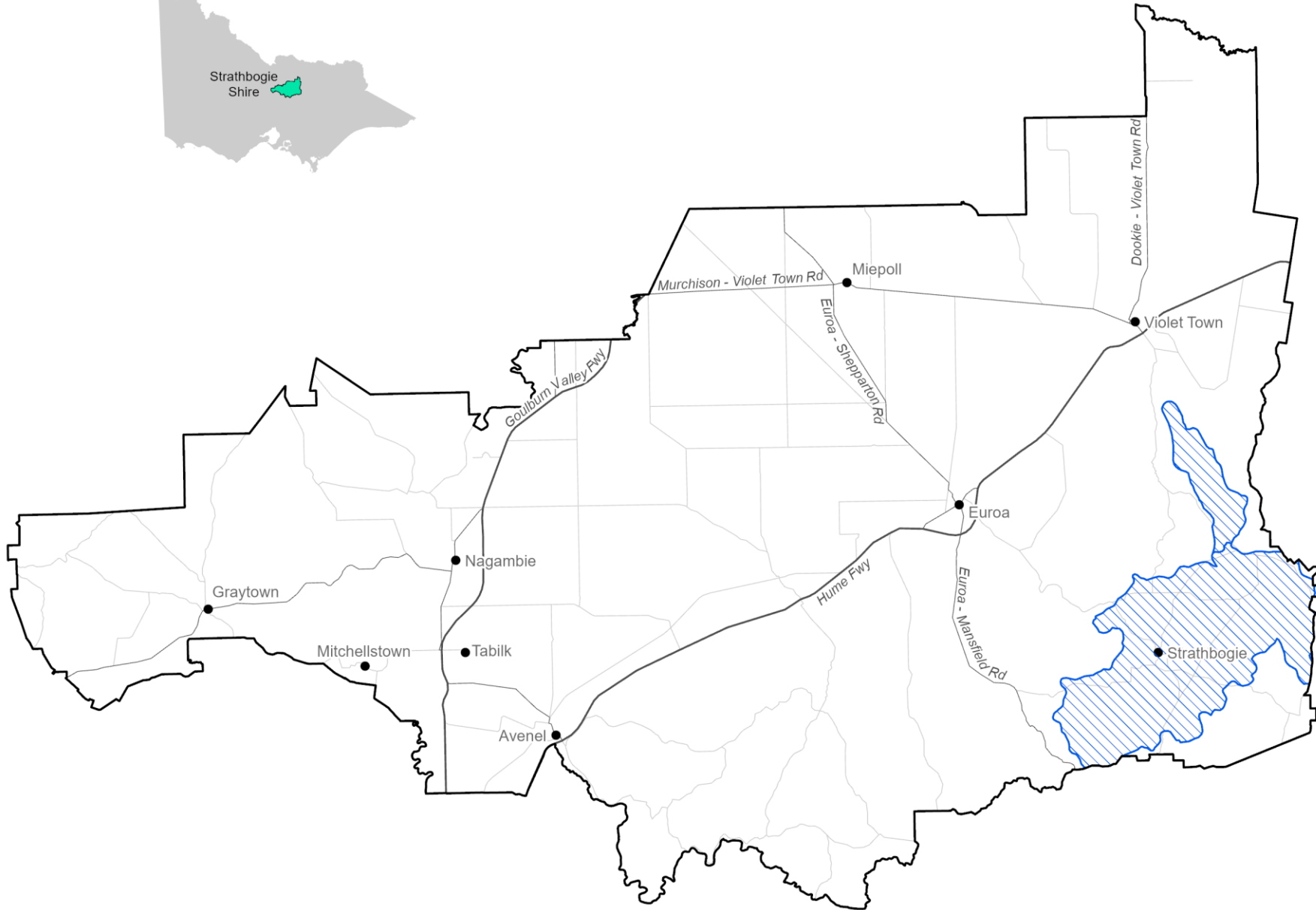
- Preparation and exhibition of an amendment to the Strathbogie Planning Scheme for the application of an Environmental Significance Overlay over declared water supply catchments and around potable water offtake points, with amendments made to the Municipal Strategic Statement to reference the adopted DWMP and reinforce its key objectives
- Preparation of a new Memorandum of Understanding with Goulburn Murray Water to identify referral requirements for development in declared water supply catchments and high-risk areas.



# Protected Water Supply Catchments

## Legend

- Town
- Freeway
- Highway / Arterial road
- Road
- LGA boundary
- ▨ Protected water supply catchment



Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Prepared by: KR  
 Checked by: KS  
 Date: 1/04/2025  
 Job Number: #1754



Disclaimer: This map has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services described in the contract or agreement between RMCG and the Client. Any findings only apply to the aforementioned circumstances and no greater reliance should be assumed or drawn by the Client.

**Figure 8: Declared potable water supply catchments, Strathbogie Shire**

## CULTURAL HERITAGE

Strathbogie Shire lies on the lands of the Taungurung peoples and Yorta Yorta people. The Shire is rich in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Places and contains many important, secret, and sacred Aboriginal Places. Within the Shire boundary there are 495 previously identified Aboriginal Places, consisting of 821 components, with countless Aboriginal Places as yet undiscovered. Of these known sites 367 Places consisting of 680 components are located in Taungurung Country, and 128 Places consisting of 141 components are located in Yorta Yorta Country. The spatial distribution of these sites is focused on waterways and areas where intensive works, such as road and rail upgrades, which have been accompanied by Cultural Heritage Management Plans have been undertaken.

The early history of post-contact Australia is preserved in the buildings and archaeological remains that can be identified throughout the State of Victoria. There are 17 known places on the Heritage Register within Strathbogie Shire that are significant to the history and development of Victoria. Towns within the shire have monuments and sites commemorating the military history of Victoria, with war memorials offering insight into local history and heroism. The Shire also falls in the Official Ned Kelly Touring Route telling the story of Ned Kelly and his Gang.

In planning for growth and future land use change, cultural heritage is considered to be a community, economic and social asset<sup>12</sup>. The Strathbogie Shire's cultural heritage assets, both Aboriginal and historic, are important to contemporary communities and heritage is integral to creating a sense of place.

Many tourists seek heritage tourism experiences. Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage attractions and services contribute to the regional economy and employment. Building a comprehensive sense of place around heritage sites is important to help develop resilient and sustainable communities.

Cultural heritage within the State of Victoria is protected by the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, the Heritage Act 2017 and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Activities that may impact on heritage places will require the development of a CHMP, permit or referral to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Identified Aboriginal Places and Heritage Register sites within Strathbogie Shire are mapped within the Existing Conditions Report. Continuing dialogue with the Taungurung Land and Waters Council and the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation is required to ensure the ongoing protection and management of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage places within Strathbogie Shire.

## OBJECTIVE

- Recognise, protect and enhance Strathbogie shire's native vegetation, habitat and waterways.
- Identify and protect cultural heritage.

## STRATEGIES

- Explore opportunities to better protect roadside vegetation through Vegetation Protection Overlays.
- Review the application and mapping of Environmental Significance Overlays and Vegetation Protection Overlays to better protect native vegetation and biodiversity assets across the shire.
- Use the Municipal Planning Strategy as a vehicle to encourage design solutions that minimise the removal of native vegetation (especially in areas of high biodiversity value).
- Prepare and exhibit an amendment to the Strathbogie Planning Scheme for the application of an Environmental Significance Overlay over declared water supply catchments and around potable water offtake points, with amendments made to the Municipal Planning Strategy to reference the adopted DWMP and reinforce its key objectives.

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<sup>12</sup> Hume Regional Growth Plan (2014) Victorian State Government

- Preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding with Goulburn Murray Water to identify referral requirements for development in declared water supply catchments and high-risk areas.
- Ensuring appropriate investigation is undertaken prior to consideration of any development of land identified with cultural heritage significance.
- Support the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council to identify and protect significant cultural heritage sites and artefacts.
- Support the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, the Taungurung Land and Waters Council and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria to raise cultural awareness amongst the Strathbogie Shire community.

## FURTHER WORK

- A detailed review of the shire's biodiversity is required particularly mapping and prioritisation of native vegetation with a focus along roadsides and on the flatter fertile plains to provide the necessary information and data at an appropriate scale to justify the application of planning control where required.
- Partner with the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, the Taungurung Land and Waters Council and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria to identify key areas and sites and recommendations for their protection to augment cultural heritage assessment of land around key townships.



# Prepared for a changing climate

Strathbogie Shire is at risk of riverine flooding, erosion, and bushfires. Changes in patterns of rainfall and temperature have the potential to exacerbate these risks. Future planning for residential and land use development needs to consider how to best manage these risks and prevent harm to human health, agriculture and the environment.

## FLOOD

Runoff from the Strathbogie Ranges drains to the Goulburn River via a network of seasonal and permanent creeks. This topography has contributed to a history of flooding, including a significant flood event in 1993, which impacted the townships of Violet Town, Euroa, Avenel and vast extents of rural areas, resulting in extensive damage. In 2022, flooding affected many parts of Strathbogie Shire and, in some areas, peaked above major flood levels. Homes and businesses were inundated, crops and infrastructure were damaged, and stock lost, resulting in significant cost and disruption.

The Flood Overlay (FO) and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) identify areas that are susceptible to flood risk and triggers planning permit requirements for buildings and works.

Climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as flood and increase the risk to homes, farms and should be a consideration in planning for rural residential development and rural areas.

The 2023 Planning Scheme Review noted that the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) have completed new flood mapping for the municipality and that once flood mapping is available to Council, it is important that the information is translated into a meaningful planning control and applied in a transparent manner so that the risks can be avoided or mitigated.

## BUSHFIRE

Strathbogie Shire is a municipality that, like its abutting neighbours, has a history of being impacted by bushfires. The majority of the municipality is designated by the Bushfire Prone Area, aside from small parts of the Shire's major townships.

Bushfire in the Strathbogie Planning Scheme is the most important consideration for decision making. Bushfire is considered in a number of ways within planning, based on what is impacted directly by the Bushfire Management Overlay (as shown in Figure 3) or is designated as a Bushfire Prone Area. Within these identified areas, Council is required to consider the state policy in Clause 13.02-1S bushfire planning which has an overall objective:

*“To strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfire through risk-based planning that prioritises the protection of human life.”*

The policy also gives priority to the protection of human life by:

- Prioritising the protection of human life over all other policy considerations.
- Directing population growth and development to low risk locations and ensuring the availability of, and safe access to, areas where human life can be better protected from the effects of bushfire.
- Reducing the vulnerability of communities to bushfire through the consideration of bushfire risk in decision making at all stages of the planning process.

The policy is considered directly in this document, where consideration of bushfire hazard has been undertaken at the municipal wide level, to inform the

designation of areas for the investigation of future Rural Living Zone. Appendix 4 goes into further detail and assessment of the municipality and the policy direction in Clause 13.02-1S to determine areas that are suitable for the introduction of the Rural Living Zone. This is done by identifying bushfire hazard, undertaking appropriate risk assessment and applying the best available science to identify vegetation, topographic and climatic conditions that create a bushfire hazard.

Based on the assessment at Appendix 4 it is recommended that there are sections of the townships of Euroa, Nagambie and Violet Town that could accommodate additional Rural Living Zone based on achieving a low risk rating and additional policy settings. The assessment has also identified the need to introduce additional planning tools to guide both applicants and Council decision-making around subdivision, use and development in future and existing Rural Living Zone areas.

The assessment (Appendix 4) has been undertaken at a strategic level and it is acknowledged that further detailed assessment will be undertaken at the planning scheme amendment stage that will utilise design standards that seek to achieve a low risk environment. Future planning scheme amendments should look to incorporate additional planning controls (local planning policy or other planning tools).

## **EROSION**

The Erosion Management Overlay (EMO) has been applied to northern slopes of the Strathbogie Ranges. The purpose of the overlay is to protect areas prone to erosion, landslip, and other land degradation by minimising land disturbance and inappropriate development. The 2023 SPS Review noted that the schedule for the EMO is currently blank resulting in any vegetation removal requiring planning permission. The schedule needs to be reviewed to provide content, statement of risk, and objectives to be achieved.

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Manage natural hazards in rural areas and prioritise the protection of human life in relation to the use and development of rural land.

## **STRATEGIES**

- Avoid future residential development in areas with a risk of flooding or inundation.
- Residential development is directed to areas of low bushfire risk consistent with State Planning Policy.
- Consider the negative impacts of residential bushfire risk management to biodiversity values.
- Strongly discourage development that increases exposure to bushfire hazards in areas where risk to life cannot be reduced to an acceptable level.
- Ensure all future development is sited and designed to:
  - Achieve compliance with Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) construction standards;
  - Provide for adequate defensible space;
  - Maintain safe and reliable vehicle access and egress for emergency services and residents.

## **FURTHER WORK**

- Translate the most recent flood mapping conducted by Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority into meaningful planning control.
- Review the EMO to provide content, statement of risk, application requirements and objectives to be achieved.
- Consider more detailed biodiversity mapping across the Shire to understand where areas of high biodiversity value are located.
- Encourage ongoing landholder education and proactive land management to reduce fuel loads, maintain access, and enhance landscape resilience to bushfire events.

# Provide housing for the future

The intent of this chapter is to recommend the extent of rural residential development that could be accommodated in the Strathbogie Shire in the future.

Rural residential development refers to land in a rural setting used and developed for dwellings that are not primarily associated with agriculture. The primary document guiding residential development within townships is the Urban Growth Strategy. However, the focus of the RRLUS is to address housing in rural areas (outside of established townships).

## DEMAND FOR RURAL LIVING

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Strathbogie Shire Council experienced a notable increase in planning permit applications for dwellings on small lots within the Farming Zone. This led to development that conflicts with the objectives of supporting agriculture, preserving environmental and landscape values, and ensuring the efficient use of land designated for rural residential development.

Historically, a considerable proportion of Strathbogie shire's dwelling growth has occurred in the municipality's rural areas, outside urban zones (between 25–50 per cent). At certain times, population growth in non-township and rural areas has outpaced that of urban centres, driven by factors such as the appeal of rural living. Between 2016 and 2021, the Strathbogie Shire Council experienced a notable increase in planning permit applications for dwellings on small lots within the FZ. This trend intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proliferation of housing in Farming Zones can conflict with the objectives of supporting agriculture, preserving environmental and landscape values, and ensuring the efficient use of land designated for rural residential development. Development activity has been especially strong in rural areas near Nagambie and Avenel, where more dwellings have been built in surrounding rural zones

rather than within the towns themselves. Notably, all recent residential growth in the rural areas of the municipality has occurred solely within the FZ.

## EXISTING RURAL LIVING AREAS

There are currently only two areas of Rural Living Zone land within Strathbogie Shire, in Avenel and Euroa. Neither of these has seen development or subdivision occur. While both areas have site constraints that are likely to have limited development, the enabling of development within the FZ may also have contributed to this outcome.

State planning policy requires local councils to accommodate a projected population of at least a 15-year period and provides clear direction on where growth should occur.

The Urban Growth Strategy identifies that existing townships have sufficient capacity to accommodate future demand, with an estimated land supply of between 31 and 41 years in vacant and developable areas of Avenel, Euroa, Nagambie, Longwood, Strathbogie and Violet Town.

Further residential development should prioritise the uptake of existing land supply within the township areas, where there is significant capacity and where jobs and services are located.

While the State Government does not specify the type of residential supply that should be provided (i.e. the quantum of rural residential), we know that there is community preference to provide for some rural living development.

Within the existing RLZ areas, there is an estimated capacity for 43 lots, approximating to 2 years of supply. However, there are a number of issues that to date have resulted in there being no Rural Living Zoned allotments on the market for sale.

## **AVENEL**

The existing Rural Living Zone in Avenel (Lovers Hill) is constrained by bushfire risk and significant native vegetation. The existing planning controls, including the Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) and Development Plan Overlay (DPO), require further information and resolution to justify development in these areas. While these challenges may be addressed through detailed planning, their resolution remains uncertain. Feedback from the CFA, suggests that there will be parts of Lovers Hill that will not be developable.

It is understood that there is an application currently with Council to develop Stage 1 of this RLZ. This will provide a useful case to test the capacity of the site for development.

Ongoing monitoring is recommended to assess whether rezoning is warranted. Should the constraints on the land prove insurmountable, there may be sufficient strategic justification to rezone the land or use alternative planning tools to reflect current risks.

## **EUROA**

A Floodway Overlay and Land Subjection to Inundation Overlay currently applies to the existing Rural Living Zone land in Euroa. There are also more extensive flood controls proposed over the land. Given these locational constraints, justification may exist to rezone this land.

If current Rural Living Zoned land is to be rezoned or is constrained to the point of being undevelopable, it is logical to explore new Rural Living Zoned land that can be created in a manner that avoids a net loss of rural lifestyle opportunities and productive agricultural land.

## **PROPOSED FUTURE RURAL LIVING AREAS**

Further residential development in the municipality needs to prioritise the uptake of existing land supply within the township's areas, where there is significant capacity and where jobs and services are located. However, it is clear that there is some demand for the community to continue to live in rural areas, for a range of social, environmental and economic reasons.

Given that all recent rural residential development has occurred within the FZ, further restrictions are required to limit further residential development in these locations.

State planning direction requires that a clear distinction be made between rural residential areas and farming areas to ensure that productive agricultural land is protected and that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect farming.

There is a clear need to provide an alternative to small Farming Zoned allotments where, historically, dwellings have been supported. This historic approach is in conflict with state policy that seeks to direct growth into existing settlements and to preserve productive farmland.

The identification of any future rural residential development areas needs to ensure the protection of human life and productive agricultural land, as well as addressing other environmental, natural hazard and landscape considerations.

Earlier analysis identified towns with potential to accommodate rural living based on alignment with their proposed growth status (as identified in the UGS Issues and Opportunities Paper) and potential economic development opportunities<sup>13</sup> (as identified in the Strathbogie RRLUS Issues and Opportunities Paper). The analysis also identified areas considered unsuitable for further residential development. This considered avoiding rural areas of high biodiversity and vegetation value and limiting development in areas where there is a potential risk to human life and property from natural hazards (i.e.

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<sup>13</sup> Issues and Opportunities Paper (2024) RMCG and SGS [https://hdp-au-prod-app-strath-share-files.s3.amazonaws.com/7217/3095/3512/Strathbogie\\_RRLUS\\_Issues\\_and\\_Opportunities\\_7.11.24\\_s hort.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-strath-share-files.s3.amazonaws.com/7217/3095/3512/Strathbogie_RRLUS_Issues_and_Opportunities_7.11.24_s hort.pdf)

bushfire and flooding). Based on this analysis additional RLZ areas have been identified near Violet Town, Nagambie and Euroa.

### VIOLET TOWN

The proposed area for RLZ (Figure 9a) was identified as an area suitable for future rural residential development which has manageable bushfire and flood risk and avoids areas of cultural heritage sensitivity and vulnerable flora and fauna (Figure 9b).

### NAGAMABIE

The proposed area for RLZ (Figure 10a) was identified as an area suitable for future rural residential development which has manageable bushfire and flood risk and avoids areas of cultural heritage sensitivity and protects biodiversity values (Figure 10b).

### EUROA

The proposed area for RLZ (Figure 11a) was identified as an area suitable for future rural residential development which has manageable bushfire and flood risk and avoids areas of cultural heritage sensitivity and vulnerable flora and fauna (Figure 11b).

The proposed future RLZ areas were endorsed by the Community Panel during consultation.

Additional RLZ areas are not proposed for:

- Strathbogie township due to:
  - The bushfire risk posed to human life
  - The bushfire risk posed to property due to limited access roads
  - Issues around biodiversity and proximity to Seven Creeks
  - Its inclusion within a protected water supply catchment.
- Avenel due to the volume of existing RLZ.
- Longwood due to existing Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) land that has not been developed.

## POTENTIAL CAPACITY OF RURAL LIVING AREAS

In terms of capacity, if the existing Avenel RLZ (36 lots) is retained, and the proposed RLZ areas in Nagambie, Violet Town and Euroa are implemented, in theory, the total capacity would increase to 87 lots. Refer to Table 6 below. This represents 4 to 6% of the total housing demand to 2041 identified in the Urban Growth Strategy.

**Table 6: Rural Residential Capacity Assessment**

	AREA (ha)	YIELD (LOTS)
<b>Existing RLZ</b>		
Avenel	244	36
<b>Proposed RLZ</b>		
Nagambie	59	20
Violet Town	49	17
Euroa	40	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>87</b>

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2025

Note: This assumes the approximate land required for the RLZ uses the minimum RLZ subdivision size (2 ha) plus 30 per cent allowance for infrastructure areas.

In addition, the existing and proposed Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) identified in the Urban Growth Strategy provides a complementary lifestyle option for residents seeking a more rural feel and setting than traditional urban land.

## OBJECTIVE

To guide future residential growth to existing townships close to services.

Provide rural residential opportunities in appropriate locations with consideration of the:

- Agricultural value of the land
- Environmental and landscape characteristics of the land.

## STRATEGY

Support housing growth in existing settlements in line with the Urban Growth Strategy.

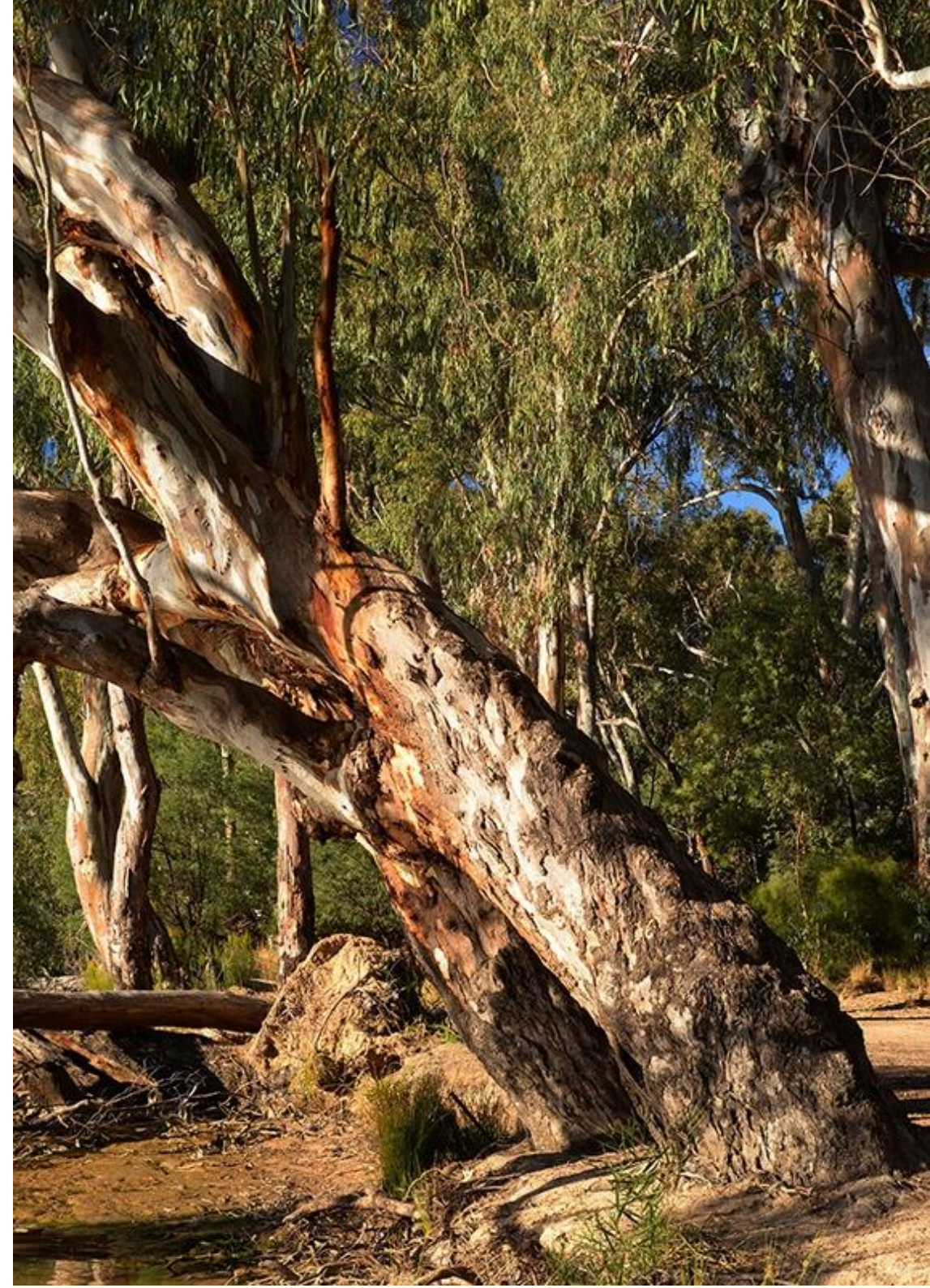
Ensure existing RLZ areas and the identification of any future areas for future rural residential development are in locations that:

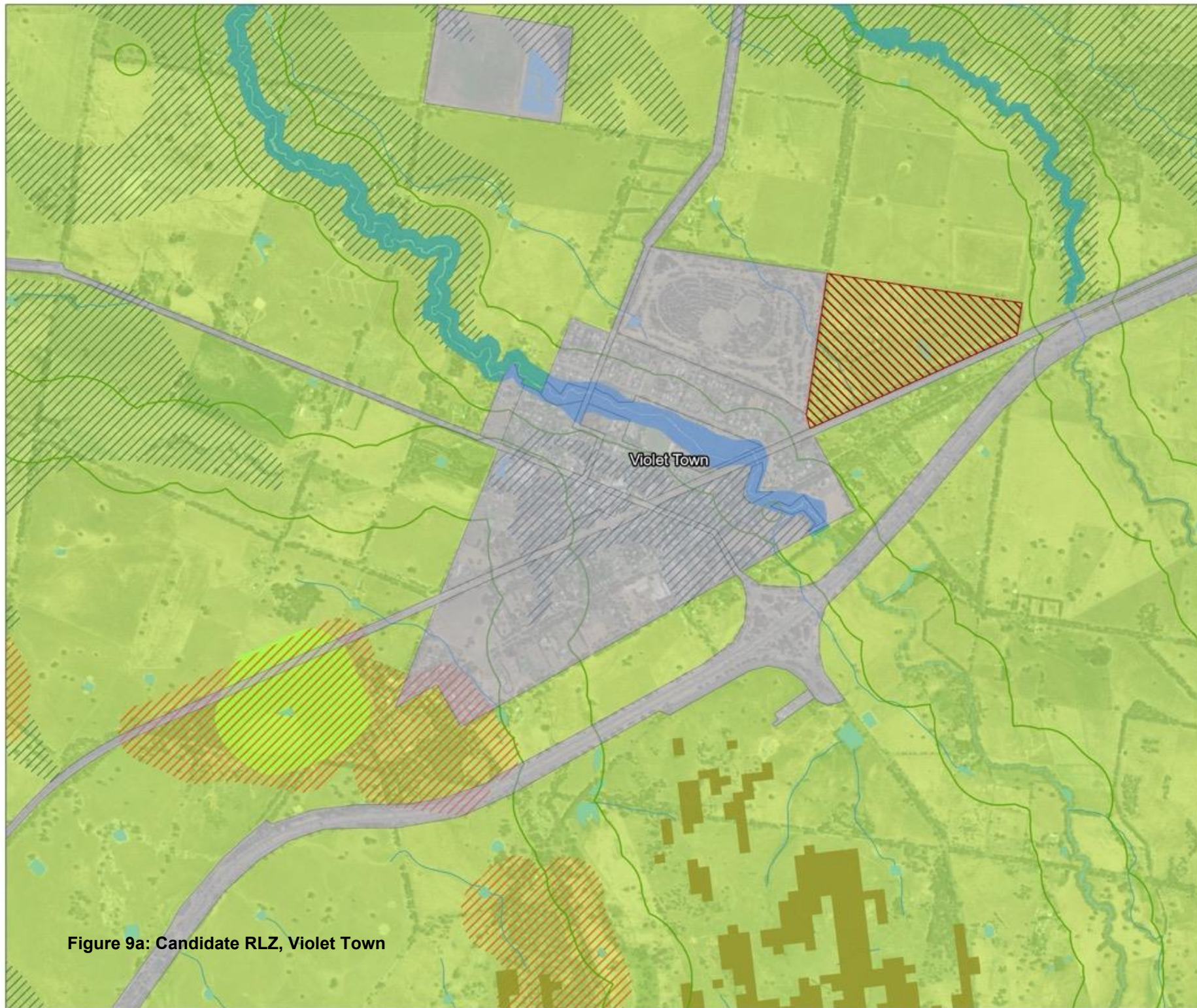
- Are not productive agricultural land;
- Provide reasonable access to existing settlements and infrastructure;
- Avoid areas of high scenic or landscape value;
- Have a low risk of natural hazards, such as bushfire or flooding; and
- Are protected from incompatible uses.

Further RLZ policy is included in Attachment 4.

## IMPLEMENTATION

- Monitor the uptake of Avenel RLZ, specifically around native vegetation and bushfire, to determine whether there is sufficient strategic justification to rezone.
- Consider rezoning existing Euroa RLZ with regard to current and recently updated flood mapping data.
- Consider rezoning additional RLZ areas subject to the identified locational criteria in Violet Town, Nagambie and Euroa (as shown in Figure 9a, Figure 10a and Figure 11a).





# Violet Town

- Legend**
- Constraints**
- Cultural heritage sensitivity
  - Steep slope
  - Waterbody
  - Watercourse
- Environmental Overlays**
- BMO - Bushfire Management Overlay
  - LSIO - Land Subject To Inundation Overlay
  - ESO - Environmental Significance Overlay
  - FO - Floodway Overlay
- Zones**
- FZ - Farming Zone
  - All other zones
  - Proposed location of future Rural Living Zone (RLZ)

↑ 0 500 m  
 Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Prepared by: KR  
 Checked by: KS  
 Date: 21/03/2025  
 Job Number: #1754



Disclaimer: This map has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services described in the contract or agreement between RMCG and the Client. Any findings only apply to the aforementioned circumstances and no greater reliance should be assumed or drawn by the Client.

Figure 9a: Candidate RLZ, Violet Town

# Violet Town Conservation Map

## Legend

- Strathbogie LGA boundary
- Proposed location of future Rural Living Zone (RLZ)
- Constraints**
  - Cultural heritage sensitivity
  - Steep slope
  - Waterbody
  - Watercourse
- Environmental Overlays**
  - BMO - Bushfire Management Overlay
  - LSIO - Land Subject To Inundation Overlay
  - ESO - Environmental Significance Overlay
  - FO - Floodway Overlay
- EVC Conservation Status**
  - Endangered
  - Vulnerable
- FFG Listed Flora and Fauna**
  - Vulnerable



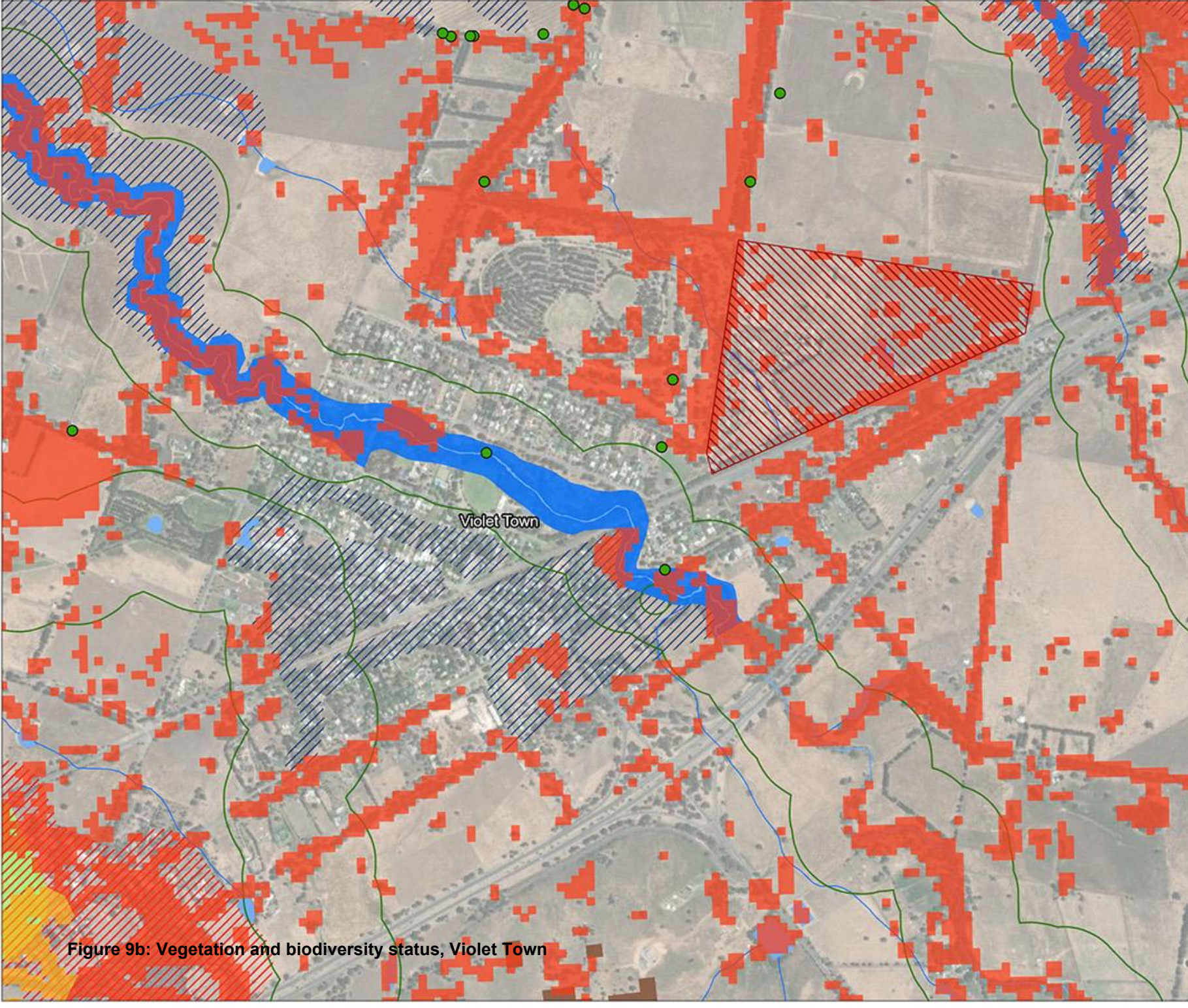
Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA  
Zone 55

Prepared by: KR  
Checked by: KS  
Date: 21/03/2025  
Job Number: #1754

# RMCG

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Figure 9b: Vegetation and biodiversity status, Violet Town




# Nagambie

## Legend




### Constraints

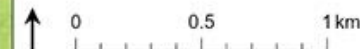
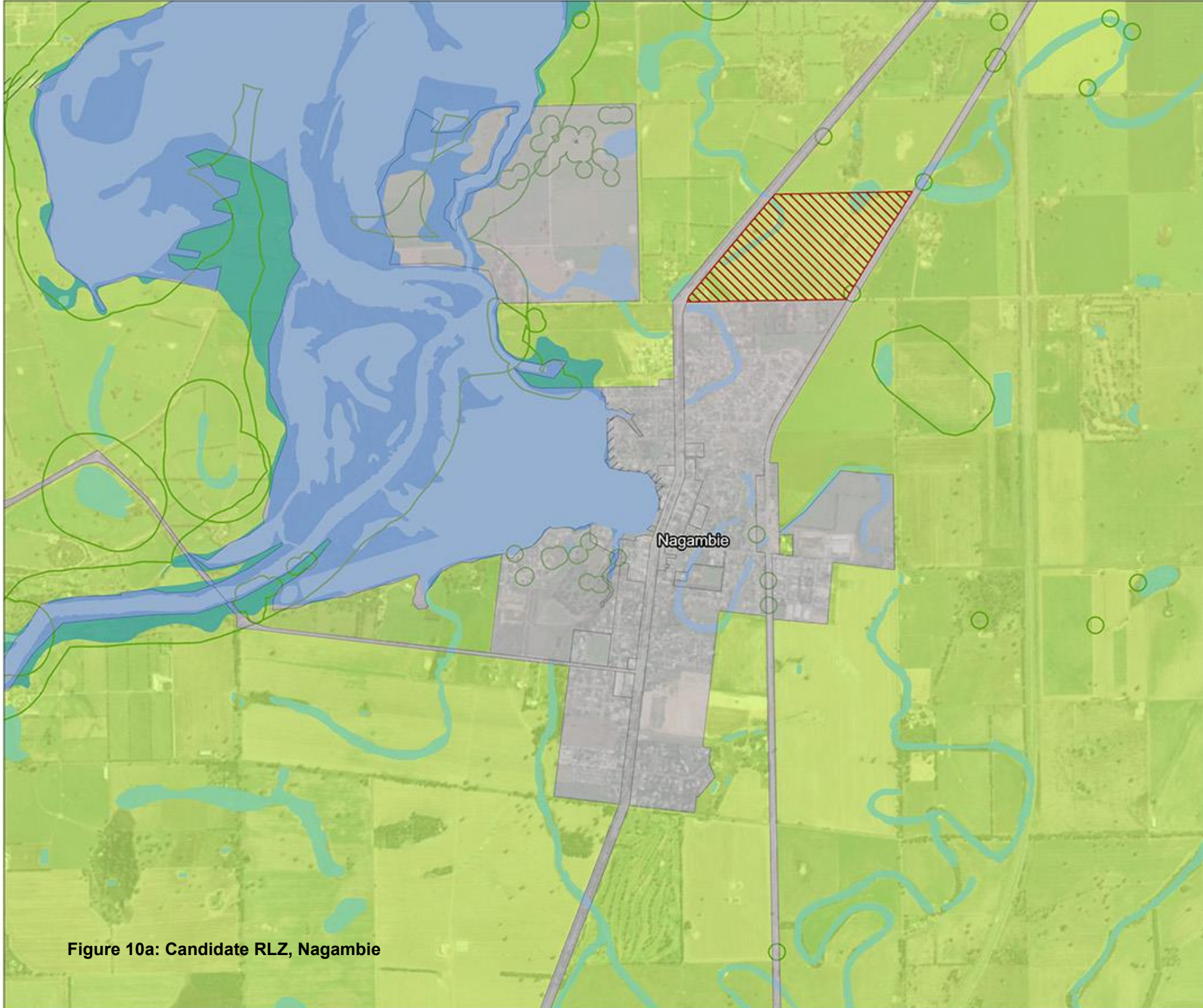
-  Cultural heritage sensitivity
-  Waterbody
-  Watercourse

### Environmental Overlays

-  LSIO - Land Subject To Inundation Overlay
-  FO - Floodway Overlay

### Zones

-  FZ - Farming Zone
-  All other zones
-  Proposed location of future Rural Living Zone (RLZ)



Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Prepared by: KR  
Checked by: KS  
Date: 21/03/2025  
Job Number: #1754



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Figure 10a: Candidate RLZ, Nagambie

# Nagambie Conservation Map

- Legend**
- Strathgowie LGA boundary
  - Proposed location of future Rural Living Zone (RLZ)
- Constraints**
- Cultural heritage sensitivity
  - Waterbody
  - Watercourse
- Environmental Overlays**
- LSIO - Land Subject To Inundation Overlay
  - FO - Floodway Overlay
- EVC Conservation Status**
- Endangered
  - Vulnerable
- FFG Listed Flora and Fauna**
- Critically Endangered
  - Endangered
  - Vulnerable

0 500 m  
Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Prepared by: KR  
Checked by: KS  
Date: 21/03/2025  
Job Number: #1754



Disclaimer: This map has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services described in the contract or agreement between RMCG and the Client. Any findings only apply to the aforementioned circumstances and no greater reliance should be assumed or drawn by the Client.

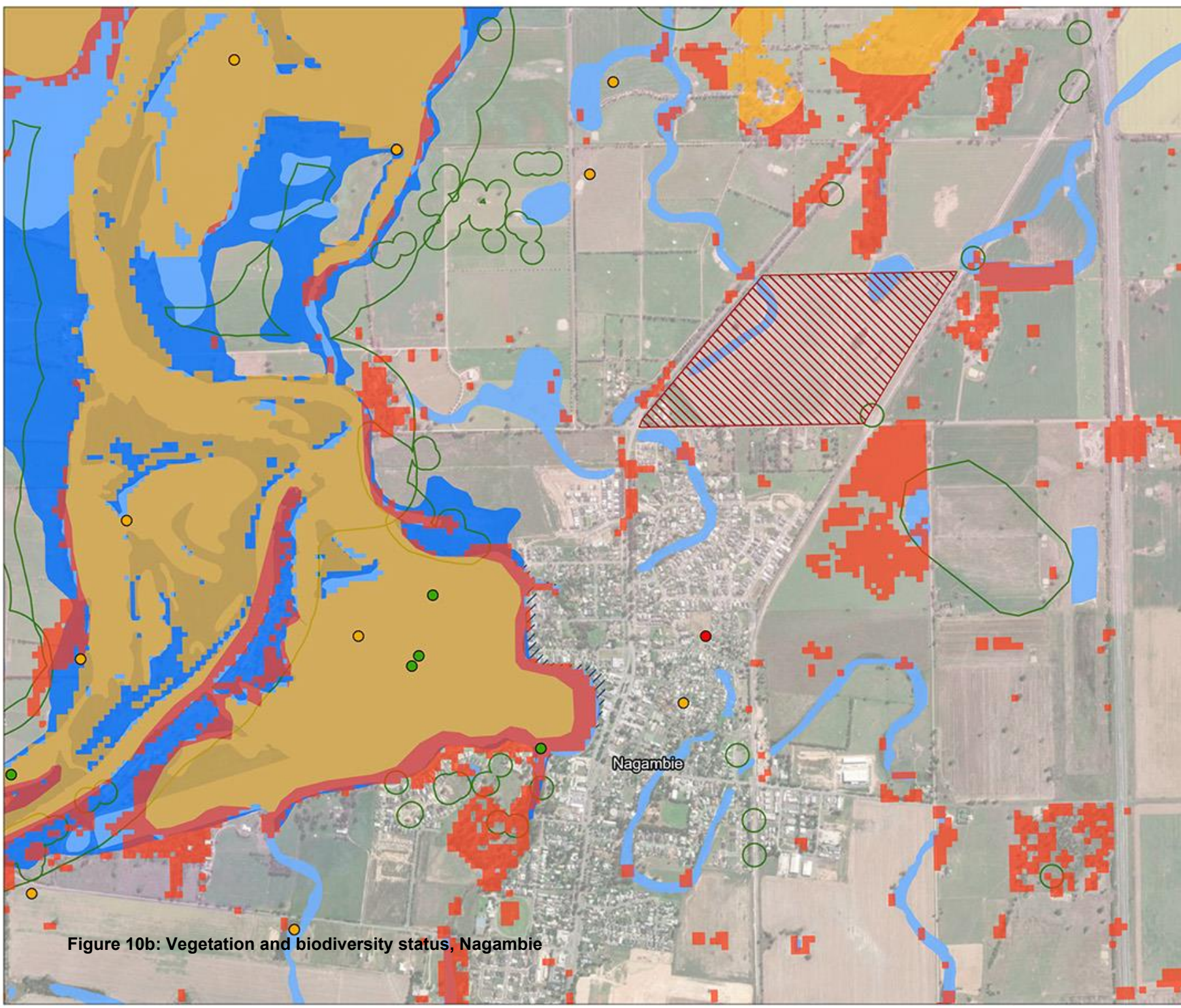
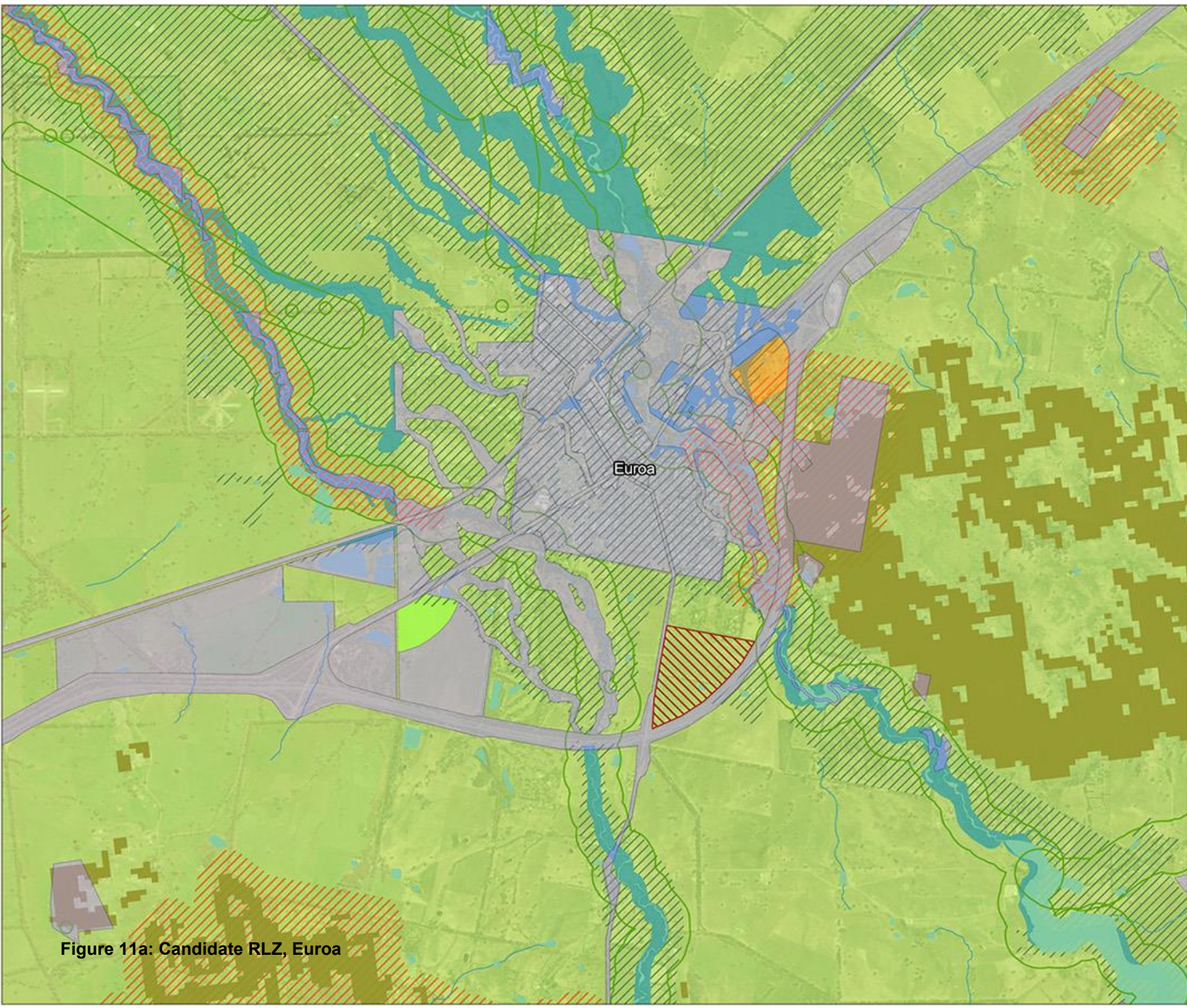


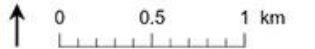
Figure 10b: Vegetation and biodiversity status, Nagambie



**Euroa**

**Legend**

- Constraints**
- Cultural heritage sensitivity
  - Steep slope
  - Waterbody
  - Watercourse
- Environmental Overlays**
- BMO - Bushfire Management Overlay
  - LSIO - Land Subject To Inundation Overlay
  - ESO - Environmental Significance Overlay
  - FO - Floodway Overlay
- Zones**
- FZ - Farming Zone
  - RLZ2 - Rural Living Zone Schedule 2
  - All other zones
  - Proposed location of future Rural Living Zone (RLZ)



Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55















Prepared by: KR  
 Checked by: KS  
 Date: 21/03/2025  
 Job Number: #1754



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Figure 11a: Candidate RLZ, Euroa

# Euroa Conservation Map

- Legend**
-  Strathbogie LGA boundary
  -  Proposed location of future Rural Living Zone (RLZ)
- Constraints**
-  Cultural heritage sensitivity
  -  Steep slope
  -  Waterbody
  -  Watercourse
- Environmental Overlays**
-  BMO - Bushfire Management Overlay
  -  LSIO - Land Subject To Inundation Overlay
  -  ESO - Environmental Significance Overlay
  -  FO - Floodway Overlay
- EVC Conservation Status**
-  Endangered
  -  Vulnerable
- FFG Listed Flora and Fauna**
-  Critically Endangered
  -  Vulnerable

0 400 m  
 Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Prepared by: KR  
 Checked by: KS  
 Date: 21/03/2025  
 Job Number: #1754



Disclaimer: This map has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services described in the contract or agreement between RMCG and the Client. Any findings only apply to the aforementioned circumstances and no greater reliance should be assumed or drawn by the Client.

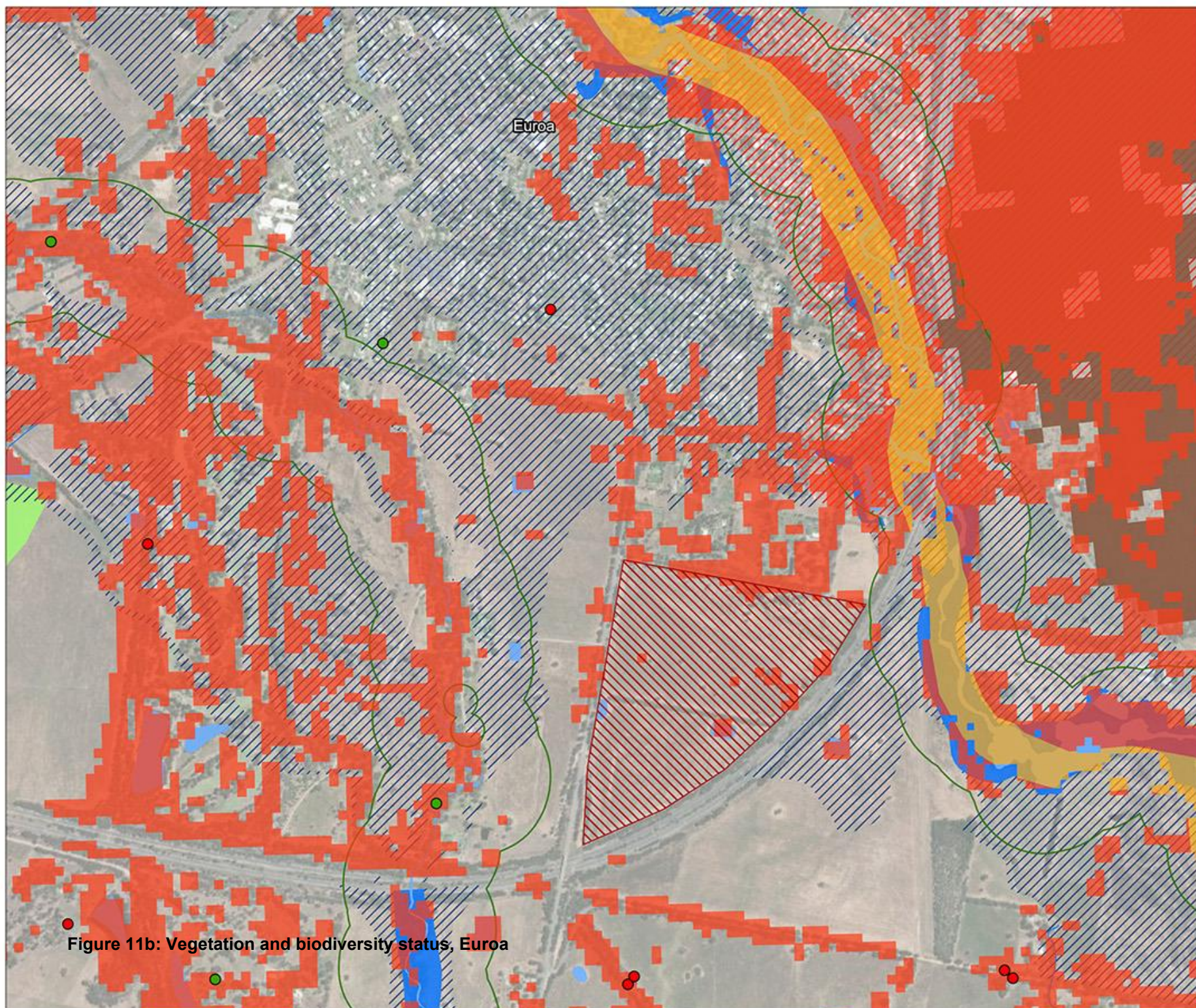


Figure 11b: Vegetation and biodiversity status, Euroa

# Part 4: Implementation



This section presents a consolidated Implementation Plan to realise the vision and objectives for the Strathbogie RRLUS. For each action the Implementation Plan indicates Council's role and the priority of the action.

## COUNCIL'S ROLE

Strathbogie Shire Council will play different roles in the implementation of this Strategy. These will vary between the roles of Planner, Provider, Advocate, Partner, Educator and Regulator. A description of these various roles is provided below.

**Deliver** – Council to lead

**Advocate** – representing community needs and interests to Commonwealth and State Governments and the private sector

**Partner** – working closely with developers, investors, government departments and agencies and peak bodies

**Regulator** – ensuring that rural land uses meet town planning, building and public health regulations and expectations

## PRIORITY

Actions have been prioritised into high, medium, low and ongoing to be completed over the lifetime of the strategy. Priorities should be periodically reviewed and reassessed in line with available budgets, resources and funding opportunities. The timeframe for completing prioritised actions is:

- High – Action to occur over the next 1–2 years
- Medium – Action to occur over the next 3–5 years

- Low – Action to occur over the next 6+ years
- Ongoing – Action to be undertaken on an ongoing basis.

## PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

This Rural Land Use Strategy identifies a number of actions which involve participation and collaboration with State, regional and local organisations to enable their realisation. These include, but are not limited to the agencies listed below.

- Agriculture Victoria
- Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR)
- Regional Development Victoria (RDV)
- Environmental Protection Authority Victoria (EPA VIC)
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA)
- Goulburn Murray Water (GMW)
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation
- Taungurung Land and Waters Council
- Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
- Various Strathbogie Shire Council departments.

ACTION		ROLE OF COUNCIL	PARTNER ORGANISATION	PRIORITY
Planning Scheme Implementation and Future Strategic Work				
1.0	<p>Following Councils adoption of the Strategy a Planning Scheme Amendment should be prepared to embed the recommendations and actions into the Strathbogie Planning Scheme. The following provides a general guide to the statutory implementation:</p> <p><b>Policy Changes:</b></p> <p>Embed the overall vision and strategic directions of the Strategy within the Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>Review and update local policy within the Scheme to reflect the land use and development directions outlined within the Strategy, to guide decision making in particular for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dwellings and subdivision within the Farming and Rural Living Zones.</li> <li>▪ Non-agricultural uses including tourism development within the Farming Zone and Rural Areas.</li> <li>▪ Bushfire risk.</li> <li>▪ Native Vegetation and Biodiversity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Zoning Changes</b></p> <p>Revise the Schedule to the Clause 35.07 (Farming Zone) to a minimum lot size to construct a dwelling without a permit to 80 ha in Area B.</p> <p><b>Background Documents:</b></p> <p>Reference the Rural Residential and Land use strategy as a background document.</p> <p><b>Further Strategic Work:</b></p> <p>Reference all future strategic work outlined in action item 2.0.</p>	Deliver	DTP	High
Further Strategic Work				
2.0	The following future strategic work should be referenced at Clause 74.02 of the Strathbogie Planning Scheme, undertaken as scheduled and subsequently drafted into future planning scheme amendments.	Deliver	DTP	High
2.1	<p>Buffer Area Overlays – Intensive Agriculture</p> <p>Investigate and apply Buffer Area Overlays around all intensive agricultural operations as required. Consider also the translation of the existing ESO1 (Rural Industrial Activities) to a BAO.</p>	Deliver	DTP EPA VIC	Low
2.2	<p>Erosion Management Overlay</p> <p>Review the Erosion Management Overlay to provide content, statement of risk, application requirements and objectives to be achieved.</p>	Deliver	DTP	Medium - Low
2.3	Flood related Planning Controls	Deliver	GBCMA	High

ACTION		ROLE OF COUNCIL	PARTNER ORGANISATION	PRIORITY
	Prepare and undertake a planning scheme amendment to update flood related planning controls (overlays) to reflect the most up to date flood mapping undertaken by Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, to ensure its visibility within the planning scheme.			
2.4	<p>Native Vegetation and Biodiversity</p> <p>Investigate, map and prioritise native vegetation and biodiversity assets in the Shire to inform the application of appropriate planning tools like the Environmental Significance Overlay and Vegetation Protection Overlay where required.</p>	Deliver	DEECA	Medium-Low
2.5	<p>Declared Special Water Supply Catchments</p> <p>Prepare and exhibit an amendment to the Strathbogie Planning Scheme for the application of an Environmental Significance Overlay and other policy settings to spatially recognise the declared water supply catchments, and around potable water offtake points and also reference Councils adopted Domestic Wastewater Management Plan.</p>	Deliver	GMW	Medium - Low
Existing Rural Living and Future Supply				
3.0	Monitor the land take up within Rural Living Zoned land to ensure adequacy of supply.	Deliver		On-going
3.1	Further investigate the rezoning of additional Rural Living zoned land as identified within this Strategy surrounding the towns of Violet Town, Nagambie and Euroa subject to the identified criteria and progress to rezoning once demand requires.	Deliver	DTP	Medium
3.2	Consider rezoning or the application of other suitable planning tools to the existing Euroa Rural Living Zoned land in recognition of the riverine flood risk.	Deliver	GBMCA DTP	Medium - Low
Monitoring and Review				
4.0	Following implementation of the Strategy into the Strathbogie Planning Scheme, the plan will require monitoring and review either through a dedicated review or as part of Councils regular planning scheme review program.	Deliver	DTP	On-going
Cultural Heritage				
5.0	Continue to partner with the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, the Taungurung Land and Waters Council and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs to ensure that key areas of cultural heritage are identified and recognised as areas of significance to inform decision making on land use applications.	Partner	Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation Taungurung Land and Waters Council Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria	On-going
Operational				
6.1	Prepare a new Memorandum of Understanding with Goulburn-Murray Water to identify referral requirements for development in declared water supply catchments and high-risk areas.	Regulator / Partner	GMW	High-Medium

ACTION		ROLE OF COUNCIL	PARTNER ORGANISATION	PRIORITY
6.2	Continue to advocate for the role that Agriculture Victoria plays in assisting Council's planning department for specialty advice.	Advocate	Agriculture Victoria	Ongoing

## PLANNING SCHEME CHANGES

In addition to the inclusion of relevant text from the Strategy to update the MPS, the following updates to the Strathbogie Planning Scheme are recommended:

### FARMING ZONE

Revise the Schedule to the Farming Zone to land in Policy Area 1, specifying a minimum lot size above which a planning permit for a dwelling is not required of 80 ha for Area B.

Introduce local policies or MPS to provide further guidance on the assessment of planning permit applications with regard to:

- Subdivision, including dwelling excisions and small lot subdivision, dwellings and rural workers accommodation in the Farming Zone.
- Non-agricultural uses including tourism uses, in the Farming Zone. Rural Living Zone Consider rezoning existing Euroa RLZ having regard to current and recently updated flood mapping data.

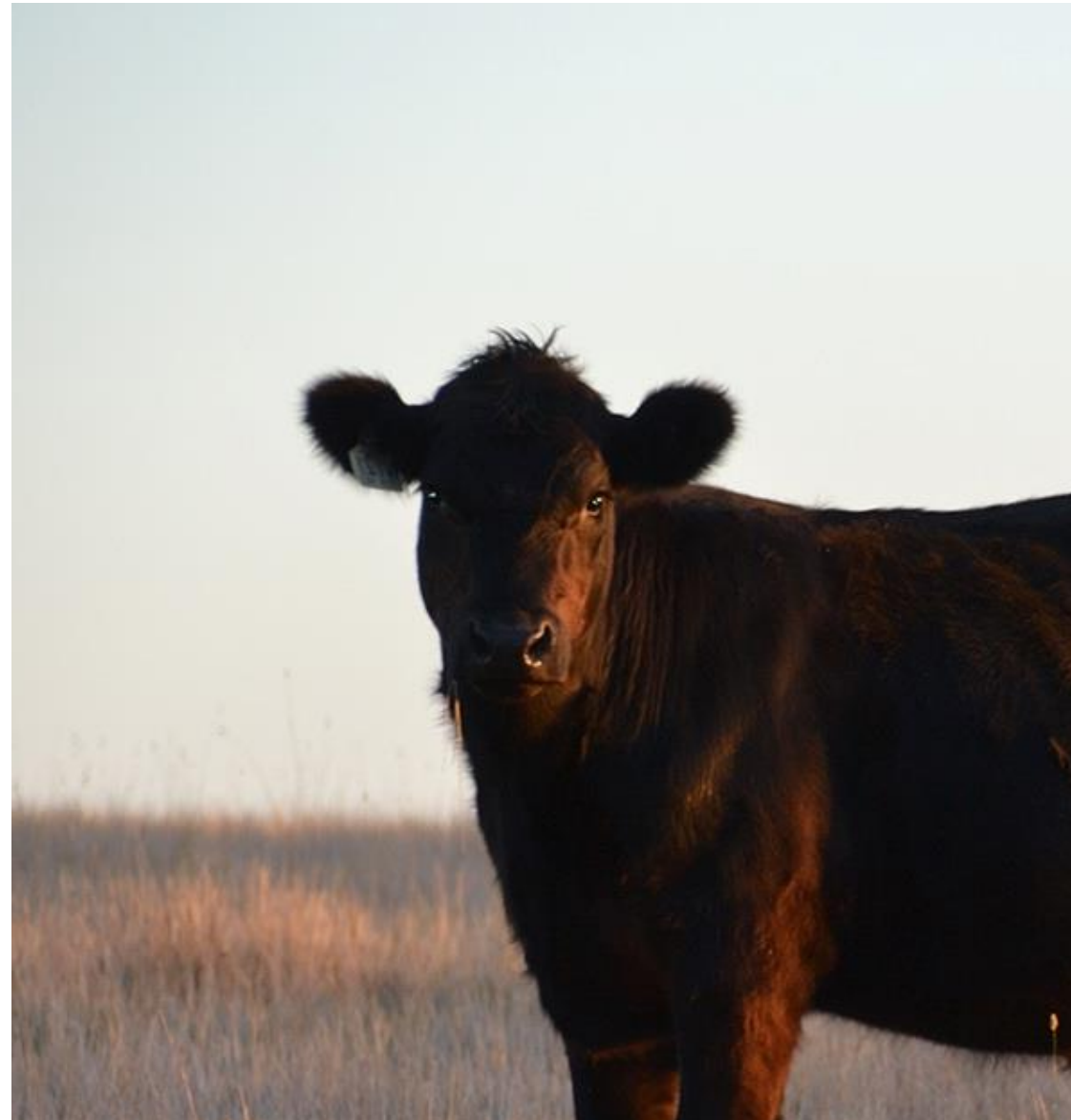
Consider rezoning additional RLZ areas subject to the identified locational criteria in Violet Town, Nagambie and Euroa (as shown in Figure 9a, Figure 10a, and Figure 11a).

### LOCAL POLICY / MPS

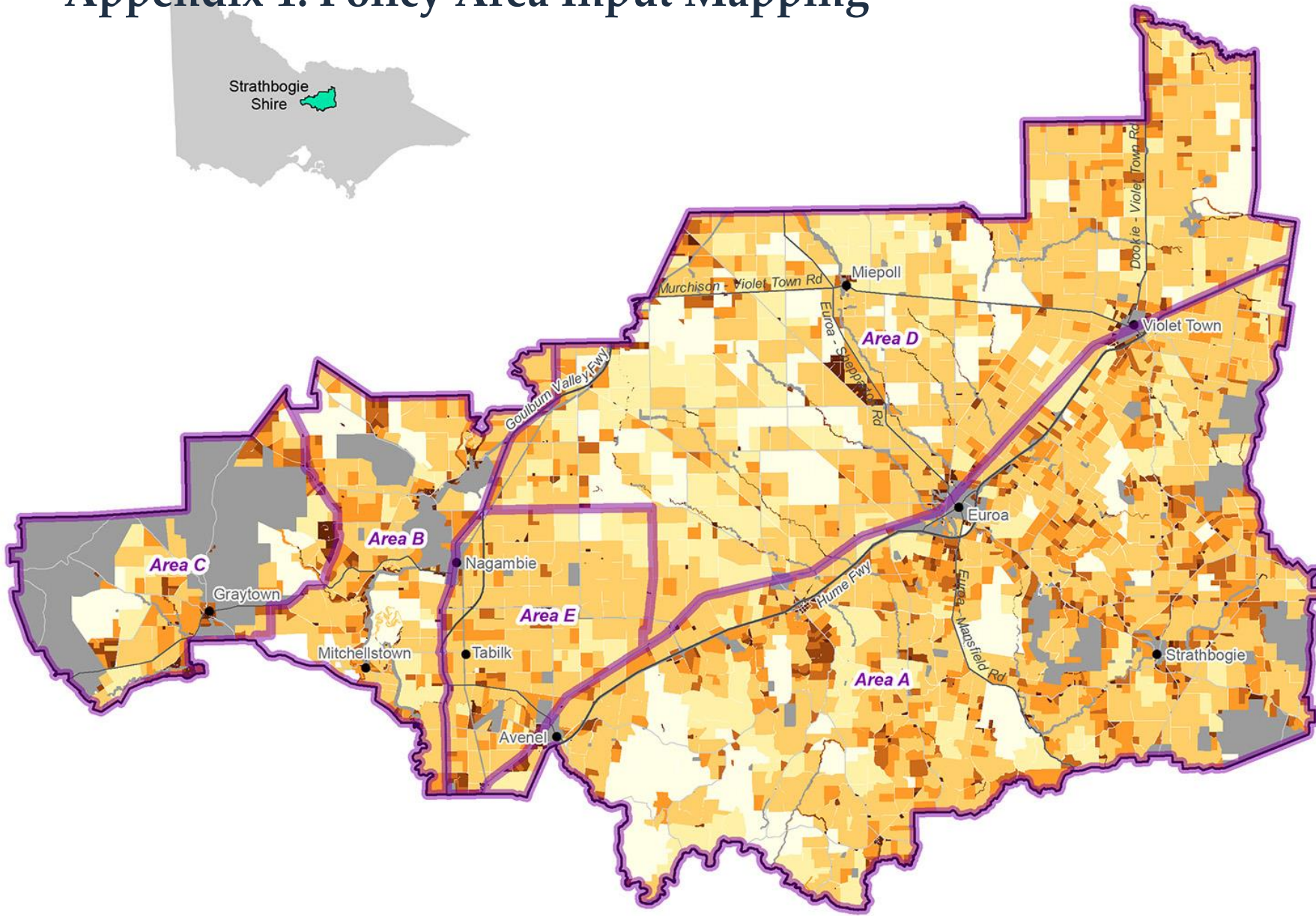
Local policies or MPS should be prepared to provide further guidance on:

- The assessment of planning permit applications within the Farming Zone
- Consideration of landscape protection within the Farming Zone and Rural Living Zone
- Bushfire risk and design requirements for the Rural Living Zone.

- Subdivision and dwellings within the Rural Living Zone that addresses and seeks to create rural living communities that are attractive, safe, accessible, diverse and sustainable.
- Specific areas for the policy to cover, lot design and layout, vegetation, landscaping, bushfire design response and infrastructure. Specific requirements to inform this future policy are located at Appendix 4.



# Appendix 1: Policy Area Input Mapping



## Ownership Size in the Farming Zone

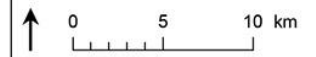
### Strathbogie RLUS

#### Legend

- Town
- Freeway
- Highway / Arterial road
- Road
- LGA boundary
- Land out of scope
- ▭ Farm zone area

#### Ownership size (hectares)

- < 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 40
- 40 - 100
- 100 - 500
- 500 - 1,000
- > 1000



Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

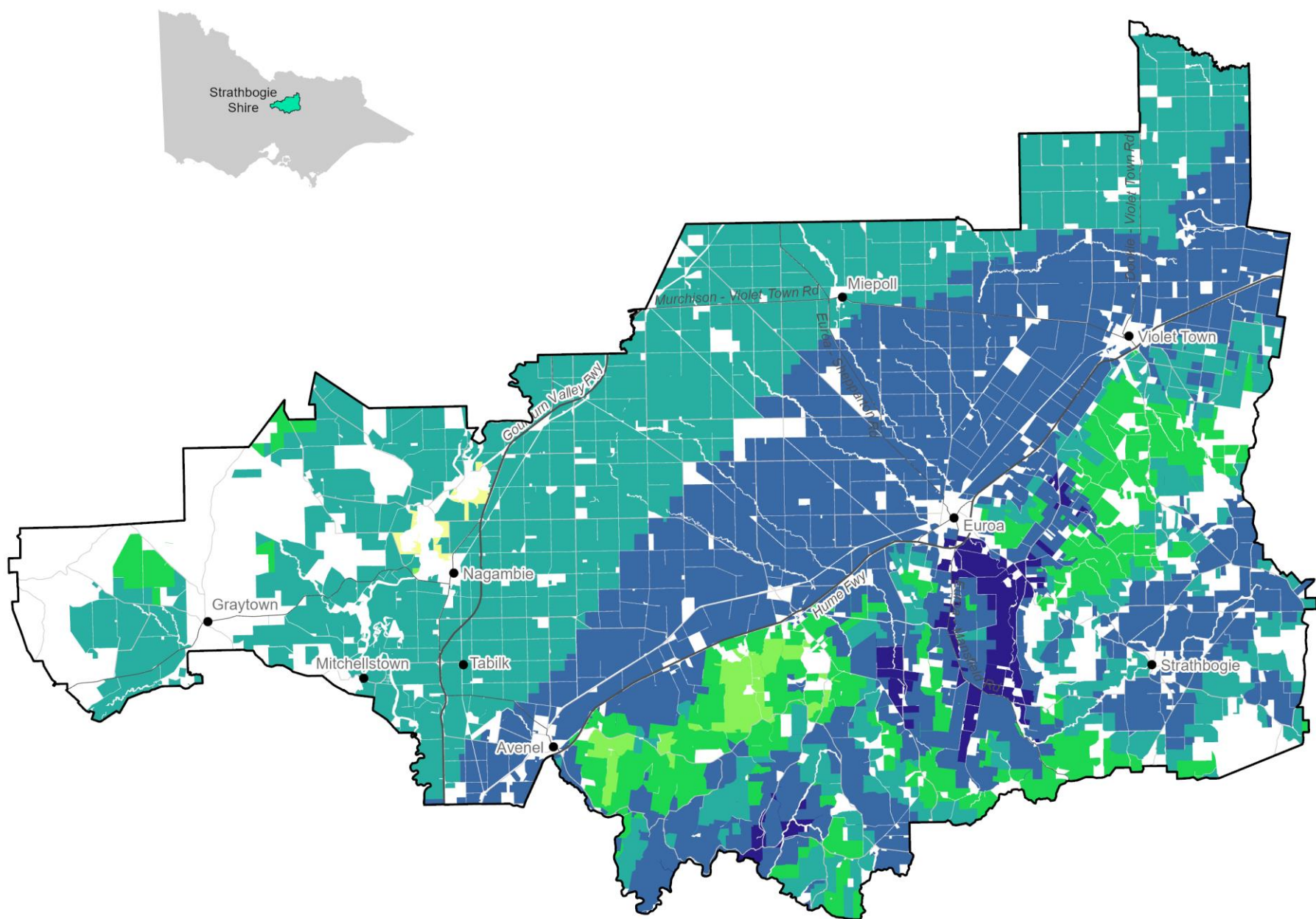
Prepared by: KR  
 Checked by: KS  
 Date: 22/11/2023  
 Job Number: #1754



Disclaimer: This map has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services described in the contract or agreement between RMCG and the Client. Any findings only apply to the aforementioned circumstances and no greater reliance should be assumed or drawn by the Client.

Figure 12: Land Holdings (land in single ownership) in the Farming Zone

# Land Capability



**Legend**

- Town
- Freeway
- Highway / Arterial road
- Road
- Strathbogie LGA boundary

**Land capability**

- Yellow: Lowest
- Light Green
- Green
- Teal
- Blue
- Dark Blue: Highest

0 5 10 km  
Coordinate System: GDA2020 MGA Zone 55

Prepared by: KR  
Checked by: KS  
Date: 28/03/2025  
Job Number: #1754



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Figure 13: Capability of land, Strathbogie Shire\*

\* Mapping of the capability of land within Strathbogie Shire has utilised the Land Systems of Victoria data set, which covers a broad range of land resource information drawn from many field-based studies using varying methodologies over various decades (Figure 13).

A land system is a mapping unit containing a pattern of land components accounting for climate, lithology (geology type), landform, soils and native vegetation. The mapping covers the nature of the land or landform, its capabilities and its condition. The original regional land systems have been reproduced to a common scale of 1:250000 by combining the data and observations from detailed regional studies, including field surveys, with additional mapping to cover those areas not previously described. Despite the dataset being 24 years old, it is the dataset that most accurately represents biophysical factors at a consistent statewide level. Factors include soils, terrain, landform, rainfall and susceptibility to degradation.

Land capability provides the biophysical foundation for long-term sustainable agricultural production. Timely growing season rainfall and soils with good structure and moisture-holding ability help sustain agricultural production in different ways in different parts of Victoria. These biophysical characteristics influence crop yields and livestock stocking rates, particularly in broadacre dryland production systems.



# Appendix 2: Draft Policy

*This example of draft policy addressing new dwellings and subdivision in the Farming Zone is intended to guide council officers in drafting new local policies that align with and implement the objectives of a multi-policy area rural strategic framework.*

## SUBDIVISION – FARMING ZONE

This policy will apply to all land in the Farming Zone in Policy Area 1 and Policy Area 2.

### Objectives

- Limit the fragmentation of rural land by subdivision.
- Ensure that lots created by subdivision are of a sufficient size to be used for agriculture.
- Encourage the consolidation of parcels.
- Discourage the creation of lots that have the potential to interfere with surrounding agricultural activities
- Ensure that lots have access to adequate infrastructure including access to all weather roads.
- Prevent small lot subdivision to meet personal and financial circumstances or to create lots for 'rural lifestyle' purposes.

Any proposal for the subdivision of land to excise an existing dwelling must demonstrate that:

- The existing dwelling is no longer reasonably required for the carrying out of agricultural activities in the long term.
- The dwelling must have established existing use rights or a planning permit under the planning scheme.
- There are beneficial agricultural outcomes by excising the dwelling.
- The balance lot is at least the minimum specified in the schedule to the Farming Zone.
- The excised lot does not include significant farm infrastructure

## DWELLINGS

### POLICY AREA 1

This policy will apply to all land in the Farming Zone in Policy Area 1.

### Objectives

- Discourage the new dwellings not associated with agriculture.
- Ensure that the development does not prejudice existing and future agricultural activities on surrounding land.

When considering an application to construct a new dwelling, the following requirements must be met:

- Discourage new dwellings not associated with or required for the agricultural use of the land.
- Demonstrate that the agricultural use has been established on the land prior to the construction of a dwelling.
- The dwelling is necessary to support the ongoing or planned farming activity on the land and any adjacent land.
- The dwelling is necessary for the operation of and secondary to the use of the land for agriculture.

### POLICY AREA 2

This policy will apply to all land in the Farming Zone in Policy Area 2.

### Objectives

- Support a mix of rural uses, including agriculture, rural tourism and the green economy.
- Consider legitimate environmental benefits in areas with significant environmental values that may be proposed as part of the construction of a dwelling within Policy Area 2.
- Recognise legitimate environmental gains when assessing proposals for new dwellings in areas with significant environmental value within Policy Area 2.
- Foster tourism development that complements both agricultural operations and the natural landscape.

When considering a planning permit application to construct a dwelling in Policy Area 2 under the Farming Zone, the following requirements should be met:

- Discourage a dwelling not associated with or required for the agricultural or environmental use of the land.
- The dwelling is necessary for the operation of and secondary to the use of the land.

## **ALL OTHER DEVELOPMENT IN FARMING ZONE**

Discourage residential, commercial, industrial and other land uses that do not demonstrate a direct link with agricultural land use or rural dependent tourism enterprises.

Discourage use and development not directly required to support the agricultural use of the land.

Protect the continued operation of existing farms, rural enterprises/activities from adverse residential amenity impacts.

Consider reverse buffers to intensive agricultural operations for any new uses.

Support intensive agricultural practices where:

- Separation distances can be contained within the property boundaries.

- Appropriate stormwater management to demonstrate minimal impact on waterways.

Application requirements

- An application to use or subdivide the land to support an agricultural use must be accompanied by an Integrated Land Management Plan, which details the proposed enterprise and explains how the proposal responds to the policy framework and the relevant decision guidelines under the Farming Zone.
- An application to use or subdivide the land to support an environmental outcome must be accompanied by an Environmental Management Plan, which details the proposal and demonstrates how the proposal enhances or contributes to the environmental decision guidelines under the Farming Zone.

# Appendix 3: Integrated Land Management Plan

## INTEGRATED LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN EXAMPLE

A description of the current or proposed farm business, including:

- business goals
- the enterprise (livestock, cropping, haymaking, horticulture, etc) including the scale of the enterprise (land area, number of livestock range)
- farm labour, including owner/manager(s), full-time and part-time employees and seasonal labour
- Ten-year financial projections.

Property description including:

- Proposed and existing structures (dwellings, sheds for shearing, machinery, etc, livestock yards,
- Waterways
- Native vegetation
- Local road network
- Dwellings and other development on adjoining land.
- Location of wind energy or extractive industry facilities within 1 km of the property boundary
- Location of intensive animal husbandry within 1 km of the property boundary
- Land capability Assessment
- Water supply for stock, cropping or horticulture.

Risk assessment - Undertake a land use conflict risk assessment to assess:

- The risk that the development will be impacted by surrounding land uses
- The risk is that the development will impact the operation of surrounding land uses.

Provide details on why a dwelling/rural farm worker accommodation is required, including:

- Why a 24-hour presence is required
- Why rural workers accommodation is required
- The duration of the use of the land for rural worker accommodation.

# References

*Issues and Opportunities Paper* (2024) RMCG and SGS

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census data provided by Kynetec

*Strathbogie Planning Scheme Review* (2023) SD Planning

*Existing Conditions Report* (2024) RMCG and SGS

*Strathbogie Economy, Jobs, and Business Insights* (2025) Remplan

Climate Smart Agricultural Development – Goulburn Broken

<https://gbcma.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=50b1ec366f9a4c79850e29c0c105c9fc#>

[https://ier-study.racingaustralia.horse/state-and-territory-impacts/victoria/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://ier-study.racingaustralia.horse/state-and-territory-impacts/victoria/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

*Hume Regional Growth Plan* (2014) Victorian State Government

*NaturePrint v4.0 Strategic Biodiversity Values* (2021) Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

*SGS Economics and Planning* (2021) Mansfield 2040: Background and Discussion Paper



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**Document review and authorisation**

**Project Number:1754**

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1.0	Draft	04/04/2025	K. Stirling	S. McGuinness	E. Kelly	K. Stirling	Strathbogrie Council
2.0	Final	26/05/2025	K. Stirling S. McGuinness	S. McGuinness	E. Kelly	K. Stirling	Strathbogrie Council
3.0	Final	03/07/2025	K. Stirling S. McGuinness	K. Stirling	-	K. Stirling	Strathbogrie Council