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C347**DISCRETIONARY USES IN RURAL AREAS**

This policy applies to the consideration of use and development applications within the Farming and Rural Conservation Zones. This policy does not apply to agricultural, tourism, function centre or accommodation land uses.

Policy Basis

The rural areas of Geelong and its many attractions are highly valued for their contribution to the economy, liveability and amenity of the whole municipality.

Non agricultural uses in rural areas must be carefully managed to ensure that the ongoing use of land for agriculture is supported and the rural landscape character of the rural area is preserved.

Non-agricultural uses that would attract a significant numbers of visitors, accommodate large numbers of people or generate significant volumes of traffic and car parking demand are generally incompatible with farming activities and rural amenity. These uses should be directed to urban areas where municipal infrastructure services and good transport connectivity is available. An adequate supply of land is zoned for industrial, commercial and community purposes in urban areas to provide for these uses. The encroachment of non-agricultural uses into rural areas is discouraged and should only be considered when the use or development cannot be catered for in an urban area and there are unique circumstances to justify a rural location.

Objective

- To discourage discretionary non-agricultural uses in rural areas that could reasonably be located in an urban zone.
- To preserve the productive agricultural capacity of the land and where possible enhance the environmental condition of the land.
- To maintain the unique rural landscape character of rural areas.

Policy

For a discretionary non-agricultural use, it is policy that:

- The intensity of the use will complement and support the local rural context.
- The use will not result in an unreasonable loss of productive agricultural land.
- Existing agricultural activity on adjoining land will not be compromised.
- The scale of the development will complement and respect the rural landscape character.
- Buildings and structures are designed and sited to not be visually dominant and can blend into the surrounding landscape and natural environment. Visual impacts should be mitigated or minimised through sensitive design, landscaping, materials and colours.
- The site has access to an appropriately constructed or sealed road that is capable of accommodating anticipated traffic levels or has convenient access to a major road.
- The site has access to all necessary servicing infrastructure. Where infrastructure is required or needs upgrading the applicant will meet all costs.
- The environmental condition of the land could be enhanced by fencing off remnant vegetation and revegetating waterways and other strategic areas to develop wildlife corridors.

References

City of Greater Geelong Rural Land Use Strategy, City of Greater Geelong, 2007.

Managing Development in Rural Areas, Planning Policy Review, City of Greater Geelong, 2015.