HEALESVILLE DISTRICT

This policy applies to all the land in the Healesville district shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Land to which this policy applies

Policy Basis

Healesville is an important regional centre in Yarra Ranges, serving the surrounding settlements of Badger Creek, Castella, Chum Creek, Mt Toolebewong and Toolangi. It is also a popular tourist destination for metropolis Melbourne.

The civic and commercial core of the Healesville township is located along the spine of the Maroondah Highway. It is bounded by Wilson Street to the east and extends just beyond Church Street to the west. A further area of commercial activity is located further east on the Maroondah Highway, in the vicinity of Don Road.

The Yarra Ranges Activity Centres Network Strategy identifies Healesville as a Large Neighbourhood Activity Area/Town Centre. It has a total floor area of approximately 40,000 sq metres and businesses which cater for both local residents and tourists.

This policy is based on the vision, principles, strategic directions and strategic framework of the Healesville Structure Plan (August 2016), which establishes a framework for future land use, development and urban design in the Healesville district, with a focus on the Healesville town centre.

The vision for Healesville, identified in the Structure Plan, is that:

Healesville will maintain a friendly country atmosphere in a natural setting and be a place where community and business can thrive.

This policy:

- Supports the vision for Yarra Ranges at Clause 21.03;
- Builds on the Land Use, Settlement, Built Form and Landscape policies at Clauses 21.04, 21.05, 21.06 and 21.07;
- Furthers the objectives for Community Services and Recreation and Cultural facilities at Clause 21.11.
Objectives

Objective 1 – Economic development and employment
To provide a sustainable business environment for retail, tourist and other commercial businesses.

Policy
1.1 Support applications for commercial uses which contribute to a vibrant town centre which capitalises on Healesville’s tourism appeal and landscape features.
1.2 Focus additional commercial activity and development within the town centre to strengthen its role and function.
1.3 Support the redevelopment of identified vacant and under-utilised sites within the town centre.
1.4 Encourage additional retail activity and diversity, including a medium sized supermarket, within the town centre.
1.5 Reinforce Healesville’s status as a premier tourist destination.
1.6 Continue to support key tourist attractions, including the Healesville Sanctuary, Tarra Warra, Healesville Amateur Racing Club and the Healesville Country Club.
1.7 Support eco-tourism proposals that benefit the local economy.
1.8 Ensure that new uses in the existing industrial precincts do not introduce incompatible activities.
1.9 Encourage more intensive redevelopment of existing industrial sites.

Objective 2 – Built environment
To encourage development that makes a positive contribution to the Healesville town centre by respecting its rural town character and key features, including scale, building form, height and significant trees.

Policy
2.1 Encourage an improved interface between the town centre development on the northern side of Maroondah Highway and the carparking areas adjacent to River Street.
2.2 Ensure there is full activation of retail frontages on commercially zoned land along Maroondah Highway within the town centre.
2.3 Protect and enhance Healesville’s buildings and features which have recognised heritage significance.
2.4 Support advertising signs that are compatible with the amenity and visual appearance of an area, including the existing or desired future character.

Objective 3 – Residential
To maintain current urban boundaries of Healesville and focus additional residential development opportunities within those boundaries.

Policy
3.1 Provide opportunities for higher density residential development within the Urban Growth Boundary in locations close to the Healesville town centre.
3.2 Allow some further subdivision within the Urban Growth Boundary in suitable locations in Healesville to provide for a modest increase in residential lots.
3.3 Support applications which contribute to the valued residential character of Healesville.
3.4 Encourage different forms of housing to provide for a range of household types and abilities which meet the needs of the local population.
3.5 Minimise land use conflicts between residential and rural uses by maintaining a transition of lot sizes at the interface between rural and residential zones in Healesville.

Objective 4 – Community services and facilities
To provide a range of community and cultural facilities that are well connected and easily accessed by all members of the community.

Policy
4.1 Encourage health related services in the precinct adjacent to Healesville and District Hospital.
4.2 Facilitate retirement and aged care accommodation in proximity to existing social and physical infrastructure.
4.3 Support applications for community facilities that are integrated and accessible.
4.4 Facilitate an indigenous belonging place in Healesville.

Objective 5 – Open space, landscape and environment
To continue to improve open spaces and to retain and enhance Healesville’s valued environmental character while mitigating environmental risks.

Policy
5.1 Continue to upgrade Queens Park and the Don Road Recreational Reserve to support local recreational activities.
5.2 Investigate the opportunity to create a pedestrian link between Queens Park and Coronation Park.
5.3 Investigate the potential to create a pedestrian trail along the northern side of Grace Burn extending from Queens Park to the Council reserve at Silverleaf Place.
5.4 Introduce additional planning protection for significant trees around the Healesville town centre not currently protected by the Heritage Overlay.
5.5 Recognise a distinct Healesville landscaping/streetscape character, which incorporates traditional European and indigenous species.
5.6 Ensure the retention of European trees in the town centre streets.
5.7 Protect valued landscapes and discourage visually intrusive development in the township’s gateways.
5.8 Introduce additional planning protection to identified waterways, biolinks and remnant vegetation within the Healesville district.
5.9 Support development and initiatives that increase environmental sustainability in the Healesville district.
5.10 Discourage potentially hazardous uses such as timber plantations, on the land shown as a Strategic Firebreak in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Strategic Firebreak Area

Objective 6 – Transport and access
To provide a safe, accessible and efficient movement network in Healesville for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

Policy
6.1 Support improvements for motorists and pedestrians at the Maroondah Highway/ Wilson Street/Badger Creek Road intersection.
6.2 Maintain and improve car parking provision in the town centre by encouraging new retail and commercial developments to provide onsite car parking and optimising the layout of existing Council owned car parking areas.

6.3 Maintain connectivity by retaining existing laneways in the Healesville town centre where they provide safe pedestrian access and there are no alternative routes nearby.

6.4 Investigate the application of a Parking Overlay or a similar mechanism to meet future car parking demand generated by new commercial development in Healesville.

6.5 Extend Healesville’s pedestrian network and improve connections between the main recreational spaces and to nearby settlements.

6.6 Investigate options for the creation of an accessible walking circuit within Healesville for recreational use, utilising existing paths where possible.

6.7 Further develop the Healesville district’s recreational cycle network by improving on-road safety and extending off-road opportunities.

6.8 Maintain the Healesville town centre as the hub for public transport services.

6.9 Where practical, construct roads, footpaths and trails in materials that reflect Healesville’s rural character.

Policy documents

Healesville Structure Plan, Yarra Ranges Council, August 2016

Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network Strategy, Essential Economics, April 2013
Figure 4 - Healesville Town Centre Map