

21.0605/07/2018
C125**NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

This clause provides local content and strategy to support **Clause 14 Natural Resources Management** of the State Planning Policy Framework.

Specific references to individual suburbs and towns are also included at Clause 21.13 (Local Areas).

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C125**Agriculture**

The rural land surrounding the city is valuable for a range of reasons, including its agricultural productivity and the landscape values it contributes to the character of the region and the city. These values must be recognised and protected as the city grows, to ensure that development does not compromise the very features that make Wodonga attractive as a destination.

Agricultural land quality across Wodonga municipality is generally poor, with the floodplains providing the highest quality agricultural land in the municipality.

Due to topographical constraints such as hills and floodplains, a large percentage of the City of Wodonga will not be required for future urban development and will remain in rural use. Rural areas require careful land management for a range of environmental, lifestyle and economic reasons.

Due to the population growth in Wodonga, rural land is under pressure for residential use with demands to sell off rural land for rural residential use in preference to maintaining agricultural production. The fragmentation of productive agricultural land by subdivision and small lot housing is to be avoided to ensure that the productive capacity of the land is maintained. Small lot housing should be directed to the specific areas that are allocated for low density and rural living development in preference to ad-hoc residential development occurring in the rural areas.

Key Issues

- The Farming Zone acts as a holding zone for rural land including rural land required for future urban development. There is a need to minimise the fragmentation of agricultural land required for future urban development.
- Minimising the potential conflict between ad hoc rural residential and rural land uses.
- Minimising speculative land purchases, which can diminish and discourage legitimate farming activities.

Objective

To recognise and preserve the agricultural, environmental and landscape values of the rural areas in Wodonga.

Strategies

- Avoid the development of high quality agricultural land within the Murray and Kiewa floodplains for urban or rural residential purposes.
- Avoid dwellings on small lots below the minimum area specified in the schedule to the Farming Zone unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the development is required to support commercial rural production.
- Avoid subdivision of land that is likely to lead to a concentration of lots, which may change the general use and character of the rural area, unless it can be demonstrated that the clustering of lots promotes the productive use of larger lots in the subdivision.
- Minimise land management conflicts that threaten existing agricultural operations.
- Where possible retain larger land parcels to maintain the economies of scale.
- Support the expansion of farming in the rural parts of the City of Wodonga.

- Protect rural areas from further fragmentation created by low density and rural living subdivisions.
- Support other uses, including tourism, where it is demonstrated that these activities contribute to the local economy, maintain the environmental quality and integrity of the landscape and do not jeopardise existing rural activities.

Policy guidelines

Use local policy Subdivision and Housing on Small Lots in the Rural Zones at Clause 22.04 to provide a consistent basis for considering permit applications for excisions of dwellings and creation of lots and dwellings on lots smaller in size than specified in the Schedule to the Farming Zone through realignment of boundaries.

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Catchment Planning and Management

The City of Wodonga is located centrally within the North East Regional Catchment. As the catchment's major urban centre, the need to ensure sustainable natural resource management and a consideration of the impacts of land use and development downstream and on the broader catchment form an integral part of the strategic framework for the municipality.

The Murray River corridor is an important recreation destination in the region and also contains numerous sites of archaeological and cultural significance.

The largely intact River Red Gum overstorey creates crucial instream and terrestrial habitat along the river and floodplain anabranches play an important role in maintaining the overall health of the river. Nationally listed threatened species and two nationally significant wetlands, Lake Hume and Ryans Lagoon, occur within the Murray River corridor.

The Kiewa River corridor has high economic and social values and provides key habitat within largely cleared landscape. The Kiewa River has a flat floodplain affected by sedimentation and constructed levees, typical of a river valley used extensively for grazing and agricultural pursuits.

Key Issue

- Pressure to develop the Murray and Kiewa River floodplains for non agricultural uses.
- The impact of sand and gravel extraction on water quality and the riparian environment in the Murray River Floodplain.
- Minimising the impacts of use and development on the Murray River and the downstream catchment.
- Protecting water from pollution and contaminants.
- Degradation of water quality and fragmentation of native vegetation along urban waterways.
- Fragmentation of remnant native vegetation along major waterways.
- Balancing natural resource management (such as the protection of water quality and habitat), with population growth and land use change.

Objective

To improve waterway and catchment health and protect water quality.

Strategies

- Minimise the quantity and retard the flow of stormwater run-off from urban areas.
- Minimise the encroachment of non- agricultural uses on the Murray River and Kiewa River floodplains.
- Require a minimum 30 metre wide buffer to be established along all major waterways at subdivision stage through the creation of reserves to minimise urban encroachment on waterways.

- Improve biodiversity in and around waterways and wetlands by protecting and enhancing native vegetation.
- In unsewered areas within the Special Water Supply Catchment Area, require applications for a dwelling or uses which require an on-site waste water management system to be accompanied by a land capability assessment (LCA) prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Environmental Management: Code of Practice – Onsite Wastewater Management 2016 (as amended).

Exercise of discretion

It is policy to:

- Consider the *Guidelines for the Protection of Water Quality 2001 (as amended 2016)*.

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Implementation

The strategies will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

Application of zones and overlays

- Apply an Environmental Significance Overlay around to the Lake Hume Northern Section Catchment to protect water quality.

Further strategic work

- Prepare a Waterway Activation Strategy in conjunction with relevant authorities and landowners to increase access to waterways for physical activity.
- Undertake a review in partnership with Goulburn Murray Water, and the North East Catchment Management Authority, to investigate the need for the provision of an Environmental Significance Overlay along the Murray River corridor.