

21.0403/12/2015
C34**ENVIRONMENT****21.04-1**03/12/2015
C34**Biodiversity**

The municipality contains significant areas of public land including Crown reserves, road reserves, stream reserves and a host of other areas. However, dedicated reserves do not capture a representative array of ecosystems and cannot adequately protect biodiversity. The management of biodiversity on private land is now the greatest challenge and opportunity. The protection of remnant vegetation and EVCs on private land is extremely important. The ongoing fragmentation of ecosystems, regardless of their significance, undermines the long term viability of biodiversity in the landscape. It is considered important that future developments do not detract from the natural settings that attract people to the municipality.

Objective 1

- To protect and enhance the biodiversity assets of the municipality.

Strategies

- Protect, manage and enhance existing native flora and fauna communities, biodiversity values and riparian zones to provide habitat.
- Protect and enhance native vegetation to achieve a net gain in the area and quality of native vegetation throughout the municipality.
- Protect sites of biological significance.
- Minimise native vegetation loss and ensure replacement of native vegetation using indigenous species where the loss cannot be prevented.
- Encourage and promote the use of indigenous species in tree planting schemes and landscaping schemes for public and private land.
- Minimise land clearing and require detailed site analysis, management and re-mediation plans where extensive clearing is proposed.
- Encourage the establishment, protection, and enhancement of buffer zones around areas of moderate to high biodiversity significance.
- Encourage the establishment and protection of lineal vegetation corridors along drainage lines, waterways, roadsides and ground recharge areas.
- Control pest plant and animal populations of the municipality.
- Identify processes which are potentially threatening to the biodiversity of the region.
- Reduce fragmentation and isolation of vegetation communities.
- Protect the habitat values of wetlands and wetland wildlife habitats designated under Ramsar, JAMBA or CAMBA agreements.
- Implement the recommendations of 'Protecting Roadside Native Grasslands and the 'Sites of Biodiversity Significance in the Ararat Rural City'.

21.04-203/12/2015
C34**Catchment Management**

A number of local and regional environmental studies and management plans have been prepared which seek to create sustainable land management through the better co-ordination of government, land and water managers and the community. They include the Regional Catchment Strategies (RCS) of both the Glenelg/Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and the Wimmera Catchment Authority. While the Glenelg/Hopkins RCS covers most of the municipality, the Wimmera RCS also provides a comprehensive approach to the future environmental management of the region. The recommendations of the Regional Catchment Strategies are important in achieving long term environmental sustainability for the region and will be considered in all relevant decision making.

Objective 1

- To integrate and ensure consistency in land use planning and catchment management.

Strategies

- Minimise the existence and impacts of soil salinity within the municipality.
- Encourage the development of tree planting, tree lots and agroforestry as mechanisms to reduce land degradation and salinity throughout the municipality.
- Support and encourage a total catchment management approach to natural resources.
- Ensure that planning in rural areas has regard to key environmental and natural resource management issues.
- Assist in the restoration and protection of the Black Range.
- Protect high quality agricultural land for agricultural use.
- Encourage farmers to develop whole farm plans to promote the effective management of individual properties.
- Encourage revegetation by the replacement of grazing land with intensive horticultural practice.

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Floodplain Management

The municipality includes significant areas of flood prone land where flooding poses a natural hazard to the community and built environments. Floods are naturally occurring events and the function of floodplains to convey and store floodwater should be recognised and preserved to minimise flood risk to communities and assets and deterioration of environmental values in the long term.

Objective 1

- To maintain to the maximum possible extent, the natural function of floodplains in storing floodwater and conveying it safely through the landscape.

Strategies

- Identify land that is prone to flooding particularly in and around townships.
- Identify floodway land which is the high hazard portion of the floodplain, the natural function of which should be preserved and kept free from development.

Objective 2

- To avoid development on flood-prone land and where this is not possible, ensure that the design and construction of new or replacement developments responds appropriately to the level of flood risk.

Strategies

- Ensure that any development permitted on flood-prone land responds appropriately to the level of flood risk.
- Where flood depth and velocity is known, require development and works to demonstrate it is commensurate with flood risk.
- Where flood depth is not known, encourage new development and works to be located outside the LSIO area, or on the highest practical ground level.

21.04-403/12/2015
C34**Bushfire****Objective**

- To ensure that new land use and development does not increase the level of fire risk and includes adequate fire protection measures.

Strategies

- Ensure bushfire mapping and relevant bushfire science is used to guide development, in consultation with the Country Fire Authority and the Municipal Fire Prevention Committee.
- Ensure housing and other forms of development are sited, designed and maintained to minimise risks from fire.
- Seek the development of biolinks and fire-breaks on private land adjacent to public land where appropriate and encourage the development of ploughed or graded fires breaks on private property, particularly where such property abuts public land.

21.04-503/12/2015
C34**Water Management**

Water management is a critical issue for the community as it has implications for economic development, settlement and natural resource management. The widespread clearing of land for agriculture has led to increased pollution of waterways. Natural watercourses have changed, with extensive harvesting and redistribution from the surface water system used to sustain agriculture and the rural and township communities. Changes in land use have resulted in sediments, salts, heavy metals, chemicals and nutrients entering the system. There is the need to undertake improvements to the water quality of waterways and catchments through methods such as water use efficiency, water frontage management and waterway management.

Objective 1 – Water Management

- To protect and enhance the quality of both ground and surface waters throughout the municipality and on downstream users.

Strategies

- Protect and manage water resources to ensure the long term sustainability of urban, rural and natural environments.
- Manage waste water in towns without reticulated sewerage.
- Protect high quality frontage environments along waterways and lakes.
- Require appropriate set-backs from waterways and the on-site retention and treatment of stormwater and waste water prior to entering natural systems.
- Utilise Water Sensitive Urban Design as a means of controlling the quality of stormwater run-off from urban areas.

21.04-603/12/2015
C34**Rural Landscapes**

The rural and natural landscapes surrounding the Grampians National Park, Langi Ghiran State Park, Black Range and the Mount Buangor State Park are important assets. These landscapes are sensitive to development as viewed from vantage points within the parks and from adjoining land. Protection of these landscapes is important to tourism and the environment. These parks, along with a large number of other parcels of public land, have detailed management plans for the protection and enhancement of the conservation value of the land. The Grampians Surround Strategy Plan in 1991 aims to co-ordinate the orderly development of private land around the Grampians so it would not have a detrimental impact on the environmental, tourism and landscape

values of the Grampians. The Black Range Land Care Group has also prepared a detailed guide inclusive of recommended improvements on the way that this important area is managed in the future.

Objective 1 – Rural Landscapes

- To ensure that land use and development does not adversely impact on the environment, social and economic values of public land.

Strategies

- Recognise that public land is an important resource and ensure that it and adjacent private land are properly managed.
- Control development that may have an effect on landscape qualities and environmental, social and economic values of public land and surrounds.

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Heritage

Ararat Rural City is covered by a number of Aboriginal Registered Aboriginal Parties, including Martang Pty Ltd which covers the majority of the municipality; part of Wathaurung in the east. Aboriginal sites typically occur along water courses, stream sides, lakes and in areas which have not been excessively disturbed which have been identified as areas of cultural sensitivity under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. The municipality also contains a number of places of post European historic and cultural significance which are important to the local and wider community and must be protected and enhanced for their conservation and tourism potential. The sites (which were documented in the *Ararat Heritage Study 1994*) include buildings, bridges, trees, landscapes and general environments of national, state and local significance. The *Ararat Heritage Study Review (2001)* has added to this and has identified seven heritage precincts.

Objective 1 - Heritage

- To protect, conserve and enhance areas, features and sites of historic, aboriginal, natural and cultural significance.

Strategies

- Identify and protect heritage places.
- Encourage sympathetic forms of development adjacent to heritage sites.
- Consider the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 guidelines (Cultural Sensitivity maps) produced by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.
- Assess heritage applications in accordance with the *Ararat Heritage Study 1994* at Clause 81. Ensure applicants demonstrate how any proposal complies with the Citations, Statements of Significance and/or Development Guidelines within the *Ararat Heritage Study 1994*.
- Assess heritage applications in accordance with the *Ararat Heritage Study Review 2001* at Clause 81. Ensure applicants demonstrate how any proposal complies with the Citations, Statements of Significance and/or Development Guidelines within the *Ararat Heritage Study Review 2001*.

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Sustainable Development

The commitment to sustainable development through improved siting and building practices, techniques and design is in-line with the implementation of Clause 15.02 of the Planning Scheme. The efficient use of energy and minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions will be advocated and considered as part of all development proposals. This will be achieved through measures such as efficient building design, passive and active solar applications and the retention of existing vegetation and revegetation.

Ararat Rural City is especially committed to achieving water efficient development. Design requirements and guidance for all new buildings and extensions are provided to ensure that environmental sustainability and efficient water use is a consideration in the design and construction of these buildings wherever possible.

Objective 1 – Sustainable Development

- To encourage water sensitive urban design in all applications for dwellings and subdivision.

Strategies

- Encourage housing design that encompasses both passive and active solar techniques.
- Encourage developments which utilise water sensitive techniques and provide for the retention of stormwater and the re use of waste water.
- Encourage the implementation of waste minimisation programs and water use reduction initiatives as a condition of permit.
- Utilise techniques such as landscaped swales, porous pavements and infiltration trenches.
- Encourage rainwater gathering and solar energy where appropriate technologies and favourable physical circumstances exist.
- Ensure that the design and placement of rainwater gathering and solar energy technologies are considered as part of the overall design of new development.
- Use water sensitive design techniques in new developments.

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Visual Amenity

Council acknowledges that the proliferation of signage can significantly reduce the visual amenity of the area. It is considered important that the scale and nature of signage is appropriate to the role and character of its surrounds.

Objective 1 – Visual Amenity

- To preserve the visual amenity of the locality by avoiding disorder, clutter and excessive advertising on buildings, structures and on land.

Strategies

- Ensure that signage is in proportion to the building or structure on which it is to be located so that it does not become the dominant element in the built form.
- Ensure that signage does not obscure or detract from architectural or historic detail of the host, or adjacent, buildings or vistas.
- Ensure that signage is located and designed with regard to the safety of the operation of the road network.

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Policy Guidelines – Visual Amenity (Signage)

Applications for signage will be assessed in accordance with the following Policy Guidelines:

Retail, office and industrial areas

- High wall and panel signs are discouraged from visually dominating the viewable proportion of the wall.
- Any sign unrelated to the business conducted on the land is discouraged.
- Bunting, promotional, high wall, sky, panel, animated and reflective signs are discouraged due to visual clutter and detriment to the amenity of the area.

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- Promotional signs that project outside the perimeter of the building are discouraged because of their visual dominance and detriment to the amenity of the area.
- Above verandah signs are discouraged from being greater than 1.5 m² and that project no more than 0.7 metre from the wall face.
- Pole signs are encouraged to be limited to one per premises, and be no higher than the building on the site and the total advertising area no greater than 6 m².

Rural areas

- Any sign unrelated to the activity conducted on the land is discouraged.
- Promotional, panel and sky signs are discouraged along the Western Highway given that they are visually intrusive and dominant, and will detract from the visual amenity of both the highway and rural environment in which they are set.

Residential areas

- The quantity of signs is encouraged to be kept to a minimum and be designed with regard to the character and amenity of the area.
- Bunting, pole, promotional, high wall, sky, panel, animated and reflective signs are discouraged as they are intrusive in residential areas.

Roads and public land

- The proliferation of signs on roads and public land are discouraged given that visual clutter and dominance of signs would reduce landscape values and amenity of the area.

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Implementation - Environment

- Apply the Significant Landscape Overlay to land that has particular landscape qualities including the Black Range area generally above the 340 metre contour.
- Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay and the Vegetation Protection Overlay to those sites identified as being of “Biodiversity Significance”.
- Apply the Heritage Overlay to those precincts and buildings identified in the *Ararat Heritage Study Review 2001*.
- Apply as appropriate, the Urban Floodway Zone, Floodway Overlay and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay to identified flood-prone land.

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Further Strategic Work - Environment

- Review the *Ararat Heritage Study 1994*.
- Complete the Rural Ararat heritage study for the balance of the Ararat Rural City inclusive of significant buildings, precincts, trees, vegetation and sites of Aboriginal significance.
- Review and update environmental controls including the Environmental Significance Overlay, Vegetation Protection Overlay and Salinity Management Overlay in consultation with State Government Agencies and Catchment Management Authorities.
- Identify water catchments, review waste water management and undertake land capability assessments particularly around small towns in consultation with other agencies.
- Complete relevant flood studies that will provide important information to communities around responding to floods and the development of towns.
- Review and consider the findings of the Defendable Space for Towns, Settlements and Population Clusters.
- Review and implement the recommendations of the South West Landscape Assessment Study.