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SETTLEMENT, BUILT ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND HOUSING

This Clause provides local content to support Clause 11 (Settlement), Clause 15 (Built Environment and Heritage) and Clause 16 (Housing) of the State Planning Policy Framework.

Overview

The demographics and geography of the Buloke Shire are key influences on its settlement patterns and township development. Major demographic influences on the municipality are an ageing population and population decline. The municipality has an older than average median age (45) compared to the rest of Australia (37). Declining population trends are similarly a key influence on Council's capacity to maintain viable services both overall, and within the main townships of Donald, Charlton, Wycheproof, Birchip and Sea Lake. These are small towns spread over large distances, which makes local economies of scale difficult to achieve for economic activity and community development. Any population dispersal poses challenges to the viability of the main townships and the capacity for Council to provide services to the community effectively and efficiently.

Where appropriate, significant development should be directed to the main townships, which have greater potential to remain as viable economic centres and to maintain a threshold population. The centres of the main townships will benefit from a flexible approach to land use and development, allowing them to respond to new opportunities. This flexibility should not prejudice the amenity of the towns, the efficient use of infrastructure or the continuation of agriculture on the fringe of the townships.

There are numerous significant heritage buildings and places throughout the municipality listed and their consideration is provided for by the Heritage Overlay. Heritage assets in the municipality contribute to the character of the landscape and townships. The towns and rural areas of the municipality contain numerous historic buildings and sites acting as a reminder of the history and cultural heritage of the towns and surrounding area.

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Demographics

Key Issues

- Providing accommodation and services to older residents within an ageing population.

- Mitigating and adapting to population decline.

- How to utilise the heritage values of the municipality to enhance the community.

Objective 1

To encourage accommodation and services that will meet the needs of a diverse population.

Strategies

- Increase the mix of housing types and densities to reflect the needs of older people in the community.

- Support private and public sector provision of a range of housing in the community.

- Encourage additional public or private sector housing for the elderly within the municipality, ideally within the main townships.

- Encourage development that facilitates older people living at home.

- Identify and support strategic partners whose work is relevant to the municipality's changing demographics, including health, education and social service providers.

Objective 2

To adapt to smaller populations where necessary and maintain sustainable communities.

Strategies

- Encourage the provision of a range of government, municipal and community services and facilities within the townships of the municipality.

- Encourage joint usage of existing and proposed facilities, including the rationalisation of underutilised facilities.

- Provide all communities with facilities in both a socially and economically effective manner.

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Townships

Key Issues

- Maintaining the viability of town centres.

- Supporting the provision of services in townships.

- Preserving and enhancing the character and amenity of townships.

- Encouraging appropriate development in town centres.

Objective 1

To provide high quality, attractive, functional and efficient townships.

Strategies

- In determining applications for use and development on the highways and main roads that pass through the main townships, consider:

    – The need to prevent ribbon development in the vicinity of the main roads;

    – The effect of any development on the safety and operation of the roads; and

    – Comments from the relevant road authority where appropriate.

- Consider local heritage values, built character and streetscape of towns when designing and siting development;

- Require that the design of new buildings and works in addition to existing buildings must be in keeping with the streetscape character and built form of the area;

- Recognise that the design of buildings, their mass and scale is important in preserving the historical attributes and visual character of towns.

- Give preference to the renovation and re-use of existing building stock, especially in the main commercial areas, over the construction of new buildings.

- Require that the design, form and construction materials should reflect and enhance the character of the heritage site, when development is proposed for sites of heritage significance, or for sites adjoining sites of heritage significance,

- Consider the presentation of town entrances and streetscapes and their capacity to attract tourism, encourage development and demonstrate civic pride in determining applications for land use and development.

- Consider the importance of street trees in creating areas that offer shade and protection from the elements, and the consistency of tree species with the landscaping of the township, in determining applications for land use and development.

- Consider the need for landscaping to assist in absorbing development within the surrounding landscape and providing a delineated edge to the township when considering applications for land use and development on the edge of townships.

Objective 2

To develop vibrant and high quality living environments with ready access to a range of facilities and services.

Strategies

- Encourage new residential use and economic development opportunities to locate and develop in the main townships which have reticulated infrastructure provision, including Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Wycheproof.

- Encourage consolidation and diversity of development and growth within the defined boundaries of the large, serviced townships to provide a sustainable population base, maximise services and promote opportunities for employment, investment and infrastructure development.

- Encourage the provision of medium density housing as an alternative housing type for the community (especially the elderly), particularly within walking distance of commercial areas and community facilities, and only where reticulated water and sewerage are available.

- Consider the need to provide for pedestrian and transport facilities within the townships and improve the standard of access to shopping and community service areas.

- Encourage land use and development that minimises conflict between residential, industrial and rural land and protects residential amenity.

- Encourage the re-use of vacant housing stock where this does not unacceptably affect residential amenity.

- Provide high quality community infrastructure, particularly recreation facilities and community services, and encourage investment opportunities within the key townships of Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Wycheproof.

Objective 3

To encourage new land use and development proposals without compromising residential amenity or agricultural land use.

Strategies

- Consider the need to protect the amenity and character of sensitive land uses within the main towns when assessing use and development proposals, particularly those which may be inappropriate or incompatible.

Implementation

The strategies in relation to demographics will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

Policy guidelines

- Require land use and development in the towns to be generally in accordance with any relevant structure plan.

- When deciding on applications for use and development of land, considering, as appropriate:

  - The need to encourage residential development that offers housing forms best suited to the household structures and age-groups represented in the municipality.

Application of zones and overlays

- Applying the Township Zone to provide for a range of urban uses, while maintaining residential amenity in towns.

- Applying the Commercial 1 Zone within town centres to promote a consolidation of commercial areas.

- Applying the Commercial 2 Zone in peripheral highway commercial areas to facilitate commercial uses that are unsuitable for town centres.

- Applying the Industrial 3 Zone where industrial land is located in close proximity to sensitive uses.

Further strategic work

- Investigating the need to develop planning strategies to retain and attract young people to the municipality.

- Investigating the need to provide development for older people close to services.

- Investigating the long term need for recreational facilities and their ongoing maintenance.

- Monitoring changes to services and the population levels and characteristics needed to support government and private services and facilities in various townships.

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Heritage

Objective 1

To protect the buildings, sites and artefacts of natural and man made heritage significance in the municipality, and to utilise the heritage values of the municipality to enhance the community.

Strategies

- Maximise the economic value, amenity and potential of the municipality's heritage places.

- Preserve and maintain places of heritage value where practicable.

Implementation

The strategies in relation to heritage will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

Application of zones and overlays

- Identifying and applying the Heritage Overlay to places of heritage significance.

Further strategic work

- Investigate priorities for the preservation and maintenance of heritage places and the availability of funding for such work.