

**COAL RESOURCES POLICY**

This policy applies to land covered by the State Resource Overlay – Schedule 1 (Gippsland Brown Coalfields).

**Policy basis**

The Municipal Strategic Statement describes the strategic National and State importance of the coal resource as an asset for energy purposes. The winning of coal as an industry is a significant land use activity in the municipality.

**Objectives**

To ensure that the use and development of land overlying the coal resources recognises the need to conserve and utilise the coal resource in the context of overall resources, having regard to social, environmental, physical and economic considerations in order to ensure a high quality of life for residents.

To facilitate orderly coal development so that the resource is utilised in a way which is integrated with the State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks.

**Policy**

It is policy that:

**Natural environment**

- Environmental quality and protection against pollution is a primary consideration.
- Planning for coal resource development or use takes into account areas and features of recognised value for nature conservation, recreation and tourism, and landscape quality.
- Planning, development and management of the coal resource takes into account, and is compatible with Statements of Environment Protection Policy.
- Coal excavations, overburden dumps, and other associated development be planned, managed and progressively rehabilitated to the highest practicable future use.
- Whenever practicable and cost effective, the use of quarry or other materials recovered from coal development areas prior to or during their development be encouraged.
- Buffers are used to provide separation between coal development and associated areas and residential or other sensitive areas to alleviate the adverse effects of one upon the other.

**Social planning**

- Coal resource development or use takes into account the interests of the existing and future Victorian community, the needs and views of the local community, equity in the provision and distribution of employment, housing and community services and the likely social and environmental impacts of development, and should incorporate strategies to ameliorate adverse effects and promote the positive benefits of developments.

**Water resources**

- Catchments of the river systems and underground waters be planned and managed to ensure an adequate supply and quality of water for development, management and use of water resources, complementing and integrated with coal resource planning in both the municipality and regional catchments.

**Timber production**

- Timber production be planned in a manner which will complement the orderly development of the coal resource.
- Timber production takes into account the need for effective fire protection for the coal resource.

**Transport**

- Transport corridors be protected and maintained.

**Rural areas**

- Land uses in the coal resource area prior to coal development, which are productive and minimise the social and financial cost of coal development, will be encouraged.
- Extensive animal husbandry and other rural land uses will be strongly encouraged in areas of potential coal production.
- Residential, rural living, commercial or non coal related industrial land use and development will be strongly discouraged in areas of potential coal production.

**Decision guidelines**

- A planning authority in preparing an amendment and a responsible authority in deciding an application will consider:
  - When the land is expected to be required for development of the coal resource.
  - Whether development of the coal resource may be prejudiced.
  - The nature and scale of development.
  - The relationship between the proposed use or development and development of the coal resource.
  - Whether the proposed use or development can be located elsewhere.
  - Protection of the policy area from fire.
- If policy statements relating to one land use conflicts with another, then:
  - In the coal resource area, the extraction and use of coal should be the primary consideration. At every stage of development of that coal, due account should be taken of the other principal resources of the coal resource area. Land uses which do not impede that objective may be considered in the policy area.
  - In the identified coal related buffer areas the mutual protection of urban amenity and coal development areas are to be the primary consideration.
  - In existing urban areas and land identified for urban purposes, urban land uses should be the primary consideration.
  - In high quality agricultural areas, the use of land for rural activities is to be the primary consideration, however, coal development remains the primary consideration in relation to those areas identified as a coal area or for that land required for facilities for, or associated with, the use of that coal.
  - Timber production has a lesser priority than the extraction of coal and agricultural land use activity, unless a proper economic assessment shows it to be viable.
  - Within areas zoned for urban use or development and areas identified for future urban use or development, low density residential and rural living use or development have a lower priority than timber production, the extraction of coal, high quality agricultural activity and urban land uses.