NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This clause provides local content to support Clause 14 (Natural resource management) of the State Planning Policy Framework.

Agriculture

Overview

The City of Melton is renowned for its long established equine industry, particularly harness racing, which attracts significant investment and is a key feature of the region’s economy. Opportunities for more intensive agriculture are presented by the increasing availability of recycled water and also emerging opportunities for new niche agricultural production.

The agriculture sector plays an important role within the City of Melton and across the economy although it is not a large employer in the region. Melton’s proximity to Melbourne’s markets, road networks and airport provides a competitive advantage.

The city’s rural areas have traditionally been used for grazing and cropping (primarily cereal production such as wheat, barley and oats) and agriculture continues to remain the dominant use of the rural areas.

The viability of agriculture within the Green Wedge is affected not just by local conditions but by regional and global markets and trends in agriculture. These more challenging conditions are affecting all agricultural areas, but those in the peri-urban fringe face the greatest challenges and are likely to be exacerbated by climate change.

Key issues

- Building on the advantages of productive agricultural land close to the Melbourne market.
- Protecting areas of the municipality for their ongoing capacity for sustainable agriculture into the future.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 1 To build on the resources available for productive agriculture including the opportunities presented by recycled water.

Strategy 1.1 Support a diversity of new and innovative agricultural uses within the rural areas of the city.
Strategy 1.2 Support viticulture and winery operations that utilise recycled water.
Strategy 1.3 Support co-location of viticulture and winery related activities to create a cluster of these uses within the region.

Objective 2 To protect and support agricultural productivity

Strategy 2.1 Preserve areas of broad acre farming to allow for a range of agricultural and equine activities.
Strategy 2.2 Support continued agricultural production within the rural areas.
Strategy 2.3 Facilitate agriculture in the Leakes Road – Holden Road Precinct.
Strategy 2.4 Support consolidation of lots to enable more efficient land management practices and infrastructure provision.
Strategy 2.5 Avoid further land fragmentation through inappropriate subdivisions.

Implementation

Other actions

- Work with Western Water to prepare a ‘recycled water based agriculture’ business plan.

Reference documents

Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan September 2014