

22.0119/01/2006
VC37**MACEDON RANGES AND SURROUNDS**

This Policy applies to the Macedon Ranges and their surrounds as indicated on the plan marked "Macedon Ranges" and referred to in this policy as the policy area. This Policy is a restatement of "Statement of Planning Policy No. 8 – Macedon Ranges and Surrounds" as approved by the Victorian Government in 1975.

Policy Basis

The policy is directed primarily to the planning and management necessary for the conservation and utilisation of the policy area both as a water catchment for urban and local supply and as a location of State, metropolitan and local importance for leisure activities and nature conservation.

Policy

It is policy that:

- Protection and utilisation of the resources of the policy area for water supply, tourism and recreation, and nature conservation must be the primary concern.
- Where appropriate, due account must be given to the value of the area for forestry and agriculture.
- All development in proclaimed water catchment areas and in elevated areas must be strictly limited and regulated to protect water quality, and maintain or enhance natural systems and landscape character.
- Planning for recreation and leisure must be directed predominantly towards activities, which require natural or semi-natural surroundings and must be integrated with planning for water catchment management and nature conservation so as to minimise conflicts.
- There must be no further subdivision for outward urban extension of the Mt. Macedon settlement or for extension generally northerly of the Macedon township.
- Elsewhere in the policy area urban development must be provided for only in association with township areas and must be coordinated on a regional basis.
- Development to be permitted in urban and rural areas must be planned to achieve harmony with the natural environment and to maintain both the generally rural character and high landscape values of the policy area.
- All development of an urban character must be connected to or provided with, a high-grade system for the treatment and disposal of waste materials and effluents.
- Planning and management of the resources of the policy area must take into account not only the interests of the Victorian community but also the needs and views of the local community.

Major Influencing Factors

- The outstanding quality and range of the natural resources of the policy area, having regard particularly to its close proximity to Melbourne and its special value and availability to the people of the northern and western sectors of the metropolis.

- The importance of the water resources of the policy area to urban and local water supply systems, together with the sensitive relationship between land use in water catchments and the quality of water produced from them.
- The rare concentration of a wide variety of species and structural forms of vegetation on both public and private land within the relatively small area covered by the policy, which provides habitats for the wide variety of native fauna.
- The importance of the area for recreation both for residents and visitors, especially in the context of the increasing need for a balanced distribution of outlets for leisure activities for the metropolitan community.
- The existing and potential conflict between recreation activities and both water catchment management and nature conservation.
- The distinctive character of the policy area deriving from its complex geological features of scientific and educational value.
- The high quality of landscapes, both natural and man-made in the policy area.
- The physical attractiveness of the policy area, which increasingly generates demand for residential development.
- The extensive and indiscriminate past subdivision of the policy area.
- The unacceptable detriment to the valuable landscape, recreation, water and nature conservation resources, which would ensue if all subdivided land in the policy area were to be developed for residential purposes – and the need to develop equitable policies to avoid that result.
- The extent of demand for and speculation in land in the policy area giving rise to escalating land prices which counter economic farming and result in accelerating pressures for further subdivision.
- The special problems of landscape protection, soil conservation, drainage, access and provision of services, which occur when elevated and steeply sloping land is used for residential purposes.
- The fire hazard resulting from the combination of flammable fuels, buildings and general human activities in forest environments.
- The potential conflict between the provision of access for effective fire protection and the restriction of public access in the interests of the conservation of flora, fauna and water.
- The important role of existing settlements in relation to the character, functioning and future of the policy area.
- The development of Melton and Sunbury has increased pressures for use of water from and recreation resources in the policy area.
- The potential for conflict between the interests of metropolitan and local communities and the importance of adequate recognition of both.

Implementation

In implementing this policy every department, public authority, planning authority and responsible authority, where appropriate to its function, must pay special attention to the following:-

Co-ordination of development

- The formulation and application of an efficient system of management designed to ensure co-ordination of planning and careful regulation of the use and development of private and public land.

Conservation and recreation

- The preparation of a positive, comprehensive and coordinated conservation and recreation strategy for the policy area which:-
 - Is consistent with long term water catchment management objectives;
 - Takes account of the various values of all lands in the policy area for nature conservation and for satisfying a broad range of recreational needs;
 - Makes provision for the conservation of landscapes, flora and fauna and the protection of natural systems;
 - Provides for the location, planning and management of recreation and tourist facilities and associated services;
 - Provides for the protection or enhancement of areas and improvements of cultural or historical value; and
 - Makes positive proposals for implementation of the strategy.

Habitat

- The definition and management of a system of areas suitably arrayed to provide adequate variety and extent of habitat to enable the conservation of the diverse wildlife in the policy area.

Water Conservation

- The co-ordination of all activities and policies relating to water conservation and use to ensure:-
 - The integration of those policies and activities with overall planning and land use policies;
 - Efficiency in catchment management and in the conservation, distribution and utilisation of water;
 - Prevention of pollution; and
 - Proper provision for fire protection.

Fire Hazard and Access

- Regulation of the use and development of land and where necessary its reservation to minimise fire hazard.
- The design construction and maintenance of an integrated network of access routes so as to provide for:-
 - Minimum interference with the environment of the policy area;
 - Routes of different standards appropriate to the particular functions for which they are planned;

- The utilisation, management and fire protection of the area; and
- The regulation of usage of routes where necessary for the protection of resource values.

Subdivision

- Control of subdivisions to ensure that the pattern and size is consistent with the policy and to safeguard against subdivision in advance of selection and approval of appropriate future use.
- Review and evaluation of existing subdivisions and their capacity for development without detriment to the area, and formulation of equitable policies and protective measures to avoid such detriment.
- Formulation of restraints and proposals designed to reduce potential intensity of use and development, particularly in areas of strategic importance.

Landscape

- Preservation and enhancement of landscape by reservation or regulation of the use of land, paying particular attention to:-
 - Landscape areas and vantage points of high quality; and
 - Visual sequences along access routes.
- The preservation of landforms and geological features of special scientific or educational value.
- Formulation of suggested standards for the siting and appearance of buildings and other developments, particularly in recreation and tourist areas and areas of special landscape value, and provision for consultation thereon.

Infrastructure

- Provision of drainage, sewerage, utilities and social services in keeping with the special demands and restraints placed upon the policy area.

Consultation

- The development of programs to foster public participation in the planning process is required to enable assessment of the needs and views of the local community, and to assist in reconciling State and local interests.

Policy Reference Documents

- Macedon Ranges and Surrounds – Report of Studies for the Preparation of Statement of Planning Policy Number 8, Town and Country Planning Board, 1975.
- Statement of Planning Policy No 8 – Macedon Ranges and Surrounds, Government of Victoria, 1975.
- Macedon Ranges Cultural Heritage and Landscape Study, Trevor Budge & Associates, 1994.

