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KEY ISSUES AND INFLUENCES

The following “key issues and influences” have shaped the strategic directions and planning controls contained in this scheme.

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Settlement and Housing

- The Shire’s ageing population will create more diverse and differing demand for community facilities and resources than the Shire experiences currently.
- Maintaining healthy communities through all age cohorts in the population, and the link between urban planning and health is seen as being increasingly important to the Shire.
- It is more efficient to provide for population growth, housing and other non-rural development in existing townships to take advantage of existing infrastructure.
- The value of the Shire’s agricultural sector will be diminished if high quality agricultural land is fragmented and lost from production.
- Rural residential development is an important lifestyle feature of the Shire.
- Sale competes with other regional centres for investment and employment.
- The Shire’s coastal areas are under increasing redevelopment pressure.
- Many developed areas and areas subject to development pressure are compromised by not having reticulated sewerage and by inadequate stormwater drainage.
- Physical activity and social interaction are important urban design principles in the Shire’s main towns.

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Environment and Landscape Values

- The Shire’s ecological and landscape features are important State and national assets.
- The Shire’s coastal and riverine environments are sensitive to inappropriate development and can be easily and irreversibly damaged.
- The Shire’s coastal landscapes are highly sensitive to visible changes, such as inappropriately scaled or sited built form or changes to the existing vegetation patterns.
- The Shire has areas of high value biodiversity habitat.

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Environmental Risks

- The Shire contains areas of land that are liable to flooding and susceptible to fire.
- Inadequate drainage and sewerage services can lead to significant environmental degradation.
- Many developed areas and areas subject to development pressure are compromised by not having reticulated sewerage and by inadequate stormwater drainage.
- Land capability is an important consideration for most land use activities in the Shire.

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Natural Resource Management

- The economy and lifestyle enjoyed by the Wellington Shire community is closely linked to the Shire’s unique natural environment. The Shire’s natural resources have provided the foundation upon which the Wellington community has developed and prospered. The future development of the Shire will continue to depend on the utilisation, management and protection of these natural resources. The protection and sustainable development of the Shire’s natural resources must, therefore, be important principles in guiding future development.
- Water catchments are vital to the Shire’s prosperity and are highly sensitive to inappropriate development.

- The natural resource base provides a significant economic opportunity for the Shire.
- The *West Gippsland CMA Regional Catchment Strategy, 2013-2019* (or any superseding document) is the principal natural resource management strategy for the region. Key issues in the Regional Catchment Strategy include appropriate planning for coastal areas and the Gippsland Lakes.
- Natural resources, such as brown coal reserves, are important State assets that must be protected for future use.

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Built Environment and Heritage

- The Shire's cultural and heritage features are important State and national assets.
- Community viability, social interaction and healthy living can be enhanced by a well designed urban environment, streetscapes and infrastructure to facilitate physical activity and linkages to open space.

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Economic Development

- The Shire's main industries include dairying, beef production, timber production and industries based on oil and gas exploration.
- Sustainability is often a critical consideration in terms of economic development and employment creation.
- Long term prosperity will rely on the diversification and strengthening of the Shire's economic base.
- The diversity of economic activity within Sale and the wider Wellington Shire is a key economic strength.
- Sale is the primary service centre within the municipality and its economy has an impact on adjoining towns, as well as the wider region.
- The environmental diversity of the Shire is a key tourism opportunity.
- Agriculture, rural and timber industries are of fundamental importance to the Shire's economic prosperity as well as economies of the region, State and nation.
- High quality agricultural land, particularly in the Macalister Irrigation District, is the cornerstone of the Shire's agricultural sector.
- The Shire's airfields provide important economic development opportunities that can be compromised by inappropriate use and development.
- The natural resource base provides a significant economic opportunity for the Shire. Future strategic industries, including tourism, horticulture, dairying, timber production, viticulture, value adding industries and other niche industries will depend on the maintenance and improvement of the natural environment.
- The Shire's rural areas make a significant contribution to the economic well being of the community.
- The value of the Shire's agricultural sector will be diminished if high quality agricultural land is fragmented and lost from production.

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Transport

- The Princes Highway, Hyland Highway and South Gippsland Highway and Bairnsdale Rail Line are key transport routes providing access between and within the Shire.

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Infrastructure

- Urban infrastructure is expensive to provide and its development requires long lead times.