

21.0508/12/2016
C37**ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES**

This clause provides local content to support Clause 12 (Environmental and landscape values) and Clause 14 (Natural resource management).

The Council Plan 2013-2017 is committed to the following environmental and natural resource management issues:

- *Implement the key adopted actions of Council's Environment Strategy*
- *Continue to advocate for meaningful resourcing for weed control, making use of the Pest, Plants and Animals Plan as a resource*
- *Review and implement the Waste Management Strategy*
- *Prepare a Shire-wide drainage strategy, and progressively implement Mansfield township's Drainage Strategy*
- *Complete Lake Eildon Recreational Boating Facilities Improvement Plan*

21.05-108/12/2016
C37**Landscapes****Overview**

Landscape features include Mounts Buller, Stirling, Terrible and the Great Dividing Range. Natural environment features include parts of the Eildon and Alpine National Parks.

Mount Buller and Mount Stirling are within the Alpine National Park. Mount Buller is Victoria's most popular ski resort with approximately 350,000 visitors annually.

The alpine vista to Mount Buller and Mount Stirling is of state significance and requires protection from inappropriate development. The approaches to the mountains and its influence on Mansfield and surrounds during the winter months, requires special planning consideration by Council. Mount Stirling generates significant visitor numbers in its own right for activities such as cross country skiing and bushwalking.

Scenic value of the foothills, valleys and cleared grazing country is a characteristic of the district and of intrinsic importance to the landscape and requires careful management of development.

Key issues

- Protecting the landscape character of the Shire.
- Managing development in significant landscapes.

Objective 1

To recognise and protect the environmental and landscape significance of the broader alpine approach areas.

Strategies

- Strategy 1.1 Protect significant landscape features, large old trees, visually significant ridges and view corridors of the Shire.

21.05-2**Flora and fauna**08/12/2016
C37**Overview**

There are a number of activities that threaten local biodiversity in the municipality.

Large areas of native vegetation have been cleared for agriculture, especially in the Mansfield basin. Although the current rate of clearing is much reduced, the incremental loss of remaining habitat is a major issue. Potential threats to remnant vegetation can include clearing, (including removal of single paddock trees), salinity, roadside management, lack of regeneration, inappropriate fire regimes, and disturbance and damage including that caused by livestock grazing.

Roadsides provide some of the most significant examples of native habitat and these require protection. There are a number of endangered, vulnerable or depleted Ecological Vegetation Classes, including Plains Grassy Woodland, Grassy Woodland, Herb-rich Woodland and Valley Grassy Forest.

There are numerous threatened plant species and fauna species including the nationally listed threatened community Grassy White Box Woodland. Protection of remnant vegetation is a high priority because it protects the biodiversity of the area.

Riparian zone vegetation is particularly important for the protection of native habitat and biodiversity values, but also for the benefits to water quality that result from riparian buffer zones with a width of at least 30 metres.

A Roadside Conservation Management Plan was completed in 2014.

Key issues

- Need for conservation and enhancement of the municipality's biodiversity.
- Removal of native vegetation and its effect on the environment, scenic values and fauna. and in particular:
 - Protection of significant vegetation communities, especially from higher residential densities, which leads to fragmentation and incremental clearing and disturbance.
 - Protection of large old paddock trees, which have significant habitat and landscape value, especially in the context of the intensification of land use, including residential and rural living developments.
 - Protection and management of roadside vegetation.
 - Protection of native grasslands from conversion and disturbance.
 - Increased demand for timber harvesting on private property.
- Implementing the *Roadside Conservation Management Plan 2014* in the planning scheme.

Objective 1

To maintain biodiversity.

Strategies

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| Strategy 1.1 | Protect areas of remnant vegetation, including roadside vegetation, scattered trees and native grasslands. |
| Strategy 1.2 | Seek a balance between maintaining biodiversity values and encouraging appropriate development. |

- Strategy 1.3 Prevent unjustified removal of native vegetation as well as enable recovery of threatened species and communities through application of the risk-based approach of the *Permitted clearing of native vegetation - Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines*.
- Strategy 1.4 Ensure residential and rural living developments protect remnant vegetation.
- Strategy 1.5 Use at least a 30 metre buffer zone of native vegetation along waterways and natural drainage corridors.
- Strategy 1.6 Support eradication programs for pest plants and animals.

21.05-3
08/12/2016
C37

Water catchment planning

Overview

The upper catchments of the Broken and Goulburn Rivers provide 11 percent of the entire water resource of the Murray Darling Basin; which warrants its recognition and protection. The Goulburn Broken Catchment is one of Victoria's highest priorities for nutrient reduction. This includes the Upper Delatite Special Water Supply Catchment which is the source of the Mansfield Township water supply. Major sources of nutrients include treated effluent, sediment mobilisation and urban stormwater run-off.

Water features include the Broken, Goulburn, Delatite, Jamieson, Howqua and Big Rivers, the Brankeet, Merton and Fords Creeks, Lake Eildon and Lake Nillahcootie. The Broken River has its headwaters north of Mansfield and flows through Lake Nillahcootie on its way to Shepparton and the Goulburn River.

Fords Creek, which flows through Mansfield to Lake Eildon, has been identified as carrying large amounts of salt. Consequently the surrounding environs can be expected to have significant dry-land salinity occurring in the next fifty years. The areas around the Brankeet and Merton Creeks, which are recognised as existing saline streams, are also at risk.

Lake Eildon and Lake Nillahcootie are artificial water storage lakes and significant economic, environmental and tourism resources. However, the primary function of these lakes is to regulate water supply to downstream irrigation areas. Lake Eildon and Lake Nillahcootie are both within Special Water Supply Catchments.

Lake Eildon is Victoria's largest artificial lake and one of its major water storages. In addition to this role, Eildon is a popular tourist destination for water-based activities such as house boating, fishing and water skiing. The proximity to Melbourne has also made its environs popular for the establishment of 'weekenders' and holiday homes. Demand for these activities has placed pressure on the lake environment, largely as a result of adhoc and development and subdivision in the past. Onsite wastewater management is a key issue. In this regard Council has adopted the *Mansfield Shire Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2014*. It provides a framework for the consideration of development in unsewered areas and will be implemented in the planning scheme in the near future.

Key issues

- The cumulative impacts of onsite wastewater treatment systems within declared water supply catchments.
- Balancing development with the need to protect water quality.
- Pressure from residential and recreational uses on water quality and the environs of waterways and lakes.

- Land use and development of land abutting Lake Eildon and Lake Nillahcootie needs to be carefully assessed having regard to their attributes and ensuring that water quality, biodiversity and the visual amenity of the landscape is not prejudiced.
- Implementing the *Mansfield Shire Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2014*.

Objective 1

To recognise and protect the environmental significance of the Special Water Supply Catchments.

Strategies

- Strategy 1.1 Ensure best practice Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) techniques are used in new urban and rural development.
- Strategy 1.2 Prevent development in the catchment that is detrimental to water quality.
- Strategy 1.3 Discouraging further development in Special Water Supply Catchments, particularly new rural residential estates on the lakes' shores.
- Strategy 1.4 Provide a riparian buffer of at least 30 metres to development.
- Strategy 1.5 Discourage land uses in the upper catchments of the Broken, Goulburn, Howqua, Delatite and Big Rivers that would contribute to the degradation of downstream water quality.
- Strategy 1.6 Improve the quality of urban stormwater entering the catchment.

21.05-4

08/12/2016
C37

Further strategic work

- Implement the *Mansfield Shire Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2014*.
- Implement the *Roadside Conservation Management Plan 2014*.