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C20**TIMBER PLANTATIONS**

This policy applies to the establishment of timber plantations in the Significant Landscape Overlay and Environmental Significance Overlay.

Policy basis

The timber plantations are a major land use in the Shire. The Shire seeks to encourage timber plantations to locate outside areas of high quality agricultural land, riverine environments and areas containing significant landscapes.

The location of timber plantations adjacent to roads and highways can have effects on the safety of roads and access, including through the formation of black ice. Proposals will be considered having regard to the Code of Practice for Timber Production and the Council prepared "*Management Prescriptions for Plantation Establishment, Harvesting and Cartage, 1998*".

The Shire seeks to work with companies in support of the establishment of plantations in appropriate locations outside the sensitive areas referred to in this clause and in locations where it can be demonstrated that the Shire is not exposed to additional road maintenance costs as a result of new plantation activity.

Objectives

- To minimise the effects on the natural environment from plantation establishment, operations and harvesting, in particular effects on catchment water yields and water quality.
- To discourage the location of new timber plantations in areas recognised as known to provide high quality agricultural land as defined by the Environmental Significance Overlay and significant landscapes as defined by the Significant Landscape Overlay.
- To ensure high standards of road safety and access in timber production areas, in addition to providing the opportunity for the timber industry to make a fair contribution to the upgrading of local road networks and bridges where required.
- To ensure that adequate road infrastructure is provided to new plantations and that preference is for upgrading existing roads and use of road alignments rather than creation of new access.

Policy

It is policy that:

- Timber plantations are discouraged in areas containing the Environmental Significance Overlay and Significant Landscape Overlay.
- Timber plantations located adjacent to roads need to be setback an appropriate distance to allow solar access onto road surfaces, so as to prevent the formation of black ice.
- Timber plantations must comply with the Code of Practice for Timber Production and the Council's *Management Prescriptions for Plantation Establishment, Harvesting and Cartage, 1998*.
- Timber plantations will contribute to the upgrade of local roads and bridges as deemed necessary by the Shire, to maintain the road network in a condition equivalent to what existed prior to the timber plantation being established.
- A Plantation Management Plan shall accompany all applications and include:
 - Proposed plantation species, design and layout, including location of internal and perimeter roads
 - Details in regard to infrastructure, external to the site and clarification on the adequacy to meet the continuing needs of existing users

- The location of and proposed measures to protect any waterway, areas of special value for flora or fauna habitat, steep slopes or areas otherwise vulnerable to land degradation
- The context of the site in relation to adjoining or nearby areas or features of environmental or landscape significance, to roads accessible to the public and the propose means of ameliorating potential effects on them
- A visual analysis of the site addressing the impact of the plantation and the clearing of the site on the vistas from adjoining and public places
- Proposals for fire protection and management of the fire risk
- Plantation management practices relating to herbicide use, weed management and feral animal control
- Anticipated timeframes for thinning and harvesting and any access requirements (road standards, bridge widths and load limits etc) likely to apply to Shire owned infrastructure, particularly where this involves upgrades of existing provision
- Estimates of employment to be created in establishment, maintenance, harvesting and processing, if any, of the timber from the plantations.
- Details of harvesting arrangements, including sediment control and harvesting access.
- An analysis of the hydrological impacts of the proposed plantation.

Policy reference

North East Regional Catchment Strategy, 2004.

Code of Practice for Timber Production, 2007.

Management Prescriptions for Plantation Establishment, Harvesting and Cartage, 1998.