

21.05 SETTLEMENT

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21.05-1 Growth of towns

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Overview

The West Wimmera Shire retains a distinctive pattern of urban development based on separate townships and settlements that have developed as a result of historical, locational and environmental factors. The predominant towns in the West Wimmera Shire are Edenhope, Kaniva, Harrow and Goroke. There are also a number of smaller settlements located throughout the Shire. Each retains its own local history and culture, individual character and roles, which contributes to a sense of place and community association. There is a reasonably clear hierarchy among the towns and villages related to their function and the range of services and facilities provided.

The towns and settlements in the Shire have important roles as service and business centres and as a focus for community activities. Further development in the main towns should be encouraged to increase their population so as to support a wider range of services and facilities in those towns.

The Shire is well served by a range of community services which are integral to maintaining communities. Accordingly, there is the need to retain the existing provision and standard of services in a manner which is both economically and socially sustainable.

There are a number of community clubs, groups and associations currently active in the Shire which make up the fabric of the towns and villages. They are the focus for the community, particularly in generating social activities and maintaining community spirit, interest and association. There has been a shift towards greater self-determination and management by communities as a result of the restructuring of governments functions. This has led to a contraction of public funding and greater promotion of self-sufficiency in communities. The encouragement of self sufficiency within the community is most effectively promoted through the various clubs, groups and associations.

Structure Plans for all towns that inform the Local Areas section in Clause 21.10. These provide more specific guidance about future land use in the Shire's towns.

The 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census recorded a population of 4,383 in West Wimmera Shire. The population of the two main centres, Edenhope and Kaniva, was 733 and 738 respectively, with the rural areas and small townships accounting for the balance of the Shire's total population.

Over recent years an annual population loss of over one-percent has been experienced throughout the Shire. The population decline reflects the changes in the structure of agriculture, the steady increase in average farm size, and the migration of people in search of better education and employment opportunities.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1 To provide sufficient land and promote urban development in existing settlements throughout the shire.

Strategy 1.1 Apply Framework Plans to towns identified as the main settlements in the municipality to guide growth and urban development in the municipality.

Strategy 1.2 Direct urban development to existing urban areas and areas identified in relevant structure plans.

Objective 2 To ensure that residential development and related urban uses are restricted to existing or identified settlements.

Strategy 2.1 Strongly discourage new and isolated residential, low density residential, and rural living estates.

Objective 3 To encourage sustainable development, minimise impacts on the natural systems, increase natural reserves and vegetation in urban areas and improve the quality of life for the community.

Strategy 3.1 Minimise the impact on significant environmental features within identified settlement boundaries, and address these impacts through the rezoning or development planning process.

Objective 4 To discourage urban development that encroaches or impacts on significant environmental features and in areas affected by future climate change impacts.

Strategy 4.1 Ensure that urban growth and development enhances significant environmental features by identifying and protecting these areas.

Strategy 4.2 Manage the future impacts of climate change by identifying those areas and assets vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Objective 5 To enhance the sense of identity for each community.

Strategy 5.1 Ensure that new urban development contains high quality infrastructure, community services and facilities.

Strategy 5.2 Ensure each settlement maintains its internal connectivity so that the community has access to opportunities for social interaction, goods and services, recreational opportunities, and environmental assets.

Strategy 5.3 Promote and enhance the roles of the main towns as the service and business centres for the Shire and as a focus for communities.

Strategy 5.4 Direct further urban development to the main towns, in order to increase the population to support a wider range of services and facilities.

Strategy 5.5 Foster and support the retention and enhancement of existing services and facilities in the towns as major assets serving the local and wider region.

Strategy 5.6 Foster and support new development within existing towns.

Strategy 5.7 Facilitate opportunities for increased employment within and adjacent to the towns.

Strategy 5.8 Contain urban development within township boundaries identified in the relevant structure plans.

Strategy 5.9 Promote urban design and architecture that reflects the characteristics, aspirations and cultural identity of the community, enhances livability, diversity, amenity and safety of the public realm and promotes attractiveness of towns within broader strategic contexts.

Strategy 5.10 Encourage energy efficient building and sub-division design.

21.05-2 Rural Living and Low Density Residential Development

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Overview

Properly planned rural living and low density residential development has the potential to provide lifestyle living opportunities in the municipalities urban centres. However rural living and low density residential development has the potential to adversely affect the productive agricultural capacity of the area.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1 To encourage and promote rural living and low density residential development in identified areas.

Strategy 1.1 Identify potential areas of rural living and low density zoned land in existing settlements.

Strategy 1.2 Consider a range of lot sizes for land within the Rural Living Zone and the Low Density Residential zones to promote a range of lifestyle opportunities.

Strategy 1.3 Ensure that new rural living and low density residential development does not compromise the potential future development of towns.

Strategy 1.4 Consider the fire safety of residents in the design and siting of development.

Strategy 1.5 Discourage residential development outside of areas identified for this use.

Strategy 1.6 Encourage the restructuring of old and inappropriate subdivisions.

Objective 2 To minimise the impact of development on the landscape and the environment.

Strategy 2.1 Strongly discourage the establishment of rural living or lifestyle development outside of areas identified for this use.

Objective 3 To retain viable rural holdings located on productive agricultural land and restrict inappropriate development within agricultural areas.

Strategy 3.1 Ensure that rural living and low density residential development does not locate in areas that will reduce the productive capacity of agricultural land.

Strategy 3.2 Ensure dwellings in rural areas do not adversely affect the use of the land for agriculture and are consistent with sustainable land management practices. Ensure a clear link between the need for a dwelling and the agricultural use of the land.

Strategy 3.3 Recognise that people engaged in agricultural production need to live close to their farms.

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Small rural lots

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Overview

Generally, the creation of small Farming Zone lots is inappropriate in rural areas. The additional house entitlement created is rarely necessary to improve farm operations on the land from which it was excised, and can lead to land use conflict and poor land management practices that may reduce the productivity of the land.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1 To retain and protect viable rural holdings.

Strategy 1.1 Discourage the fragmentation of the rural land through the creation of small rural lots within the Farming Zone.

Strategy 1.2 Discourage small rural lots in areas of agricultural production.

Strategy 1.3 Provide opportunities to consolidate or increase the size of land holdings in the Farming Zone in order to increase economies of scale and create more viable farming systems.

Strategy 1.4 Support, where appropriate, the creation of small lots as parts of re-subdivision where it provides for the ongoing protection and viability of agricultural landholdings.

Strategy 1.5 Recognise that people engaged in agricultural production need to live close to their farms.

Objective 2 To prevent land use conflicts in agricultural areas.

Strategy 2.1 Ensure that dwellings are not excised from land within the Farming Zone, unless it can be demonstrated that there is benefit to the ongoing use of the land for agricultural production.

Strategy 2.2 Encourage the use of existing small lots for innovative, niche, or diverse agricultural pursuits.

Strategy 2.3 Discourage subdivision that is likely to lead to a concentration of lots that changes the general use or development of the area.

Objective 3 To ensure small rural lots do not occur in environmentally sensitive areas.

Strategy 3.1 Discourage small rural lots where there is likely to be an impact on landscape values, significant environmental features such as remnant vegetation, wetlands and waterways.

Strategy 3.3 Discourage small rural lots in areas where there are unsealed roads and remote from physical and community infrastructure.

Strategy 3.4 Support, where appropriate, the creation of small lots as parts of re-subdivision where it enables the protection of significant environmental features of a particular site.