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SETTLEMENT, HOUSING, BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

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.

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Settlement

Overview

The majority of the shire’s population reside in the towns of Stawell and St Arnaud. These towns provide the focus of the shire’s retail, commercial, industrial, administrative and service orientated employment and economic activity.

Halls Gap is a unique township located on freehold land in the heart of the Grampians National Park. The town is located in a river valley with steep densely vegetated slopes on its sides which impose severe development constraints. The township and the immediate area contain business, residential, rural and public land and it serves an important social, economic, tourist and landscape role in the local community.

Key issues

- Promoting the growth of Stawell as the shire’s largest town.
- Enhancing the role of St Arnaud as a regional service centre.
- Managing the development of Halls Gap whilst protecting its environmental and tourism values.
- Providing community services to an aging and declining population in smaller townships and settlements.
- Bushfire hazards around the shire’s towns.
- Managing the interface between rural and urban land use including protecting agricultural and industrial land uses on the edges of townships.
- The need to maximise the use of existing infrastructure.
- Planning for an aging population with the loss of residents in the 30 to 40 year and 5 to 9 year age cohorts.
- Increasing household numbers with decreasing average household sizes.

Objective 1 To facilitate the orderly development of the shire’s main townships.

Strategy 1.1 Promote infill residential development in appropriate areas to maximise the use of existing infrastructure.

Strategy 1.2 Ensure that the future development of each of the shire’s major townships occurs in accordance with the strategic directions for the township.

Strategy 1.3 Encourage residential development within current township boundaries and particularly within the township centre and in proximity to the town sewerage scheme.

Objective 2 To minimise the potential for future land use conflicts.

Strategy 2.1 Ensure rural living areas are limited to areas where such development currently exists and on the periphery of Stawell and St Arnaud.

Strategy 2.2 Encourage low density residential and rural living development in appropriate areas close to towns, where the land is of marginal agricultural value.

Strategy 2.3 Protect the role of the Western Highway as a bypass by locating new urban development a suitable distance away from the Western Highway.

Strategy 2.4 Ensure new industries are established with regard to the proximity of sensitive uses, such as dwellings.

Objective 3 To reduce the risk to life, property and community infrastructure from bushfire at a municipal and local scale.

Strategy 3.1 Encourage new residential development in low bushfire risk locations, including established urban areas.

Strategy 3.2 Support future development which can provide defensible space to improve the township resilience during a bushfire.

Strategy 3.3 Ensure new development implements bushfire compliant subdivision design.

Strategy 3.4 Ensure development is managed in the areas where the settlement scale defensible space needs to be protected.

- Strategy 3.5 Support new development adjoining the established built up areas to reduce the potential exposure to bushfire.
- Strategy 3.6 Encourage access around settlements to facilitate fire suppression activities.
- Strategy 3.7 Encourage implementation of fuel management treatments around settlements.

Implementation

The strategies for settlement will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

Policy guidelines

- Directing residential development to existing settlements.
- Require any development to implement bushfire compliant subdivision design.

Application of zones and overlays

- Applying the General Residential Zone to facilitate residential development in urban areas.
- Applying the Low Density Residential Zone in areas close to towns where the land is of marginal agricultural value.
- Applying the Rural Living Zone to existing rural living areas or on the periphery of Stawell and St Arnaud.
- Applying the Bushfire Management Overlay to areas where bushfire is a significant risk.
- Applying the Erosion Management Overlay to areas where erosion and landslide is a significant risk.

Further strategic work

- Identifying urban growth boundaries to clearly define the limits of urban growth in the shire's main townships through a combination of existing urban zoning and the preparation of structure planning.
- Preparing a rural residential and rural living land supply and demand assessment and review the application of this zone.
- Preparing structure plans for Stawell, Halls Gap and St Arnaud including identified settlement boundaries, existing and future land use outcomes, housing needs and types assessment and an overall strategic framework plan for each settlement.
- Investigating residential development opportunities of land in Darlington Lane and Slone Street, Stawell.
- Preparing a Local Planning Policy for non-agricultural uses in the Farming Zone.

Reference documents

Land Development Strategy 2013-2017

Northern Grampians Shire Planning Strategy, Report 1 – The Existing Situation and Issues (October 1996)

Northern Grampians Shire Planning Strategy, Report 2 (March 1997)

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Housing

Overview

Housing within the townships of the shire has traditionally comprised large lots with a single dwelling on each and large yards to maintain. With a trend towards an ageing population the household make-up and size is expected to also change. This is expected to result in a need for a greater diversity of housing to accommodate a changing population demographic. There is a mismatch between the changing structure of households and the available housing stock.

Provision of housing and lifestyle choice and managing conflicting land uses are key strategic planning directions for housing. Accommodating the diverse housing and lifestyle preferences of the shire's population in an economically and socially responsible manner and managing potentially conflicting land uses in order to protect amenity are important issues.

Key issues

- Accommodating additional residential growth in Stawell.
- Rural residential housing is provided around and outside of the townships with the Rural Living Zone applied extensively around Stawell and St Arnaud as well parts of Halls Gap.
- Housing on small rural lots can be problematic given the potential for land use conflict with agricultural activities.

Objective 1 To provide a diversity of housing styles and living opportunities throughout the municipality to ensure the attractiveness of the municipality as a place to live, work and invest is maintained.

- Strategy 1.1 Ensure the provision of a range of lot sizes and housing types that recognise changes in family structure and an ageing population in the towns of Stawell and St Arnaud.
- Strategy 1.3 Accommodate the demand for low density allotments in planned estates rather than the ad hoc subdivision of, and excision from, rural land holdings.
- Strategy 1.4 Encourage innovative forms of residential development such as those based on recreation and open space areas in suitable locations.
- Strategy 1.5 Protect and retain heritage places as a means of diversifying housing styles and preserving neighbourhood character.

Objective 2 To manage the risk of land use conflict between forms of housing and other industry and rural activities.

- Strategy 2.1 Limit the establishment of housing in locations where amenity may be negatively impacted on by farming and related activities, or where the location of housing may inhibit rural activities.

Implementation

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

Application of zones and overlays

- Applying the General Residential Zone, Low Density Residential Zone, Rural Living Zone and Development Plan Overlay to support a diversity of housing and lot size in appropriate locations.

Further strategic work

- Preparing a strategy for the municipality's main townships that provides an overarching framework to direct open space planning and management.
- Preparing a new local policy for rural dwellings and subdivisions to guide development in rural areas (if required) upon completion of a rural strategy.

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Built environment and heritage

Overview

The Grampians and Wimmera Plains region is a rich indigenous cultural location. The Northern Grampians Shire is part of the broader Grampians Region that contains over 70% of Victoria's indigenous art sites. The Brambuk Cultural Centre at Halls Gap and aboriginal art at significant sites at Bunjils Cave, Lake Lonsdale and within the Grampians National Park help to promote and preserve the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the region.

The shire has a diverse range of urban areas and townships. They represent the built and cultural heritage of the development of the Wimmera, Grampians region and its mining past and agricultural industry. The presentation of the towns from the highways and major roads is important in building civic and community pride, in protecting existing heritage values, in the attraction of tourism and providing a sense of place.

The shire's two main towns, Stawell and St Arnaud were developed and settled by Europeans in Victoria's 1850's gold rush. The built heritage within these towns reflects their gold rush origins.

Key issues

- The abundance of natural, cultural and historically significant places in the shire.
- Recognising, protecting and conserving the shire's natural, spiritual, cultural and built form heritage including heritage buildings, monuments, streetscapes and precincts.
- Identifying and assessing the heritage assets of the shire.
- The importance of urban design in protecting and respecting neighbourhood character and the heritage values of the shire's towns.
- Improving the visual quality and amenity of township entrances.

Objective 1 To conserve and protect sites and precincts of architectural, cultural and historic significance.

- Strategy 1.1 Protect individual places and precincts of significance.
- Strategy 1.2 New development should minimise the impact on identified heritage places, precincts and landscapes.
- Strategy 1.3 Ensure that development on or neighbouring a site or precinct which is considered to have natural, archaeological, architectural, cultural or historic significance will not have a detrimental impact on the significance of the site.
- Strategy 1.4 Ensure development of main streets recognises heritage values, and enhances the pedestrian experience.
- Strategy 1.5 Enable development and use that complements and enhances significant items, places and areas of natural and cultural heritage.

Implementation

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

Application of zones and overlays

- Applying the Heritage Overlay to identified heritage places, precincts and landscapes.
- Applying the Design and Development Overlay to ensure development recognises and protects the natural attributes of the Grampians National Park.

Further strategic work

- Review and update the 'Halls Gap Township Urban Design Framework, A Pride of Place Project, 2001.'
- Develop siting and design guidelines for buildings (both residential and industrial).

Reference documents

Halls Gap Township Urban Design Framework, a Pride of Place Project, 2001

Northern Grampians Heritage Study, Stage 1, April 2000

Northern Grampians Shire Heritage Study Stage 2, 2005