

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

Rural Zones Review
April 2012



ADOPTION OF PLAN

LEVEL: Council

APPROVAL DATE:

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ATTACHMENTS: Nil

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Signed by Chief Executive Officer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Loddon Shire Council has a clear position of supporting and promoting the growth of population and its agricultural sector. Agriculture is the basis of the economy and agricultural land is a key asset of the Shire. This review does not seek to revisit the strategic position of supporting agricultural growth and development, which is well entrenched in both the planning scheme and other state and local policy documents, but aims to refine and enhance the delivery of this position.

This review of the rural zones seeks to reinforce a balance between Council's desire to accommodate new residents in a range of localities and environments, protect the ongoing ability of farms to expand and operate relatively unhindered to maintain viability, minimise Council's liability for road maintenance and other service provision to isolated dwellings and protect environmental assets.

This review focuses on:

- 1) Identifying and rezoning areas that have limited or no agricultural prospects, such as remnant vegetation and highly fragmented and developed land that was inappropriately translated into the Farming Zone;
- 2) Updating subdivision and dwelling controls to ensure that they support Council's strategic position of supporting agricultural growth and development;
- 3) Developing a local policy position on rural land use issues such as renewable energy development and rural industry.

Agriculture is by far the largest economic sector in the Loddon Shire (Loddon Shire 2009) and is the biggest employer (ABS 2006). Agriculture in the Shire includes broadacre dryland farms producing grains and livestock and irrigated farms producing livestock, grains, milk, fruit and vegetables. The agricultural sector was worth around \$200 million in 2006, and grew by around \$50 million between 1997 and 2001 and maintained this value between 2001 and 2006. This was despite the drought and low water allocations for irrigation during this latter period.

Key assets of the Shire include broadacre land suited to cropping and grazing, high quality soils suited to intensive horticulture, water provided via irrigation networks, Loddon River and groundwater supplies and rural areas with low development and population density.

Farm sizes in Loddon are increasing, with farms consolidating and amalgamating to keep pace with terms of trade. The irrigation area in the north is contracting, but is being upgraded to deliver a more efficient system. The trend of farm expansion will continue into the future and the ability for farms to acquire additional land will be significant in terms of their ongoing viability. The reduction of irrigation land will increase its value and significance in terms of food production. Irrigated land should be protected from land use change or development that would compromise its agricultural potential.

A review of land use trends in Loddon revealed that there are some areas of land in the south of the Shire that are fragmented and developed to the point that retaining them in the Farming Zone is unrealistic. These areas are largely located around key townships and adjacent to public forest areas. There have been a significant number of dwelling approvals on smaller properties across the farming areas, contrary to agricultural trends, which is posing a risk to agricultural growth and indicating that current policy is not adequate to discourage non-farm development in farming areas. A revised response to non-farm development is important as some highly valuable farming areas in the east of the Shire are at risk of land use change as they consist of many smaller parcels.

This review made the following findings and recommendations;

Farming Zone

The majority of rural land in Loddon is considered productive, or has productive potential, or farming is the highest and best use despite the productive potential of the land. As such it is appropriate that most rural land in Loddon should be zoned Farming. Application of the Farming Zone recognises the attributes of the Shire and supports the basis of the economy.

Rural Living Zone

The Rural Living Review (2007) identified that there are a number of areas within the Shire that are zoned Farming, but are fragmented, developed and used for rural living. This review reevaluates the rezoning of these areas to rural living in response to the recommendations of the 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission and increasing focus on environmental issues.

Numerous parcels within the following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Rural Living Zone;

- Wedderburn
 - Gregson Road / Clifden Lane
 - Josephine Drive
 - Wallaby Way
 - Woolshed Flat
- Inglewood
- Kingower
 - Wehla Kingower Road
- Brenanah
 - Kingower Wedderburn Road area
 - Brenanah Wehla Road area
- Wehla
 - Logan Wehla Rheola Road
- Fentons Creek
- Tarnagulla
- Laanecoorie
- McIntyre

-
- McIntyre township
 - Moliagul
 - Chinamans Lane
 - Moliagul Drive / Mason Drive

Rural Activity Zone

Within Loddon, there are areas that are predominantly rural in nature but feature a mixture of uses and environmental values. These areas are considered to be inappropriately located within the Farming Zone and should be rezoned to the Rural Activity Zone.

- Kingower
 - Nyanaghul Road
 - Kingower Brenanah Road (including Kingower Township)

Rural Conservation Zone

Loddon includes some areas with significant environmental or conservation values, largely in the form of remnant vegetation. Most of these areas are not currently farmed, and should not be farmed as this would compromise these values; however most of these areas are zoned Farming. These areas should be zoned Rural Conservation Zone. This is the zone for areas where environmental and conservation values are to take priority over other land uses. Within the RCZ, dwellings are permissible subject to a planning permit. Council will support dwellings in these areas where they are compatible with and support protection of the environmental values of the property and appropriate infrastructure is provided.

Parcels within the following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Rural Conservation Zone;

- Wedderburn
 - Skinners Flat – north
- Nine Mile
- Mt Korong
- Wehla
 - Birthisel Road
- Brenanah
- Kingower
 - Halls Road
 - Wehla Kingower Road
- Rheola
- Moliagul
 - Cherry Gardens Road
- Tarnagulla
- Llanelly

Township Zone

The Laanecoorie township area has been inappropriately included in the Farming Zone of the Loddon Planning Scheme. The township should be included in the Township Zone.

Public Park and Recreation Zone

The Newbridge recreation reserve has been translated into the Farming Zone. This is an inappropriate zone for the land and does not reflect the existing use or development of the land. The Newbridge recreation reserve should be rezoned to the Public Park and Recreation Zone.

Public Conservation and Resource Zone

The Loddon Shire contains extensive areas of publicly managed land much of which has significant environmental values. The following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone:

- Tarnagulla – State Forest
- Bridgewater Public Caravan Park
- Laanecoorie Riverside area
- Loddon River Corridor

Public Use Zone

The following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Public Use Zone:

- Skidders Flat Reservoir
- Laanecoorie water treatment plant
- Boort Cemetery
- Pyramid Hill Cemetery
- Wedderburn Cemetery
- Kingower Cemetery
- Inglewood Cemetery
- Rheola Cemetery
- Yarrayne Cemetery
- Eddington Cemetery

Subdivision

Given the requirement to support farm growth the following changes to subdivision controls in the Farming Zone are recommended;

Land	Area	
	Existing	Proposed
Minimum subdivision area (Hectares).	20ha	40ha
Land within the GMID that is currently irrigated, set up for irrigation or a commitment or agreement has been put in place to enable the land to be irrigated following subdivision <u>and</u> where the land is likely to remain irrigated by virtue of infrastructure, soil type or proximity to water source.		
All other land	100 ha, unless in accordance with Local Planning Policy – 22.05	100ha

Excisions

Council should continue to support house lot excisions where they support farm expansion and consolidation, minimise the amount of land lost to farming and do not pose a significant risk to surrounding farming activities. House lot excisions should not be supported where there is a risk to the farming opportunities of the area.

Dwellings

Planning controls in relation to dwellings in the Farming Zone should be amended to require a permit for dwellings on lots of less than 100ha and that information be submitted with a permit application to demonstrate that the dwelling will be ancillary to the farming use of the land where a new farming business is proposed.

Renewable Energy Facilities

Renewable energy facilities will be supported in Loddon but should not be located on high quality agricultural land where they compromise primary production, in particular, land that is and is likely to remain irrigated (or may be irrigated in the future) due to soil type or access to irrigation infrastructure.

Rural Industry

It is preferable that rural industry be located within existing urban areas to capitalise on infrastructure and contribute to the employment options, viability and vibrancy of the town and minimise loss of farmland.

Rural industry should only be located in rural areas where;

- Amenity impacts of the industry make it unsuitable for an urban area;
- Existing road infrastructure is suitable for the traffic to be generated by the industry;
- The industry will not compromise agricultural use of surrounding land;
- There are clear advantages of locating the industry in the rural area that outweigh the advantages of locating it in an urban area.

1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Loddon Shire is located in North West Victoria. It is a rural municipality with agriculture being the main land use and basis of the economy. It is critical for the ongoing viability of the municipality that rural planning controls support the growth and development of agriculture. The primary purpose of this review is to secure the future of agriculture in Loddon through ensuring that productive agricultural land is suitably zoned and associated planning controls are relevant to current farming practices and opportunities. Council is also keen to ensure that opportunities remain in suitable locations for rural living to support their strategy of population growth.

The current rural planning controls were introduced in 2000 with the adoption of the Loddon VPP Planning Scheme. In 2007, the Rural Zone was replaced by the Farming Zone by the State Government, slightly changing the direction of the rural areas to having a greater focus on agriculture and removing some opportunities for other land uses.

In the time since the original rural planning controls were adopted in Loddon there have been many changes in agriculture and rural land use. Some of these changes include:

- An increase in farm size, with a reduction in farm numbers between 80ha and 1000 ha in size, but an increase in farm numbers 1000ha to 10,000ha in size between 1997 and 2006
- The introduction of water trading, irrigation restructure and renewal
- Development of large scale horticultural investment, for example Olive Corp
- The introduction of a policy of Net Gain of native vegetation by the State Government
- Carbon trading
- Increased interest and investment in renewable energy

Given these changes and the time that has elapsed since the rural planning controls were developed in Loddon it is considered appropriate that these controls be reviewed.

This review will focus on:

- 1) Identifying and rezoning areas that have limited or no agricultural prospects, such as remnant vegetation and highly fragmented and developed land that was inappropriately translated into the Farming Zone;
- 2) Updating subdivision and dwelling controls to ensure that they support Council's strategic position of supporting agricultural growth and development;
- 3) Developing a local policy position on rural land use issues such as renewable energy development and rural industry.

Council has a clear position of supporting and promoting the growth of its agricultural sector. Agriculture is the basis of the economy and agricultural land is a key asset of the Shire. The review does not seek to revisit the strategic position of supporting agricultural growth and development, which is well entrenched in both the planning scheme and other state and local policy documents, but aims to refine and enhance the delivery of this position.

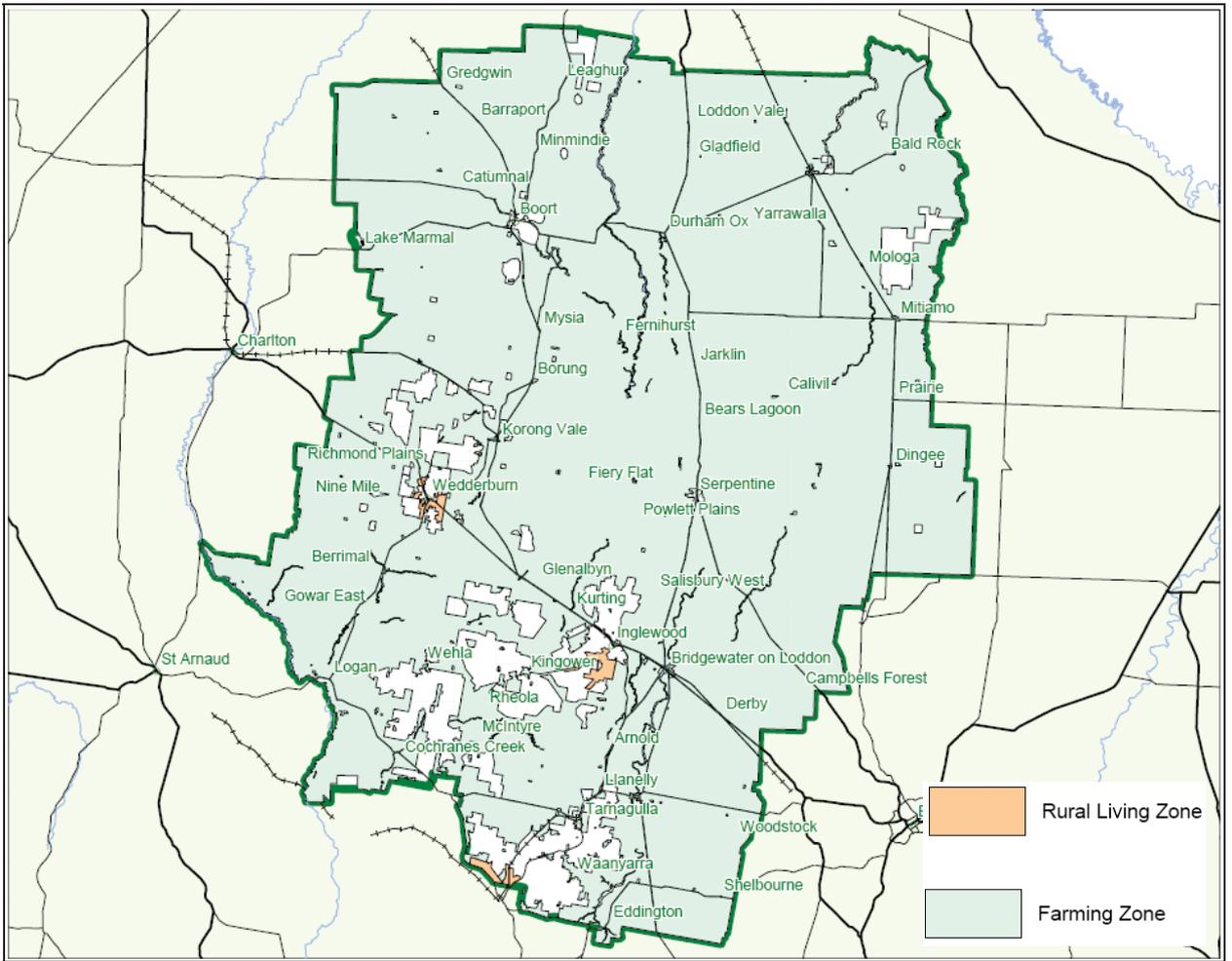
Loddon Shire

Loddon Shire resulted from the amalgamation of seven municipalities and part municipalities in 1995. It covers an area of 6,701 square kilometers and includes land as diverse as riverine plains and forested gold mining areas.

The vast majority of the Shire's land is used for agriculture, with the towns and settlements dispersed throughout the Shire servicing these farming areas. It has a long tradition of agricultural production of commodities including grain, sheep, wool, beef cattle, dairy, pigs, and poultry. In recent years this primary production base has diversified to include more intensive forms of agriculture such as wine grapes, olives, other horticulture, oilseeds, grain legumes, and fodder crops (although a number of these crops also featured in some areas in the past). A significant change to agriculture in Loddon in recent years is the conversion of broadacre land to a substantial olive plantation near Boort.

Key assets of the Shire include broadacre land suited to cropping and grazing, high quality soils suited to intensive horticulture, water provided via irrigation networks, Loddon River and groundwater supplies and rural areas with low development and population density. According to a study conducted in 1998, the Loddon Shire has a diversity and scale of agricultural opportunities unequalled in most other municipalities in Australia (Miller).

The Shire also includes areas of land with significant environmental values. Some of these areas include land with remnant vegetation around Kooyoora State Park and Wychitella Flora and Fauna Reserve, remnant grasslands and wetlands and this review will consider the compatibility of these environmental values with agricultural land use.



Rural Zoned Land within the Loddon Shire

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Introduction

Council is currently operating in a strategic context that clearly supports an agricultural future for the Shire. This context also supports opportunities for diversifying the economic base, rural living and protecting and enhancing environmental assets, in particular providing for net gain of native vegetation. This section of the report provides an overview of the key strategies that provide the context for the review of the rural planning controls.

Council Plan 2010-2014

Council's corporate plan, Council Plan 2010-2014, confirms Council's role in facilitating economic development to create a climate for investment and employment growth to support population growth. Agriculture is recognised as a key part of the economy and the corporate plan includes strategies to support its ongoing viability and development. Specific strategies of the corporate plan relevant to the rural zones review are:

- Support Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) to deliver an efficient and sustainable irrigation system in Loddon Shire
- Restore confidence in the sustainability of the Shire's irrigation sector
- Improve sustainable farming and irrigation methods in the Loddon Shire
- Attract new and sustainable investment into the Loddon Shire's agriculture/horticulture sector
- Complete a review of Loddon's Rural Zones and implement the recommendations of the review
- Ensure that the planning scheme review recognizes Council's current objectives for growth including:
 - Intensive animal industries in the East Loddon Waterworks district
 - Loddon Prime development zones

Economic Development Strategy

Loddon Shire's economic development strategy is based on the principle of promoting population growth through creating a climate for investment. It focuses on a number of key opportunities, including:

- Irrigated agriculture;
- Renewable energy generation;
- Diversified horticulture;
- Carbon trading;
- Manufacturing.

Specific initiatives, relevant to the rural zones review include:

- Extension of the "prime development zone" (PDZ), involving water from the Waranga channel and other water access licenses (e.g. Loddon River);
- Protection and promotion of the PDZ for horticulture through the planning scheme;

-
- Identification, protection and promotion of areas suitable for intensive animal industries through the planning scheme.

Tourism Strategy

Loddon Shire's Tourism Strategy identifies the potential of the municipality as a tourism destination. The Shire's tourism strengths are identified as:

- "Nature based" – including bushwalking, cycling, mountain bike riding, canoeing, horse riding, orienteering, fishing, bird watching, photography, camping, etc. in our State and National Parks and on our rivers and lakes
- Culture and heritage – including historic towns, Aboriginal heritage sites, gold rush relics, museums,
- Food and wine agri-tourism – including local wines and produce such as olives
- Festivals and events – including Detector Jamboree, Boort Agricultural Show, Pyramid Hill Christmas Event, Bridgewater Jumbuck, Wedderburn Engine Rally, Kooyoora Wildflower Show, Rheola Carnival

Loddon Planning Scheme

The Loddon Planning Scheme includes policy from the State and local level that will influence the future of the rural areas. The planning policy position of relevance to this project can be summarised as:

- Protect productive farmland which is of strategic significance in the local or regional context.
- Support effective agricultural production and processing infrastructure, rural industry and farm-related retailing and assist genuine farming enterprises to adjust flexibly to market changes
- Support development that will provide for more sustainable, more intensive agriculture;
- Encourage high value, sustainable, intensive agriculture on high quality agricultural land;
- Encourage the efficient use of irrigation water for commodities with high returns;
- Provide for the effective restructure and redevelopment of farm holdings to maximise opportunities for diversification and intensification;
- Ensure development (including subdivision) in farming areas is clearly related to ongoing farming prospects;
- Direct non soil based agricultural activity away from quality agricultural land;
- Support initiatives for value adding and processing of local produce;
- Facilitate the establishment and expansion of cattle feedlots, piggeries, poultry farms and other intensive animal industries in a manner consistent with orderly and proper planning and protection of the environment.
- Protect water quality
- Protect and enhance native vegetation
- Promote the provision of renewable energy
- Land should only be zoned for rural living or rural residential development where it can be serviced and will not encroach on high quality productive agricultural land or adversely impact on waterways or other natural resources.
- Encourage the development of a range of well designed and sited tourist facilities, that build upon the assets and qualities of surrounding urban or rural activities and cultural and natural attractions.

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- Facilitate the establishment, management and harvesting of plantations, harvesting of timber from native forests and the development of forest based industries.

Rural Living Review (2007)

In 2007, Loddon Shire Council prepared a Rural Living Review. The purpose of this project was to determine the future of rural living in the Shire. The Shire has a long history of supporting rural living development, particularly in the southern areas around Wedderburn, Inglewood, Wehla, McIntyre and Moliagul.

Loddon Shire Council supports rural living and rural residential development as a legitimate part of the settlement strategy of the Municipality. Rural living plays an important role in the liveability of the Shire, and in terms of the range of residential options offered. It is recognised that liveability and residential amenity is a key part of the Shire's ability to attract new residents.

The Rural Living Review concluded that there was a sufficient supply of rural living land in the Shire to cater for short to medium term demand, with the exception of Bridgewater. It was recommended that land be rezoned at Bridgewater for low density residential development to meet some demand for rural living in this area. Farmlet development around Bridgewater was considered inappropriate due to the farming values in this area. The review also recommended that land at McIntyre, Moliagul, Wedderburn, Inglewood and Wehla be rezoned to the Rural Living Zone to recognise the existing supply of this land type in these areas.

Other schemes

Loddon Shire is adjoined by Central Goldfields Shire, Campaspe Shire, Gannawarra Shire, Buloke Shire, Northern Grampians Shire and Greater Bendigo. A number of these municipalities have recently completed rural land strategies.

Campaspe Shire

Campaspe Shire undertook a Rural Land Use Strategy in conjunction with Moira Shire and Greater Shepparton. This strategy recognised the future of these municipalities was based on supporting the growth and development of farming businesses and that different planning controls were required for different areas based on existing development, farming trends and prospects.

The Farming Zone was recommended for the vast majority of the rural land in the Shires to promote agriculture and provide for growth of farm businesses. Three schedules were recommended to recognise the different characteristics across the rural area. The table below sets out the recommended controls for subdivision and housing.

	Strategy for the area	Minimum subdivision size	Dwelling	House lot excisions
Farming 1	Growth – to provide for the large scale farming operations and expansion of existing farm businesses (e.g. dryland, green fields sites with access to irrigation network)	250ha – dryland 100ha - irrigation	No – new dwellings are not required to support agricultural growth	No – lack of neighbours is a key driver of growth
Farming 2	Consolidation – to support expansion and consolidation of existing farm businesses (e.g. soldier settler irrigation areas)	160ha – dryland 40ha - irrigation	No – new dwellings are not required to support agricultural growth	Yes – where restructure and property consolidation is an outcome and there is no neighbour impact.
Farming 3	Niche – to support farm business on smaller properties (e.g. horticulture areas)	40ha	Yes – where it can be demonstrated it is required to support the productive use of the land.	No – as consolidation is unlikely in this area.

The strategy recommends that those areas adjoining Loddon be subject to a 250ha minimum subdivision size.

The Rural Activity Zone (RAZ) was recommended for two key areas where tourism values should be supported along with farming values. These areas are on Lake Mulwala between Yarrawonga and Bundalong, and on the Murray River, north of Echuca.

The Rural Conservation Zone was recommended for land with remnant vegetation values, including box iron bark forest near Rushworth.

Greater Bendigo

The City of Greater Bendigo completed a rural land use strategy in 2009. This strategy determined that land on the west side of the municipality is to be used for broadacre cropping and grazing and farms should be supported to grow and consolidate. New housing should be strictly limited to minimise any displacement of agriculture. The strategy recommended a minimum subdivision size of 40ha in the south west of the City, 100ha in the North West, and 8 ha for a small niche farming area near Heathcote to support the wine grape growing industry (centered on a particular soil type).

Gannawarra

Gannawarra Shire Council has been undertaking a project to consider the future use of the “new dryland”. The “new dryland” is land that previously had access to irrigation but following reconfiguration will no longer be irrigable. This project is yet to be finalised but its conclusions are expected to include support for broadacre farming, intensive animal industries, forestry and renewable energy in the new dryland areas to the north of Loddon. Those areas that are to retain irrigation access are to be strictly protected for soil based agriculture.

Future Farming Strategy

The State Government's Future Farming Strategy (2008) identified key tasks and responsibilities of Government to support the ongoing growth and development of Victoria's agricultural sector. This strategy recognised that land-use planning must provide greater certainty and productivity for farm businesses by setting a clear policy direction that balances complex and competing community demands. State Government has committed to improving rural planning through an advisory group which will undertake research including identification of barriers to adjustment, developing land-use planning policy to help farmers adapt, delivering regional land-use planning projects identified by the group and where necessary, changing statutory planning tools to ensure policy alignment with directions in the Future Farming strategy.

Future Farms Rural Planning Group

The Future Farms Rural Planning Group was established by the State Government to advise on changes to the planning system to better support agricultural growth and development. The final report has been submitted to the State Government for consideration. The "Future Farming: Improving rural land use, 2009" report, offers five land use planning principles. The five principles are as follows:

1. Promote evidence-based rural and regional planning to support decision making.
2. Maintain, protect and enhance natural assets.
3. Facilitate and plan for rural agricultural adjustment.
4. Respond to the relationship between climate change risks and rural community safety.
5. Ensure adequate infrastructure to support agricultural investment.

Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan – Southern Region

The Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan has recently been completed. Loddon Shire is included within the Southern Region, along with Central Goldfields, Greater Bendigo, Mount Alexander and Macedon Ranges. The strategic directions of this plan are:

1. Manage our population growth and settlements
2. Strengthen our communities, especially in our small towns
3. Strengthen and diversify our economy
4. Improve our infrastructure
5. Improve education and training outcomes
6. Protect and enhance our natural environment

There is a strong recognition in the plan for the need to manage growth in the region to direct it to appropriate locations and protect non-urban breaks.

Of particular relevance to Loddon Shire is priority action 3.2;

Attract investment in high value agriculture production and added value processing, including in intensive agriculture related industries leveraging off the regions strengths of good soils, efficient flexible farming systems and vast tracks of land to deliver new jobs and encourage efficient resource use.

Of all the municipalities in the region, Loddon has the greatest opportunity for such investment as its farming areas have not been compromised by non-agricultural development to the same extent as the other local government areas.

Ministerial Direction 6 Rural Residential Development

The purpose of this Direction is to manage the provision of sustainable rural residential development.

The Direction's key objective is to manage the provision of sustainable rural residential development so that it supports sustainable housing and settlements and does not compromise Victoria's agricultural, natural, environmental, landscape and infrastructure resources.

2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission handed down several recommendations relating to planning and building regulations. These recommendations will impact upon settlement strategies and patterns as well as approval of new buildings in at risk areas. The royal commission recognized a need for greater emphasis on the assessment of fire risk and hazard reduction in the consideration of new developments.

Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan 2011 – 2021 (August 2011)

The Draft Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan focuses on minimising the impact of bushfire on the community, economy, environmental and cultural assets and services. The plan identifies broad fire management risks for the Loddon Mallee region and strategies for addressing these risks. The draft plan identifies the following issues for the Loddon Shire:

- Loddon Shire has the lowest rankings for grass and forest fire likelihood in the region.
- The Shire's barriers to capability building are the second highest in the region.
- The Shire has the third highest level of community and social connectedness.
- Loddon is ranked average in the region for human settlement exposure.
- Twenty two communities and special fire protection sites in the Shire are rated Extreme or Very High by the Victorian Fire Risk Register (mostly in the south and west of the municipality).
- The Shire has an average economic exposure.
- The municipality is below the regional average in the amount of vulnerable or endangered EVC's and the number of fire sensitive aboriginal artefact areas.

Conclusion

This discussion of the strategic context for Loddon's rural areas indicates that there is strong support for agriculture, but there is also the opportunity to plan for ancillary industries such as rural industry, renewable energy and tourism. The revised rural planning controls that will come from this review need to achieve an appropriate balance to accommodate these ancillary industries, which can assist to support farming businesses, without compromising the ability of farms to grow and develop.

3. AGRICULTURE – SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

Introduction

This chapter has been prepared by RMCG and provides an overview of value, trends, prospects and requirements for ongoing agricultural development. The purpose of this work is to determine the significance and value of agriculture to Loddon, and provide the basis for changes to planning controls, in particular subdivision and housing.

Significance and value of agriculture

Overview

Agriculture is by far the largest economic sector in the Loddon Shire (Loddon Shire 2009) and is the biggest employer (ABS 2006). Agriculture in the Shire includes broadacre dryland farms producing grains and livestock and irrigated farms producing livestock, grains, milk, fruit and vegetables.

The agricultural sector grew by around \$50 million between 1997 and 2001 and maintained this value between 2001 and 2006 (Figure 1). This was despite the drought and low water allocations for irrigation during this latter period.

The relative contribution to gross value of production (GVAP) by the North Loddon Statistical Local Area (SLA) compared to the South Loddon SLA has changed over time, with North Loddon becoming a more significant contributor (refer Appendix 1 for SLA map).

Between 1997 and 2006, the value of production increased significantly in the Loddon North SLA, but steadily declined in the Loddon South SLA (Figure 2).

The reasons for this are discussed in greater detail in the next section, but are primarily linked to the higher value of produce from irrigation compared to dryland and the influence of drought on dryland production.

Figure 1 Gross value of production 1997 to 2006 in Loddon Shire (ABS 2006)

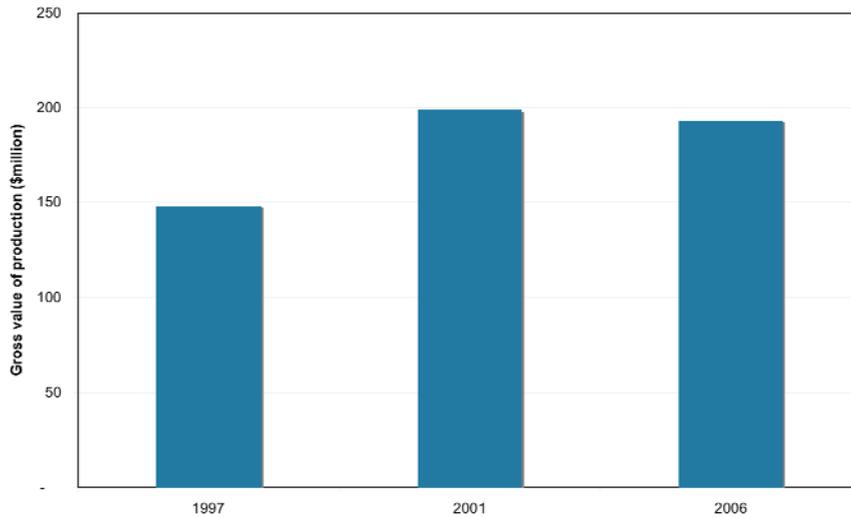
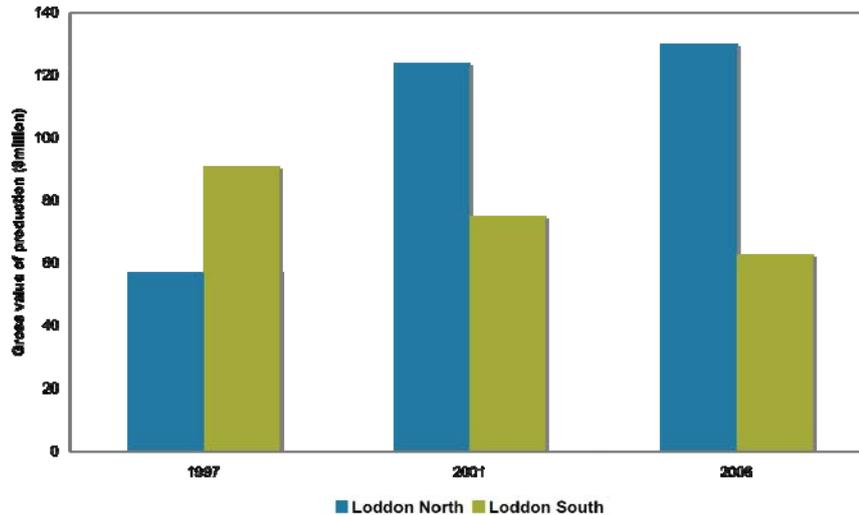


Figure 2 Gross value of production 1997 to 2005 in Loddon North and Loddon South statistical local areas (ABS 2006)



Commodities

The main commodities produced in the Shire by gross value of production, include beef and sheep for meat, grains (cereals, legumes, oilseeds predominantly dryland), milk and wool. Olive groves established in the 1990's have begun producing oil and are the fifth most significant commodity.

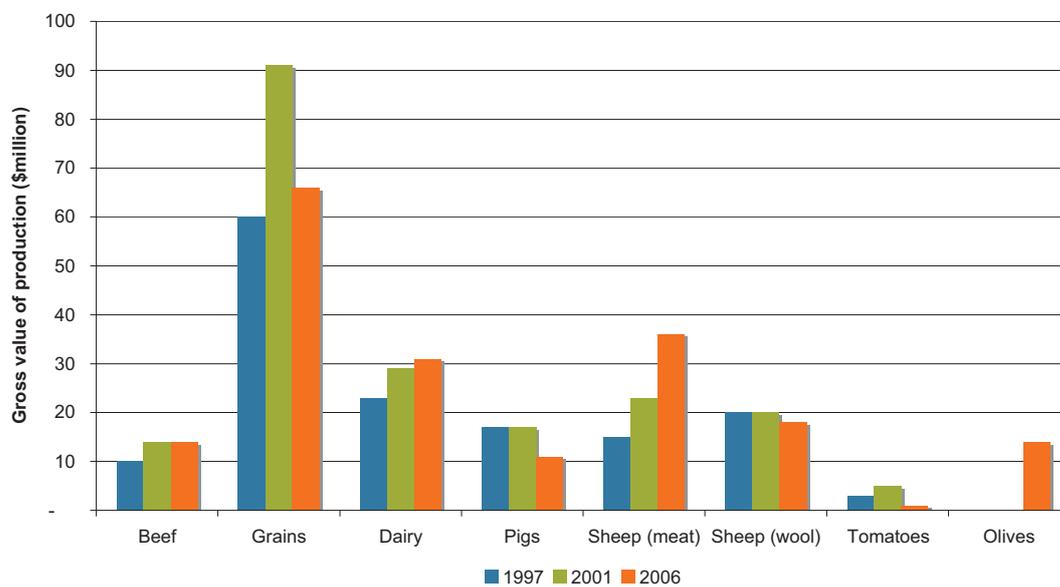
There has been some variability in the value of production over time primarily linked to drought, low water allocations for irrigation and commodity prices. The key points to note from Figure 3:

- Meat production increased between 1997 and 2001 with animal numbers remaining steady. Value of production increases between 2001 and 2006 were related to improved meat prices;
- Grains production significantly increased in value between 1997 and 2001. The area of crop production increased between 1997 and 2006. However, the value of production fell in 2006 due to low rainfall and a reduced harvest.

- Dairy herd numbers increased from 1997 to 2001 and remained steady in 2006. The steady increase in value of production reflects buoyant milk prices to 2009;
- The value of sheep meat production tripled between 1997 and 2001;
- Wool and egg production have remained steady;
- Tomato production has been significantly impacted by drought and low water allocations over the last 5 years;
- Olives have emerged as an important sector.

These trends reflect strong prices for milk to 2009, strong demand for feed for dairies when water allocations were low, strong prices for lamb and the maturing of olive plantations established over the last 10 years

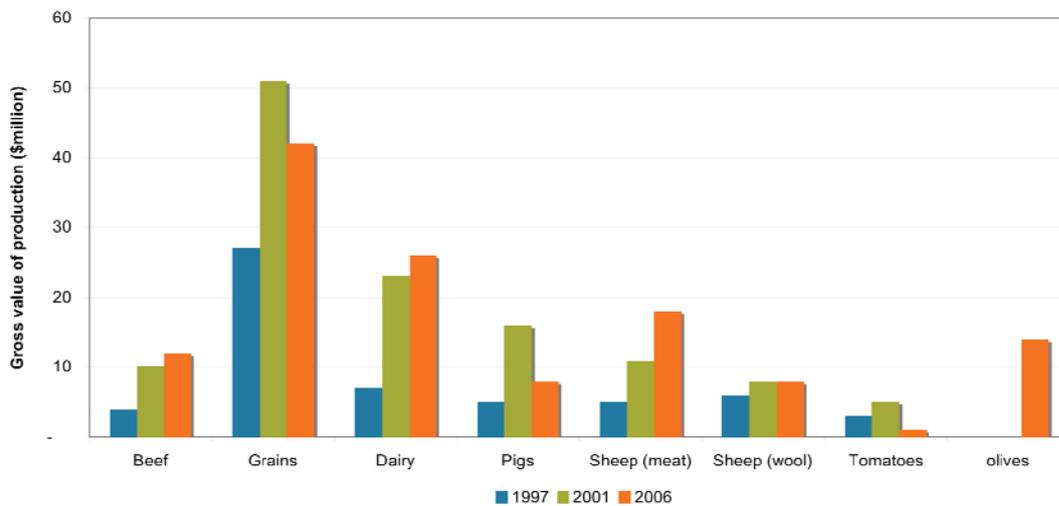
Figure 3 Gross value of production of commodities 1997 to 2006



North Loddon

The value of production in the North Loddon SLA is dominated by grain production, with dairy the second most important. As noted above, the variability in the value of production over time has been impacted by drought and commodity prices. Hence, the value of grain production was impacted in 2006 by low rainfall, poor harvest and good grain prices for feed. The olive groves in the northern part of the Shire are maturing and processing of fruit for oil has commenced.

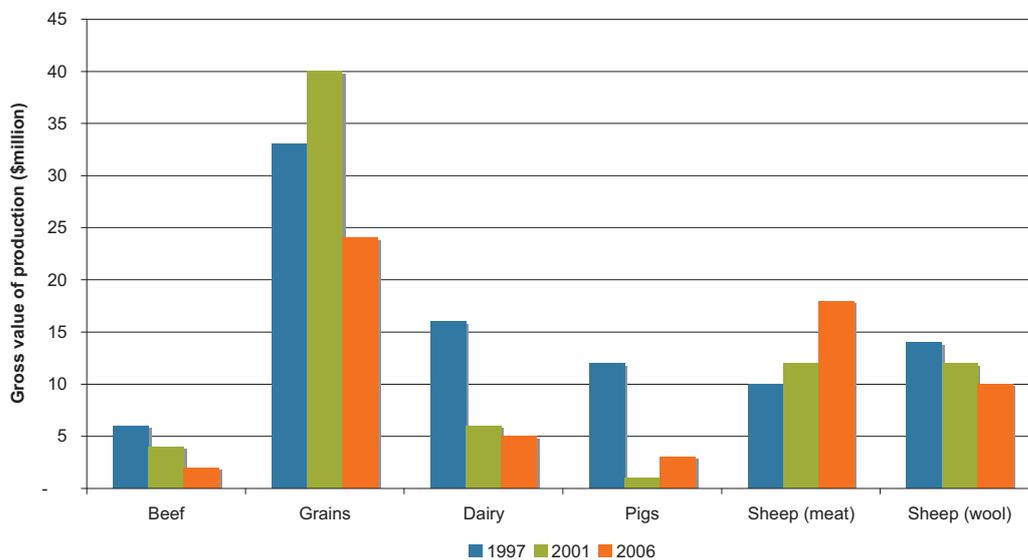
Figure 4 Gross value of production of commodities in the North Loddon SLA (ABS 2006)



South Loddon

Grains, followed by sheep meat production, and wool, dominate the value of production in the South Loddon SLA. As noted above the variability over time is impacted by drought and commodity prices. Hence, the value of grain production was significantly reduced in 2006 due to low rainfall and a poor harvest. There is also a much smaller area of irrigated agriculture in the South Loddon SLA, with irrigation focused around dairy and mixed farming. In contrast to North Loddon, the value of production from dairy has dropped significantly in the South Loddon SLA.

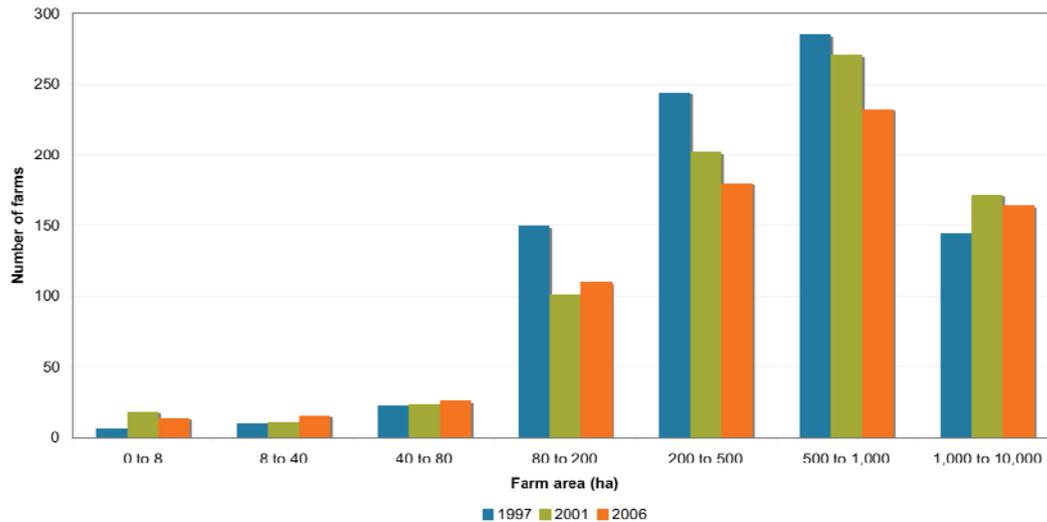
Figure 5 Gross value of production of commodities in the South Loddon SLA (ABS 2006)



Farm size

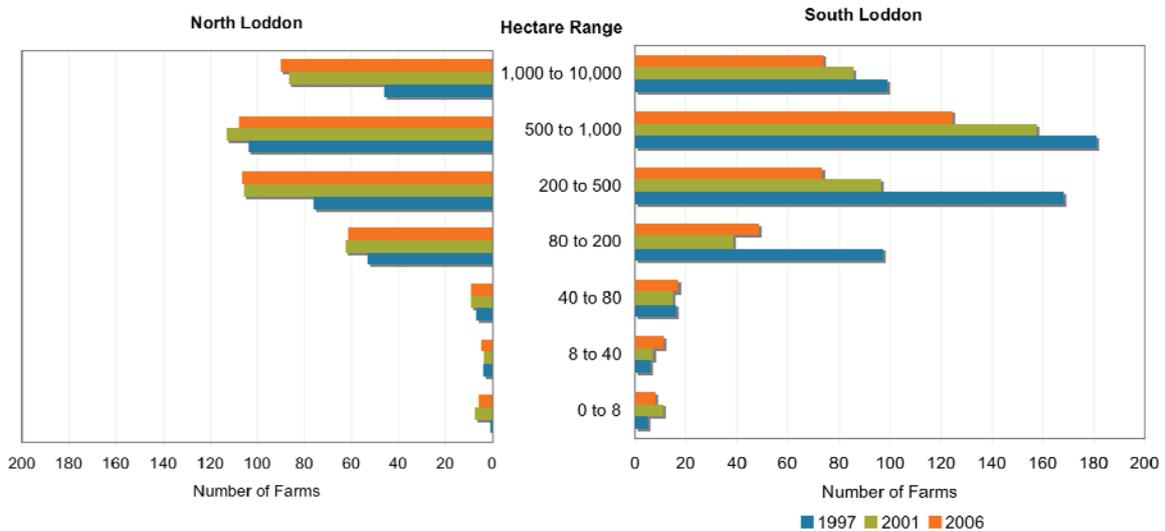
Farms in Loddon Shire are generally large, consistent with the mostly broadacre farming activities. The trend over time indicates that farm size has been growing with a reduction in farm numbers between 80ha and 1000 ha in size, but an increase in farm numbers 1000ha to 10,000ha in size. This is consistent with trends in farm size and farm amalgamation across Australian agriculture in which the medium sized farms are reducing in number as farm sizes increase. With an increase in farm sizes across the Shire the number of farm businesses will contract.

Figure 6 Farm size in Loddon Shire 1997 to 2006 (ABS 2006)



Farm sizes in the Loddon South SLA are generally larger than the Loddon North SLA. This is consistent with the mainly dryland, broadacre production in the Loddon South SLA and larger proportion of irrigated farming in the Loddon North SLA. The trend towards increased farm size over time is stronger in the North Loddon SLA compared to the South Loddon SLA. In the South Loddon SLA, there has been a substantial drop in the number of medium sized farms.

Figure 7 Farm size in Loddon Shire, North and South SLAs 1997 to 2006 (ABS 2006)

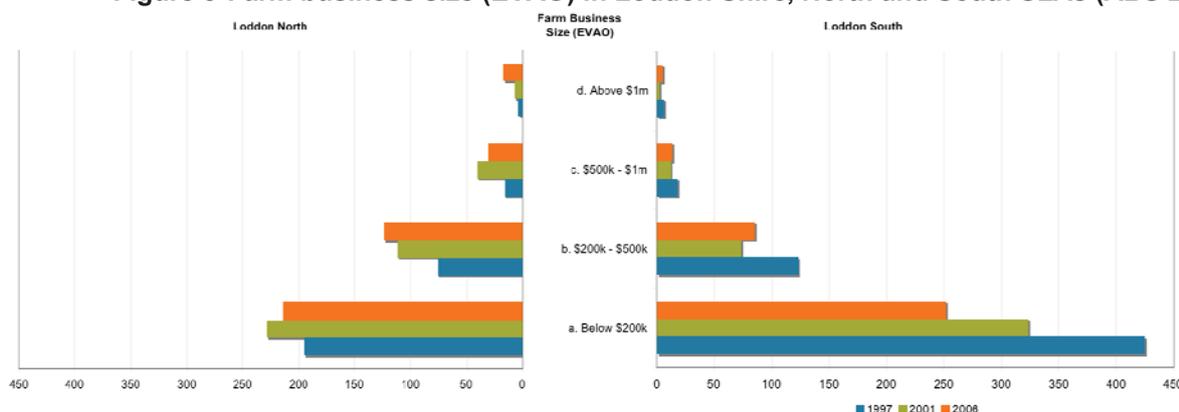


Farm business size

Most farm business in the Loddon Shire, as measured by the estimated value of agricultural (EVOA) operations are considered small. The number of small farm businesses as a proportion of total farm businesses is higher in the South Loddon SLA as compared to North Loddon SLA. The trend towards increased farm business size over time is relatively consistent across both SLAs.

With ongoing farm adjustment in the irrigation areas and decline in terms of trade, it is expected that the trend towards increased farm business size will continue. The large number of small farm businesses in the South Loddon SLA suggests that there may be more adjustment in this area.

Figure 8 Farm business size (EVAO) in Loddon Shire, North and South SLAs (ABS 2006)



Irrigation in Pyramid-Boort

Irrigation in the Pyramid-Boort Irrigation Area (PBIA) started with a small supply from the Loddon River through the Tragowel Plains Irrigation Trust in 1886. The PBIA is now part of the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District operated by Goulburn-Murray Rural Water Authority (G-MW) in northern Victoria. In the 1930's the Waranga Western Channel provided water to a larger area and more irrigators.

Unlike other irrigation districts, irrigation development followed settlement and subdivision of the land. There was not a sufficient supply to provide water for all the land on any given farm and the water was shared across all farms. As a result, there was insufficient water to irrigate a whole farm. Also, due to the length and complexity of the supply system, water was delivered more irregularly than systems in the Goulburn Valley (National Water Commission 2007). This, along with the soil types, resulted in the majority of farms in the district being developed as mixed farms, a mix of stock and irrigated crop production and a smaller number of dairy and horticultural farms.

In 2006, there were 737 services in the Pyramid-Boort area managed as 583 businesses. The majority of these are farm business and how they use their water is shown in Table 1. There has been a significant adjustment in property ownership and numbers since 1996/97. There were 372 services existing in 1996/97 that are no longer active in 2003/04, but there were 222 new services. This adjustment has occurred through property sales, amalgamation and/or subdivisions, as farmers adjust to significant drought and water reform activities. Overall there were 150 fewer services in 2003/04 than in 1996/97.

The Pyramid Boort Future Management Strategy (GMW 2007) summarized the key features of the PBIA as follows:

- Mixed farming dominates the Pyramid-Boort Area (80% of businesses).
- It is estimated that only 30% of all businesses are viable but they use 70% of all water.
- Half of all customers use less than 250 ML per annum.
- The annual turnover generated by all irrigation enterprises within Pyramid-Boort is estimated at \$100 million.

Table 1 Number and farm type of water users (RMCG 2006)

Farm type	Number of businesses
Stock and domestic	71
Dairy	82
Horticulture	14
Mixed	402

Soil types

The Pyramid-Boort Irrigation Area Atlas provides an assessment of soil suitability for irrigation within the irrigation area. The maps indicate areas of the following 6 soil groups:

- Group 1: Soils with no serious disabilities for irrigation except, in some situations above the gravity supply level. Suitable for irrigation of horticultural crops, vegetables, tomatoes, cereals, summer fodder crops, lucerne and perennial and annual pastures;
- Group 2: Soils with few disabilities for irrigation. Generally suitable for irrigation of vegetables, tomatoes, cereals, summer fodder crops and perennial and annual pastures.
- Group 3: Soils with several disabilities for irrigation, namely low permeability, shallow surface and sometimes moderate salinity. Suitable, given appropriate management, for irrigation of cereals, summer fodder crops and perennial and annual pastures.
- Group 4: Heavy textured soils liable to salinity problems. According to the effective means of measures to control salinity, suitable for irrigation of cereals, summer fodder crops, and annual and perennial pastures.
- Group 5: Low-lying soils, including strongly gilgaed, permeable clays and less permeable clays. Effectiveness of drainage and grading measures determine suitability for irrigation of cereal, summer fodder crops, annual and perennial pastures.
- Group 6: Soils generally not recommended for irrigation because of swampiness or surface features making layout for irrigation difficult.

The maps have been reproduced in Appendix 2. They show that much of the area has Class 3 and Class 4 soils. These areas tend to be less intensively irrigated and used for opportunistic cropping and annual pastures. The better Group 1 and 2 soils are generally associated with the major irrigation channels and more intensive irrigation for dairy and horticulture.

Soil suitability mapping for other dryland areas of the Shire are not available. However, based on geology mapping and our knowledge of the areas, we can make the following general comments:

- There are good quality soils for winter grains and pasture production associated with the floodplain of the Loddon River. Some of this land is irrigated for summer cropping and vines by direct diversion from the river;
- The central and northern dryland parts of the Shire (Wedderburn, Serpentine, Borung) have a mix of soil types associated with floodplain geology. They are generally well suited to cropping and pasture production.

-
- The old gold mining areas on the southern boundary of the Shire (Dunolly, Moliagul, Tarnagulla – land that is on the very fringe of the dividing range) generally have poorer soil types, with shallow rock, and generally only suited to pasture production.

Summary

Agriculture in Loddon Shire comprises a mix of dryland and irrigated production of meat, grains and milk. Agriculture is the dominant industry in the Shire and its most significant employer. Grains, dairy and meat production are the most important commodities produced in the Shire. Farm size, as measured by land area and estimated value of agricultural operations is increasing with time. Mixed farming has been the dominant production system in the irrigated areas of the Shire. The soils of the Shire are diverse associated with the underlying geology of the northern foothills of the divide in the south to the active floodplain and historic floodplain of the Loddon River. There are some excellent soils for high value irrigated agriculture and dryland cropping and grazing.

Prospects and requirements for ongoing agricultural development

Irrigation

Irrigation provides an opportunity for production of high value commodities such as milk, fruit and vegetables. Irrigation occurs in Loddon via direct diversion from the Loddon River and groundwater pumping in the south of the Shire. The largest area of irrigation occurs in the north of the Shire via the Waranga Channel to the PBIA.

The scale of irrigated agriculture in Loddon is declining. The PBIA has experienced significant levels of permanent and temporary trade resulting in net movement of water out of the district (Figure 9, Figure 10). Further to the sales noted in the graphs, 9GL of High Reliability Water Shares and 2GL of Low Reliability Water Shares, and 8GL of High Reliability Water Shares and 9 GL of Low Reliability Water Shares were sold out of the district in 2007/08 and 2008/09, respectively.

In other districts, sales of permanent water have been offset by increased purchases of temporary water.

Figure 9 Cumulative permanent trade in Victoria, 1994/95 – 2005/06 (DSE 2008b)

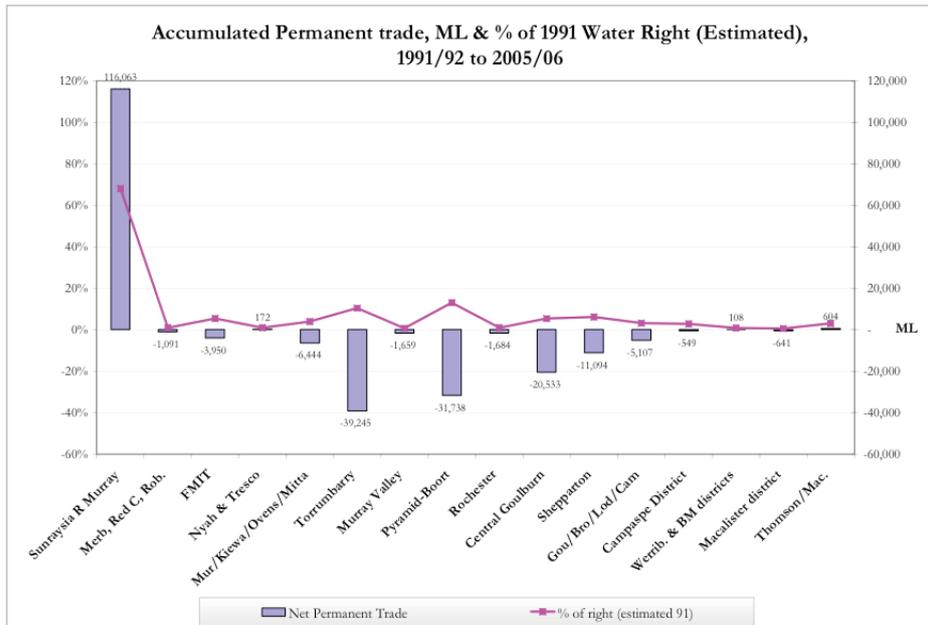
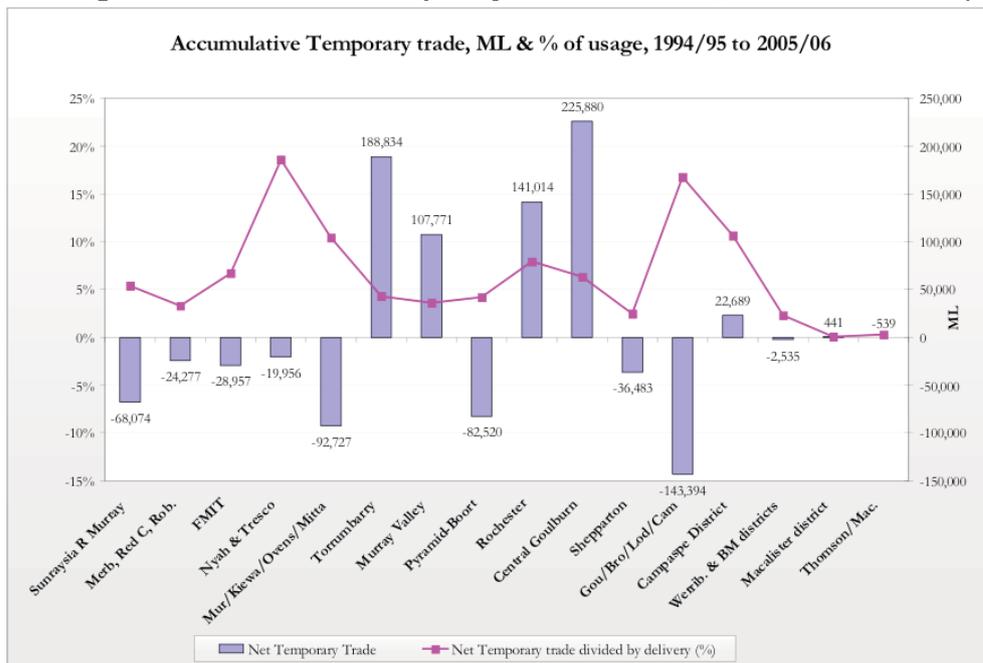


Figure 10 Cumulative temporary trade in Victoria, 1994/95 – 2005/06 (DSE 2008b)



The movement of water out of the PBIA has been driven by:

- Movement of water to support expansion of high value horticulture including Managed Investment Scheme (MIS) developments in Sunraysia;
- Extended drought and low inflow to storages reducing irrigation allocations and increasing demand and water prices across northern Victoria;
- The Federal Government Restoring the Balance program which has resulted in the purchase of 1,029ML of High Reliability Water Shares and 500ML of Low Reliability Water Shares in the PBIA to 2009.

Going forward, the irrigation footprint in the PBIA is likely to contract. The Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) will see rationalization of redundant and under utilized irrigation infrastructure and a reduced public irrigation footprint (Appendix 3). As part of the commitment by the Federal Government to funding Stage 2 of the project, NVIRP needs to identify 60GL annually for the Federal Buyback outside of the 4% cap on permanent water trade. NVIRP is likely to work closely with groups of landholders looking to participate in the buy back.

Cost of connection to the modernized system and transport of water from the backbone will be borne by the landholder. High cost of water delivery is likely to result in the irrigation footprint contracting to around 5km either side of the backbone, except for businesses producing high value crops.

The net effect of water trade and renewal of irrigation infrastructure will be a reduced irrigation footprint in the Pyramid Boort irrigation district. This will result in some land that was once irrigated reverting to dryland production. However, the upgrade of the infrastructure will present opportunities for improved water use efficiency on farms, and production of high value crops on appropriate soil types.

The Pyramid Boort Future Management Strategy noted the following competitive advantages that make it attractive for future investment in irrigated agriculture in the PBIA:

- An excellent efficiency level, regularly above 80% and compared to the average within G-MW of 72%.
- The price per megalitre of water is the least expensive gravity supply of all the irrigation areas within G-MW, and in Victoria.
- Mixed-farming enterprises increase flexibility, moving water along the value-chain as commodity prices or other conditions change. They also provide support to the dairy and horticultural industry within the Pyramid-Boort Area.
- Large tracts of land with little internal infrastructure providing greenfield-like development opportunities within the irrigation region.
- Excellent soil types around the edges of the irrigation district provide greenfield development sites, in identified Prime Development Zones (which are located around Boort).

In addition to the system improvements to be realized under NVIRP, there is an opportunity for farms to replace existing flood irrigation with more efficient systems under the Federal Government on Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program to be administered by the Goulburn Broken and North Central Catchment Management Authorities.

It will be important that planning policy supports irrigated agriculture, particularly areas in close proximity to the backbone, by minimizing development that would be a disincentive to ongoing or future irrigation development.

Dryland agriculture

In the existing dryland areas of the Shire, there is unlikely to be a dramatic change in agricultural practices. Farms will continue to expand to keep pace with the declining terms of trade. Climate change will have impacts in the future and in the short to medium term may see expansion of livestock grazing and more opportunistic cropping in response to seasonal conditions. From a planning policy perspective,

ensuring that land is retained in parcels of a size suited to broadacre farming will be important. This will also enable landholders to take advantage of new opportunities such as intensive animal husbandry or renewable energy capture, such as solar energy in the future.

New dryland

It has been noted that the irrigation footprint in the Shire will be substantially smaller in the future. The resulting areas of 'new dryland' are likely to be in limbo for some time as landholders decide on their future. During the transition, some land may be farmed productively, some will be retained but not farmed and some will be sold. It is inevitable that holdings will need to increase in size substantially to support a farming family from dryland production (to between 2,000ha and 5,000ha). There will also be significant cost and effort in removal of irrigation infrastructure and laying out the land for dryland farming.

Planning policy can support the transition from irrigation to new dryland by retaining land in parcels of a size suited to broadacre agriculture and where appropriate providing for excision of unwanted dwellings to facilitate amalgamation of holdings.

Intensive Agriculture

Intensive agriculture refers to production systems that require high capital inputs in terms of buildings, storage and infrastructure. Examples are poultry and egg production, piggeries, dairy farming and some types of horticulture. Within the Loddon Shire the most common forms of intensive agriculture are broiler farms, egg production and piggeries. Piggeries and poultry based operations are present at Woodstock, Newbridge, Bridgewater, Bears Lagoon, Prairie and Pyramid Hill.

The Loddon Shire has many attributes necessary for intensive agriculture including:

- Large areas of farm land with a low dwelling density.
- Ability to locate farms with appropriate separation distances for bio-security and amenity protection.
- Proximity to processing facilities and markets.
- Availability of water supply infrastructure
- Availability of appropriate electricity infrastructure.

Investment in intensive agriculture is likely to increase in the future in response to increased demand (particularly for chicken meat and eggs). Increasing development pressures on traditional areas of intensive agriculture around the Melbourne fringe may also drive development of intensive agriculture within the Shire. Significant opportunities exist for future investment in intensive agriculture throughout the municipality.

Climate Change

The impacts of climate change on the North Central region have been modelled by the CSIRO as part of the Victorian climate change adaption program.

The North Central region generally, experiences cool and relatively wet winters and warm dry summers. The north and west of the region are substantially warmer and drier than the south and east. Summers range from warm in the elevated southern regions (average maximum temperatures less than 25°C) to

hot in the north (more than 30°C). In winter, average maximum temperatures are mostly around 12 to 15°C but increase from south to north. Frosts are common throughout the region. Annual rainfall averaged across the region is 491 millimetres but ranges between about 350 millimetres per year at Swan Hill and over 1200 millimetres per year in the far southeast. On average there are 82 days each year where at least 1 millimetre of rain falls.

Climate change predictions for the year 2030 area as follows:

- Average temperature increased by +0.9°C
- Average rainfall decreased by -4%
- Potential evaporation increased by +2%
- No change in average Wind speed
- Relative humidity reduced by -0.7%
- Solar radiation increased +0.7%

Climate change will have both positive and negative impacts on the types of crops grown and the productivity of primary production systems. Higher levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide tend to enhance plant growth and water-use efficiency. However, changes in temperature and rainfall are likely to offset these benefits. Any reduction in rainfall will place most farms under stress, particularly when linked to higher temperatures. For dryland cropping, reductions in rainfall and increases in evaporation directly contribute to reductions in soil moisture. Irrigated agriculture is likely to be affected by tighter constraints on water allocations, possibly resulting in a more developed and competitive water market. In this sense, the unusually hot droughts of recent years may become more common in the future.

Decreases in rainfall and higher evaporation rates will mean less soil moisture and less water for rivers. Demands for water may also increase as a result of warmer temperatures and regional population growth. Therefore, the need to use water more efficiently will be even greater. Average annual runoff in the Campaspe and Loddon rivers is expected to decrease by as much as 35% by 2030, while the Avoca River is expected to decrease by between 5 and 40%. By 2070, a decrease in runoff to all three rivers is expected to be between 5 and more than 50%. Lower flows and higher temperatures may also reduce water quality within the catchment and create a more favourable environment for potentially harmful algal blooms. Greater bushfire activity could temporarily contaminate water catchments with sediments and ash.

Some impact studies have already been carried out, and have identified:

- increased heat stress on dairy cattle, reducing milk production unless management measures such as shade sheds and sprinklers are adopted;
- inadequate winter chilling for some fruit trees, which may reduce fruit yield and quality, however, higher temperatures are likely to reduce the risk of damaging winter frosts for other crops;
- in viticulture, higher temperatures are likely to reduce grape quality, but there may be opportunities to shift production to varieties better adapted to warmer conditions.

Other climate change impacts such as heavy rains and winds from storm events will also contribute to crop damage and soil erosion. Indirect impacts due to changes in weeds, pests and international markets may also place farms under stress.

Conclusions

The future of agriculture in Loddon Shire is likely to include:

- A steady position within the dryland sector with farms continuing to expand over time and possibly an adjustment in the production mix in response to climate change;
- A substantially reduced irrigation footprint;
- Areas of new dryland that over time will revert to some form of dryland agriculture;
- A shift to high value enterprises e.g. more dairy and horticulture on better soil types.
- An increase in intensive agriculture

In the irrigated areas, planning policy should focus on minimising development on land close to the backbone to protect current industries and the qualities that make it attractive for new business investment.

In the dryland areas planning policy that seeks to retain parcels of a size suited to broadacre farming will protect the current industries but also enable landholders to take advantage of new opportunities such as intensive animal husbandry or renewable energy capture, such as solar energy in the future.

In the new dryland areas planning policy can support the transition to broadacre agriculture by retaining land in parcels of a size suited to broadacre agriculture and where appropriate providing for excision of unwanted dwellings to facilitate amalgamation of holdings.

4. LAND USE TRENDS

Introduction

This section of the report provides an overview of some of the key land use trends apparent in the rural areas. These trends have been assessed using GIS mapping and data. An understanding of these trends will assist in determining the pressures on and risks to rural land that may need to be managed to support farming, as well as determine those areas that have moved beyond farming land use.

Loddon exhibits some significant differences in land use trends between the north and south of the Shire. These differences are largely attributed to the different agricultural prospects of these two areas and their relative proximity to Melbourne and Bendigo. The main change in land use apparent in these areas relates to rural farmland being converted to rural residential / living use, with this trend being stronger in the south.

Some of the critical issues that have been revealed include;

- High levels of fragmented land ownership in south of the shire in key locations
- High levels of new dwellings in Farming Zone in the south
- Significant mismatch between planning and building approvals for new dwellings (possible latent supply)
- Significant recent housing approvals in Wildfire Management Overlay areas – and high levels of small lots in and near areas of forest on public and private land

Properties and Parcels

As indicated in Table 2 and Map 1 (Appendix 4), most farming properties consist of more than one lot or parcel. Some farm businesses may also consist of a number of properties or a combination of properties and parcels, and as such this table and accompanying map is not a definitive description of ownership and land use patterns, but does suggest some trends that are supported anecdotally.

There is a higher level of property fragmentation in the south of the Shire around Wedderburn and, Inglewood, adjacent to public forest areas, along the Loddon River corridor, and adjacent to the eastern Shire boundary.

As will be discussed later in this report, a number of these highly fragmented areas are generally treated as rural residential areas despite being zoned Farming. They are in areas of poorer land quality, and have developed beyond a point where farming is realistic. These areas include Wallaby Way and Josephine Drive, Wedderburn and Ramon Parade, Laanecoorie. The Loddon River corridor, however, despite some fragmentation, remains a valuable agricultural area but as this mapping identifies it is at significant risk of land use change.

As the parcels map identifies (Map 2 – Appendix 4) valuable farming land on the eastern side of the Shire is at risk of land use change away from agriculture without strong policy about the intended use of this land due to the high number of smaller lots in this area that are currently incorporated into farming properties.

As identified in the previous section, farms will need to expand, primarily through the acquisition of additional land to remain viable. The fragmented nature of land in Loddon, particularly in the east provides opportunities for land acquisition and property restructure, but also poses a risk should the planning controls not provide certainty about the intended purpose of the land. Smaller Farming zoned parcels can be attractive to a non-agricultural market due to lower prices compared to Rural Residential zoned land. Planning controls need to limit non-agricultural development on land identified for farming to ensure that this land remains available for agricultural use to allow for ongoing expansion, protect operating rights of remaining farmers and to maintain Council control on settlement, to limit their servicing liabilities.

The Victorian Planning Provisions provide the Restructure Overlay as a tool to identify old and inappropriate subdivisions and facilitate their restructure. In situations where significant fragmentation occurs, the Restructure Overlay may be an appropriate response to protect agricultural land. However, in many of the fragmented areas sufficient development has already occurred to make the use of the Restructure Overlay unviable. Strong policy addressing non-agricultural development on land identified for farming will provide greater certainty about the intended purpose of the land and will be further reaching than what is realistically achievable through the use of the Restructure Overlay.

As identified in Table 2, Council has set aside land for rural living development and as identified in the Rural Living Review, there remains significant capacity for further development of this land.

Table 2: Rural Properties and Parcels by Size Range and Zone

	Farming Zone		Rural Living Zone	
	Properties	Parcels	Properties	Parcels
0-2ha	1051	3219	108	250
2-4ha	389	973	44	79
4-8ha	491	1680	61	106
8-20ha	744	2808	70	88
20-40ha	428	3118	13	7
40-100ha	906	3180	3	1
100+ha	2122	1725	2	0
Total	6131	16703	301	531

Planning and Building Approval

Over half of all building permits for new dwellings in the Farming Zone have been issued for properties of less than 20 hectares. Over 60% of planning permits issued for new housing for new dwellings were on properties below 20 hectares (Map 3-7, Appendix 4).

Table 3: Building and Planning Permits (Dwellings) by Property Size Range & Zone – 2004-2010

	New Planning		New Building	
	FZ	RLZ	FZ	RLZ
0-2ha	15	11	7	6
2-4ha	5	4	4	1
4-8ha	36	5	10	2
8-20ha	68	2	30	2
20-40ha	26	0	9	0
40-100ha	12	0	13	0
100+ha	27	0	20	0
Total	189	22	93	11

The trend of housing on small lots has been long running and is discussed in the Rural Living Review (2007). The existing pattern and distribution of rural addresses offers some indication of the existing fragmentation of rural landscapes, not only indicating a fragmentation of ownership, but also of settlement. A third of all addresses in the Farming Zone are on properties of less than 20ha. This proportion is higher in the south of the shire and very highly concentrated in areas close to urban centres.

The significant number of new dwellings in the Farming Zone suggests current planning policy and controls are inadequate to discourage non-agricultural development, and some areas despite being zoned Farming are operating as rural residential areas. Current agricultural trends of farm expansion indicate limited need for new farm housing, as such most new housing within the Farming Zone is likely to be rural residential. Stronger controls on non-farm housing are required to protect ongoing farming areas, and those areas that are clearly operating as rural residential enclaves need to be rezoned.

Table 4: Rural Addresses by Property Size Range & Zone

	FZ	RLZ
0-2ha	169	20
2-4ha	67	15
4-8ha	161	25
8-20ha	248	34
20-40ha	127	2
40-100ha	235	0
100+ha	939	0
Total	1946	96

Within irrigation areas low levels of new housing permits, and existing housing as expressed through rural addressing, exists on smaller properties. There are no areas zoned Rural Living in the irrigation areas.

Table 5: Planning/Building Permits, Rural Addresses & Total Properties by Size Range (Irrigation Areas)

	Planning	Building	Rural Address	Properties
0-2ha	1	0	28	229
2-4ha	1	1	5	126
4-8ha	1	0	5	107
8-20ha	2	2	4	64
20-40ha	1	2	5	44
40-100ha	0	1	25	173
100+ha	10	9	114	580
Total	16	15	186	1323

Critically, a large number of building and planning permits have been issued for smaller properties in areas now identified by the Wildfire Management Overlay (which in many cases was not previously applied). This suggests some ongoing management issues, but also is consistent with the trend of farms to offload poorer vegetated land for rural living development (Map 6, Appendix 4).

Table 6: Planning/Building Permits, Rural Addresses & Total Properties and Parcels (WMO Area)

	Planning	Building	Rural Addresses	Properties	Parcels
0-2ha	9	3	48	353	849
2-4ha	3	0	22	99	217
4-8ha	21	5	86	213	451
8-20ha	43	18	157	412	714
20-40ha	8	0	47	106	149
40-100ha	4	0	20	81	124
100+ha	2	0	24	78	49
Total	90	26	404	1342	2553

Conclusions

This review of land use trends in the Shire has revealed that;

- There are some areas in the south of the Shire that are fragmented and developed to the point that retaining them in the Farming Zone is unrealistic.
- Dwelling approvals in the Shire are indicating that current policy is not adequate to discourage non-farm development in farming areas.
- Some highly valuable farming areas in the east of the Shire are at risk of land use change as they consist of many smaller parcels.

5. REVIEW OF APPLICATION OF RURAL ZONES

Introduction

Although most rural land in Loddon is clearly farm land, there are some areas that have no or limited agricultural prospects, or are better suited to another land use. Such areas include:

- Areas with significant vegetation coverage, in particular those areas adjacent to Crown land areas;
- Areas where properties consist of smaller lots in individual ownership, and have been developed for rural living purposes.

Although these areas exhibit characteristics that are inconsistent with farming, most are zoned Farming due to a number of zone translations over the years and the shift of the purpose of the rural zoning from a more general zone that accommodated agriculture and other rural land uses to one that is more focussed on agriculture.

Planning needs to recognise and respond to the environmental factors affecting land in determining the appropriate zone for land. The zone needs to balance the sometimes competing objectives of planning in Victoria as expressed in Section 4(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Recent events including the 2009 bushfires and 2011 floods have reinforced the need to consider environmental processes and influences in the application of zones to land. Many of the areas identified as being inappropriately contained within the Farming Zone are within areas identified as having an elevated bushfire risk and are subject to the Bushfire Management Overlay. Topography, hydrology, vegetation and available infrastructure will all influence this risk.

In assessing the application of a zone to land attention must be given to the types of uses that the particular zone allows in the context of the location of the land and environmental processes associated with those areas. Planning should seek to minimise risk through appropriate application of controls.

This project aims to identify those areas that have limited or no agricultural prospects, and were inappropriately translated into the Farming Zone, and recommend a more appropriate zone. Wherever possible the extent of the alternative zones should extend to natural boundaries such as roads or public land to ensure clarity in the extent of its application and to ensure consistency within precincts.

Farming Zone

In 2006 State Government reviewed the rural zones and released a new zone, the Farming Zone, which aims to better support farming and protect agricultural land from competing land uses. This Farming Zone generally replaced the Rural Zone. The Rural Zone primarily provided for agriculture but also allowed for an extensive number of other land uses. This situation resulted in agriculture being displaced in some areas. The Farming Zone has significantly less discretionary uses to reduce this risk. The Farming Zone was introduced into the Loddon Planning Scheme in July 2007 by a ministerial amendment. The amendment was a direct translation from the Rural Zone to the Farming Zone. It did not include any strategic analysis to guide the application of the new zone. This has resulted in a number of areas that are not suited to farming being zoned Farming. This review provides Council the opportunity to identify

and consider the future preferred use of these areas, as well as ensuring that those areas with agricultural prospects are zoned Farming.

The State Planning Policy Framework objective for Agriculture (Clause 17.05) states that “productive farmland of strategic significance in the local or regional context should be protected.”

The VPP Planning Practice Note: Applying the rural zones (DSE 2007) provides the following definition of productive agricultural land:

Productive agricultural land generally has one or more of the following characteristics:

- *Suitable soil types*
- *Suitable climatic conditions;*
- *Suitable agricultural infrastructure, in particular irrigation and drainage systems*
- *A present pattern of subdivision favourable for sustainable agricultural production.*

In the context of Loddon, based on the above characteristics, the most productive areas are those with access to irrigation. Most other areas of Loddon are considered productive based on these criteria also.

Despite some areas of Loddon being of low productivity (largely as a result of soil type), particularly in the south of the Shire, this land still plays a role in the viability of the associated farm businesses and in most cases despite the potential capability or productivity of the land, agriculture remains the highest and best use.

A comprehensive assessment of land capability or agricultural productivity has not been completed for Loddon due to limited primary data sources. Although some detailed soils mapping has been done, this largely relates to the irrigation areas.

A report was completed in June, 1999 called “A Land Suitability Analysis for Selected Agribusiness in the Loddon Campaspe Region” (Centre for Land Protection Research, June 1999). This report provided an assessment of land suitability for tomatoes, olives, potatoes, wheat, canola, stone and pome fruits and viticulture. The report revealed that there are a range of products that the Shire is highly suited to produce and most rural areas of the Shire have a high or moderate suitability for at least one agricultural product.

As identified above the majority of rural land in Loddon is productive, or has productive potential, or farming is the highest and best use despite the productive potential of the land. As such it is appropriate that most rural land in Loddon should be zoned Farming. Application of the Farming Zone recognises the attributes of the Shire and supports the basis of the economy. There are some exceptions to this and these are set out below.

Rural Activity Zone

The Rural Activity Zone is a mixed use rural zone that caters for farming and other compatible land uses. The State Government is clear that it is not a pseudo rural living zone, and agriculture is to be a primary land use along with another compatible use (as opposed to the Farming Zone where farming is the primary land use). According to the Planning Practice Note “Applying the Rural Zones” (DSE, March 2007), possible Rural Activity Zone areas include:

-
- An existing mixed use rural area where the mix of uses complements the agricultural, environmental and landscape values of the area and supports the council's urban settlement objectives.
 - Rural areas where commercial, tourism or recreation development will complement and benefit the particular agricultural pursuits, landscape features or natural attractions of the area.
 - Farming areas where complementary rural industry, agribusiness uses, and rural research facilities are encouraged.

The Practice Note states the following in regard to the Rural Activity Zone:

The main feature of the Rural Activity Zone is the flexibility that it provides for farming and other land uses to co-exist. In this zone:

- *the zone purpose and provisions support the continuation and growth of farming but provide the opportunity for non-farming uses to be considered in appropriate locations*
- *a wider range of tourism, commercial and retail uses may be considered, compared to the Farming Zone and Rural Conservation Zone*
- *farming uses are encouraged to establish and expand, subject to proper safeguards for the environment and amenity considerations*
- *a planning permit is always required to use land for a dwelling.*

The Rural Activity Zone is designed to be applied to rural areas where:

- farming is an important activity in the area but the planning objectives identified for the land support the establishment of other land uses
- a mixed-use function would support farming activities in the area, assist in preventing the unplanned loss of productive agricultural land elsewhere, or allow for the logical and efficient provision of infrastructure
- the use of land in the area for non-farming purposes would not compromise the long term productivity of surrounding farmland
- appropriate buffers can be provided between different land uses so that land use conflicts are avoided
- the planning authority has developed a clear policy about how discretion in the zone will be exercised.

Golden Plains have successfully applied the zone to two areas of the Shire, the Moorabool Valley and the North West area. These areas are characterised by smaller scale agriculture and associated tourism and are distinctly different from the broad acre areas in the Shire.

Baw Baw Shire proposed to apply the RAZ to an extensive area of the Shire dominated by smaller lots. This amendment was rejected as the Planning Panel considered that there was insufficient strategic justification, and that other drivers of land use other than lot size were required to justify the RAZ.

Campaspe and Moira Shires have sought to apply the RAZ to a small area on the Murray River north west of Echuca and on Lake Mulwala between Yarrawonga and Bundalong where there is a strong tourism focus and agricultural prospects are limited.

The following areas are considered to be inappropriately contained within the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Rural Activity Zone;

Table 8: Areas recommended for inclusion in the Rural Activity Zone

Locality	Investigation area	Existing Mixture of Uses	Significant biodiversity values
1. Kingower	Nyanaghul Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lifestyle ▪ hobby farming ▪ environmental values. ▪ Viticulture ▪ Silviculture 	Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
	Kingower Brenanah Road (including Kingower Township)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lifestyle ▪ hobby farming ▪ environmental values. ▪ Viticulture ▪ mining 	Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC

These areas have been identified as having a mixture of uses including, agriculture (both commercial and hobby farms), recreation, tourism and rural residential in conjunction with noteworthy environmental values. This existing mixture of uses is generally not supported by the purpose of the Rural Conservation Zone and means that notwithstanding the identified environmental values of the area it would be inappropriate to rezone it as such. The Rural Activity Zone provides the opportunity to encourage the continued development of a mixture of compatible uses of the identified land which is not available under the Farming Zone.

The vegetation quality of the land identified for translation to the Rural Activity Zone has been identified as being good to very good (appendix 5). However, these areas feature a mixture of uses not apparent on the land recommended for translation to the Rural Conservation Zone. The areas identified present significant tourism opportunities with their proximity to the Kooyoora State Park (including Melville Caves), Dunolly-Inglewood State Forest and Local Wineries.

The application of the Rural Activity Zone will allow for the use and development of land to take advantage of the tourism potential of these areas. The Loddon Shire Council Tourism Strategy 2011-2016 places significant emphasis on the development and enhancement of nature based tourism which the implementation of the Rural Activity Zone will assist to implement.

The following purpose statement should be included in the Schedule to the zone:

To achieve a mix of, tourism and lifestyle uses that complement the biodiversity values of the Kooyoora State Park the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest and vegetated private land and are compatible with agricultural activities in the area.

Rural Living Zone

As set out previously in this report, Council has recently undertaken an extensive review of rural living in the Shire. This review identified that generally Loddon has a sufficient supply of rural living land for the next 10-15 years. However, it also identified a number of additional areas that are generally identified as rural residential in character and recommended that they should be rezoned to the Rural Living Zone.

Several of the areas investigated in the Rural Living Review have been reassessed as part of this project. These areas remain inappropriately zoned farming zone. They clearly function as a rural residential precincts and should be contained within the Rural Living Zone. The areas are identified in the following table.

Table 7: Areas recommended for inclusion in the Rural Living Zone

Locality	Investigation area
1. Wedderburn	Gregson Road / Clifden Lane
	Josephine Drive
	Wallaby Way
	Woolshed Flat
2. Inglewood	Inglewood Salisbury Road
3. Kingower	Wehla Kingower Road
4. Brenanah	Kingower Wedderburn Road
	Brenanah Wehla Road
5. Wehla	Logan Wehla Rheola Road
6. Fentons Creek	Wheelhouse Road
7. Tarnagulla	Tarnagulla Road
8. Laanecoorie	Raymon Parade
9. McIntyre	McIntyre township
10. Moliagul	Chinamans Lane
	Moliagul Drive / Mason Drive

An amendment to a planning scheme that provides for the rezoning of land to the Rural Living Zone must comply with Ministerial Direction 6 Rural Residential Development. In preparing an amendment a planning authority must demonstrate that the rezoning:

-
- Is consistent with the housing needs and settlement strategy of the area.
 - Is supported by and supports sustainable and viable settlements and communities.
 - Does not comprise the sustainable future use of existing natural resources, including productive agricultural land, water, mineral and energy resources.
 - Protects existing visual and environmental qualities of the area, such as landscape, water quality, native vegetation, habitat and biodiversity.
 - Avoids predictable adverse environmental processes and effects, such as flooding, erosion, landslip, salinity or wildfire.
 - Can efficiently be serviced by social and physical infrastructure, at an acceptable and sustainable community cost.

The proposed change to the zone is consistent with Direction No. 6. The rezoning of these areas to the Rural Living Zone would have the effect of formally recognising their existing use and development. The areas have historically functioned as a rural living. These areas are not utilised for productive purposes other than in a perfunctory manner ancillary to the dominant residential nature of the locale. Therefore, the application of the Rural Living Zone to these areas will not compromise the sustainable future exploitation of natural resources on this land. The visual and environmental qualities of the areas have been determined by historical rural residential development. Whilst part of the areas have been identified as being at risk from bushfire it is considered to be manageable. All areas are well serviced with physical infrastructure and reasonable proximity to social infrastructure.

The default minimum lot size of 8 hectares contained within the provisions of the Rural Living Zone is considered appropriate and would not allow for the creation of additional parcels in these areas.

Rural Conservation Zone

Loddon includes some areas with significant environmental or conservation values, largely in the form of remnant vegetation. Most of these areas are not currently farmed, and should not be farmed as this would compromise these values; however most of these areas are zoned Farming.

The suite of Victoria Planning Provisions zones includes the Rural Conservation Zone. This is the zone for areas where environmental and conservation values are to take priority over other land uses. This zone is not currently used in Loddon.

The purpose of the RCZ is:

- *To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.*
- *To conserve the values specified in the schedule to this zone.*
- *To protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values.*
- *To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.*

-
- *To encourage development and use of land which is consistent with sustainable land management and land capability practices, and which takes into account the conservation values and environmental sensitivity of the locality.*
 - *To provide for agricultural use consistent with the conservation of environmental and landscape values of the area.*
 - *To conserve and enhance the cultural significance and character of open rural and scenic non-urban landscapes.*

Within the RCZ, dwellings are permissible subject to a planning permit. The dwelling must be compatible with and support protection of the environmental values of the property. This is generally consistent with the land use aspirations of owners of properties with conservation values. Most intend to live on the property to enhance the environmental values. Currently, under the provisions of the Farming Zone, construction of a dwelling is dependent on demonstrating its role in the agricultural use of the property, which is difficult as most of these properties with remnant vegetation are not used for farming.

The RCZ also provides for agriculture, although a planning permit is required if the property has not been farmed before to ensure that the proposed agricultural use will not affect the environmental qualities of the land.

The following areas are considered to be inappropriately contained within the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Rural Conservation Zone;

Table 9: Areas recommended for inclusion in the Rural Conservation Zone

Locality	Investigation area	Significant biodiversity values
1. Wedderburn	Skinners Flat – north	Habitat for Endangered Mallee Fowl Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
2. Nine Mile	Nine Mile South Road	Habitat for Endangered Swift Parrot Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
3. Mt Korong	Wedderburn Serpentine Road	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
5. Wehla	Birthisel Road	Habitat for Endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for Vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail; and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
6. Brenanah	Brenanah Wehla Road	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
7. Kingower	Halls Road	Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater
	Wehla Kingower Road	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
8. Rheola	Rheola Arnold Road	Habitat for critically endangered Regent Honeyeater Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
10. Moliagul	Cherry Gardens Road	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Diamond Firetail
11. Tarnagulla	Tarnagulla Road	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Diamond Firetail
12. Llanelly	Wimmera Highway	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Diamond Firetail

These areas have minimal agricultural prospects due to vegetation cover and fragmentation, and as such should not be zoned Farming.

An assessment of the environmental values of the above identified areas has been undertaken to confirm the values that are to be protected and support the recommended rezoning (Appendix 5). The RCZ includes a schedule that enables the values to be protected to be identified. It is not envisaged that further subdivision would be enabled through such a rezoning. Subdivision is unlikely to enhance conservation values.

The majority of areas identified for translation to the Rural Conservation Zone are identified as being at risk from bushfire and are affected by the Bushfire Management Overlay. The risk is largely as a result of the environmental features of the land including vegetation coverage and the topography of the areas. Current bushfire policy prioritises the protection of human life through the application of the precautionary

principle to planning and decision-making. The structure of the Rural Conservation Zone is such that it does not overtly encourage land uses that may result in risk to human life but will allow for the full and proper assessment of the environmental impacts of proposals in the context of where they are to be located. The recommended zone will achieve a balance between protection and enhancement of environmental values and consideration of risk factors created or contributed to by those values.

In other municipalities the Rural Conservation Zone has proven to be attractive for the use and development of dwellings. It is anticipated that the areas recommended to be included in the Rural Conservation Zone will attract proposals for lifestyle developments. Therefore, policy guidance for the assessment of dwellings and to articulate Council's position should be introduced alongside the introduction of the Rural Conservation Zone. The following policy statement should be included at Clause 22.05 of the Loddon Planning Scheme:

New dwellings in the Rural Conservation Zone will be supported where it is demonstrated that proposals consider, protect and enhance landscape and environmental values and that dwellings are compatible with the environmental characteristics of the area.

It should be noted that areas recommended for inclusion in the Rural Conservation Zone are generally affected by overlays such as the Bushfire Management Overlay, Salinity Management Overlay and Vegetation Protection Overlay. These controls will affect the assessment of applications and may impact on the approval of applications in some circumstances.

Wherever possible the extent of the zones should extend to natural boundaries such as roads or public land to ensure clarity as to the extent of its application and minimise the potential for the creation of conflicting land uses.

Other

The review of the application of the Farming Zone has identified several zoning anomalies within the rural areas that should be addressed. These are as follows:

Township Zone

Laanecoorie

Laanecoorie is a small township in the south of the Shire. It includes a number of dwellings, hall, tennis courts and camping area. Currently Laanecoorie is zoned Farming, which resulted from a translation of former planning controls. This zoning is considered inappropriate as Council supports maintaining this settlement. The existing non rural extent of Laanecoorie should be rezoned Township. Laanecoorie should be maintained as a compact settlement as it is surrounded by quality farmland. The camping ground should be rezoned Public Park and Recreation Zone.

Public Park and Recreation Zone

Newbridge

The Newbridge recreation reserve is currently zoned Farming. This land should be zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone consistent with its reservation status and existing use.

Public Conservation and Resource Zone

Tarnagulla

An area of public land (forest) to the east of Tarnagulla is currently zoned Farming. This land should be zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone, consistent with the zoning of other State Forest in the area.

Bridgewater

The land currently occupied by the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park is contained within the Farming Zone. This zoning is considered inappropriate as it is inconsistent with the existing zoning of the Loddon River corridor in which it is located and is unable to be used or developed in accordance with the purpose of the Farming Zone. This land should be rezoned to Public Conservation and Resource Zone consistent with the river corridor.

Laanecoorie

The riverside at Laanecoorie contains a mixture of formal and passive recreational areas including camping grounds, picnic areas, tennis courts and public access to the Loddon River. This area should be rezoned to Public Conservation and Resource Zone consistent with the river corridor.

The Loddon River Corridor

The zoning of the Loddon River corridor is inconsistent and fragmented. While it is predominantly contained within the Public Conservation and Resource Zone, sections of the corridor are zoned farming. The sections of the Loddon River zoned farming and which are in public ownership should be rezoned to the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to facilitate a consistent application of regulation to this natural asset.

Public Use Zone

Skidders Flat Reservoir

Skidders Flat Reservoir is part of the water supply for the township of Wedderburn and is also used for recreational boating and fishing. There are picnic facilities and a boat ramp. The Farming Zone does not reflect the public use of the land. The land should be rezoned from the Farming Zone to the Public Use Zone.

Laanecoorie Water Treatment Plant

The Laanecoorie Water Treatment Plant located on Williamsons Road, Laanecoorie is currently contained within the Farming Zone. It is recommended that this site be included in the Public Use Zone to reflect the use of the site.

Cemeteries

A number of cemeteries across the Municipality are currently contained within the Farming Zone. These include the Boort, Pyramid Hill, Wedderburn, Kingower, Rheola, Yarrayne, Eddington and Inglewood cemeteries. These cemeteries should be included in the Public Use Zone to remove a technical requirement to obtain planning approval for some buildings and works.

6. SUBDIVISION AND DWELLING CONTROLS

Introduction

One of the key objectives of this review is to ensure that subdivision and dwelling controls that are prescribed in the planning scheme support agricultural growth and development. The Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) provide the opportunity for Council to define a minimum subdivision size and a minimum lot size before a dwelling requires planning approval in the Farming Zone to ensure that planning controls are responsive to local conditions. Obviously, the size whereby farming is likely to be the primary use of the land will vary across the State. The opportunity to subdivide can be important in farming areas as it can assist with farm restructure and expansion. The opportunity to subdivide can also pose a significant threat to agriculture where there is demand for rural land for rural residential development and amenity living. The ability to use and develop land for a dwelling also raises the potential for land use competition, as a dwelling may be required to support the farming use of the land but this opportunity may also result in the removal of the land from agriculture through rural residential demand. This section of the review considers the role of subdivision and new dwelling development in the pursuit of agricultural growth and development in Loddon and provides a recommendation for controls that will support agriculture and discourage competition from other land uses.

Existing Controls

The following subdivision and dwelling controls currently apply in Loddon Shire pursuant to the planning scheme.

Table 10: Existing Farming Zone subdivision and dwelling controls

	Land	Area/Dimensions/Distance
Minimum subdivision area (Hectares).	All land within the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District	20 hectares
	All other land	100 hectares, unless in accordance with Local Planning Policy – 22.05
Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling (Hectares).	All land	40 hectares

Local Planning Policy 22.05 provides the opportunity for subdivision down to 40ha where it can be demonstrated by the applicant that the proposal is to provide for high value, sustainable, intensive agriculture. This provision has been rarely, if ever, used. This local planning policy also provides guidance in terms of dwelling development and house lot excisions to ensure they minimise risk to farming and dwellings are provided with essential infrastructure.

The following table sets out the subdivision and dwelling controls that apply in surrounding municipalities.

Table 11: Farming Zone subdivision and dwelling controls of surrounding municipalities

Municipality		Land	Area/Dimensions/Distance
Buloke	Minimum subdivision area (hectares).	All land	100 ha except where the application is for a rural dependent enterprise or for intensive agriculture and meets the requirements of Local Planning Policy <i>Rural land and Sustainable Agriculture</i> (Clause 22.03).
	Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling (Hectares).	All land	40 ha
Northern Grampians	Minimum subdivision area (hectares).	Land near Halls Gap	40ha
		Other land	80ha
	Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling (Hectares).	Land near Halls Gap	40ha
		Other land	80ha
Greater Bendigo	Minimum subdivision area (hectares).	Northern Hwy West	8ha
		Other land	40ha
	Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling (Hectares).	Northern Hwy West	8ha
		Other land	40ha
Mount Alexander	Minimum subdivision area (hectares).	All land	40ha
	Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling (Hectares).	All land	40ha

Table 11 Cont.

Municipality		Land	Area/Dimensions/Distance
Gannawarra	Minimum subdivision area (hectares).	Dryland areas	40ha
		Irrigated areas	20ha
		Irrigated areas	An area of less than 20 hectares in irrigated areas where the proposal satisfies the objectives and requirements of Local Planning Policies <i>Rural Subdivision</i> (Clause 22.08) and <i>Rural Dwellings</i> (Clause 22.09)
		All land, if a lot is being subdivided to provide a site for specific use, other than accommodation, for which a permit has been granted.	0.5 ha
	Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling (hectares).	Dryland areas	40 ha
		Irrigated areas	20 ha
Campaspe	Minimum subdivision area (hectares).	Irrigated areas	100ha
		Dryland areas	250ha
	Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling (hectares).	Irrigated areas	100ha
		Dryland areas	250ha

Campaspe’s controls are a result of their recent Rural Land Strategy, which they prepared in conjunction with Greater Shepparton and Moira Shire. This strategy concluded that the future of agriculture in that municipality was based on growth and large properties, with minimal interference from housing and small lots.

The City of Greater Bendigo completed a rural land use strategy in 2009. The strategy recommended a minimum subdivision size of 40ha in the south west of the City and 100ha in the North West. These changes have not yet been incorporated into their scheme.

Gannawarra Shire Council has been undertaking a project to consider the future use of the “new dryland”. It is likely that increased subdivision sizes will be adopted as a result of that project.

Changes to Subdivision Controls

As set out in Chapter 3, both dryland and irrigated farms are increasing in size and will need to continue to increase in size to keep pace with declining terms of trade. Current farm planning thinking is that farms need to double in size every 20 years to remain viable. This is an annual increase of some 5%, but in reality most farms expand at a higher percentage every few years (e.g. 25% every 5 years). To support the ongoing viability and growth of agriculture in the Shire, subdivision controls need to retain land in parcels that are of a size conducive to local farming prospects and growth requirements.

The majority of dryland mixed farms in Loddon are between 1000ha – 3000ha in size. Many of the farms at the smaller end of this range, although viable farm businesses, would be unable to support a family. Depending on the nature of the farm business and the family circumstances it is considered that at least 2000ha is required to support a farming family from dryland production.

It is recognised that in most cases in Loddon dryland farms are not made up of one parcel but a consolidation of parcels and therefore the minimum lot size should not reflect property size but should reflect a size that is attractive and economic for a farmer to acquire to expand their existing operation. Growth and expansion of existing dryland farm businesses as opposed to new farm businesses will be the foundation of the ongoing agricultural economy in the dryland areas.

Although there is a basis to increase the minimum subdivision size for lots in the dryland parts of the Shire, given existing subdivision patterns, increasing it from 100ha is unlikely to have any significant change on subdivision opportunities. 100ha is considered a sufficient size to protect agricultural land and provide for farm expansion and consolidation.

Table 12: Recommended changes to subdivision controls for dryland areas

Land		Area	
		Existing	Proposed
Minimum subdivision area (hectares).	All other land	100 ha, unless in accordance with Local Planning Policy – 22.05	100ha

Determining a suitable size for the GMID irrigation areas is more complex as there are more existing and potential agricultural uses due to water access, with different land area requirements. Further, some existing properties are a mix of dryland and irrigated land. A revised subdivision size for irrigated areas will not be solely based on existing property size and growth requirements, but an estimate of a lot size that is suited to a range of irrigated agricultural activities as well as growth requirements of larger enterprises.

Irrigation in Loddon predominantly involves larger scale, less intensive production such as dairy, horticulture (tomatoes), prime lamb, hay and olives, as opposed to smaller scale, more intensive activities like fruit and vegetable production in the Goulburn Valley. There are a few small scale more intensive activities including apple and cherry production, as well as some viticulture in the Shire. The scale and form of irrigation uses is largely dictated by the soil types, with limited areas suited to intensive horticulture.

There are not many small size (< 80 ha) dairy farms remaining in the Shire. Most dairy farms are in the 200 ha to 1,000 ha size range. There are only a few vegetable farms in the region and all are greater than 500ha (these would be tomato growers). The olive development is an anomaly as it was set up through MIS and the same development/investment probably would not have occurred without the tax incentive.

The future of irrigation in Loddon is likely to be larger scale industries (due to soil type) with a strong focus on dairy and pockets of horticulture linked to specific soil types, again though likely to be larger scale due to soil type and relative land value. The irrigation area is expected to contract as a result of reduction in water supply and rationalisation of the irrigation system. Irrigated land will become increasingly valuable and significant in terms of production and must be protected for agricultural uses that maximise value from the water.

It is recommended that the minimum subdivision size in the irrigation areas be increased to 40ha. This would provide for both expansion of existing businesses as well as development of new horticulture enterprises.

Table 13: Recommended changes to subdivision controls in the GMID

	Land	Area	
		Existing	Proposed
Minimum subdivision area (hectares).	Land within the GMID that is currently irrigated, set up for irrigation or a commitment or agreement has been put in place to enable the land to be irrigated following subdivision <u>and</u> where the land is likely to remain irrigated by virtue of infrastructure, soil type or proximity to water source.	20 ha	40ha

The following policy statements should be incorporated into Clause 22.05 to improve the guidance provided by this policy.

- Subdivision in the Farming Zone should generally not create additional lots (i.e. Property restructure should be used in preference);
- Subdivision in the Farming Zone should be clearly based on an improved productive farming outcome that cannot be achieved with the current lot size;
- The proposal must provide for ongoing productive, economic agriculture.

Information demonstrating the above may be required with a planning permit application, including either a:

- Farm business plan that demonstrates the intended output of the farming enterprise in terms of production and value and long term viability; or
- Whole farm plan that demonstrates the subdivision has been designed with consideration of the land quality and capability of the site and will therefore support enhanced productivity.

The policy that provides for smaller lots should be deleted as it has not been used since it was included in the scheme 10 years ago, it is not considered likely that it will be required and it is questionable whether it is actually valid.

Excisions

The Farming Zone provides the opportunity for Council to permit the excision of a dwelling from an existing farming lot. This is generally required when a farming property is acquired by a neighbour to expand their own property and the dwelling is not needed. House lot excisions can support the expansion and consolidation of farming properties as the dwelling value can be removed from the land. House lot excisions, however, can result in operational problems for the remaining farm business as a small residential lot remains, surrounded by farming activity. The level of this risk is dependant on the type of farming being conducted and the size and location of the dwelling lot, but complaints and concerns about noise, odour and spray operations can result in operational restrictions that outweigh any benefit from the excision. House lot excisions have been problematic in the past in dairy areas. A lack of neighbours is also a key driver of new large scale agricultural investment. Small residential lots arising from house lot excisions may undermine the competitive advantage of some areas for large scale horticulture, intensive animal industries or even renewable energy.

Given the farming trends in Loddon, house lot excisions are likely to be required into the future to assist with farm expansion and consolidation. Council should continue to support house lot excisions where they support farm expansion and consolidation, minimise the amount of land lost to farming and do not pose a significant risk to surrounding farming activities. House lot excisions should not be supported where there is a risk to the farming opportunities of the area.

The following policy should be applied to house lot excisions (and should replace the existing policy).

Council will only support house lot excisions where;

- The benefit from the removal of the dwelling from the land clearly and significantly outweighs the risk of having a residential land use adjoining a farming property in terms of supporting the growth and ongoing viability of agriculture in the Shire.
- The purpose of the house lot excision is to facilitate property consolidation. House lot excisions will not be approved where they are for capital raising only as this is not a long term land use planning outcome.
- There is a significant risk that the property will be lost to agriculture while it still contains a dwelling (i.e. the whole property will become a rural living property as the farmer cannot compete with other land purchasers for the property).
- The dwelling is a significant encumbrance on the property due to its quality and value (i.e. Poor quality, older houses will not add substantially to the value of the property and will generally not be considered to be a significant encumbrance.)
- Dwellings excised under the Farming Zone provisions are to be in a habitable condition and comply with the Building Code of Australia.
- It is clear that a dwelling is not required for the farming use of the property.
- It can be demonstrated that it is likely that farming can be continued on the balance unhindered.
- The minimum area is taken out of the balance property. The house and immediate surrounds should only be excised. A rural living / hobby farm should not be created.
- The dwelling and therefore excised lot is on the frontage of the property. Long narrow lots or battle axe lots should be avoided as the additional boundary increases the risk of land use conflict and increases the amount of land lost to agriculture.
- The dwelling is serviced by an all weather road.
- An application for a house lot excision must be advertised to surrounding land owners / occupiers.
- It is preferred that a house lot excision be in the form of a boundary restructure, not the creation of an additional lot. The balance lot should meet the minimum size for the zone.
- Subdivision that is likely to lead to such a concentration of lots as to change the general use and character of a rural area, and is not consistent with the purposes of the Zone, will be strongly discouraged.

Dwellings

Dwellings are permissible within Farming zoned areas where they are required to promote or support the agricultural use of the land. The schedule to the Farming Zone provides the opportunity to nominate a size over which it can be assumed that the land will be used for farming and therefore a dwelling is appropriate. This size should be based on an understanding of farming trends in the area. Management of new dwellings is required as if they are not legitimate farm houses (and are rural residential) they have the potential to remove land from agriculture as a result of land use competition, restrict farm expansion opportunities and limit agricultural practices through the introduction of a sensitive land use into a farming area (resulting in “right to farm” issues).

Given the prevailing trends in Loddon agriculture involving farm expansion and consolidation, very few new dwellings will be required to provide for the ongoing development of agriculture in the area. As set out above, unmanaged dwelling development is a threat to agricultural growth.

In particular, there is a high risk of agricultural land being lost to lifestyle development along the Loddon River between Serpentine and Eddington. This area is within half an hour of Bendigo and very attractive due to the river. It is also some of the best quality agricultural land in the area, with a number of very significant agricultural businesses including viticulture, horticulture and dairy. Non-agricultural land use in this area would pose a significant threat to these businesses, and significant commitment will be required to ensure housing is restricted to that essential to enhancing agricultural activity.

Council has identified that it wishes to direct rural living development to areas around existing towns and existing rural living areas to maintain the sustainability of these areas and minimise infrastructure liability. Managing dwellings in the Farming Zone is a significant part of this strategy.

Presently, a permit is required to use and develop a lot of less than 40ha for a dwelling in the Farming Zone. Lots of 40ha and more do not need a permit under the Farming Zone for a dwelling (overlays may still trigger a permit).

It is considered very important to increase the permit trigger for dwellings in the Farming Zone as it has been identified in the RCMG review of agricultural prospects (Chapter 3) that farm expansion is fundamental to the ongoing viability of agriculture in the Shire. Non-farm housing is a significant encumbrance to farm expansion, as well as posing a risk to farming operations and “right to farm”. The permit process allows Council the opportunity to review applications and minimise this risk.

Map 8 (Appendix 6) shows lots of 40ha plus. It shows that there are a substantial number of lots where land can be used for a dwelling without a planning permit under the existing provisions. This poses a significant risk in terms of the potential loss of land from agriculture, particularly closer to Bendigo, and in terms of “right to farm”. It is considered that this risk will only increase with time as Bendigo expands.

A review of building permits granted over the last five years for dwellings on lots of over 40ha has identified that approximately 16% were for non-farm housing.

Map 2 (Appendix 4) shows lots of 100ha plus. It identifies a significant reduction in this risk as many more lots would require a planning permit to be used for a dwelling. 100ha is also more consistent with local farming trends and farm sizes. Dwellings for farming purposes would remain permissible on lots of less than 100ha subject to planning approval.

It is recommended that controls on dwellings in the Farming Zone should be amended by;

- 1) Increasing the permit trigger in the schedule to the Farming Zone to 100ha (thereby requiring a permit for use of a lot of less than 100ha for a dwelling) ;

Table 14: Recommended changes to the permit trigger for a dwelling as of right in the Farming Zone

	Land	Area/Dimensions/Distance	
		Existing	Proposed
Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling (hectares).	All land	40ha	100ha

- 2) Requiring more detailed information to be submitted with a planning permit application to demonstrate the farming use of the land and why the dwelling is required to enhance this.

The following policy statements are recommended to be included in Clause 22.05:

- Council will support the construction of a dwelling on land zoned Farming where it can be demonstrated that the construction of the dwelling is required to enhance the agricultural output of the land, and that the dwelling is and is likely to remain ancillary to the farming use of the property.
- The agricultural use of the land that the new dwelling is required to support must be established prior to construction of the dwelling.
- An application for a new dwelling in the Farming Zone will be advertised to surrounding land owners / occupiers.
- Council may require the following information to support an application for a new dwelling:
 - A farm business plan that shows:
 - why there is a need to live on site and how that would enhance agricultural use
 - the investment into agriculture on the property
 - the estimated return from the agricultural pursuit
 - the amount of land to be engaged in farming, and
 - the estimated production from the property; or
 - A whole farm plan that shows;
 - the layout of agricultural uses on the property to demonstrate that the majority of the property is used for farming.
 - the dwelling is located in such a way to minimise any impact on agricultural use on the subject property and adjoining properties. The dwelling should be located on an area of lower agricultural quality and should be sited and designed to minimise the amount of land used for non-agricultural uses.

These information requirements are in addition to the information required by Clause 35.07-4 of the Loddon Planning Scheme. This clause requires that an application to use a lot for a dwelling must be

accompanied by a written statement which explains how the proposed dwelling responds to the decision guidelines for dwellings in the zone.

New dwellings in the Rural Conservation Zone will be supported where it is demonstrated that proposals consider, protect and enhance landscape and environmental values and that dwellings are compatible with the environmental characteristics of the area.

- 3) Including a statement in the MSS that identifies the future of the Loddon River corridor is for agriculture due to the existing and future value. Housing should be minimized beyond existing urban areas.

7. OTHER LAND USES

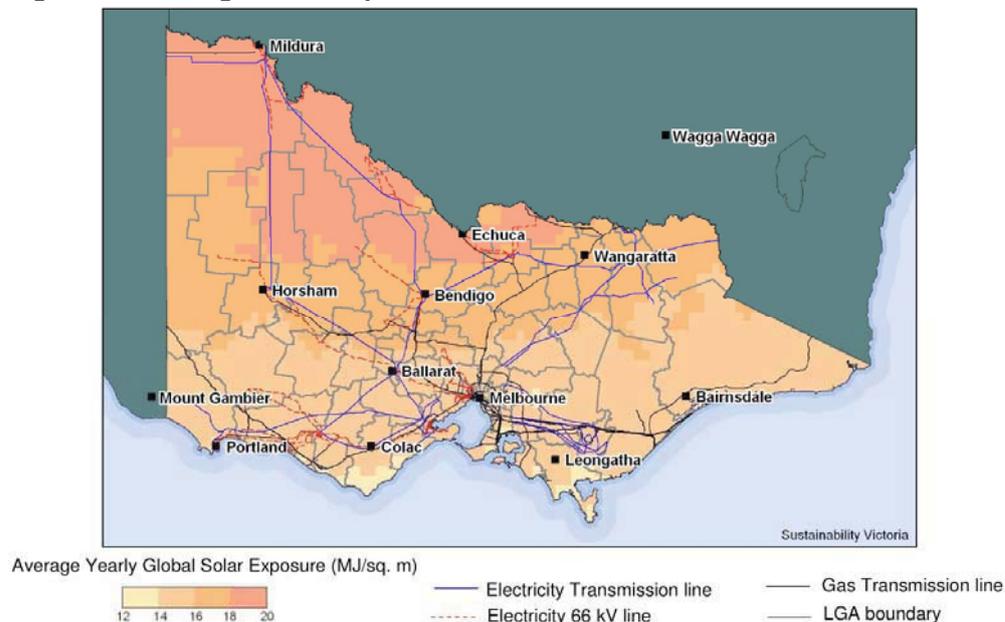
Introduction

The third component of this review is to develop a policy position on other land uses which may be attracted to the rural area. Both renewable energy and rural industry have the potential to enhance the economic prospects of the Shire, and Loddon has some unique characteristics that may make it attractive for these uses. It is important, however, not to compromise the requirements of agriculture as it is the economic foundation of the Shire.

Renewable Energy

As indicated in the map below, Loddon, especially the northern half of the Shire, has high levels of solar exposure. It is also bisected by an electricity transmission line and a 66 kV line. These factors mean that Loddon is highly suitable for solar energy generation. This suitability has been supported by the development of a demonstration facility at Bridgewater.

Figure 11: Average Solar Exposure, Victoria



Source: Sustainability Victoria.

Figure 12 indicates that Loddon has less potential for wind energy.

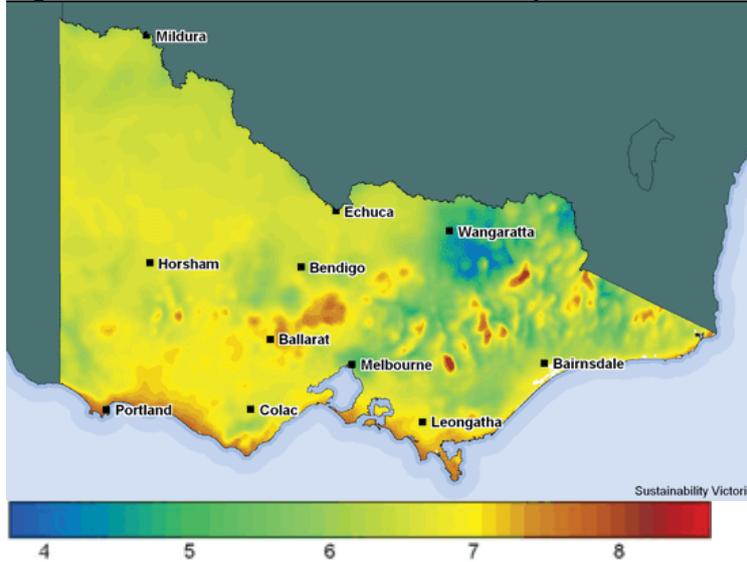


Figure 12: Wind Speed Victoria

Key: Average Yearly Wind Speed (meters per second at 65 meters above ground)

Source: Sustainability Victoria.

The State Government supports the development of renewable energy facilities in appropriate locations and has included guidelines about such facilities that seek to minimise amenity and environmental impacts. Renewable energy facilities and wind energy facilities are subject to a planning permit in the Farming Zone.

Currently the Loddon Planning Scheme does not include any local perspective on this issue. It is recommended that Loddon develop a policy position on where such facilities should be located in the Shire so as not to compromise agricultural opportunities.

The following policy statement is recommended:

Renewable energy facilities will be supported in Loddon but should not be located on high quality agricultural land where they compromise primary production, in particular, land that is and is likely to remain irrigated (or may be irrigated in the future) due to soil type or access to irrigation infrastructure.

Rural Industry

Rural industry is defined as land used to:

- a) handle, treat, process, or pack agricultural produce; or
- b) service or repair plant, or equipment, used in agriculture.

Rural industry has the potential to build on and value add to the local agricultural economy. As with renewable energy facilities and other rural land uses it is important that rural industry does not unnecessarily displace agriculture. Although there will be times when it is more appropriate that rural industry be located in a rural area, such industries can also make a positive contribution to the viability and vibrancy of the Shire's towns and by preference should be located in an urban area.

The following policy statements are recommended:

Rural industry is encouraged to locate within existing urban areas to capitalise on infrastructure and contribute to the employment options, viability and vibrancy of the town and minimise loss of farmland.

Rural industry should only be located in rural areas where;

- Amenity impacts of the industry make it unsuitable for an urban area;
- Existing road infrastructure is suitable for the traffic to be generated by the industry;
- The industry will not compromise agricultural use of surrounding land;
- There are clear advantages of locating the industry in the rural area that outweigh the advantages of locating it in an urban area

Intensive Animal husbandry

Intensive animal husbandry represents an important local industry that has synergies with other local agriculture. The proper siting and design of this form of use and development is needed to ensure amenity and environmental quality is protected. The main requirements for this type of agriculture are as follows:

- Large areas of farm land with a low dwelling density.
- Large allotments to allow separation distances for bio-security and amenity protection.
- Proximity to processing facilities and markets.
- Availability of water supply infrastructure
- Availability of appropriate electricity infrastructure.

Intensive animal husbandry offers an opportunity to diversify in the Shire's agricultural base and to support existing agricultural operations. However, this type of production has the potential to generate significant amenity impacts. It is not generally compatible with residential development or other sensitive land uses. As such, the proliferation of dwellings in rural areas has the potential to severely restrict the potential for new intensive animal enterprises and the ongoing viability or expansion potential of existing sites.

Intensive animal husbandry generally has a relatively small footprint but requires large parcels in order to ensure appropriate separation from sensitive uses that may occur on nearby land. The balance of the site not immediately required for the intensive use is generally available for compatible agricultural uses such as crop raising.

Planning should protect existing intensive animal production from encroachment by incompatible land uses. It should also protect the future potential for new operations to establish by encouraging the retention of larger lots and discouraging inappropriate residential development in rural areas.

Mining

Mining is defined as”

Land used commercially to extract minerals from the land. It includes processing and treating ore.

The mining industry has a long and ongoing history within the Loddon Shire. The goldrush of the mid nineteenth century made a significant contribution to shaping the settlement patterns of the municipality particularly to the southwest. Medium to small scale mining operations are still a feature of the Shire with active mines located at Wedderburn, Inglewood and Tarnagulla. Extensive areas of the Shire are subject to mineral exploration.

There is a recognised historical role of gold mining in the social and economic development of much of the south of the Shire, particularly Wedderburn, Inglewood, Kingower, Wehla, Tarnagulla, Llanelly and Rheola. There may still be considerable mineral resources in the Shire with the mining of these posing economic opportunities.

The condition of the Shire’s land and water resources and level of biodiversity has a direct effect on the economic prosperity of the Shire, through agriculture and through people visiting and moving to the Shire to enjoy its natural features. The southern part of the shire, including areas of State Forest as well as cleared land, is recognised as holding significant potential for mineral exploration and mining. These areas of the shire attract significant numbers of visitors to the wineries and forest environments, especially Kooyoora State Park. The vegetation in these areas is largely from the Box Ironbark community, which is classified as depleted and considered by some to be under protected and threatened. Its protection is important in realising the State and Federal Governments’ biodiversity objectives. This vegetation also has an important role in preventing soil erosion, the contamination of waterways, and in the management of recharge to the water table thus controlling further salinity in the north of the Shire. There is a variety of different mineral and mining resources throughout the Shire like mineral sands in the north of the Shire.

Mining can be both beneficial and detrimental to the rural areas of the Shire. It can generate significant investment and jobs but can also result in the temporary or permanent loss of productive agricultural land. Mining will generally displace agriculture. However, mining has traditionally occurred in agricultural areas with lower productive values. Different methods of mining can be used and each has a different potential for impact on the site and surrounding environment. Different methods of mining include small scale prospecting with metal detectors, underground mining and open cut mining, usually by the doze and detect method. Prospecting for gold with hand held tools is of significant economic benefit within this municipality. When undertaken responsibly such prospecting has minimal negative environmental impact.

Mining is an as of right use in the entire suite of rural zones. It is an activity that has the potential to make a significant contribution to the Shire’s economy. Mining is not controlled through the zones contained in the planning scheme. Rather it is subject to approval in accordance with the particular provisions.

The Loddon Planning Scheme contains a specific policy on mining within the Local Planning Policy Framework. This policy is satisfactory to guide the exercise of discretion in assessing a mining proposal in an agricultural area.

Tourism

The Loddon Shire is contained within the Bendigo Loddon Tourism Region as classified by Tourism Australia. The Bendigo Loddon Region comprises the Loddon, Greater Bendigo, Mt Alexander and Central Goldfields Shires. Its major strengths are arts and culture; history and heritage; festivals and events; food and wine; and nature based tourism. There are 3,200 tourism related businesses in this region. Key tourism statistics include:

- \$371 million spent in region – \$190 million (51%) by domestic (Australian) day visitors
- 2.6 million visitors to the region – 2 million (76%) were domestic (Australian) day visitors
- 1.5 million nights – 1.3 million (87%) by domestic (Australian) overnight visitors

Tourism in the municipality is focused on four main themes. These are as follows:

- “Nature based” – including bushwalking, cycling, mountain bike riding, canoeing, horse riding, orienteering, fishing, bird watching, photography, camping, etc. in our State and National Parks and on our rivers and lakes
- Culture and heritage – including historic towns, Aboriginal heritage sites, gold rush relics, museums,
- Food and wine agri-tourism – including local wines and produce such as olives
- Festivals and events – including Detector Jamboree, Boort Agricultural Show, Pyramid Hill Christmas Event, Bridgewater Jumbuck, Wedderburn Engine Rally, Kooyoorra Wildflower Show, Rheola Carnival

The “Nature Based” and “Culture and heritage” based tourism generally occurs on public land or within the townships if the municipality. Tourism based on these themes is not generally subject to the controls of the rural zones. However, ancillary activities such as accommodation, retail premises and restaurants are severely restricted by the provisions of the Farming Zone. The application of the Rural Activity Zone in key tourism areas will help facilitate the growth of the tourism industry in the Loddon Shire.

Food and wine agri-tourism is generally focused on local wines and produce. Tourism facilities such as cellar doors and primary produce sales are discretionary in all of the rural zones under consideration.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Agriculture is the foundation of the Loddon Shire's economy and productive agricultural land is a key asset of Loddon. The future of agriculture involves larger farms and the contraction of the irrigation district will increase the value and significance of this area for food production. The planning scheme must support the unhindered operation and growth of farm businesses. Council also wishes to encourage population growth through the provision of a range of residential opportunities.

To protect and promote agriculture Council will amend subdivision and dwelling controls in response to identified risks of land use change and threats to "right to farm". Subdivision sizes for irrigated land in the GMID irrigation area will be increased in response to farm size trends. A review of land use and development has identified that current policy is not adequate to prevent non-farm housing. The lot size over which a permit is not required for a dwelling in the Farming zone is to be increased and information requirements amended to ensure better scrutiny of proposals for establishment of dwellings in these areas.

Although the majority of the rural land in Loddon has productive value and should be retained in the Farming Zone, there are some areas that have been compromised for farming due to fragmentation and development and these areas should be rezoned Rural Conservation Zone, Rural Activity Zone and Rural Living to reflect current land use and accommodate population growth.

The following changes to the Loddon Planning Scheme are recommended;

Rural Activity Zone

1. The following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Rural Activity Zone.

Table 16: Areas recommended for inclusion in the Rural Activity Zone

Locality	Investigation area	Existing Mixture of Uses	Significant biodiversity values
1. Kingower	Nyanaghul Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lifestyle ▪ hobby farming ▪ environmental values. ▪ Viticulture ▪ Silviculture 	Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
	Kingower Brenanah Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lifestyle ▪ hobby farming ▪ environmental values. ▪ viticulture 	Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
	Kingower Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lifestyle ▪ hobby farming ▪ viticulture ▪ mining 	

These areas should be subject to a minimum subdivision size of 40ha and be subject to the following purpose statement:

To achieve a mix of, tourism and lifestyle uses that complement the biodiversity values of the Kooyoora State Park the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest and vegetated private land and are compatible with agricultural activities in the area.

The recommended Rural Activity Zone areas are shown at Appendix 8.

Rural Living Zone

2. The following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Rural Living Zone.

Table 15: Areas recommended for inclusion in the Rural Living Zone

Locality	Investigation area
1. Wedderburn	Gregson Road / Clifden Lane
	Josephine Drive
	Wallaby Way
2. Inglewood	Inglewood Salisbury Road
3. Kingower	Wehla Kingower Road
4. Brenanah	Kingower Wedderburn Road
	Brenanah Wehla Road
5. Wehla	Logan Wehla Rheola Road
6. Fentons Creek	Wheelhouse Road
7. Tarnagulla	Tarnagulla Road
8. Laanecoorie	Ramon Parade
9. McIntyre	McIntyre township
10. Moliagul	Chinamans Lane
	Moliagul Drive / Mason Drive

The Rural Living Zone should be subject to a minimum lot size of 8 hectares to restrict any further subdivision of these areas.

The recommended Rural Living Zone areas are shown at Appendix 9

Rural Conservation Zone

3. The following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Rural Conservation Zone.

Table 17: Areas recommended for inclusion in the Rural Conservation Zone

Locality	Investigation area	Significant biodiversity values
1. Wedderburn	Skinners Flat – north	Habitat for Endangered Mallee Fowl Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
2. Nine Mile	Nine Mile South Road	Habitat for Endangered Swift Parrot Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
3. Mt Korong	Wedderburn Serpentine Road	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
5. Wehla	Birthisel Road	Habitat for Endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for Vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail; and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
6. Brenanah	Brenanah Wehla Road	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
7. Kingower	Halls Road	Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater
	Wehla Kingower Road	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
8. Rheola	Rheola Arnold Road	Habitat for critically endangered Regent Honeyeater Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC
10. Moliagul	Cherry Gardens Road	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Diamond Firetail
11. Tarnagulla	Tarnagulla Road	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Diamond Firetail
12. Llanelly	Wimmera Highway	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Habitat for endangered Swift Parrot Habitat for vulnerable Diamond Firetail

These areas should be subject to a minimum subdivision size of 40ha. Local Planning Policy should identify that Council will generally support the use of land within the RCZ for a dwelling where it can be demonstrated that the environmental values on the site will be protected and enhanced. The property must be serviced by an existing all weather access. If reticulated power is not provided, wind or solar power should be encouraged; details of the power supply must be included with a permit application. Fuel powered generators are discouraged as a primary power source within the RCZ.

The recommended Rural Conservation Zone areas are shown at Appendix 10.

Township Zone

4. The following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Township Zone.

Table 18: Areas recommended for inclusion in the Township Zone

Locality	Investigation area
1. Laanecoorie	Existing non-rural extent of Laanecoorie Township

The areas recommended for inclusion in the Township Zone are shown at Appendix 11.

Public Park and Recreation Zone

5. The following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Public Park and Recreation Zone.

Table 19: Areas recommended for inclusion in the Public Park and Recreation Zone

Locality	Investigation area
1. Newbridge	Newbridge recreation reserve

The areas recommended for inclusion in the Public Park and Recreation Zone are shown at Appendix 12.

Public Conservation and Resource Zone

6. The following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone.

Table 20: Areas recommended for inclusion in the Public Conservation and Resource Zone

Locality	Investigation area
1. Tarnagulla	State forest to the north and east of the Tarnagulla township
2. Bridgewater	Land occupied by the Bridgewater Public Caravan park
3. Laanecoorie	Laanecoorie reserve along the Loddon River
4. Loddon River Corridor	Those sections of Crown Land forming part of the Loddon River corridor that are contained within the Farming Zone.

The areas recommended for inclusion in the Public Conservation and Resource Zone are shown at Appendix 13.

Public Use Zone

7. The following areas are considered inappropriate for the Farming Zone and should be rezoned Public Use Zone.

Table 21: Areas recommended for inclusion in the Public Use Zone

Locality	Investigation area
1. Skinners Flat	Skinners Flat Reservoir
2. Laanecoorie	Laanecoorie water treatment plant
3. Boort	Boort Cemetery
4. Pyramid Hill	Pyramid Hill Cemetery
5. Wedderburn	Wedderburn Cemetery
6. Kingower	Kingower Cemetery
7. Inglewood	Inglewood Cemetery
8. Rheola	Rheola Cemetery
9. Yarrayne	Yarrayne Cemetery
10. Eddington	Eddington Cemetery

The areas recommended for inclusion in the Public Use Zone are shown at Appendix 14.

Subdivision

8. The following changes to subdivision controls are recommended for the Farming Zone;

Table 22: Recommended changes to the subdivision controls of the Farming Zone

Land	Area
Minimum subdivision area (hectares). Land within the GMID that is currently irrigated, set up for irrigation or a commitment or agreement has been put in place to enable the land to be irrigated following subdivision <u>and</u> where the land is likely to remain irrigated by virtue of infrastructure, soil type or proximity to water source.	40ha
All other land	100ha

9. The following policy statements should be incorporated into Clause 22.05 to improve the guidance provided by this policy.

- Subdivision in the Farming Zone should generally not create additional lots (i.e. Property restructure should be used in preference);
- Subdivision in the Farming Zone should be clearly based on an improved productive farming outcome that cannot be achieved with the current lot size;
- The proposal must provide for ongoing productive, economic agriculture.

Information demonstrating the above may be required with a planning permit application, including either;

-
- Farm business plan that demonstrates the intended output of the farming enterprise in terms of production and value and long term viability.
 - Whole farm plan that demonstrates the subdivision has been designed with consideration of the land quality and capability of the site and will therefore support enhanced productivity.
10. The policy that provides for smaller lots should be deleted as it has not been used since it was included in the scheme 10 years ago, it is not considered likely that it will be required and it is questionable whether it is actual lawful.

Excision

11. The following policy should be applied to house lot excisions (and should replace the existing policy).

Council will only support house lot excisions where;

- The benefit from the removal of the dwelling from the land clearly and significantly outweighs the risk of having a residential land use adjoining a farming property in terms of supporting the growth and ongoing viability of agriculture in the Shire.
- The purpose of the house lot excision is to facilitate property consolidation. House lot excisions will not be approved where they are for capital raising only as this is not a long term land use planning outcome.
- There is a significant risk that the property will be lost to agriculture while it still contains a dwelling (i.e. the whole property will become a rural living property as the farmer cannot compete with other land purchasers for the property).
- The dwelling is a significant encumbrance on the property due to its quality and value (i.e. Poor quality, older houses will not add substantially to the value of the property and will generally not be considered to be a significant encumbrance.)
- Dwellings excised under the Farming Zone provisions are to be in a habitable condition and comply with the Building Code of Australia.
- It is clear that a dwelling is not required for the farming use of the property.
- It can be demonstrated that it is likely that farming can be continued on the balance unhindered.
- The minimum area is taken out of the balance property. The house and immediate surrounds should only be excised. A rural living / hobby farm should not be created.
- The dwelling and therefore excised lot is on the frontage of the property. Long narrow lots or battle axe lots should be avoided as the additional boundary increases the risk of land use conflict and increases the amount of land lost to agriculture.
- The dwelling is serviced by a sealed road or a rural gravel access road.
- An application for a house lot excision must be advertised to surrounding land owners / occupiers.
- It is preferred that a house lot excision be in the form of a boundary restructure, not the creation of an additional lot. The balance lot should meet the minimum size for the zone.

- Subdivision that is likely to lead to such a concentration of lots as to change the general use and character of a rural area, and is not consistent with the purposes of the Zone, will be strongly discouraged.

Dwellings

12. Controls on dwelling development in Farming zoned areas should be strengthened to ensure that any dwelling proposed is ancillary and required to promote the agricultural use of the land.

They should be strengthened by;

- a) Increasing the permit trigger in the schedule to the Farming Zone to 100ha (thereby requiring a permit for use of a lot of less than 100ha for a dwelling) ;

Table 23: Recommended changes to the dwelling controls of the Farming Zone

	Land	Area/Dimensions/Distance	
		Existing	Recommendation
Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling (hectares).	All land	40ha	100ha

- b) Requiring more detailed information to be submitted with a planning permit application to demonstrate the farming use of the land and why the dwelling is required to enhance this.

13. The following policy statements are recommended to be included in Clause 22.05:

- Council will support the construction of a dwelling on land zoned Farming where it can be demonstrated that the construction of the dwelling is required to enhance the agricultural output of the land and that the dwelling is and is likely to remain ancillary to the farming use of the property.
- The agricultural use of the land that the new dwelling is required to support must be established prior to construction of the dwelling.
- An application for a new dwelling in the Farming Zone will be advertised to surrounding land owners / occupiers.
- Council may require the following information to support an application for a new dwelling where a new farm business is proposed:
 - A farm business plan that shows:
 - why there is a need to live on site and how that would enhance agricultural use
 - the investment into agriculture on the property
 - the estimated return from the agricultural pursuit
 - the amount of land to be engaged in farming, and
 - the estimated production from the property; or
 - A whole farm plan that shows;
 - the layout of agricultural uses on the property to demonstrate that the majority of the property is used for farming.

-
- the dwelling is located in such a way to minimise any impact on agricultural use on the subject property and adjoining properties. The dwelling should be located on an area of lower agricultural quality and should be sited and designed to minimise the amount of land used for non-agricultural uses.

These information requirements are in addition to the information required by Clause 35.07-4 of the Loddon Planning Scheme. This clause requires that an application to use a lot for a dwelling must be accompanied by a written statement which explains how the proposed dwelling responds to the decision guidelines for dwellings in the zone.

New dwellings in the Rural Conservation Zone will be supported where it is demonstrated that the dwelling is associated with the management of biodiversity and native vegetation on the land. Proposals for new dwellings need to demonstrate that landscape and environmental values are considered, protected and enhanced and that dwellings are compatible with the environmental characteristics of the area.

14. Including a statement in the MSS that identifies the future of the Loddon River corridor is for agriculture due to the existing and future value. Housing should be minimised beyond existing urban areas.

Renewable energy

15. The following policy statement is recommended:

Renewable energy facilities will be supported in Loddon but should not be located on high quality agricultural land, in particular, not on land that is and is likely to remain irrigated (or may be irrigated in the future) due to soil type or access to irrigation infrastructure.

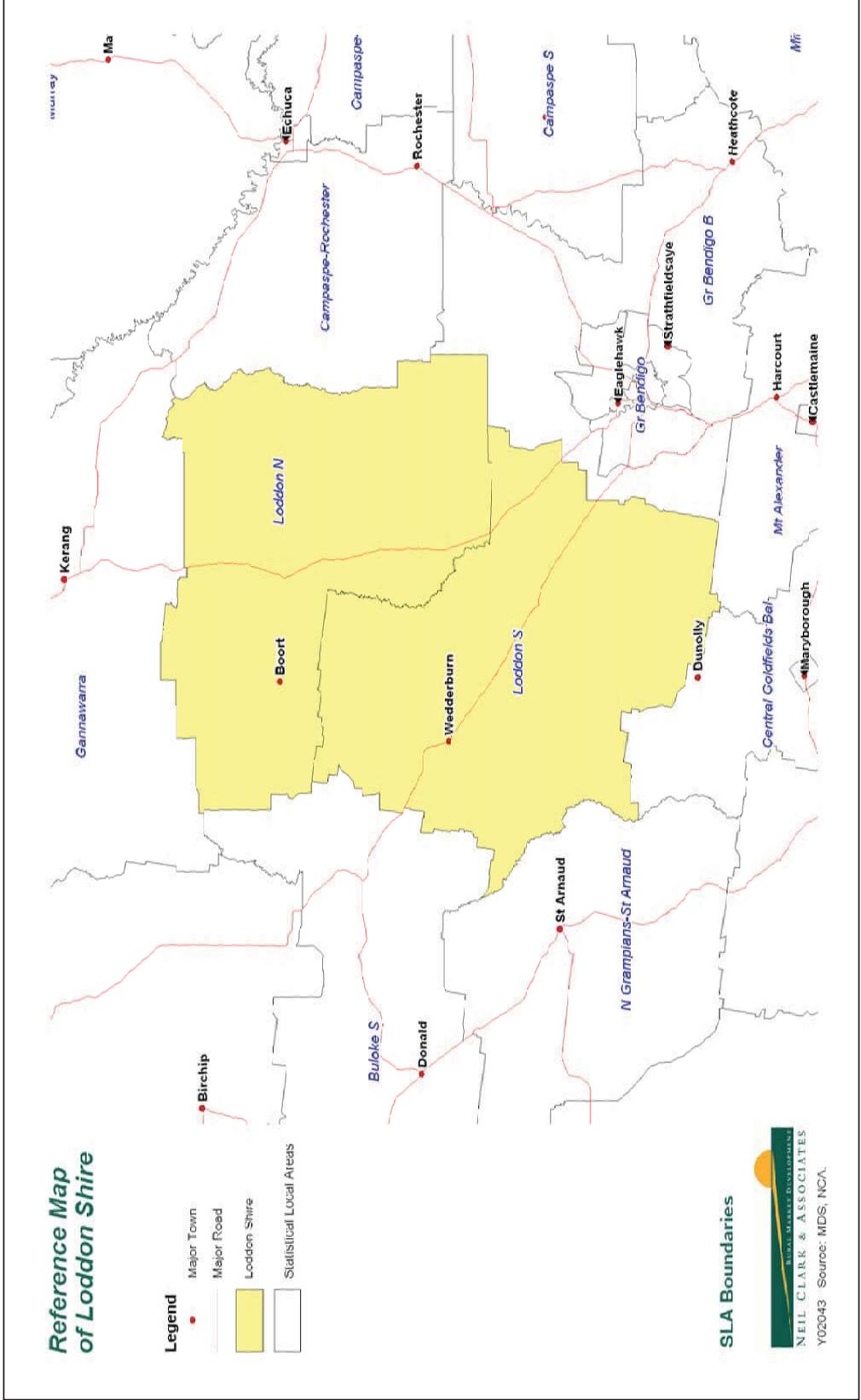
Rural Industry

16. The following policy statements are recommended:

- It is preferable that rural industry be located within existing urban areas to capitalise on infrastructure and contribute to the employment options, viability and vibrancy of the town and minimise loss of farmland.
- Rural industry should only be located in rural areas where;
 - Amenity impacts of the industry make it unsuitable for an urban area;
 - Existing road infrastructure is suitable for the traffic to be generated by the industry;
 - The industry will not compromise agricultural use of surrounding land;
 - There are clear advantages of locating the industry in the rural area that outweigh the advantages of locating it in an urban area



Appendix 1 SLA Map

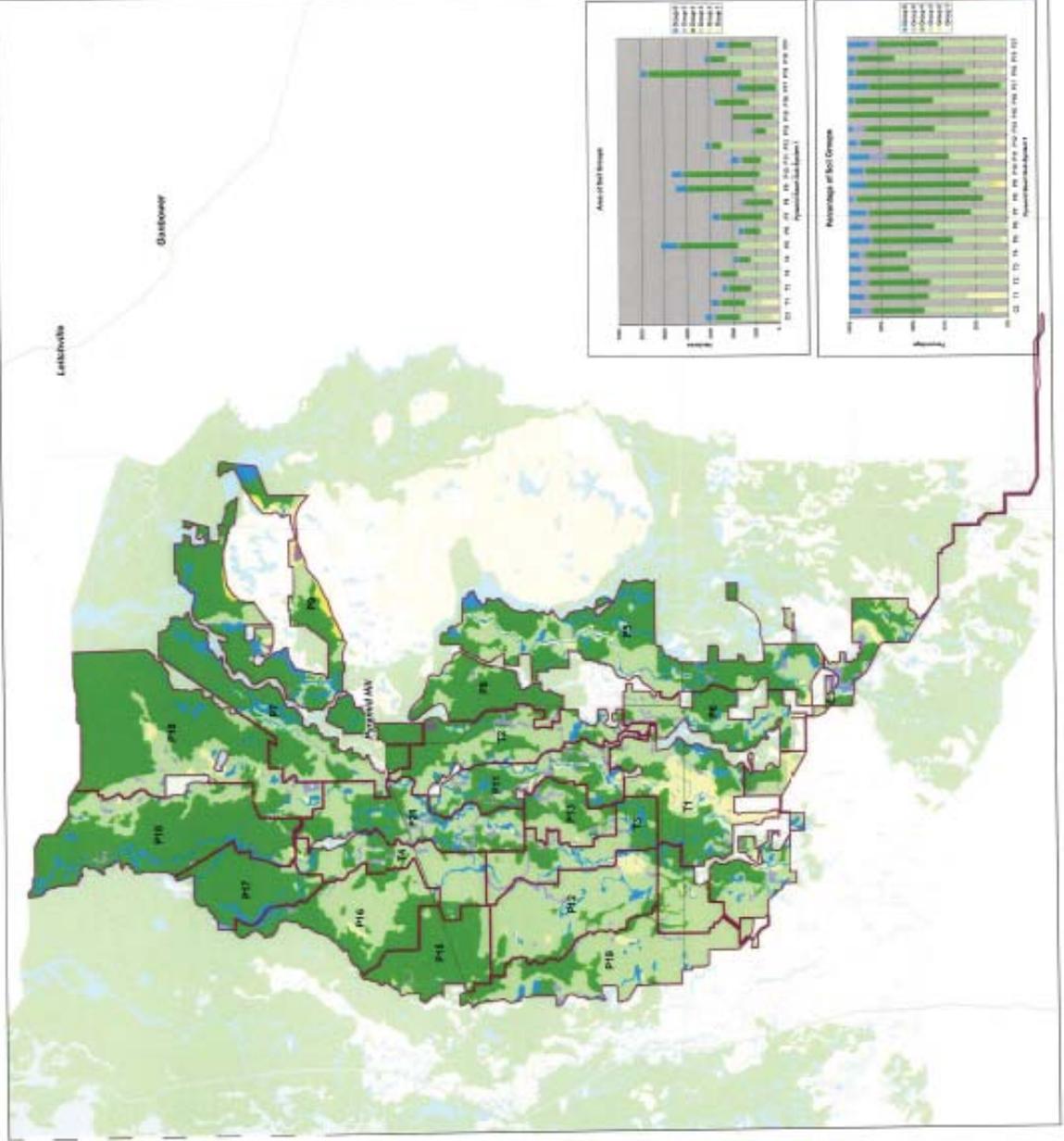
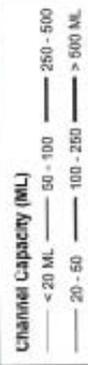
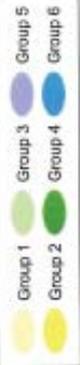


Appendix 2 Pyramid-Boort Irrigation Area Atlas Maps

PYRAMID BOORT Soil Groups Sub-System 1 Map 5

Regional soils were classified according to their suitability for irrigated crops as part of regional soil surveys (1942-1975), using the six groups described below. Maps included in the survey bulletins were subsequently digitized for GIS use. The Group descriptions below were extracted from the mid-Loddon Valley soil survey bulletin (Skene, 1971), which essentially represents the Pyramid-Boort Irrigation Area (see map 14). Although slightly different from the Soil Group descriptions in other regional soil survey bulletins (e.g. Sergeant, 1978), they are comparable.

To reflect the current use of self-mulching clays for tomatoes and other high value crops, two soil types (Boort and Yendo Clay - Mid-Loddon Bulletin 422), were reclassified as Soil Group 2.



PYRAMID BOORT

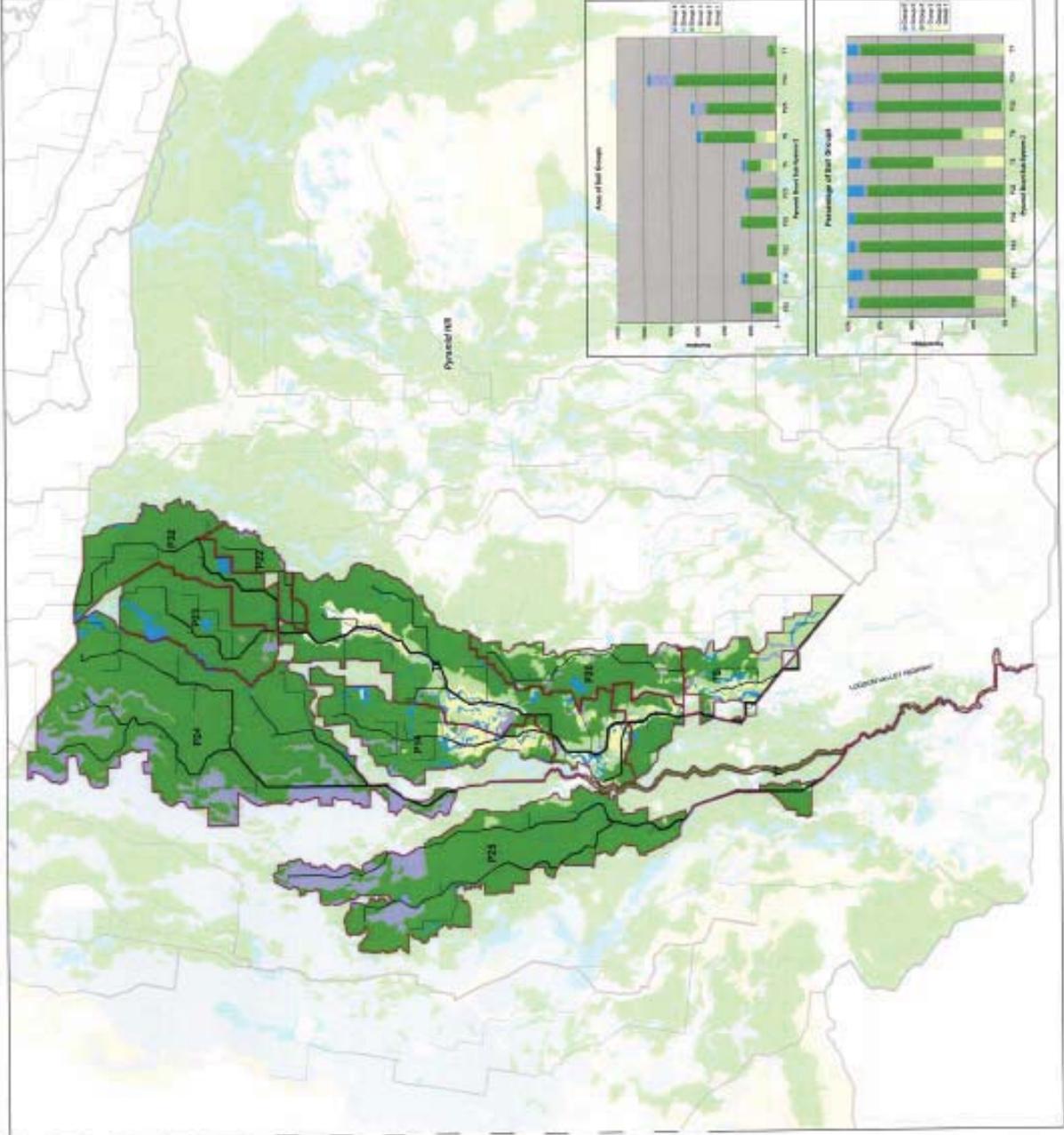
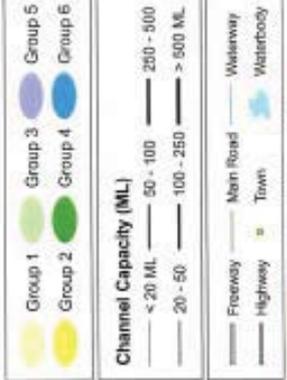
Soil Groups

Sub-System 2

Map 5

Regional soils were classified according to their suitability for irrigated crops as part of regional soil surveys (1942-1975), using the six groups described below. Maps included in the survey bulletins were subsequently digitized for GIS use. The Group descriptions below were extracted from the Mid-Loddon Valley soil survey bulletin (Staine, 1971), which essentially represents the Pyramid-Boort irrigation Area (see map 14). Although slightly different from the Soil Group descriptions in other regional soil survey bulletins (e.g. Sargent, 1978), they are comparable.

To reflect the current use of self-mulching clays for tomatoes and other high value crops, two soil types (Beech and Yando Clay - Mid-Loddon Bulletin #22), were reclassified as Soil Group 2.



PYRAMID BOORT

Soil Groups

Sub-System 3

Map 5

Regional soils were classified according to their suitability for irrigated crops as part of regional soil surveys (1942-1976), using the six groups described below. Maps included in the survey bulletins were subsequently digitized for GIS use. The Group descriptions below were extracted from the mid-Loddon Valley soil survey bulletin (Staine, 1971), which essentially represents the Pyramid-Boort irrigation Area (see map 14). Although slightly different from the Soil Group descriptions in other regional soil survey bulletins (e.g. Sargent, 1978), they are comparable.

To reflect the current use of self-mulching clays for tomatoes and other high value crops, two soil types (Boort and Yamba Clay - Mid-Loddon Bulletin #22), were reclassified as Soil Group 2.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6

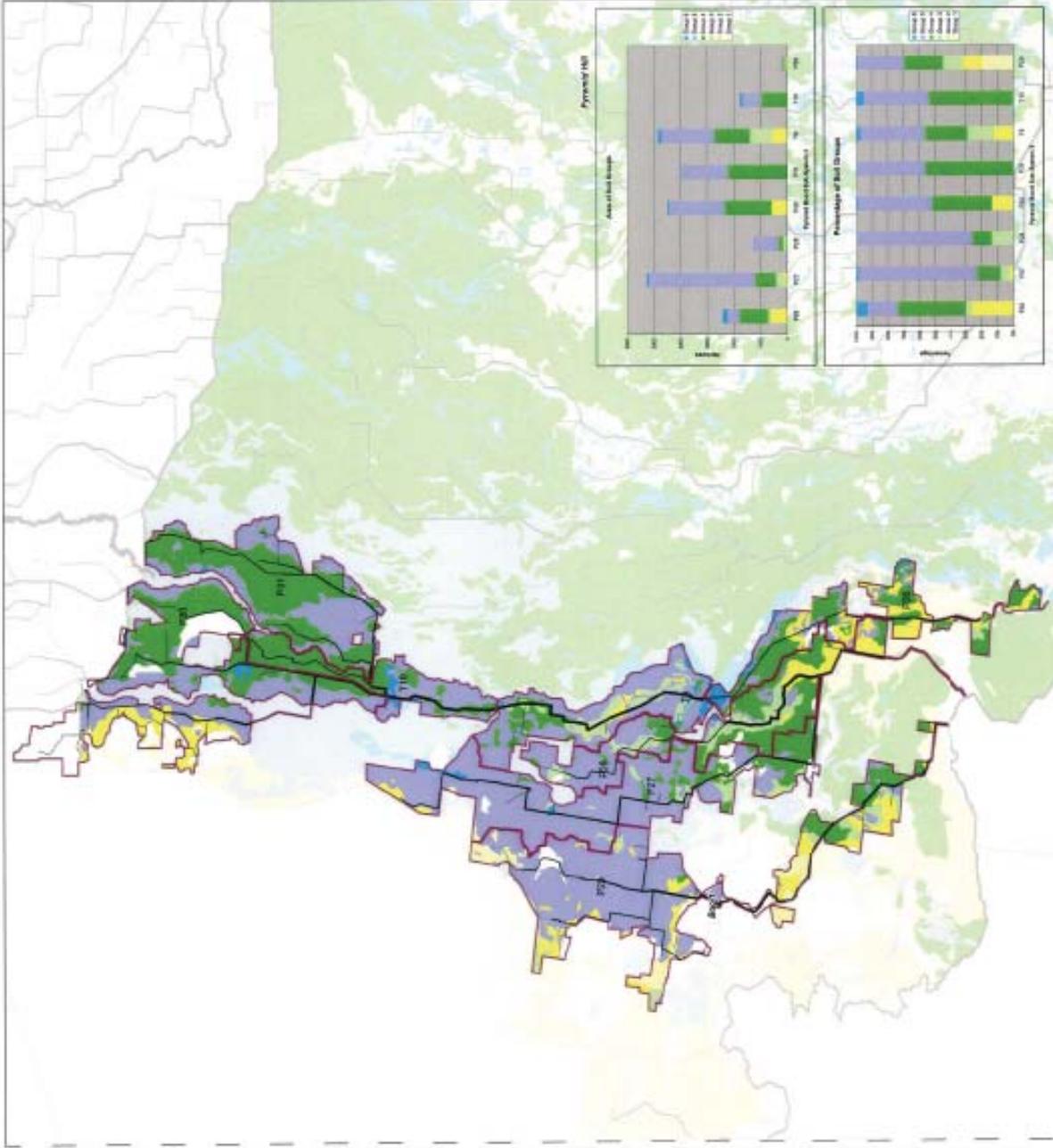
Channel Capacity (ML)	
	< 20 ML
	20 - 50
	50 - 100
	100 - 250
	250 - 500
	> 500 ML

	Freeway		Main Road		Waterway
	Highway		Town		Waterbody

Victoria
The Place To Be

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PYRAMID BOORT

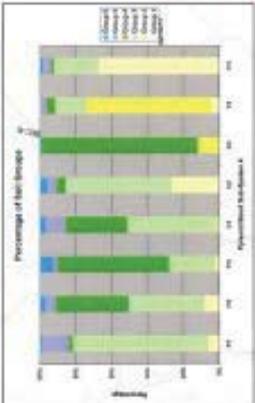
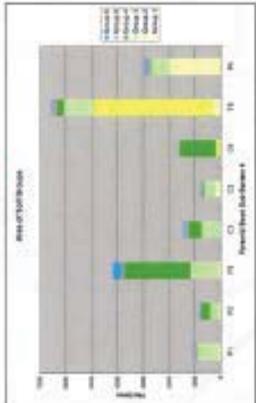
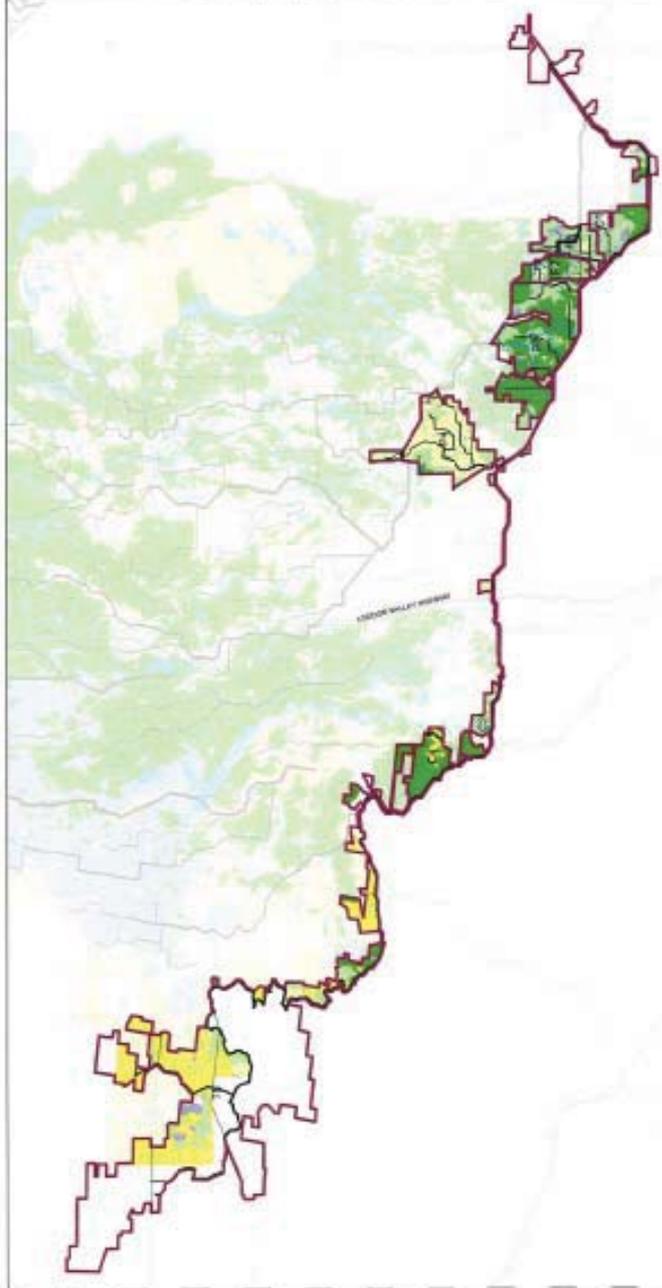
Soil Groups

Sub-System 4

Map 5

Regional soils were classified according to their suitability for irrigated crops as part of regional soil surveys (1942-1977), using the six groups described below. Maps included in the survey bulletins were subsequently digitized for GIS use. The Group descriptions below were extracted from the mid-Loddon Valley soil survey bulletin (Skerne, 1971), which essentially represents the Pyramid-Boort Irrigation Area (see map 14). Although slightly different from the Soil Group descriptions in other regional soil survey bulletins (e.g. Sergeant, 1978), they are comparable.

To reflect the current use of self mulching clays for tomatoes and other high value crops, two soil types (Boort and Yando City - Mid-Loddon Bulletin #22), were reclassified as Soil Group 2.



Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Group 4

Group 5

Group 6

Channel Capacity (ML)

< 20 ML 50 - 100 250 - 500

20 - 50 100 - 250 > 500 ML

Freeway Main Road Waterway

Highway Town Waterbody

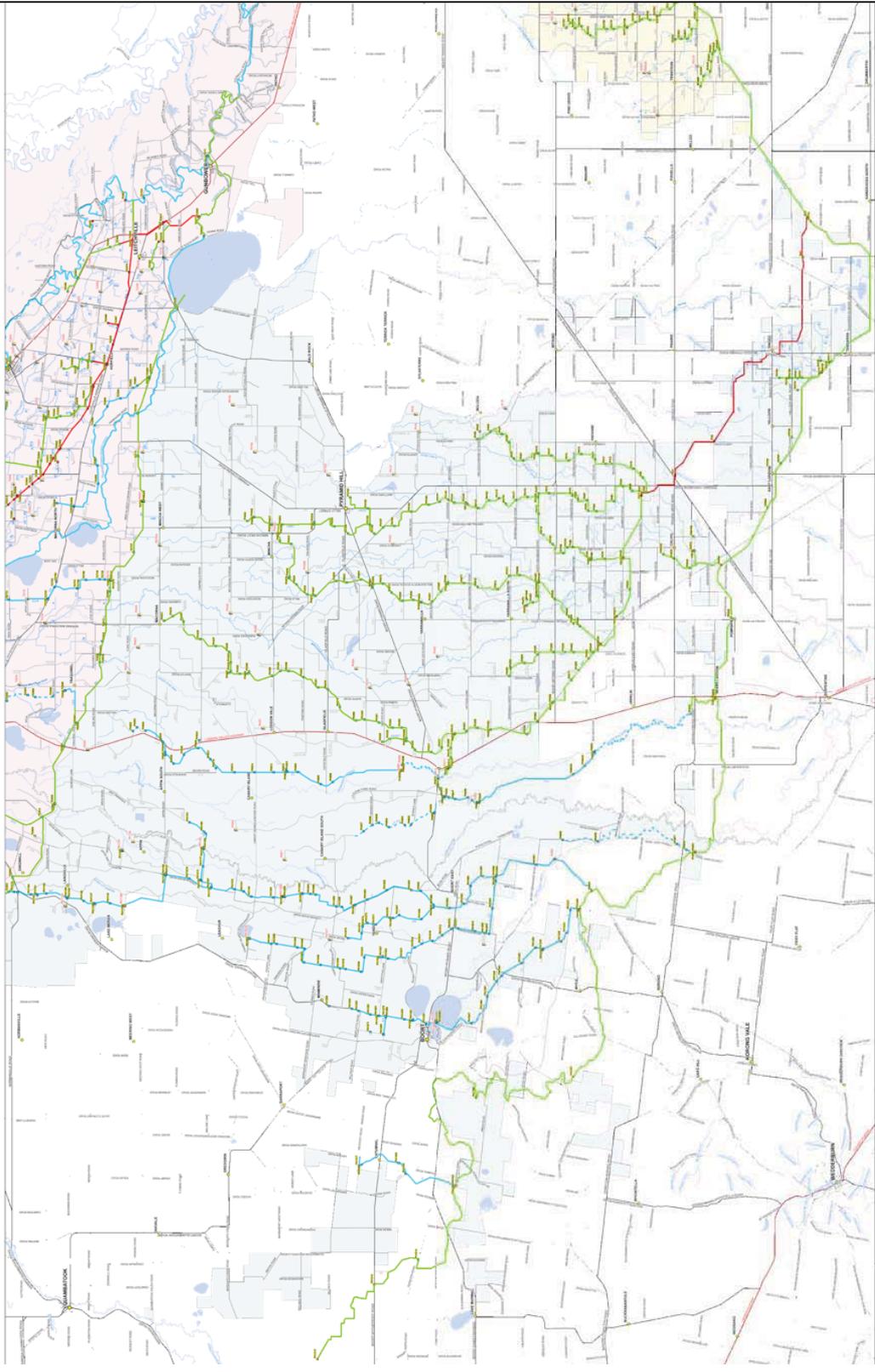
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Appendix 3 Proposed Backbone for the Pyramid Boort Irrigation Area (NVIRP 2010)

NORTHERN VICTORIA IRRIGATION RENEWAL PROJECT

Pyramid-Boort Irrigation Area - NVIRP Works



WATER
© 2012
Fig. 1 - 2012

NVIRP Channel Works
- Existing Channel Works
- New Channel Works
- New Pipelines

NVIRP Assessment Structures
- Assessment Structures
- Assessment Pipelines
- Assessment Pipelines

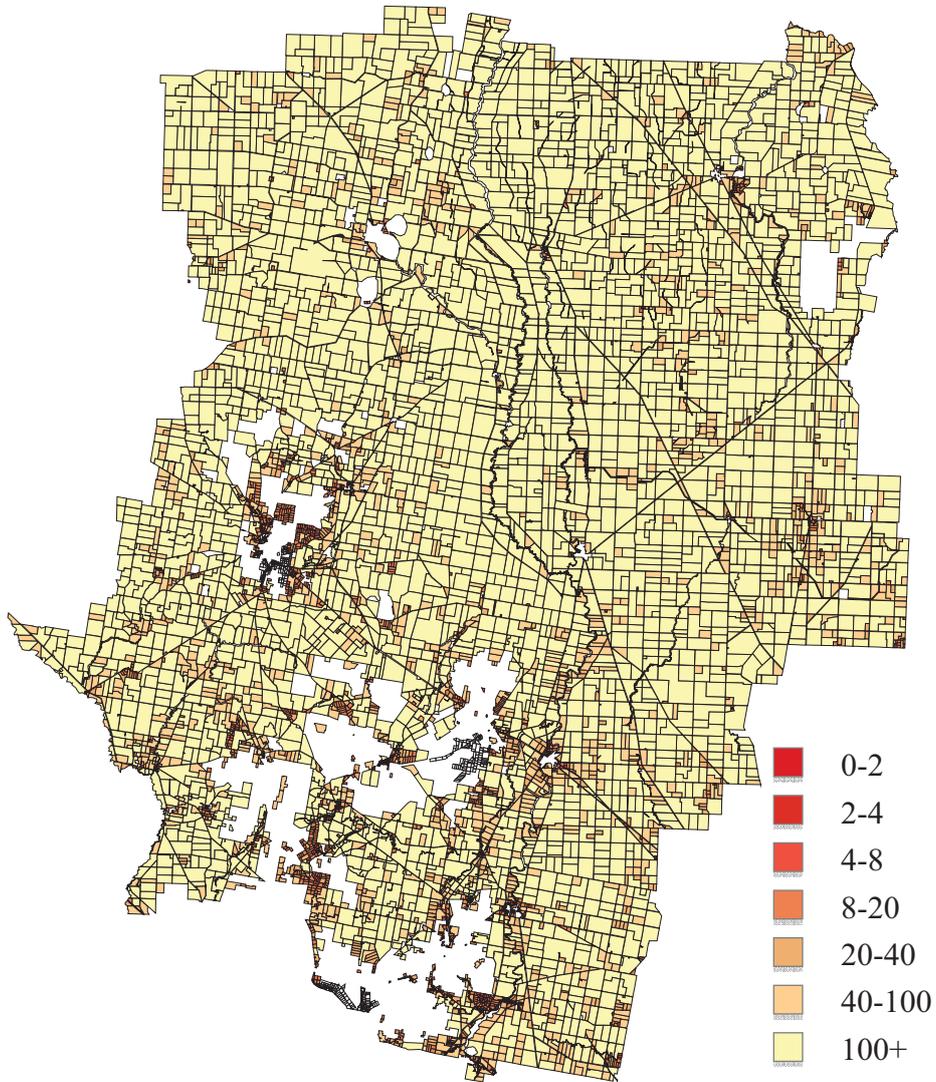
Version 6
NICTA AMBIS

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NORTHERN IRRIGATION VICTORIA BUREAU OF BUREAU OF WATER RESOURCES

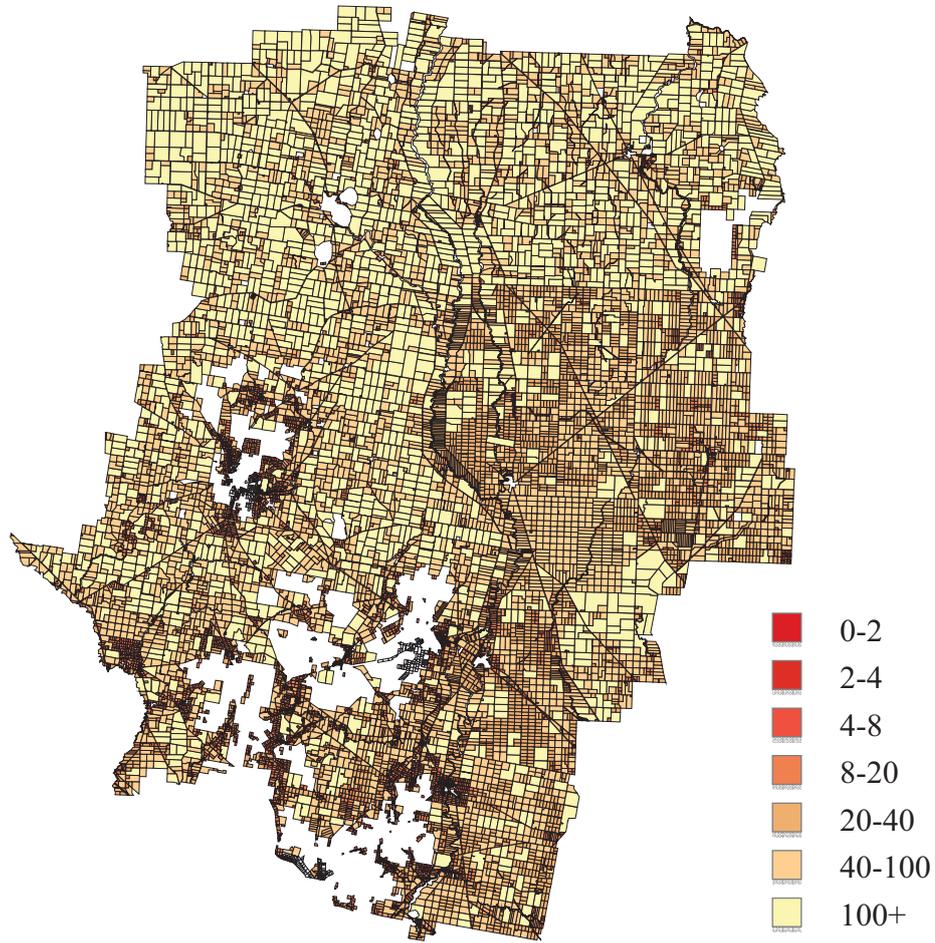
SCALE 1:100,000 (A4)
The extent of the project is shown in yellow on this map.

Appendix 4 GIS Maps

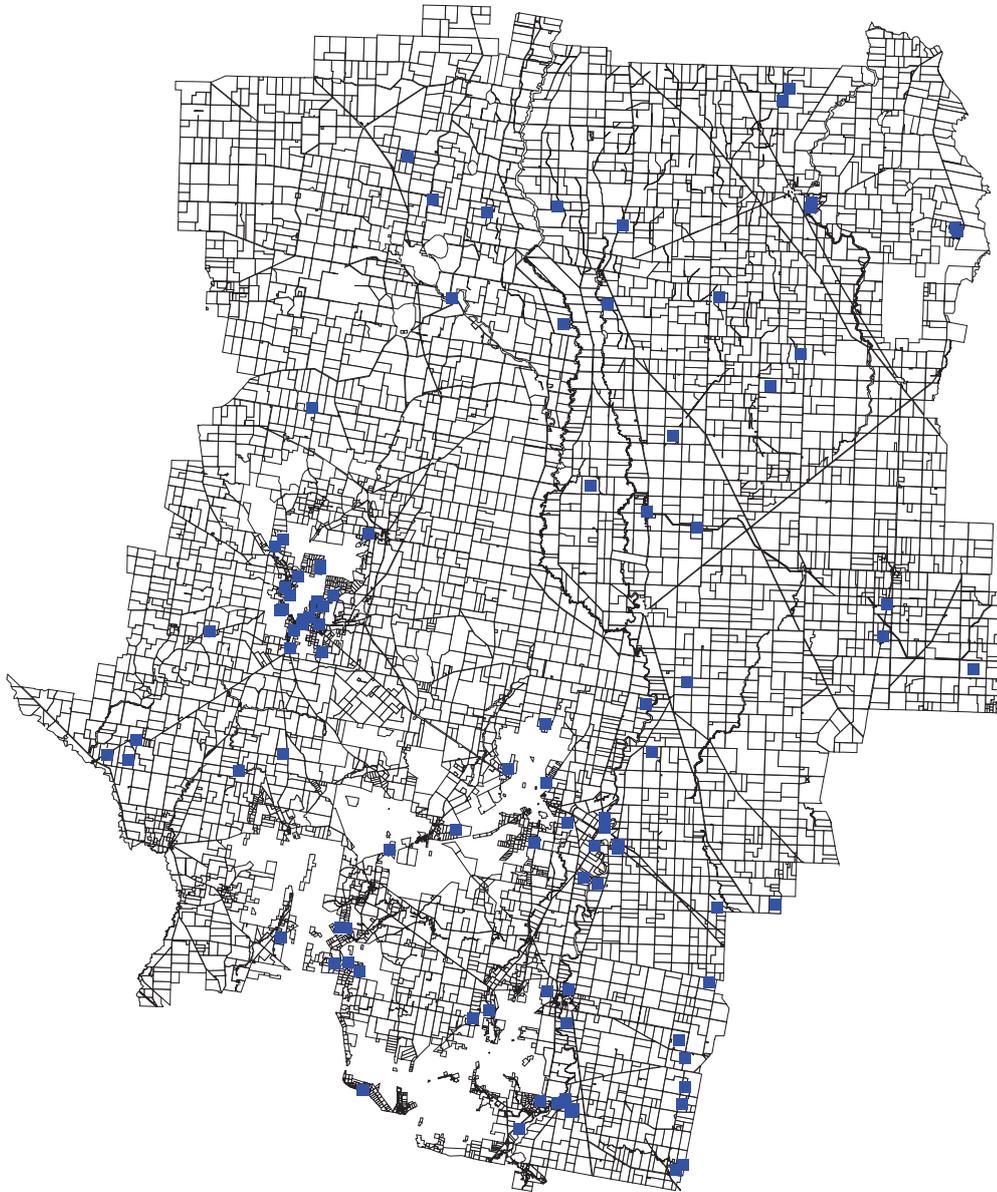
Map 1: Property Size Range (Area in hectares)



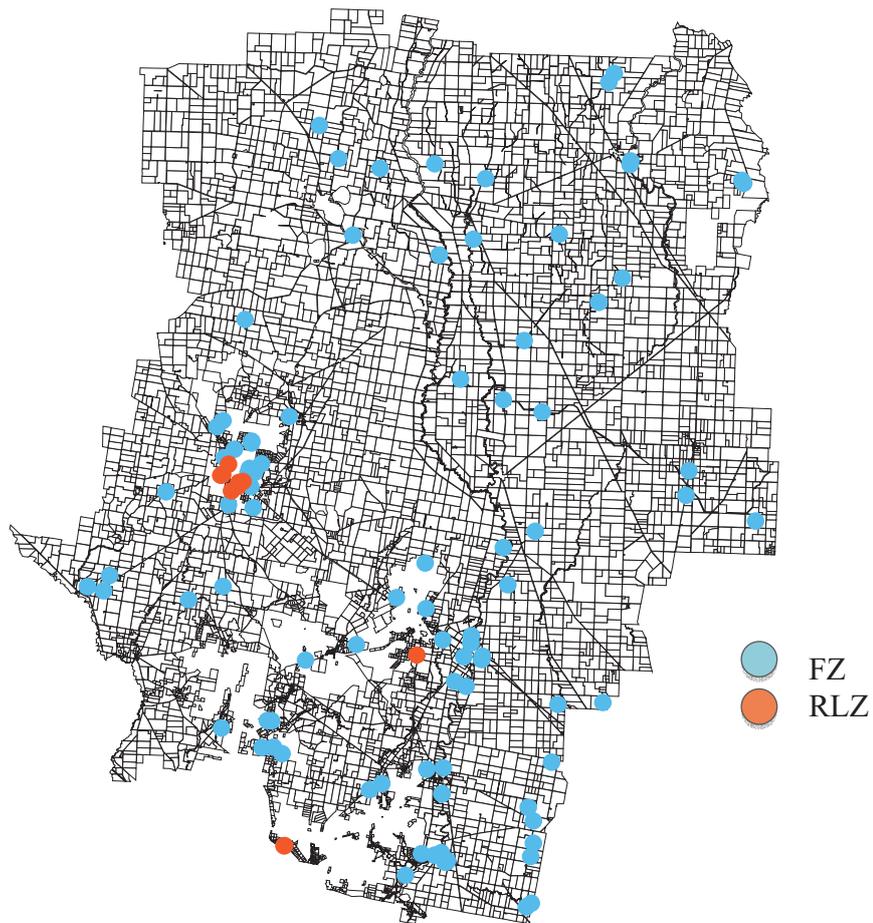
Map 2: Parcel Size Range (Area in hectares)



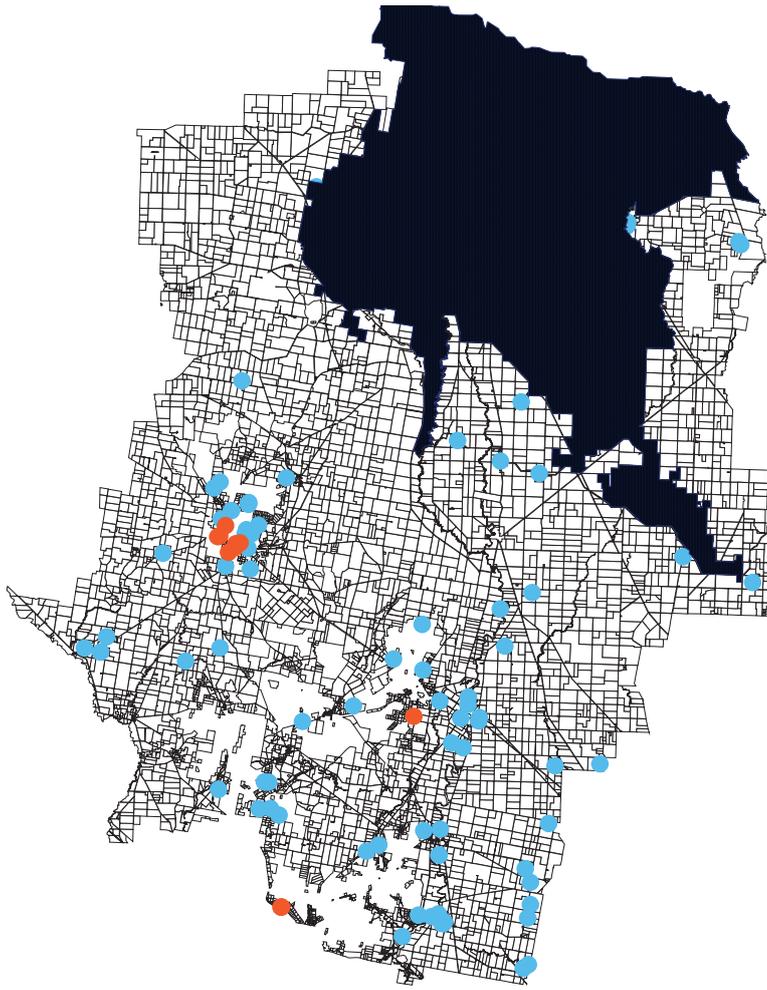
Map 3: Building Approvals 2004-2010



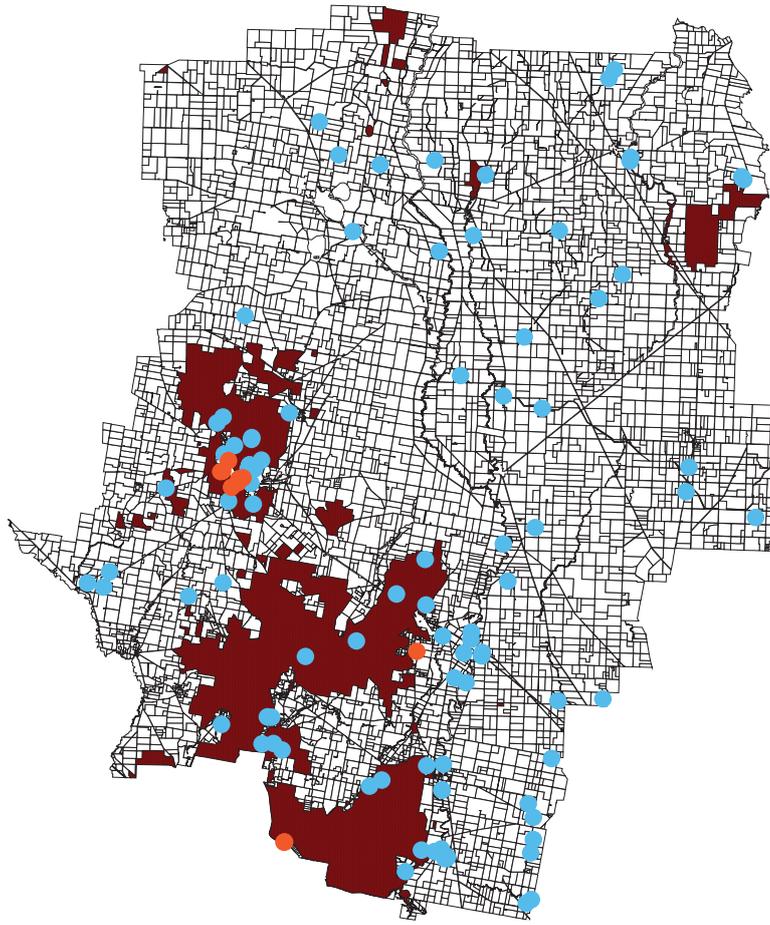
Map 4: Building Approvals 2004-2010 (by Zone)



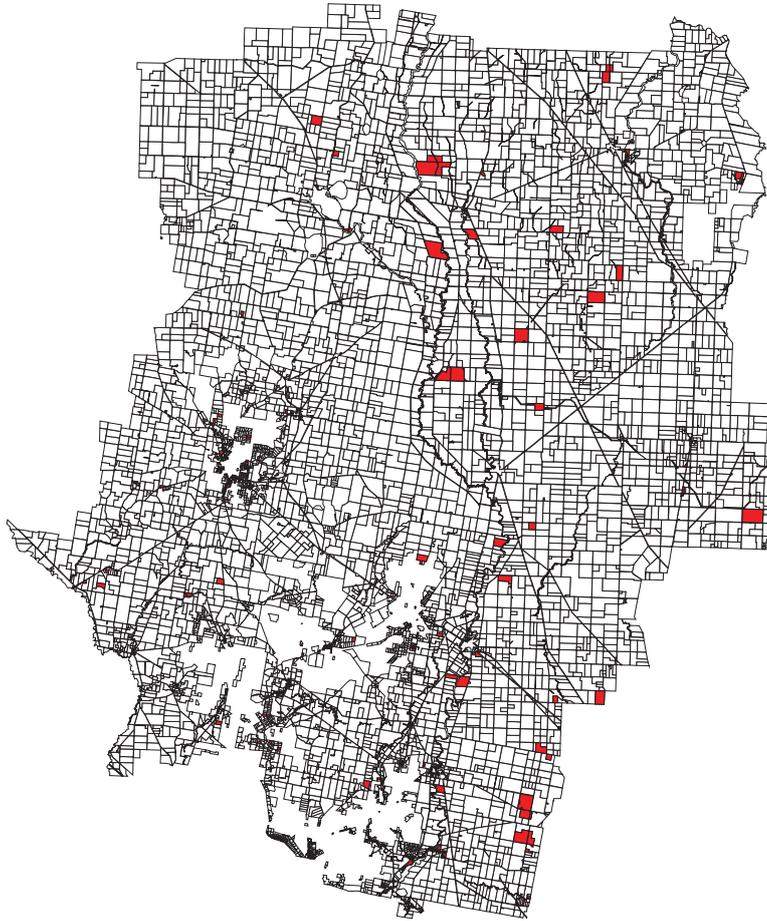
Map 5: Building Approvals 2004-2010 (with Irrigation Area)



Map 6: Building Approvals 2004-2010 (with Wildfire Management Overlay)



Map 7: Building Approvals 2004-2010 (Subject Properties)



Appendix 5 Environmental/Biodiversity Assessments

Loddon Shire

Review of vegetated land

Draft Report

June 2011



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Note: (e) after number of copies indicates electronic distribution

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Executive Summary

The Loddon Shire has undertaken a review of the land use and development circumstances and planning policy of its rural areas. A major focus of the review was the identification and rezoning of areas that have limited or no agricultural prospects, such as remnant vegetation and highly fragmented and developed land that was inappropriately translated into the Farming Zone.

The review found that there is:

- land with significant environmental or conservation values largely in the form of native vegetation that is inappropriately zoned for Farming
- land that is being used primarily for a rural residential outcome in the Farming Zone and should be rezoned to Rural Living.

The Rural Review recommended that further work be undertaken to assess the vegetation in these areas to confirm the values that are to be protected and the most appropriate zone. The Loddon Shire has engaged RMCG to undertake the vegetation assessment.

The objectives of the project are to:

- review land identified by Loddon Shire as being inappropriately zoned Farming due to its vegetation cover or links to forested land to determine its candidacy for Rural Conservation Zone
- prepare appropriate documentation providing justification to support a planning scheme amendment for land assessed as candidate for Rural Conservation Zone.

To determine the most appropriate rural zone, a list of criteria were compiled from the purposes of the Rural Conservation and Rural Activity Zones and the Draft Planning Practice Note: Applying the Rural Zones¹. The criteria were applied to each of the investigation areas using a combination of desktop analysis and field inspection.

Each area was inspected by RMCG, a representative from Loddon Shire and the Department of Sustainability and Environment. The purpose of the inspection was to assess each site against the criteria and validate and collect data for each site including:

- Ecological Vegetation Class
- vegetation condition
- land use
- infrastructure provision – power, roads, telephone.

The following criteria were selected for assessment of the investigation areas.

- proximity to reserves and public land
- conservation status of the vegetation communities
- condition of the vegetation
- land use (commercial agriculture, rural residential, hobby farming, tourism)
- recorded sightings of endangered, threatened or vulnerable fauna

A review of planning policy found that the State and Local Planning Policy framework provides a strong basis for protection of environmental and conservation values in Loddon Shire.

¹ DSE (2007) Planning Practice Note: Applying the Rural Zones

A review of key vegetation strategies relevant to the study found that the areas nominated for review are significant in terms of the opportunity to contribute to the objectives of the White Paper – particularly the Goldfields Flagship area and regional biolinks. The review also supported the approach being taken by Loddon Shire and was consistent with objectives and recommendations of the North Central Native Vegetation Strategy.

The following table summarises the key findings of the assessment of the investigation areas and planning policy recommendations.

Locality	Significant biodiversity values	Investigation area	Key planning policy recommendation
1. Wedderburn	Endangered Malleefowl Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC	Skidders Flat – west	No change to zone
		Skidders Flat – north	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
		Woolshed Flat	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
		Gregson Road / Clifden Lane	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
		Wallaby Way	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
		Josephine Drive	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
2. Nine Mile	Endangered Swift Parrot Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC		
3. Mt Korong	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC		
4. Fentons Creek	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Endangered Swift Parrot		Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
5. Wehla	Endangered Swift Parrot Vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC	Logan Wehla Rheola Road	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
		Birthisel Road	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
6. Brenanah	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC		Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
7. Kingower	Endangered Swift Parrot Vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC	Nyanaghul Road	Rezone to Rural Activity Zone
		Kingower Brenanah Road	Rezone to Rural Activity Zone
		Halls Road	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
		Wehla Kingower Road	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
8. Rheola	Critically endangered Regent Honeyeater Endangered Swift Parrot Vulnerable Speckled Warbler, Diamond Firetail and Painted Honeyeater Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC		Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
9. McIntyre	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Endangered Swift Parrot Vulnerable Diamond Firetail	McIntyre township	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
		Burkes Flat – McIntyre Road	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone

10. Moliagul	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Endangered Swift Parrot Vulnerable Diamond Firetail	Cherry Gardens Road	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
		Moliagul Drive / Mason Drive	Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
11. Tarnagulla	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Endangered Swift Parrot Vulnerable Diamond Firetail		Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
12. Llanelly	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Endangered Swift Parrot Vulnerable Diamond Firetail		Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone
13. Laanecoorie	Vulnerable Grassy Woodland EVC Endangered Swift Parrot		Rural Activity Zone
14. Inglewood	Vulnerable Common Dunnart, Diamond Firetail, Purple-gaped Honeyeater		Rural Activity Zone
15. Terricks	Endangered Plains Grassland		No change to zone

1 Introduction

1.1 Loddon Rural Zones Review

The Loddon Shire has undertaken a review of the land use and development circumstances and planning policy of its rural areas. The review sought *“to reinforce a balance between Council’s desire to accommodate new residents in a range of localities and environments, protect the ongoing ability of farms to expand and operate relatively unhindered to maintain viability, minimise Council’s liability for road maintenance and other service provision to isolated dwellings and protect environmental assets.”* The review focused on:

- Identifying and rezoning areas that have limited or no agricultural prospects, such as remnant vegetation and highly fragmented and developed land that was inappropriately translated into the Farming Zone.
- Updating subdivision and dwelling controls to ensure that they support Council’s strategic position of supporting agricultural growth and development.
- Developing a local policy position on rural land use issues such as renewable energy development and rural industry.

The review found that there is:

1. Land with significant environmental or conservation values largely in the form of native vegetation, either remnant vegetation or revegetation. Most of this land is not currently farmed, and should not be farmed, as this would compromise the environmental values. Most of the land however is zoned for Farming.
2. Land that is being used primarily for a rural residential outcome (Ramon Parade, Wallaby Way, Josephine Drive, O’Briens Drive and Moliagul Drive) and recommended that these areas be rezoned to Rural Living. The recommendation recognised the fact that these areas were subdivided and have been partially developed for the purposes of rural living and are largely not used or likely to be used for farming.

The Department of Planning and Community advised that it was not comfortable with the recommendation to rezone the land to Rural Living due to the existing supply issues for rural living in these areas, and in the case of the land at Moliagul, its isolation from a town and lack of services. These areas have minimal agricultural prospects due to vegetation cover and fragmentation, and as such should not be zoned Farming. If Rural Living is not considered acceptable for these areas then a more appropriate zone is required.

The suite of Victoria Planning Provisions includes the Rural Conservation Zone and the Rural Activity. These zones can be applied to rural areas where environmental and conservation values or other rural uses are to take priority over Farming. Neither zone is currently used in Loddon.

The Rural Review recommended that further work be undertaken to assess the vegetation in these areas to confirm the values that are to be protected. The Loddon Shire has engaged RMCG to undertake the vegetation assessment.

1.2 Project objectives

The objectives of the project are to:

- Review land identified by Loddon Shire as being inappropriately zoned Farming due to its vegetation cover or links to forested land to determine its candidacy for Rural Conservation Zone.
- Prepare appropriate documentation providing justification to support a planning scheme amendment for land assessed as candidate for Rural Conservation Zone.

The areas nominated for review (investigation areas) are the hatched areas shown in Figure 1-1. The areas in light green within the shire boundary are areas of public land including State Parks, State Forest and Nature Conservation Reserves.

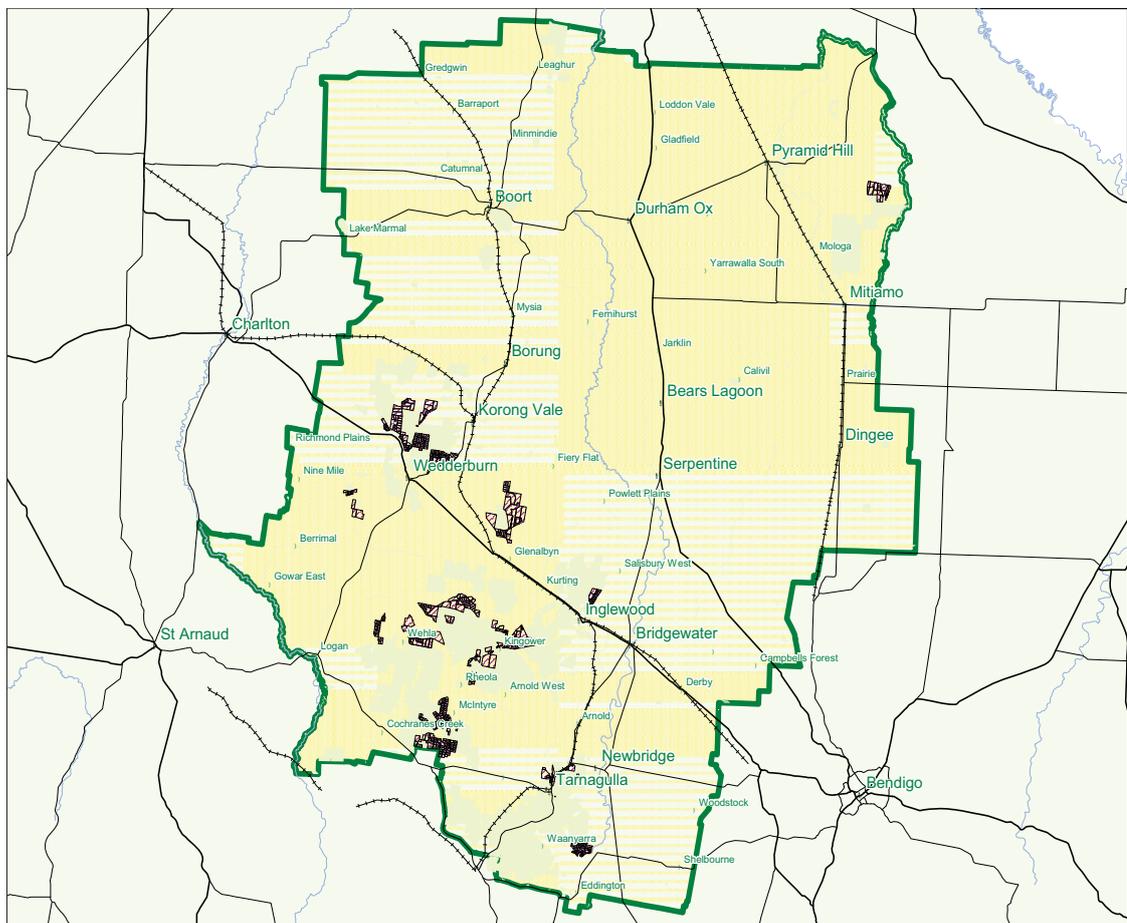


Figure 1-1 Map of Loddon Shire showing areas nominated for review

2 Review methodology

2.1 Approach

To determine the most appropriate rural zone, a list of criteria were compiled from the purposes of the Rural Conservation and Rural Activity Zones and the Draft Planning Practice Note: Applying the Rural Zones². The criteria were applied to each of the investigation areas using a combination of desktop analysis and field inspection.

Each area was inspected by RMCG, a representative from Loddon Shire and the Department of Sustainability and Environment. The purpose of the inspection was to assess each site against the criteria and validate and collect data for each site including:

- Ecological Vegetation Class
- vegetation condition
- land use
- infrastructure provision – power, roads, telephone

2.2 Criteria

Criteria for assessment of the investigation areas were drawn from the zone purposes and the Draft Planning Practice Note: Applying the Rural Zones.

Rural Conservation Zone

The purposes of the Rural Conservation Zone includes:

- to implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies
- to conserve the values specified in the schedule to this zone
- to protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values
- to protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area
- to encourage development and use of land which is consistent with sustainable land management and land capability practices, and which takes into account the conservation values and environmental sensitivity of the locality
- to provide for agricultural use consistent with the conservation of environmental and landscape values of the area
- to conserve and enhance the cultural significance and character of open rural and scenic non urban landscapes.

The Rural Planning Practice Note states with regard to the Rural Conservation Zone that:

“The Rural Conservation Zone is primarily concerned with protecting and conserving rural land for its environmental features or attributes. The conservation values of the land must be

² DSE (2007) Planning Practice Note: Applying the Rural Zones

identified in the schedule to the zone and could be historic, archaeological, landscape, ecological, cultural or scientific values. In this zone:

- all uses are subordinate to the environmental values of the land
- farming is allowed provided that it is consistent with the environmental values of the area
- the minimum lot size for subdivision is tailored to suit the environmental features and values of the land.”

Land use and development is strictly controlled in the zone to safeguard the natural environment and conserve the identified environmental qualities of the land. Some uses may only be considered if they are in conjunction with a specified farming activity or meet certain limitations on size or scale (such as Group Accommodation, Residential Hotel and Restaurant). Most agricultural uses require a planning permit. In general, there is an expectation that a proposal will only be permitted if it conserves the values identified for the land, the site is environmentally capable of sustaining the proposal, and it is compatible with surrounding land uses.

The Rural Conservation Zone is designed to be applied to rural areas where:

- The protection of the environmental features of the land is of primary strategic importance. These features could include native vegetation, flora and fauna, significant habitats, or they could relate to the visual qualities of the land.
- The environmental features of the land are scarce and strict controls are required to prevent the further loss or decline of those features.
- Land use and development could directly or indirectly threaten the environmental values of the land and strict controls are required to manage this.
- If the environmental or landscape features cover a large rural area, the Rural Conservation Zone is likely to be suitable. However, if the features are widely dispersed or fragmented and the surrounding land has been substantially altered (for example, broadacre farming areas with wildlife corridors), the other rural zones may be more appropriate, supplemented with overlays.

Possible Rural Conservation Zone areas:

- relatively intact natural areas where land use and development could result in the loss of important environmental features or values
- areas of biodiversity or ecological significance
- rural areas that contain threatened species habitat, such as wetlands, water catchments and grasslands
- rural areas of high scenic or landscape value
- environmentally degraded areas where a cautious approach to land use and development is required to avoid further environmental damage
- rural areas that are unstable or prone to erosion or salinity
- open, potable water supply catchment areas.

2.2.1 Rural Activity Zone

The purposes of the Rural Activity Zone includes:

- to implement the SPPF and the LPPF, including the MSS and local planning policies
- to provide for the use of land for agriculture
- to provide for other uses and development, inappropriate locations, which are compatible with agriculture and the environmental and landscape characteristics of the area
- to ensure that use and development does not adversely affect surrounding land uses
- to protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area
- to encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.

The Rural Planning Practice Note states the following in regard to the Rural Activity Zone:

“The main feature of the Rural Activity Zone is the flexibility that it provides for farming and other land uses to co-exist. In this zone:

- the zone purpose and provisions support the continuation and growth of farming but provide the opportunity for non-farming uses to be considered in appropriate locations
- a wider range of tourism, commercial and retail uses may be considered, compared to the Farming Zone and Rural Conservation Zone
- farming uses are encouraged to establish and expand, subject to proper safeguards for the environment and amenity considerations
- a planning permit is always required to use land for a dwelling.

The **Rural Activity Zone** is designed to be applied to rural areas where:

- farming is an important activity in the area but the planning objectives identified for the land support the establishment of other land uses
- a mixed-use function would support farming activities in the area, assist in preventing the unplanned loss of productive agricultural land elsewhere, or allow for the logical and efficient provision of infrastructure
- the use of land in the area for non-farming purposes would not compromise the long term productivity of surrounding farmland
- appropriate buffers can be provided between different land uses so that land use conflicts are avoided
- the planning authority has developed a clear policy about how discretion in the zone will be exercised.

Possible Rural Activity Zone areas:

- an existing mixed use rural area where the mix of uses complements the agricultural, environmental and landscape values of the area and supports the council’s urban settlement objectives

- rural areas where commercial, tourism or recreation development will complement and benefit the particular agricultural pursuits, landscape features or natural attractions of the area
- farming areas where complementary rural industry, agribusiness uses, and rural research facilities are encouraged.

2.2.2 Criteria

Based on the zone purposes and the practice note the following criteria were selected:

- proximity to reserves and public land
- conservation status of the vegetation communities
- Condition of the vegetation
- land use (commercial agriculture, rural residential, hobby farming, tourism)
- recorded sightings of endangered, threatened or vulnerable fauna.

3 Planning Policy Context

This section of the report summarises the State and Local Planning Policy relevant to this study.

3.1 State Planning Policy Framework

CI 12 Environmental and landscape values

CI 12.01 Biodiversity

CI 12.01-1 Protection of habitat

Objective

To assist the protection and conservation of biodiversity, including native vegetation retention and provision of habitats for native plants and animals and control of pest plants and animals.

Strategies

- assist the protection of conservation values of national parks and conservation reserves.
- assist the conservation of the habitats of threatened and endangered species and communities as identified under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, including communities under-represented in conservation reserves such as native grasslands, grassy woodlands and wetlands
- address potentially threatening processes identified under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
- assist re-establishment of links between isolated habitat remnants
- ensure that any changes in land use or development would not adversely affect the habitat values of wetlands and wetland wildlife habitats designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention) or utilised by species designated under the Japan-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (JAMBA) or the China-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (CAMBA)
- consider the potential impacts of land use and development on the spread of plant and animal pests from areas of known infestation into natural ecosystems
- ensure that the siting of new buildings and works minimises the removal or fragmentation of native vegetation
- encourage the use of property vegetation plans or works programs
- consider the need to protect waterways and soil from degradation that may result from the loss of native vegetation and the use of voluntary conservation agreements.

13 Environmental risks

13.03-2 Erosion and landslip

Objective

To protect areas prone to erosion, landslip or other land degradation processes.

Strategies

- identify areas subject to erosion or instability in planning schemes and when considering the use and development of land
- prevent inappropriate development in unstable areas or areas prone to erosion
- promote vegetation retention, planting and rehabilitation in areas prone to erosion and land instability.

13.05 Wildfire

13.05-1 Wildfire risk

Objective

To assist the minimisation of risk to life, property, the natural environment and community infrastructure from wildfire.

Strategies

- identify wildfire risk environments in planning schemes in consultation with relevant fire authorities
- consider fire hazards in wildfire risk environments to avoid intensifying the risk of wildfire through inappropriately located or designed uses or developments
- seek the advice of the relevant fire authority if compliance with the policy guidelines is not likely or additional measures are believed necessary.

3.2 Local Planning Policy Framework

21.02 Key influences

21.02-3 Environment and Land Management

Protection of remnant vegetation. The Loddon Shire comprises parts of the Goldfields, Murray Fans and Victorian Riverine Plains bioregions. There are 34 Ecological Vegetation Classes in the shire with 20 having a conservation status of endangered (less than 10% remaining) and 14 being identified as vulnerable (10-30% remaining). The protection of remnant native vegetation is of vital importance in the shire as it contributes to the State's biodiversity, stabilises soil, controls erosion, controls water table recharge and, subsequently, salinity and provides habitat for native fauna. There are fewer large tracts of Crown land in the north of the shire to provide for the preservation of native vegetation. Road reserves support some of the most significant communities of remnant vegetation in the north, as this land has been isolated from the surrounding farming activity. Of particular

importance in the north of the shire is the Terrick Terrick National Park, which contains a forest of Murray Pines, grasslands and the nationally endangered ecological community, Buloke Woodlands.

Box Ironbark Forests. Box Ironbark forests and grassy woodlands of the south of the shire are recognised as endangered, vulnerable and depleted ecological communities with 75% of these communities having being cleared. The Box Ironbark forests within the area are recognised as significant sources of durable timbers, honey, eucalyptus oils and gold and other minerals, as well as for their important habitat and soil and water conservation values. Increasing pressure is being placed on the Government to protect this asset from competing uses such as tourism, mining, timber harvesting and eucalyptus oil production.

Native Grasslands. Native grasslands were once widespread across the riverine plains of the north of the shire, but now are restricted to a handful of isolated remnants on private and public land, such as roadside and railway lines. The greatest concentration of significant grasslands is found around Mitiamo. These Northern Plains Grasslands are listed as a state threatened ecological community as well as being considered to be of national significance, as so little of this vegetation community remains Australia wide. The ongoing survival of these grasslands could be prejudiced by overgrazing, land development and changes to land management practices, such as the introduction of cropping.

Rare and threatened flora and fauna. The shire contains a number of species of flora and fauna that are considered rare and threatened. The protection of such species is fundamental to the preservation of the state's biodiversity. The survival of flora and fauna is dependent on habitat provision, preservation of native vegetation and the general health of the natural environment.

There are 72 threatened fauna species in the shire. Of these, nine are nationally listed and 41 are state listed. Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot have a national conservation status of "Endangered" and there are seven species with a nationally "Vulnerable" conservation status including Greater Long-eared Bat, Malleefowl, Plains-wanderer, Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, Striped Legless Lizard, Growling Grass Frog and Murray Hardyhead.

There are 120 threatened flora species in the shire. Of these 12 are nationally listed flora species and 33 are state listed. Spiny Rice-flower has a national conservation status of "Critically Endangered", Mclvor Spider-orchid, Yellow-lip Spider-orchid, Stiff Groundsel, Turnip Copperburr and Small Scurf-pea have a nationally "endangered" conservation status, and River Swamp Wallaby-grass, Erect Peppercross, Slender Darling-pea, Red Swainson-pea, Narrow Goodenia, Ridged Water-milfoil are rated as nationally "vulnerable".

Buloke Woodlands of the Riverina and Murray-Darling Depression Bioregion are listed as "endangered" under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Public land. There are significant tracts of public land, mainly in the west and south of the shire, managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and Parks Victoria as State Forest for economic, social and nature conservation benefits, National Park (Terrick Terrick), State Park (Leaghur and Kooyoora) and Flora, Fauna, Scenic, Bushland and Historic Reserves.

Management of vegetation for fire safety. The availability of fuel is one primary requirement for wildfires. The management of fuel, particularly fine fuels, is a means by which the intensity of wildfires can be lowered and the potential for ignition of structures lowered. This is significant near dwellings. Additional protection can be achieved by structural solutions, siting and by provision of water for fire fighting and access for emergency vehicles. These latter provisions can also improve the safety from structure fires in the absence of wildfires.

21.03-2 VISION – STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Land Use Planning Vision

Council's Vision for land use and development in the Loddon Shire is:

The Loddon Shire Council will manage the Shire's built and natural resources to ensure the enhancement of its:

- *natural resource base and environmental values*
- *economy, especially agricultural production, and employment opportunities*
- *community, cultural, heritage, and recreational facilities*
- *townships and the shire generally through improved presentation and amenity*
- *to provide residents with an unrivalled high quality lifestyle and to attract new residents*

The objectives, strategies and provisions of this planning scheme have been developed in pursuit of this Vision.

21.04-3 Land management and Environment

The natural resource base of the shire is valuable as the economic foundation of the shire. Preservation and enhancement of the natural resource base of the shire is fundamental to the future of agriculture, ongoing biodiversity, maintenance of natural landscapes and the health and wellbeing of the shire's population. The environmental values of the Shire include Box Ironbark Forests, native grasslands, woodlands, wetlands and the Loddon River.

Key Strategic Issues

- enhancement of land quality, through management of salinity
- protection of water quality, in particular in the Loddon and Laanecoorie catchments
- protection of remnant vegetation, in particular native grasslands around Mitiamo and Borung, Box Ironbark forest remnants in the south of the Shire and Black Box and Red Gums on the floodplains and along waterways. Key threats to grasslands include over grazing and land development.

Strategies

- protection of habitat of threatened species, in particular Mallee that supports Malleefowl, grasslands that support Plains Wanderer, floodplains that support Grey-crowned Babbler and Bush Stone-curlew and Box Ironbark Forest that supports the Swift Parrot
- management of land use adjacent to public land, in particular Terrick Terrick National Park, Leaghur State Park and Kooyoora State Park

- management of flood waters, in particular around Marmal and across the Loddon plains

Objective

To protect and enhance the condition of the natural resource base of the Shire to provide for the environmental and economic health of the shire.

Strategies

- promote the dependence of the shire's economy on the condition of the natural resource base
- identify and protect significant remnant vegetation parcels, especially in salinity recharge and discharge areas, along waterways and in erosion prone areas
- limit soil disturbance in areas with a high risk of soil erosion
- ensure all new land use and development aims for net improvement in the condition of the natural resource base. This may involve the use of permit conditions to offset, avoid, mitigate or repair degradation of land, water and air in the Loddon Shire that may arise from the proposed use and / or development. Such conditions may include fencing of waters, strategic replanting of indigenous vegetation and control of pest plants and animals
- ensure new use and/or development does not produce polluted run off that leaves the property untreated
- seek the advice of Goulburn Murray Water, Department of Sustainability and Environment and North Central Catchment Management Authority on development proposals in the Laanecoorie Reservoir Catchment and around wetlands, lakes and waterways to ensure water quality will not be compromised
- encourage sustainable reuse of effluent (intensive animal industry and urban), storm water and irrigation runoff
- ensure mining activity is conducted in such a way that minimal vegetation is removed, runoff polluted with soil or other contaminants does not leave the site and the site is rehabilitated promptly after mining is completed
- prevent inappropriate development in flood ways
- work cooperatively with Department of Sustainability and Environment, North Central Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn Murray Water and community environment groups
- ensure that land use is matched to soil capability.

Objective

To protect significant native vegetation and habitat

Strategies

- identify and protect significant remnant vegetation parcels
- direct development to areas with no or lower vegetation values
- maintain remnant vegetation in viable sized parcels

- maintain and enhance linkages between remnant vegetation parcels
- protect wetlands.

Objective

To protect the integrity of public land parcels, in particular Terrick Terrick National Park, Leaghur State Park and Kooyoora State Park.

Strategies

- ensure private land is not used or developed in such a way that any adjoining public land values are compromised
- work with DSE to determine the appropriate zoning of private land adjoining Terrick Terrick National Park and Kooyoora State Park, in particular inlier parcels
- ensure DSE are notified of planning permit applications for land adjoining significant public land parcels, including Terrick Terrick National Park and Kooyoora State Park.

3.3 Conclusion

The State and Local Planning Policy framework provides a strong basis for protection of environmental and conservation values in Loddon Shire.

4 Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement Context

This section of the report summarises key strategic directions with regard to protection and enhancement of biodiversity values.

There are a number of legislative instruments for protection and enhancement of biodiversity values including:

- eEnvironment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation, 1999
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, 1988
- Catchment and Land Protection Act, 1994
- Planning and Environment Act, 1987
- Environment Protection Act, 1970

Strategies particularly relevant to this study are noted here.

Securing our natural future: a white paper for land and biodiversity at a time of climate change³

The White Paper sets out a strategic framework to secure the health of Victoria's land, water and biodiversity in the face of ongoing pressures and a changing climate over the next fifty years and focused on:

- building ecosystem resilience across Victoria
- managing flagship areas to maintain ecosystem services
- improving connectivity in areas identified as biolinks

The Goldfields area, which includes part of the Loddon Shire was identified as a Flagship area (Figure 4-1). The areas nominated for review as part of this study also fall within the regional-scale biolinks identified in the White Paper (Figure 4-2).

³ Securing our natural future: A white paper for land and biodiversity at a time of climate change (2010) Victorian State government

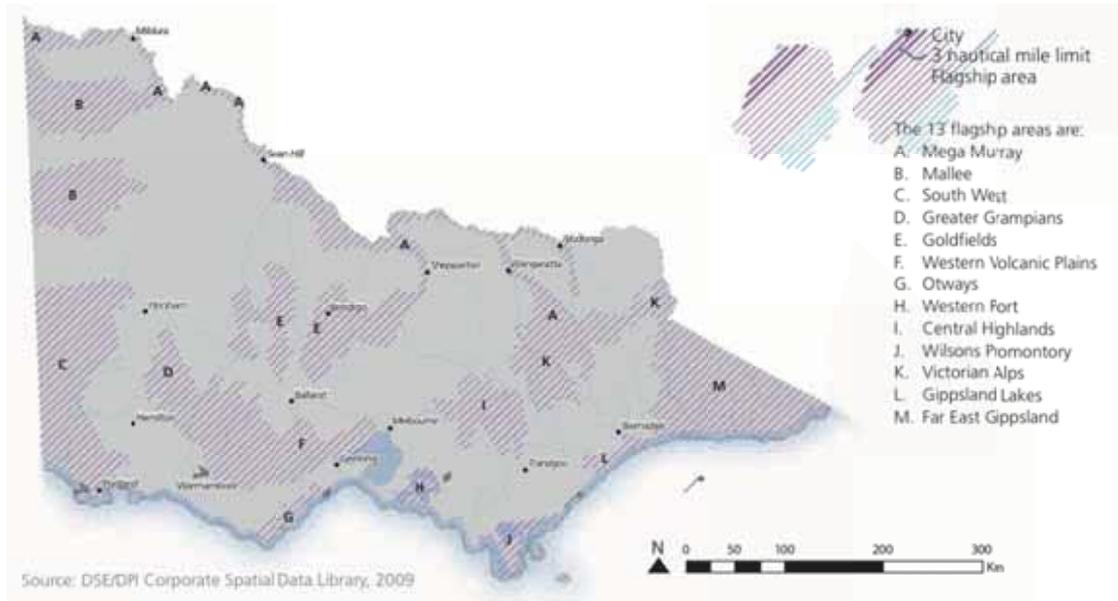


Figure 4-1 Flagship areas³

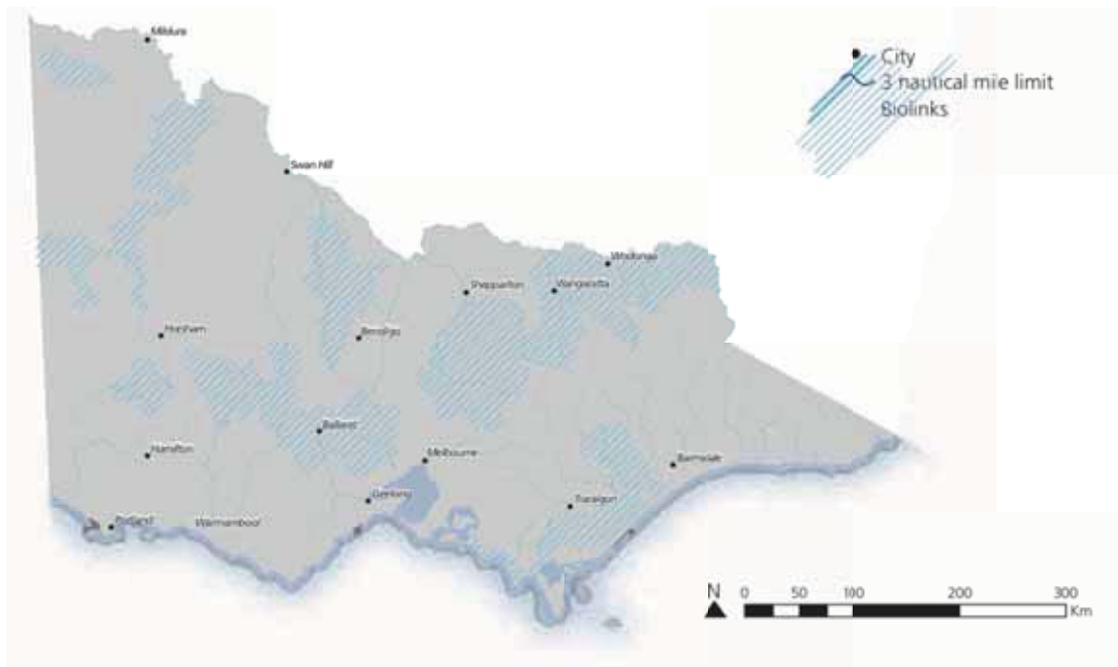


Figure 4-2 Regional biolinks⁴ Error! Bookmark not defined.

North Central Native Vegetation Strategy⁴

The aim of the North Central Native Vegetation Strategy is to protect, enhance and rebuild the native vegetation assets of the North Central region. The areas nominated in this study for review fall within the Goldfields Bioregion. The Strategy notes the following for the Goldfields Bioregion:

“The bioregion was originally covered with a mixture of drier forest and woodland types, mostly on relatively poor soils and includes the core of the Box-Ironbark ecosystem. Grassy

⁴ North Central Catchment Management Authority (2005) North Central Native Vegetation Strategy

Woodland and Box-Ironbark Forest EVCs dominated, but there were substantial areas of Heathy Dry Forest EVC and Low Rises Grassy Woodland / Alluvial Terraces Herb-rich Woodland Mosaic.

It now supports fragmented native forests and woodlands. Clearing has been extensive in the more fertile Valley and Riverine Grassy Woodlands and has fragmented and disturbed much of the remainder. The gold rush era impacted particularly on the Box-Ironbark Forests that were felled for fuel and timber for the mines.

Fragmented but considerable remnants of Box-Ironbark, Heathy Dry Forest and Grassy Dry Forest EVC occur within the bioregion. More than 50% of other EVCs have been cleared for agriculture. Moderate proportions of Mallee and Dry Foothill Forest BVTs remain, mostly on public land outside conservation reserves.”

The Strategy outlines a number of mechanisms for protection and enhancement of native vegetation. The following are relevant to this study:

- buffering surrounding incompatible land uses with revegetation
- identify high value remnants
- improve environmental management performance of adjoining land
- sustainable, conservation-compatible, economic use of assets
- planning scheme powers.

The Plan also highlights the role of local government in resource management and regional planning including the following relevant to this study:

- determination of land use and regulation of land use activities
- providing mechanisms in the planning scheme to protect biodiversity
- having areas of conservation significance mapped for the planning scheme to ensure their protection.

4.1 Conclusion

The areas nominated for review are significant in terms of the opportunity to contribute to the objectives of the White Paper – particularly the Goldfields Flagship area and regional biolinks. The approach being taken by Loddon Shire is consistent with objectives and recommendations of the North Central Native Vegetation Strategy.

5 Assessment of investigation areas

To assist with identification of the sites for assessment the investigation areas have been given locality names. In some instances, due to their scale, the investigation areas have been divided further. The following maps show the location of the each of the investigation areas.



Figure 5-1 Wedderburn, Nine Mile and Mt Korong investigation areas



Figure 5-2 Fentons Cree and Wehla investigation areas



Figure 5-3 Brenanah, Kingower, Rheola Investigation areas

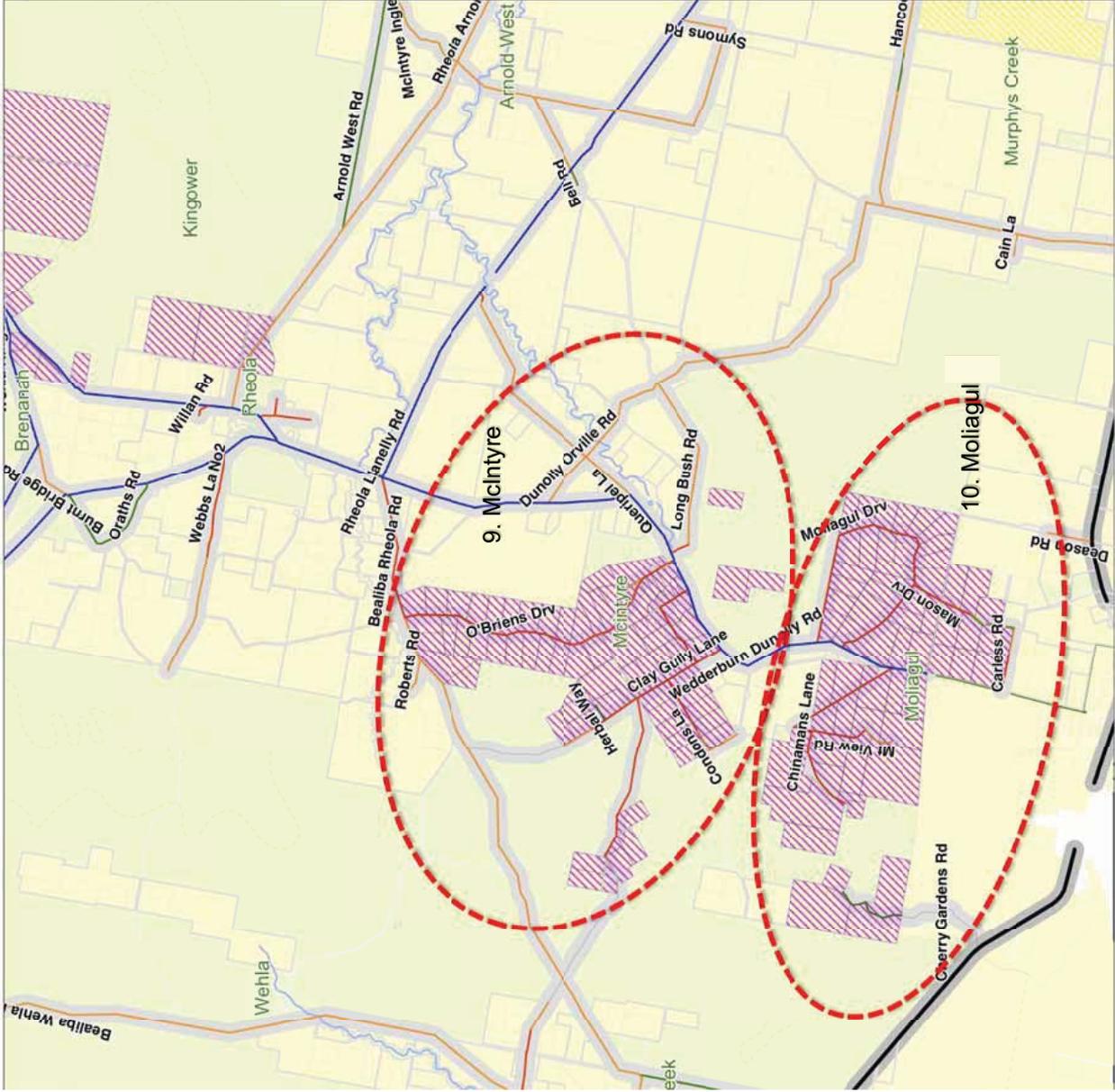


Figure 5-4 McIntyre and Moliagul investigation areas

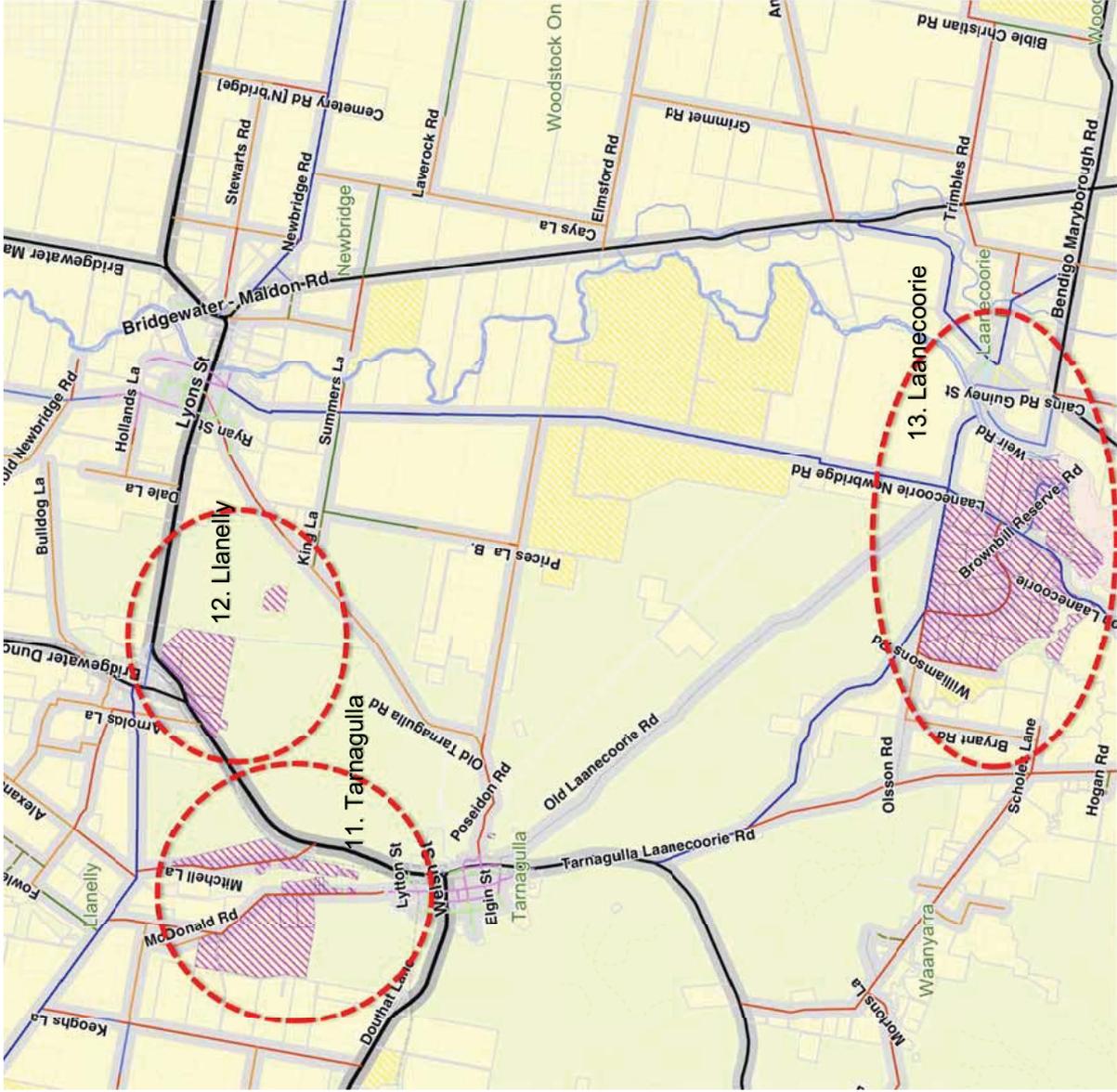


Figure 5-5 Tarnagulla, Lianelly and Laanecoorie investigation areas

5.1 Wedderburn

The areas for investigation around Wedderburn (Figure 5-7) are interspersed between a number of blocks that comprise the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve (Figure 5-8). The areas are all in close proximity to Wedderburn township.



Figure 5-7 Wedderburn investigation areas



Figure 5-8 Wedderburn investigation areas

Biodiversity status and condition

There is a mix of Ecological Vegetation Classes in the Wedderburn investigation area (Table 5-1).

Table 5-1 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Box Ironbark	Depleted
Mallee	Least concern
Grassy Woodland	Vulnerable

Native vegetation provides habitat for a number of threatened species and the endangered Malleefowl for which a Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement has been prepared (Table 5-2). The population of the Malleefowl in the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve area is isolated from others in the state.

Table 5-2 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis</i>	Black-chinned honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Pseudophryne bibronii</i>	Bibron's toadlet	Threatened	
<i>Ramphotyphlops proximus</i>	Blind snake	Threatened	
<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown tree creeper	Threatened	
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond firetail	Threatened	
<i>Sminthopsis crassicaudata</i>	Fat tailed dunnart	Threatened	
<i>Varanus varius</i>	Lace monitor	Threatened	
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i>	Malleefowl	Endangered	FFG Action Statement

5.1.1 Skinners Flat - west

Description

The area at Skinners Flat west covers around 65 hectares and includes the Skinners Flat Reservoir (Figure 5-9, Figure 5-10). The reservoir is part of the water supply for the township of Wedderburn and is also used for recreational boating and fishing. There are picnic facilities and a boat ramp. There are a number of established dwellings on the northern lots. These dwellings do not have mains power but do have telephone connection. The land is generally vegetated though there has been some clearing of undergrowth. The dominant EVC is Grassy Woodland.

⁵ Biodiversity Interactive Map 3.1 (<http://mapshare2.dse.vic.gov.au/MapShare2EXT/imf.jsp?site=bim>) Sourced June 2011



Figure 5-9 Skidders Flat west investigation area⁶



Figure 5-10 Aerial view Skidders Flat west investigation area⁷

⁶ <http://services.land.vic.gov.au/maps>

⁷ Google Earth, accessed June 2011

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Floodway Overlay
- Wildfire Management Overlay

Findings

The land on which the reservoir is located is inappropriately zoned Farming.

The remaining three lots are vegetated and there is a dwelling present on each.

The land provides a buffer to the Nature Conservation Reserve and connectivity between the Reserve and the reservoir.

Recommendations

That the land on which the reservoir is located is rezoned to a more appropriate zone e.g. Public Use or Public Park and Recreation.

That the remaining three lots remain in the Farming Zone as the scale of the area does not warrant a rezoning and no further development is possible.

5.1.2 Skinners Flat - north

The area at Skinners Flat north covers an area of around 420 hectares (Figure 5-11, Figure 5-11). The area has been cleared in the past. Vegetation has regenerated on most land. A few cleared lots are being grazed. Most lots in the area have a dwelling and land use is primarily rural lifestyle.

The dominant EVC is Mallee. The vegetation quality ranges from good to poor. There is potential for the vegetation of poor quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. This will provide increased buffer to the Nature Conservation Reserve from adjoining land uses.

Signs on property gates indicate that many landholders are participating in a project supported by the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network and Caring for Country aimed at restoring and extending the habitat of the Malleefowl. Some properties have Trust for Nature covenants in place.

The land in the investigation area provides an important connection between two blocks of the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve and the opportunity to increase the habitat and range of the Malleefowl.



Figure 5-11 Skimmers Flat north⁶

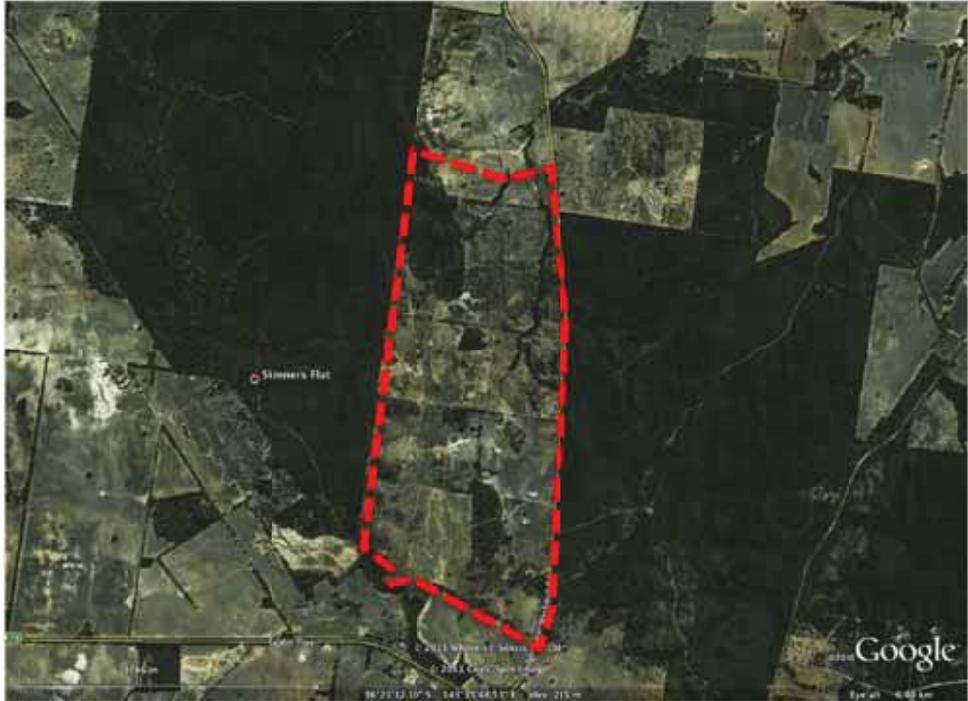


Figure 5-12 Aerial view Skimmers Flat north investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Salinity Management Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (significant remnant vegetation)
- Wildfire Management Overlay

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, which is important habitat for the endangered Malleefowl. Landowners in the area are working to restore native vegetation to improve connectivity between isolated blocks of the Reserve as well as extend the area of Malleefowl habitat. The land is being used mainly for rural residential purposes.

Recommendation

That the land within the Skinners Flat north be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.1.3 Ainsworth Road

The Ainsworth Road investigation area is around 200 hectares (Figure 5-13, Figure 5-14) and abuts the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve and the northern end of the Skinners Flat north investigation area. Parts of the area have been cleared and vegetation has since regenerated on this land. There has been little development in the area.

The vegetation quality ranges from good to poor. There is potential for the vegetation of poor quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. This will provide increased buffer to the Nature Conservation Reserve from adjoining land uses.

The land in the investigation area provides an important connection between two blocks of the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve and the opportunity to increase the habitat and range of the Malleefowl.



Figure 5-13 Ainsworth Road investigation area⁶



Figure 5-14 Aerial view of Ainsworth Road investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Vegetation Protection Overlay (significant remnant vegetation)

- Wildfire Management Overlay

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, which is important habitat for the endangered Malleefowl. There is an opportunity to extend the habitat and range of the Malleefowl by improving the vegetation cover and quality in the area. There has been little development in the area.

Recommendation

That the land within the Ainsworth Road be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.1.4 Woolshed Flat

Description

The Woolshed Flat investigation area covers 300 hectares and abuts the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve (Figure 5-15). Parts of the area have been cleared and vegetation has since regenerated on this land (Figure 5-16). There has been little development in the area.

The vegetation quality ranges from good to poor. There is potential for the vegetation of poor quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes.

The land in the investigation area provides an opportunity to increase the habitat and range of the Malleefowl and provide a buffer to the Nature Conservation Reserve from adjoining land uses.



Figure 5-15 Woolshed Flat investigation area⁶



Figure 5-16 Aerial view of the Woolshed Flat investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming and the Wildfire Management Overlay applies to the land.

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, which is important habitat for the endangered Malleefowl. The area has potential to provide a buffer to the Nature Conservation Reserve from adjoining land uses, increase the area of habitat of the Malleefowl and improve connectivity between the separate blocks of the Nature Conservation Reserve.

Recommendation

That the land within the Woolshed Flat investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.1.5 Gregson Road / Clifden Lane

The Gregson Road / Clifden Land area covers 170 hectares (Figure 5-17). Much of the land has been cleared and some is still used for grazing, as hobby farming (Figure 5-18). Vegetation regeneration is occurring on some parts of the land. The area is generally being used for rural lifestyle / hobby farming. The area abuts the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, Skinners Flat north and Wallaby Way investigation areas.

The vegetation quality in the investigation area is generally poor. There is potential for vegetation to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes.

There area is in close proximity to the Wedderburn township and there are a number of dwellings in the area. The land is being used primarily for rural residential purposes.

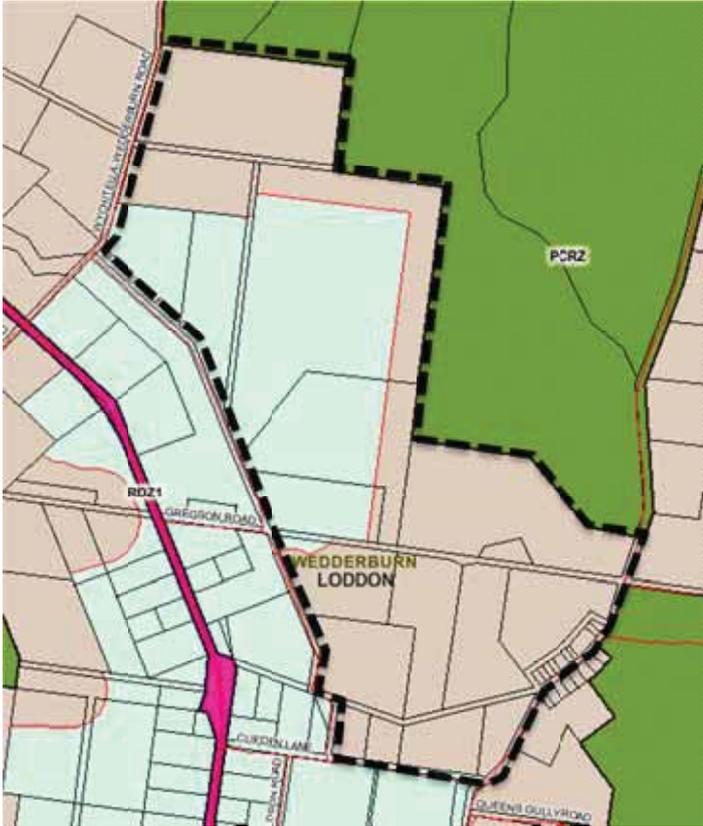


Figure 5-17 Gregson Road / Clifden Lane investigation area⁶.

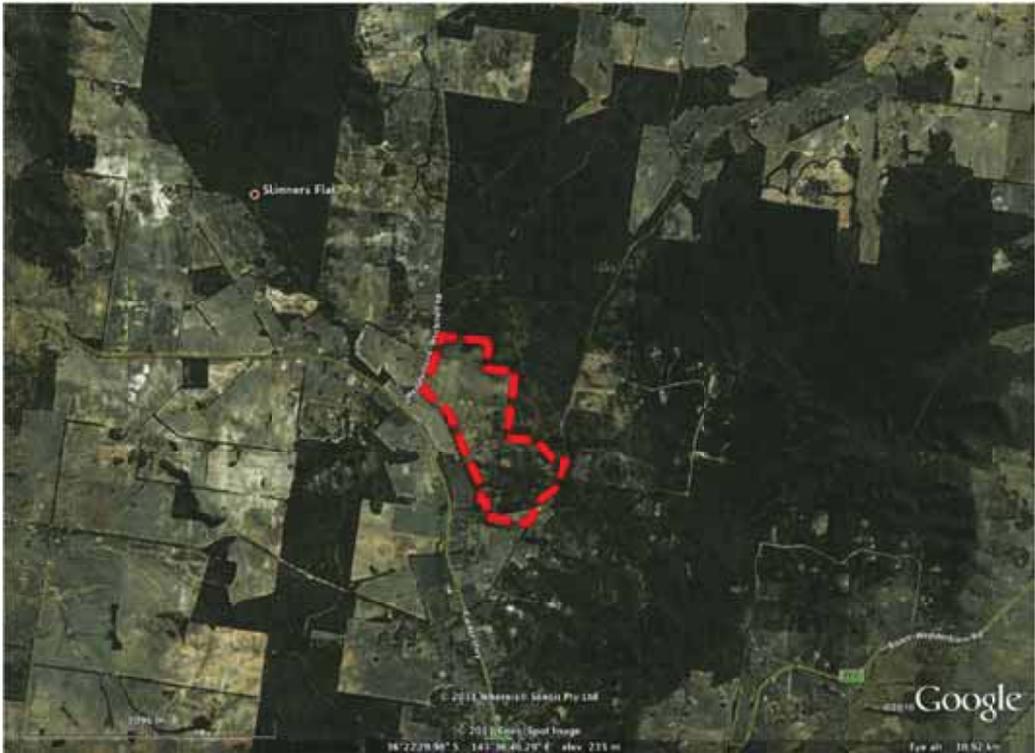


Figure 5-18 Aerial view of the Gregson Road / Clifden Lane investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position⁷

The land is currently zoned Farming and the Wildfire Management Overlay applies to the land.

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, which is important habitat for the endangered Malleefowl. The area has potential to provide a buffer to the Nature Conservation Reserve from adjoining land uses, increase the area of Malleefowl habitat and improve connectivity between the separate blocks of the Nature Conservation Reserve.

Recommendation

That the land within the Gregson Road / Clifden Lane be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.1.6 Wallaby Way

The Wallaby Way investigation area covers around 330 hectares (Figure 5-19). The area is surrounded by the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve and connects in the south west corner to the Gregson Road / Clifden Land investigation area (Figure 5-20).

There has been little development in the area. The area has telephone but no power supply. The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The area has important biodiversity values in providing connection between the separated blocks of the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve.



Figure 5-19 Wallaby Way investigation area⁶

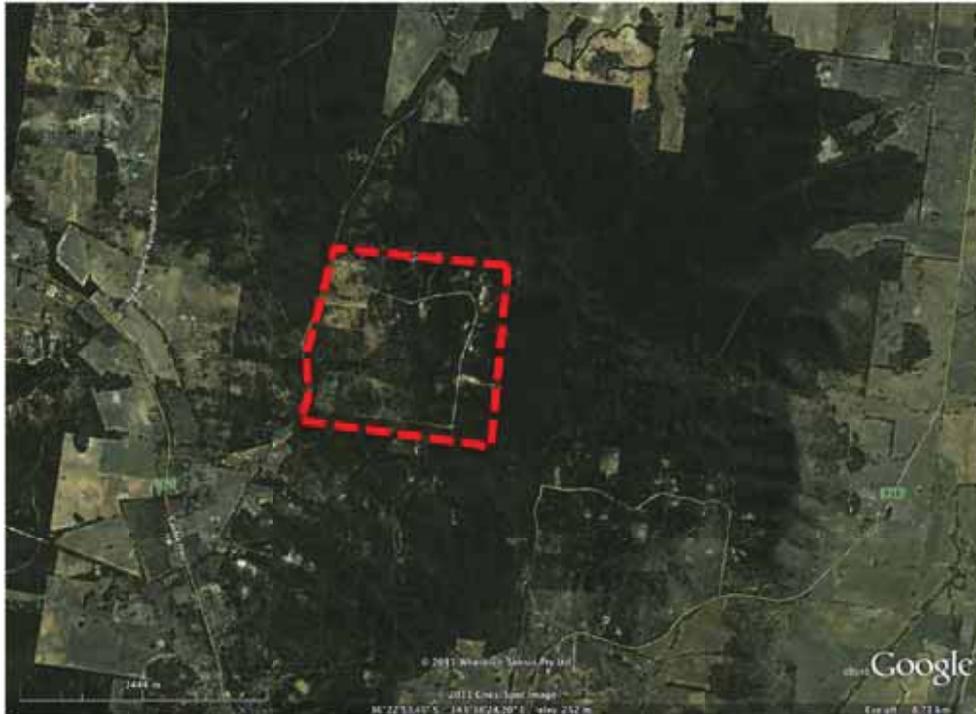


Figure 5-20 Aerial view Wallaby Way investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming and the Wildfire Management Overlay applies to the land.

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, which is important habitat for the endangered Malleefowl. The area has potential to provide a buffer to the Nature Conservation Reserve from adjoining land uses, increase the area of Malleefowl habitat and improve connectivity between the separate blocks of the Nature Conservation Reserve.

Recommendation

That the land within the Wallaby Way be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.1.7 Josephine Drive

The Josephine Drive investigation area covers 530 hectares (Figure 5-21). The area abuts the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve along two sides (Figure 5-22). There has been little development in the area. The area has telephone and an all weather road but no power supply.

The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes.



Figure 5-21 Josephine Drive investigation area



Figure 5-22 Aerial view of the Josephine Drive investigation area

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Wildfire Management Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental Significance)
- Salinity Management Overlay

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, which is important habitat for the endangered Malleefowl. The area has potential to provide a buffer to the Nature Conservation Reserve and increase the area of habitat of the Malleefowl.

Recommendation

That the land within the Josephine Drive be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.2 Nine Mile

The Nine Mile investigation area covers 235 hectares (Figure 5-23) and is around 6km from Wedderburn. The land is heavily vegetated (Figure 5-24). The land abuts outlying blocks of the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve. There is no township at Nine Mile and most lots have a dwelling.



Figure 5-23 Nine Mile investigation area⁶



Figure 5-24 Aerial photo, Nine Mile investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Wildfire Management Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental Significance)
- Salinity Management Overlay

Biodiversity status and condition

There is a mix of Ecological Vegetation Classes in the area (Table 5-3). The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The area has important biodiversity values in providing connection between the separated blocks of the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve.

Table 5-3 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Box Ironbark	Depleted
Damp sands herb rich woodland	Least concern
Grassy woodland	Vulnerable

Native vegetation mainly associated with the Nature Conservation Reserve provides habitat for a number of threatened species and the endangered Swift Parrot for which a Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement has been prepared (Table 5-4).

Table 5-4 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown Treecreeper	Threatened	
<i>Melanodryas cucullata cucullata</i>	Hooded Robin	Threatened	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Endangered	FFG Action Statement

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, which is important habitat for the endangered Swift Parrot. The area has potential to provide a buffer to the Nature Conservation Reserve from adjoining land uses and increase the area of habitat of the Swift Parrot and other threatened species

Recommendation

That the land within the Nine Mile be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.3 Mt Korong

The Mt Korong investigation area surrounds the Mt Korong Nature Conservation Reserve and covers an area of 1,285 hectares. The investigation area connects Mt Korong and the smaller Little Mount to the north. Some parts of the area have been cleared in the past but are now revegetated.

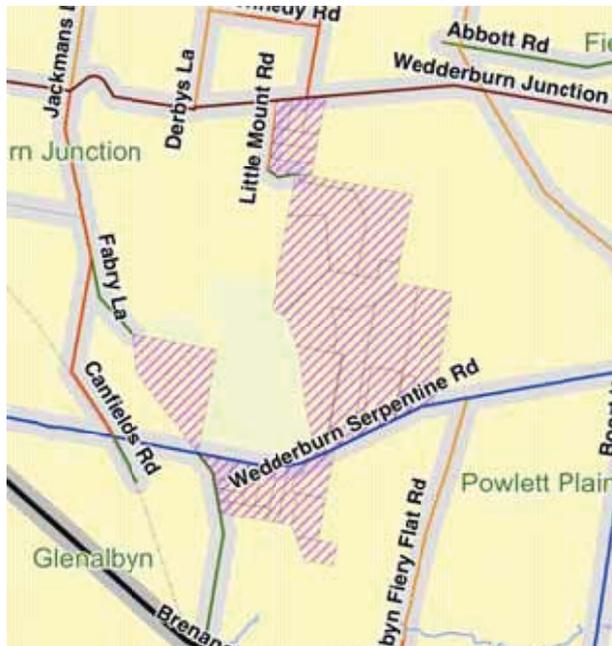


Figure 5-25 Mt Korong investigation area



Figure 5-26 Aerial view of Mt Korong investigation area⁷

Current planning policy

The land is currently zoned Farming. The following overlays have been applied to the area:

- Salinity Management Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental significance)
- Wildfire Management Overlay

Biodiversity status and condition

There is a mix of Ecological Vegetation Classes in the area (Table 5-5). The dominant EVC is Hills Herb-rich Woodland. The vegetation quality in the investigation area is poor to very good. There is opportunity to buffer the vegetation within the reserve from adjoining land uses and increase the extent of the EVC over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The threatened Turquoise Parrot has been recorded in the area.

Table 5-5 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Hills Herb-rich woodland	Depleted
Grassy woodland	Vulnerable

Table 5-6 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Neophema pulchella</i>	Turquoise Parrot	Threatened	

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Mt Korong Nature Conservation Reserve, which is habitat for the threatened Turquoise Parrot. A significant proportion of the area is protected by Trust for Nature covenants. Work in accordance with the covenant is attempting to increase connectivity and the area of habitat. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further regeneration and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened and endangered fauna recorded in the vicinity

Recommendations

That the land within the Mount Korong area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.



Figure 5-28 Aerial photo of Fentons Creek investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Wildfire Management Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental Significance)
- Salinity Management Overlay

Biodiversity status and condition

The dominant EVC in the in the area is the vulnerable Grassy Woodland (Table 5-7). The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes.

Table 5-7 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Grassy woodland	Vulnerable

Native vegetation mainly associated with the State Park provides habitat for a number of threatened species and the endangered Swift Parrot for which a Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement has been prepared (Table 5-8).

Table 5-8 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Oreoica gutturalis gutturalis</i>	Southern Crested Bellbird	Near threatened	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Endangered	FFG Action Statement

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Kooyora State Park, which is important habitat for the endangered Swift Parrot. The area has potential to increase connectivity and the area of habitat. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further regeneration and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened and endangered fauna recorded in the vicinity.

Recommendation

That the land within the Fentons Creek be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.5 Wehla

There are two areas identified around Wehla for review (Figure 5-29). These areas are adjacent to the Kooyoora State Park and the Wehla Nature Conservation Reserve (Figure 5-30).



Figure 5-29 Wehla investigation area

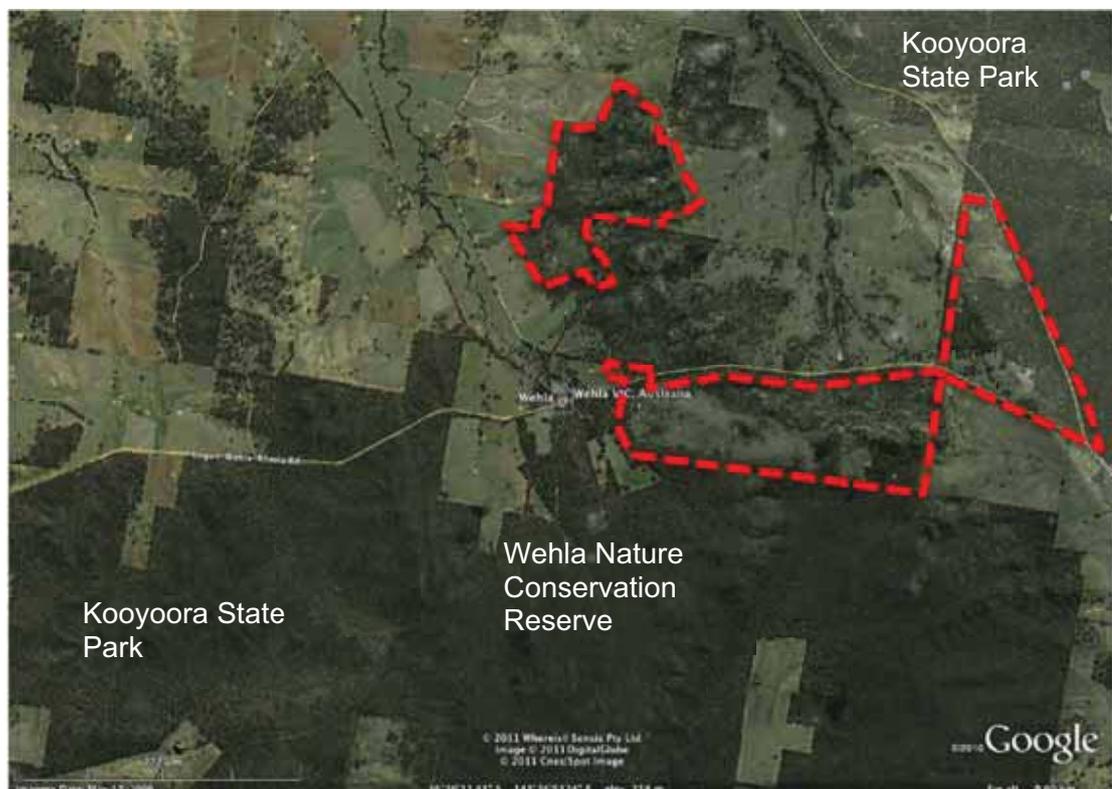


Figure 5-30 Aerial photo Wehla investigation area⁷

Biodiversity status and condition

The dominant EVC in the in the area is the vulnerable Grassy Woodland (Table 5-9). The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes.

Table 5-9 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Grassy woodland	Vulnerable

Native vegetation mainly associated with the Nature Conservation Reserve and State Park provides habitat for a number of threatened species and the endangered Swift Parrot for which a Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement has been prepared (Table 5-10).

Table 5-10 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown Treecreeper	Threatened	
<i>Melanodryas cucullata cucullata</i>	Hooded Robin	Threatened	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Endangered	FFG Action Statement
<i>Chthonicola sagittata</i>	Speckled Warbler	Vulnerable	
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail	Vulnerable	
<i>Grantiella picta</i>	Painted Honeyeater	Vulnerable	

5.5.1 Logan Wehla Rheola Road

Description

The area on the Logan Wehla Rheola Road covers an area of around 450 hectares (Figure 5-31, Figure 5-32). The land has been cleared in the past and now is substantially revegetated through regeneration. The land is mainly used for rural lifestyle with some livestock grazing. Granitic outcrops are dispersed across the area.

The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The area provides a link between separate blocks of public land and will increase connectivity between the Kooyoora State Park and the Wehla Nature Conservation Reserve as well as buffering these areas from adjoining land uses.

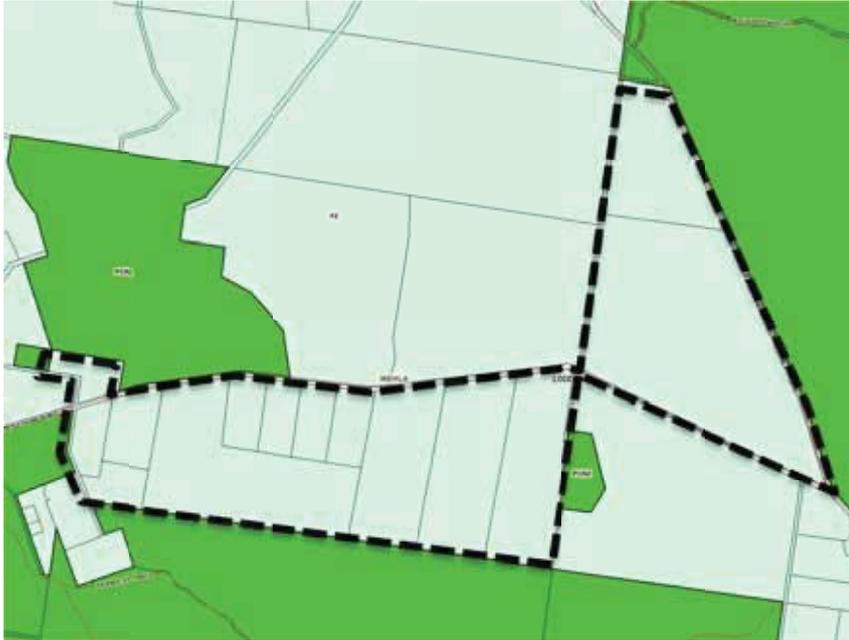


Figure 5-31 Logan Wehla Rheola Road investigation area



Figure 5-32 Aerial view of the Logan Wehla Rheola investigation area

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Wildfire Management Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental Significance)
- Salinity Management Overlay

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Kooyora State Park and Wehla Nature Conservation Reserve, which is important habitat for the endangered Swift Parrot. The area has potential to increase connectivity and the area of habitat. The land is being used for rural lifestyle.

Recommendation

That the land within the Logan Wehla Reola Road investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.5.2 Birthisel Road

Description

The Birthisel Road investigation area covers around 170ha (Figure 5-33, Figure 5-34). The land has been partially cleared in the past but is now mostly vegetated. There are granitic outcrops dispersed across the area.

The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The area provides a link between separate blocks of public land and will increase connectivity between the Kooyoora State Park and the Wehla Nature Conservation Reserve as well as buffering these areas from adjoining land uses.



Figure 5-33 Birthisel Road investigation area⁶



Figure 5-34 Aerial view Birthisel Road investigation area

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Wildfire Management Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental Significance)
- Salinity Management Overlay

Findings

The area is adjacent to the Kooyora State Park and Wheal Nature Conservation Reserve, which is important habitat for the endangered Swift Parrot. The area has potential to increase connectivity and the area of habitat.

Recommendation

That the land within the Birthisel Road investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.6 Brenanah

Description

The Brenanah investigation area covers around 1000ha in total (Figure 5-35). The area is predominantly vegetated and is adjacent to the Kooyora State Park (Figure 5-36). The area is remote, has poor road infrastructure and very few dwellings have been established in the area.



Figure 5-35 Brenanah investigation area⁶



Figure 5-36 Aerial view of the Brenanah investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Wildfire Management Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental Significance)
- Salinity Management Overlay

Biodiversity status and condition

The Ecological Vegetation Classes is predominantly Grassy Woodland (Table 5-11). The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The area has important biodiversity values in providing buffer and connections between the separate blocks of the Kooyoora State Park.

Table 5-11 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Grassy woodland	Vulnerable
Hill crest Herb-rich woodland	Depleted

Native vegetation mainly associated with the Nature Conservation Reserve provides habitat for a number of threatened species including the Brown Treecreeper (Table 5-12).

Table 5-12 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown Treecreeper	Threatened	

Findings

The area has potential to increase connectivity between the separate blocks of the Kooyoora State Park and buffer against adjoining land uses.

Recommendation

That the land within the Brenanah investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.7 Kingower

There are four areas identified for investigation around Kingower (Figure 5-37) Vegetation has been cleared from the area in the past but is now substantially revegetated (Figure 5-38).



Figure 5-37 Kingower investigation area⁶

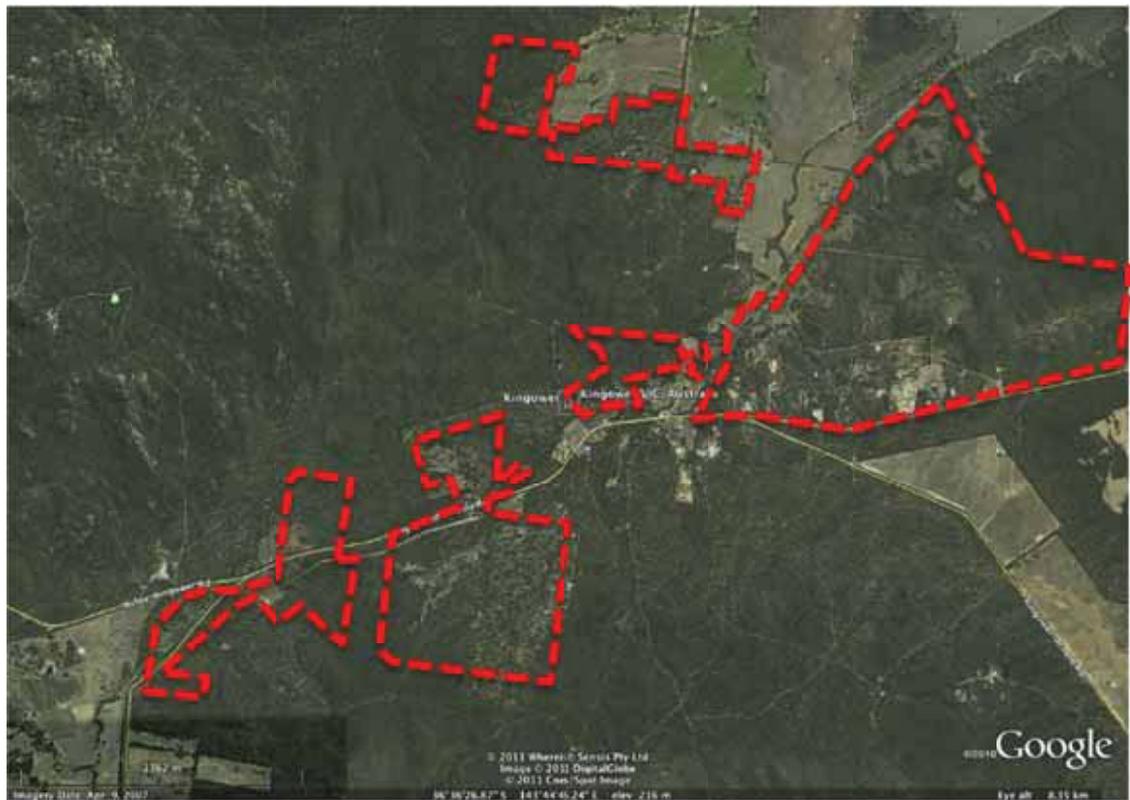


Figure 5-38 Aerial view of the Kingower investigation area⁷

The vegetation in the area is a mix of EVCs including Grassy Woodland and Box Ironbark.

Table 5-13 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Grassy Woodland	Vulnerable
Box Ironbark	Depleted

The native vegetation in the area provides habitat for a number of threatened species and the endangered Swift Parrot (Table 5-14).

Table 5-14 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown Treecreeper	Threatened	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Endangered	FFG Action Statement
<i>Chthonicola sagittata</i>	Speckled Warbler	Vulnerable	
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail	Vulnerable	
<i>Grantiella picta</i>	Painted Honeyeater	Vulnerable	
<i>Varanus varius</i>	Lace monitor	Threatened	
<i>Oreoica guttaralis guttaralis</i>	Southern Crested Bellbird	Near threatened	

5.7.1 Nyanahgul Road

Description

The Nyanahgul Road investigation area in Kingower covers around 560 hectares (Figure 5-39). Parts of the area have been cleared in the past and native vegetation has regenerated on this land (Figure 5-40). The area is adjacent to the Kooyoora State Park and the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest. There are a number of dwellings established in the area which is immediately adjacent to the Kingower township. There are also a few hobby farms with modest grazing enterprises. The area is generally used for lifestyle purposes.

The vegetation is generally of good quality. There is potential for the vegetation to further improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. There are a number of dwellings on the area, which is close proximity to the Kingower township.



Figure 5-39 Nyanaghul Road investigation area⁶



Figure 5-40 Aerial view of the Nyanaghul investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Wildfire Management Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental Significance)
- Salinity Management Overlay

Findings

The area is predominantly vegetated with good quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further regeneration and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened and endangered fauna recorded in the vicinity.

The area is being used primarily for rural lifestyle purposes and is in close proximity to the Kingower township.

Recommendation

That the land within the Nyanaghul Road area be rezoned to Rural Activity Zone to recognise the mix of uses:

- lifestyle
- hobby farming
- environmental values.

A schedule to the zone should ensure that there is no further subdivision of land within the area.

A local policy is prepared to provide further guidance on decision making ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.7.2 Kingower Brenanah Road

Description

The Kingower Brenanah Road investigation area in Kingower covers around 55 hectares (Figure 5-41). The area has a mix of established vegetation and native vegetation that has regenerated on land that was cleared (Figure 5-42). The area is adjacent to the Kooyoora State Park and the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest and intersected by a number of ephemeral watercourses. There are few dwellings established in the area, which is immediately adjacent to the Kingower township. The area is generally used for lifestyle purposes.

The vegetation is generally of good quality. There is potential for the vegetation to further improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. There are a number of dwellings in the area which is close proximity to the Kingower township.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Wildfire Management Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental Significance)
- Salinity Management Overlay

Findings

The area is predominantly vegetated with good quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further regeneration and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened and endangered fauna recorded in the vicinity.

The area is being used primarily for rural lifestyle purposes and is in close proximity to the Kingower township.

Recommendation

That the land within the Kingower Brenanah Road area be rezoned to Rural Activity Zone to recognise the mix of uses:

- lifestyle
- hobby farming
- environmental values.

A schedule to the zone should ensure that there is no further subdivision of land within the area.

A local policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.7.3 Halls Road

Description

The Halls Road investigation area covers around 140 hectares (Figure 5-43). The area has been cleared and much of the area is now revegetated (Figure 5-44). There is some evidence of mining activities with mullock heaps and mining shafts. There are very few dwellings and the area has poor road access. The area is relatively remote from the township of Kingower.

The vegetation is generally of good quality. There is potential for the vegetation to further improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The area is adjacent to the Kooyoora State Park and provides an opportunity to provide a buffer to the park and extend habitat of a number of threatened and endangered species that have been recorded within or in the vicinity of the investigation area.



Figure 5-43 Halls Road investigation area⁶



Figure 5-44 Aerial view Halls Road investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Wildfire Management Overlay
- Salinity Management Overlay

Findings

The area is predominantly vegetated with good quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further regeneration and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened and endangered fauna recorded in the vicinity.

Recommendation

That the land within the Halls Road investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.7.4 Wehla Kingower Road

Description

The Wehla – Kingower Road investigation road area is surrounded by the Kooyoora State Park (Figure 5-45). The area has been cleared in the past and much of the area is now revegetated (Figure 5-46). The quality of the vegetation ranges from poor to medium. There is opportunity for the quality to improve over time as the revegetation and recruitment continues and the area is managed for biodiversity outcomes.

The vegetation is generally of poor to medium quality. There is potential for the vegetation to further improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. There are a number of dwellings in the area which is around three kilometres from the Kingower township.



Figure 5-45 Wehla Kingower Road investigation area⁶



Figure 5-46 Aerial view Wehla Kingower Road investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming and the Wildfire Management Overlay applies to the land.

Findings

The area is predominantly vegetated with poor to medium quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further regeneration and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened and endangered fauna recorded in the vicinity.

Recommendation

That the land within the Wehla Kingower Road investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.8 Rheola

Description

The Rheola investigation area covers around 110 hectares (Figure 5-47) and is adjacent to the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest. The area is predominantly vegetated (Figure 5-48).



Figure 5-47 Rheola investigation area⁶



Figure 5-48 Aerial view Rheola investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming.

The following overlays apply to the land:

- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental significance)
- Wildfire Management Overlay

Biodiversity status and condition

The EVC in the area is predominantly Grassy woodland (Table 5-15). Part of the area has been cleared in the past but is now revegetated. The vegetation quality is medium. There is one dwelling in the area and no road access to other blocks.

Table 5-15 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Grassy Woodland	Vulnerable

The native vegetation provides habitat for a number of threatened species and the endangered Swift Parrot (Table 5-16).

Table 5-16 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown Treecreeper	Threatened	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Endangered	FFG Action Statement
<i>Chthonicola sagittata</i>	Speckled Warbler	Vulnerable	
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail	Vulnerable	
<i>Grantiella picta</i>	Painted Honeyeater	Vulnerable	
<i>Varanus varius</i>	Lace monitor	Threatened	
<i>Oreoica guttaralis guttaralis</i>	Southern Crested Bellbird	Near threatened	
<i>Anthochaera phrygia</i>	Regent Honeyeater	Critically endangered	FFG Action Statement

Findings

The area is predominantly vegetated with medium quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further regeneration and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened and endangered fauna recorded in the vicinity.

Recommendation

That the land within the Rheola investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.9 McIntyre

Description

The areas for investigation around McIntyre (Figure 5-49) are adjacent to the Kooyoora State Park and the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest (Figure 5-50).

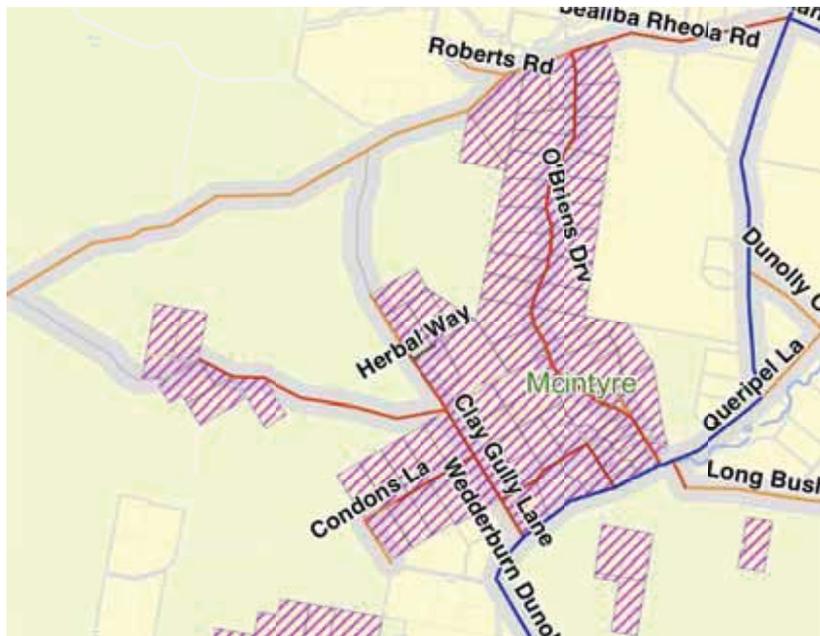


Figure 5-49 McIntyre investigation area



Figure 5-50 Aerial view of McIntyre investigation area⁷

Biodiversity condition and status

There is a mix of Ecological Vegetation Classes in the area (Table 5-17). The vegetation quality in the investigation area is medium to good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The area has important biodiversity values in providing connection between the separated blocks of the Kooyora State Park and Dunolly Inglewood State Forest.

Table 5-17 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Hill crest herb rich Woodland	Depleted
Grassy dry forest / Rocky outcrop Shrubland / Rocky Outcrop Herbland Mosaic	Depleted
Grassy woodland	Vulnerable
Box Ironbark	Depleted

Native vegetation provides habitat for a number of threatened species and the endangered Swift Parrot for which a Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement has been prepared (Table 5-18).

Table 5-18 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown Treecreeper	Threatened	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Endangered	FFG Action Statement
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail	Vulnerable	
<i>Oreoica guttaralis guttaralis</i>	Southern Crested Bellbird	Near threatened	

5.9.1 McIntyre township

Description

The McIntyre township investigation area covers an area of 560 hectares (Figure 5-51, Figure 5-52). The area is generally cleared with patches of remnant vegetation and regrowth. The land west of Clay Gully Road is being used primarily for commercial agriculture. The land east of Clay Gully Road and along O'Briens Land is used primarily for rural lifestyle and hobby farming. There is no power and the area is serviced by a gravel road.

There are also two blocks surrounded by public land. These are generally cleared and being used for rural lifestyle.



Figure 5-51 McIntyre township investigation area⁶



Figure 5-52 Aerial view of the McIntyre township investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land in the area is zoned Farming and the following overlays apply to the area:

- Salinity Management Overlay

- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental significance)
- Wildfire Management Overlay

Findings

The land west of Clay Gully Road has little native vegetation as being used for agriculture.

The land east of Clay Gully Road and along O'Briens Lane is being used for rural lifestyle and hobby farming. The area has patches of good quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further revegetation and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land, increase connectivity between area of public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened, vulnerable and endangered species in the area. The area is poorly serviced and further development should be discouraged.

Recommendations

That the land west of Clay Gully Road remain in the Farming Zone.

That the land within the east of Clay Gully Road and along O'Briens Lane be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development is discouraged and where it does take place achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.9.2 Burkes Flat – McIntyre Road

Description

The Burkes Flat – McIntyre Road investigation area covers around 50 hectares (Figure 5-53) and is surrounded by the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest (Figure 5-54). The area is remote and has poor access. The area has been cleared and is becoming revegetated. The quality of the vegetation ranges from poor to medium. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further regeneration and recruitment takes place.



Figure 5-53 Burkes Flat – McIntyre Road investigation area⁶



Figure 5-54 Aerial view of Burkes Flat – McIntyre Road investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land in the area is zoned Farming and the Wildfire Management Overlay applies to the area.

Findings

The area has patches of poor to medium quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further revegetation and recruitment takes place. The area is poorly serviced and development should be discouraged.

Recommendations

That the land within the Burkes Flat – McIntyre Road investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development is discouraged and where it does take place achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.10 Moliagul

Description

The areas for investigation around Moliagul (Figure 5-55) are adjacent to the Moliagul Nature Conservation reserve and the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest (Figure 5-56).



Figure 5-55 Moliagul investigation areas

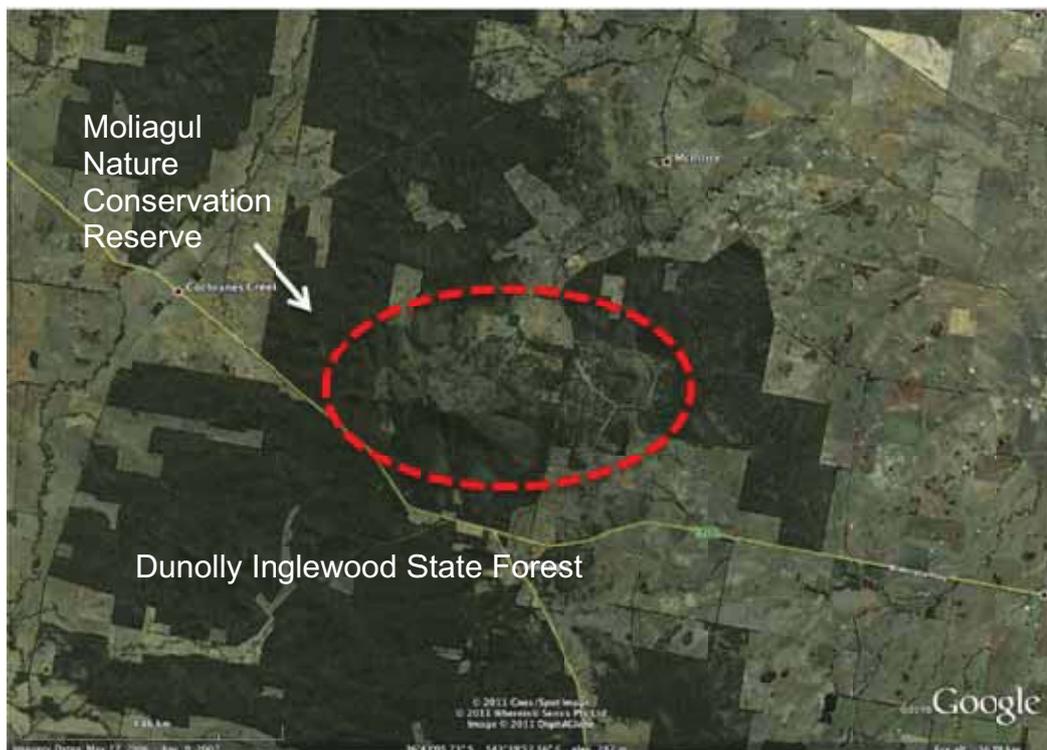


Figure 5-56 Aerial view of Moliagul investigation areas⁷

Biodiversity condition and status

There is a mix of Ecological Vegetation Classes in the area (Table 5-20). The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The area has important biodiversity values in providing connection between the separated blocks of the Waanyarra Nature Conservation Reserve and Dunolly Inglewood State Forest.

Table 5-19 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Hill crest herb rich Woodland	Depleted
Grassy dry forest / Rocky outcrop Shrubland / Rocky Outcrop Herbland Mosaic	Depleted
Grassy woodland	Vulnerable
Box Ironbark	Depleted

Native vegetation provides habitat for a number of threatened species and the endangered Swift Parrot for which a Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement has been prepared (Table 5-20).

Table 5-20 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown Treecreeper	Threatened	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Endangered	FFG Action Statement
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail	Vulnerable	
<i>Oreoica gutturalis gutturalis</i>	Southern Crested Bellbird	Near threatened	

5.10.1 Cherry Gardens Road

The Cherry Gardens investigation area covers 93 hectares (Figure 5-57) and is surrounded by the Moliagul Heritage Area and is adjacent to the Waanyarra Nature Conservation Reserve (Figure 5-58). The vegetation cover varies from good quality vegetation patches to some cleared land. The land is no longer being farmed and vegetation is regenerating on cleared land. The area is relatively remote and the access track is in poor condition. The area provides an opportunity to improve connectivity between the two areas of public land.

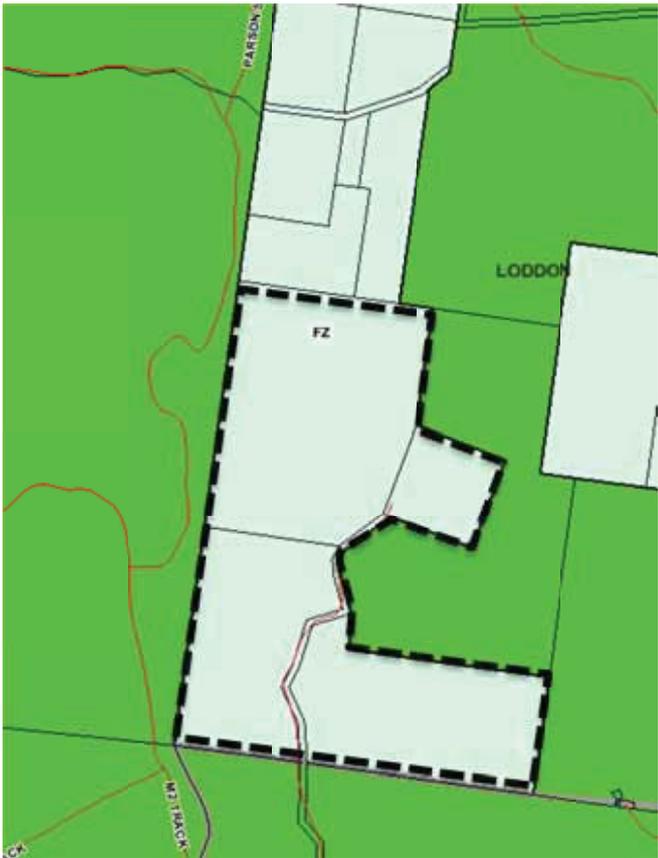


Figure 5-57 Cherry Gardens Road investigation area⁶



Figure 5-58 Aerial view Cherry Gardens Road⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is zoned Farming and the following overlays apply to the area:

- Salinity Management
- Vegetation Protection (Environmental Significance)
- Wildfire Management

Findings

The area has patches of good quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further revegetation and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land, increase connectivity between areas of public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened, vulnerable and endangered species in the area. The area is poorly serviced and development should be discouraged.

Recommendations

That the land within the Cherry Gardens Road investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development is discouraged and where it does take place achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.10.2 Chinamans Lane

The Chinamans Land investigation area covers 320 hectares (Figure 5-59). The EVCs represented in the area are predominantly Grassy Woodland and Box Ironbark with some Red Gum noted in the waterway. The area has good patches of vegetation interspersed with cleared land (Figure 5-60). There are few dwellings in the area has poor road access and no services.



Figure 5-59 Chinamans Lane investigation area⁶

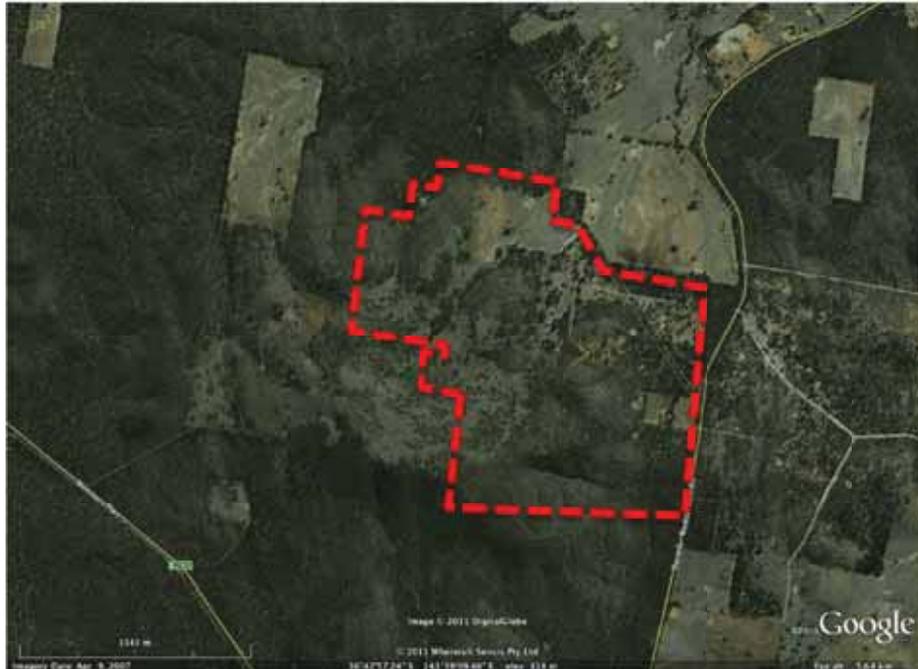


Figure 5-60 Aerial view of the Chinamans Lane investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is zoned Farming and the following overlays apply to the area:

- Salinity Management
- Vegetation Protection (Environmental Significance)
- Wildfire Management

Findings

Findings

The area has patches of good quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further revegetation and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land, increase connectivity between areas of public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened, vulnerable and endangered species in the area. The area is poorly serviced and further development should be discouraged.

Recommendations

That the land within the Chinamans Lane investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development is discouraged and where it does take place achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.10.3 Moliagul Drive / Mason Drive

Description

The Moliagul Drive / Mason Drive investigation area covers 390 hectares (Figure 5-61) and is located 3 km from Moliagul and 20 kilometres from Dunolly. Part of the area has been cleared in the past and has since become revegetated (Figure 5-62). Steeper parts of the area have not been cleared and include some mature trees. The area is adjacent to the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest.

The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. There are a few dwellings in the area serviced by a moderate quality gravel road but has no power.



Figure 5-61 Moliagul Drive / Mason Drive investigation area⁶



Figure 5-62 Aerial view Moliagul Drive / Mason Drive investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is zoned Farming and the following overlays apply to the area:

- Environmental Significance (Laanecoorie catchment)
- Salinity Management
- Vegetation Protection (Environmental Significance)
- Wildfire Management

Findings

The area is predominantly vegetated with good quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further revegetation and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land, increase connectivity between areas of public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened, vulnerable and endangered species in the area.

The area is being used predominantly for rural lifestyle purposes.

Recommendations

That the land within the Moliagul Drive / Mason Drive investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.11 Tarnagulla

Description

The Tarnagulla investigation area covers an area of 190 hectares (Figure 5-63). The area has been cleared in the past and is now revegetated. The area is adjacent to the Tarnagulla township and the Waanyarra Nature Conservation Reserve (Figure 5-64) and is serviced by a good quality road and has access to power. The area includes an ephemeral stream that is a tributary of the Bulabul Creek



Figure 5-63 Tarnagulla investigation area⁶



Figure 5-64 Aerial view of the Tarnagulla investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming and is subject to the following overlays:

- Land Subject to Inundation
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (environmental significance)
- Wildfire Management Overlay

Biodiversity condition and status

There is a mix of EVCs in the area (Table 5-21) including the vulnerable Grassy Woodland. The vegetation quality ranges from good to medium.

Table 5-21 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland . Plains Grassy Woodland Mosaic	Least concern
Grassy woodland	Vulnerable
Box Ironbark	Depleted

The native vegetation provides habitat for a number of threatened species, the vulnerable Diamond Firetail and the Endangered Swift Parrot for which a Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement has been prepared.

Table 5-22 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown Treecreeper	Threatened	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Endangered	FFG Action Statement
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail	Vulnerable	
<i>Oreica guttaralis guttaralis</i>	Southern Crested Bellbird	Near threatened	

Findings

The area is predominantly vegetated with good to medium quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further revegetation and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened, vulnerable and endangered species in the area.

The area is being used predominantly for rural lifestyle purposes and is in close proximity to the Tarnagulla township

Recommendations

That the land within the Tarnagulla investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.12 Llanelly

Description

The Llanelly investigation area covers around 80 hectares and is adjacent to Llanelly township (Figure 5-65) and in close proximity to Newbridge and Tarnagulla. The area has been cleared in the past but is now predominantly revegetated (Figure 5-66). The area is adjacent to the Waanyarra Nature Conservation Reserve and the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest. There are a number of dwellings in the area and has good quality road access.



Figure 5-65 Llanelly investigation area⁶



Figure 5-66 Aerial view of Llanelly investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The area is zoned Farming and following overlays apply to the area:

- Erosion Management
- Wildfire Management

Biodiversity condition and status

There is a mix of Ecological Vegetation Classes in the area (Table 5-25). The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The area has important biodiversity values in providing connection between the separated blocks of the Waanyarra Nature Conservation Reserve and the State Forest.

Table 5-23 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Box Ironbark	Depleted
Grassy woodland	Vulnerable
Mallee	Least concern

Native vegetation provides habitat for a number of threatened species, the vulnerable Diamond Firetail and the endangered Swift Parrot for which a Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement has been prepared (Table 5-24).

Table 5-24 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown Treecreeper	Threatened	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Endangered	FFG Action Statement
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail	Vulnerable	
<i>Oreoica guttaralis guttaralis</i>	Southern Crested Bellbird	Near threatened	

Findings

The area is predominantly vegetated with good quality vegetation. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further revegetation and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened, vulnerable and endangered species in the area.

The area is being used predominantly for rural lifestyle purposes and is in close proximity to the Llannelly, Tarnagulla and Newbridge townships.

Recommendations

That the land within the Rheola investigation area be rezoned to Rural Conservation Zone, with a schedule that will ensure no further subdivision.

That a policy be prepared to provide further guidance on decision making and ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.13 Laanecoorie

Description

The Laanecoorie investigation area covers 390 hectares and is located over the Loddon River from Laanecoorie township (Figure 5-67). There is a mix of uses in the area including a private caravan park fronting the Laanecoorie Reservoir as well as picnic and boating facilities. A number of dwellings have been established in the area.

The area has been cleared in the past but is now predominantly revegetated (Figure 5-68). The area is adjacent to the Waanyarra Nature Conservation Reserve and the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest.



Figure 5-67 Laanecoorie investigation area⁶



Figure 5-68 Aerial view Laanecoorie investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The land is currently zoned Farming and the following overlays apply to the area:

- Land Subject to Inundation
- Flood
- Erosion Management Overlay
- Environmental Significance (Laanecoorie Catchment)
- Vegetation Protection (environmental Significance)
- Wildfire management Overlay

Biodiversity condition and status

There is a mix of Ecological Vegetation Classes in the area (Table 5-25). The vegetation quality in the investigation area is good to very good. There is potential for the vegetation quality to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity outcomes. The area has important biodiversity values in providing connection between the separated blocks of the Waanyarra Nature Conservation Reserve and the State Forest.

Table 5-25 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Box Ironbark	Depleted
Grassy woodland	Vulnerable

Native vegetation provides habitat for a number of threatened species and the endangered Swift Parrot for which a Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement has been prepared (Table 5-26).

Table 5-26 Threatened fauna⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Endangered	FFG Action Statement
<i>Oreoica gutturalis gutturalis</i>	Southern Crested Bellbird	Near threatened	
<i>Ninox strenua</i>	Powerful Owl	Vulnerable	

Findings

There is a mix of uses in the area including tourism and rural lifestyle. The area also has good quality native vegetation and provides habitat for the endangered Swift Parrot. There is potential for further improvement in vegetation quality over time as the vegetation matures and further revegetation and recruitment takes place. The area has the potential to buffer the adjoining public land as well as extend the habitat for a number of threatened, vulnerable and endangered species in the area.

Recommendation

That the land within the Inglewood investigation area be rezoned to Rural Activity Zone to recognise the mix of uses including:

- Lifestyle
- Hobby farming
- Environmental values
- Tourism

A schedule to the zone should ensure that there is no further subdivision of land within the area.

A local policy is prepared to provide further guidance on decision-making ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.14 Inglewood

Description

The Inglewood investigation area is located around 3km north of Inglewood and comprises a mix of heavily vegetated to lightly vegetated land (Figure 5-69). The area has been cleared in the past and more revegetation has occurred on some blocks than others. The area covers around 220 hectares and there are dwellings on most lots. The land is generally being used for rural lifestyle with some light grazing on some blocks. The area is in close proximity to the Inglewood township and is serviced by a good quality road and has access to power and telephone. The area abuts the Dunolly Inglewood State Forest and the Inglewood Nature Conservation Reserve (Figure 5-70).

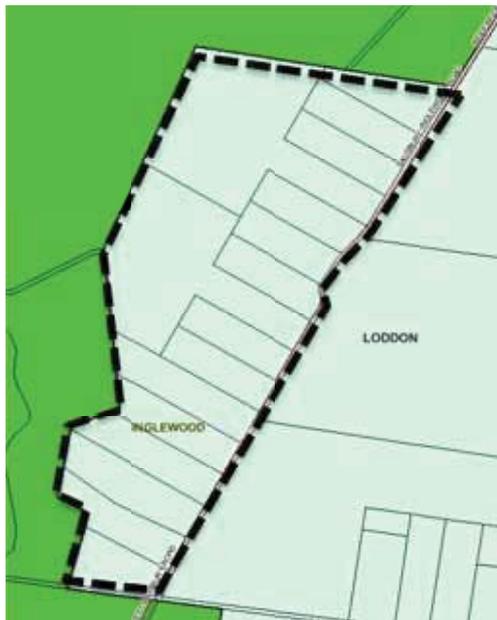


Figure 5-69 Inglewood investigation area⁶



Figure 5-70 Aerial view Inglewood investigation area⁷

Current planning policy position

The area is zoned Farming and a Wildfire Management Overlay applies to the area

Biodiversity status and condition

There is a mix of Ecological Vegetation Classes in the area (Table 5-27). The vegetation quality in the investigation area ranges from good to poor. There is potential for vegetation to improve over time as regeneration and recruitment continues and the land is managed for biodiversity

Table 5-27 Ecological Vegetation Classes and Status⁵

EVC	Status
Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland Plains Grassy Woodlands Mosaic	Least concern

Native vegetation associated with the State Forest and Nature Conservation Reserve provides habitat for a number of threatened and vulnerable fauna species. The area provides an opportunity to buffer the public land, increase connectivity between the reserves and increase the extent of habitat.

Table 5-28 Threatened fauna species⁵

Species name	Common Name	Conservation status	Other
<i>Melithreptus gularis gularis</i>	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Threatened	
<i>Ramphotyphlops proximus</i>	Woodland Blind Snake	Near Threatened	
<i>Sminthopsis murina murina</i>	Common Dunnart	Vulnerable	
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail	Vulnerable	
<i>Oreoica guttaralis guttaralis</i>	Southern Crested Bellbird	Near threatened	
<i>Lichenostomus cratitius</i>	Purple-gaped Honeyeater	Vulnerable	
<i>Geopella cuneata</i>	Diamond Dove	Near threatened	
<i>Chrysococcyx osculans</i>	Black-eared cuckoo	Secure	

Findings

The area is a mix of vegetated and cleared land. Land use is predominantly rural lifestyle including hobby farming. There is potential for native vegetation condition and extent to improve over time. The area is in close proximity to the Inglewood township and is serviced by a good quality road and has access to power and telephone.

Recommendations

That the land within the Inglewood investigation area be rezoned to Rural Activity Zone to recognise the mix of uses including:

- lifestyle
- hobby farming
- environmental values.

A schedule to the zone should ensure that there is no further subdivision of land within the area.

A local policy is prepared to provide further guidance on decision-making ensuring that future development achieves a net gain in biodiversity outcomes.

5.15 Terricks

Description

The Grasslands Management Coordinator (DSE) reviewed this site and noted the following:

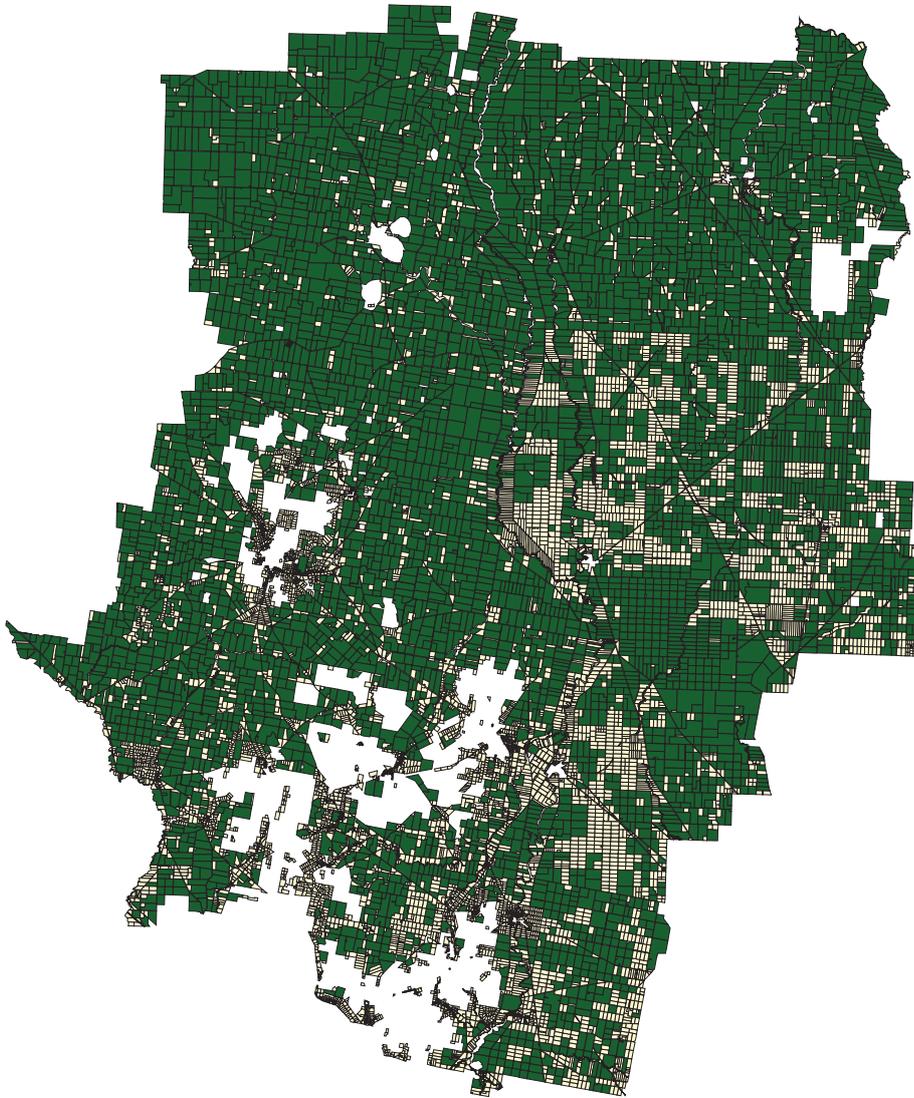
- Vegetation on the site does include the endangered Plains Grassland EVC.
- The quality of the grassland is not high.
- There are other tracts of high quality Plains Grassland on private land in the area.

The discussion concluded that further strategic work is required to identify the extent of Plains Grassland in Loddon Shire and that appropriate planning policy for these areas is then considered.

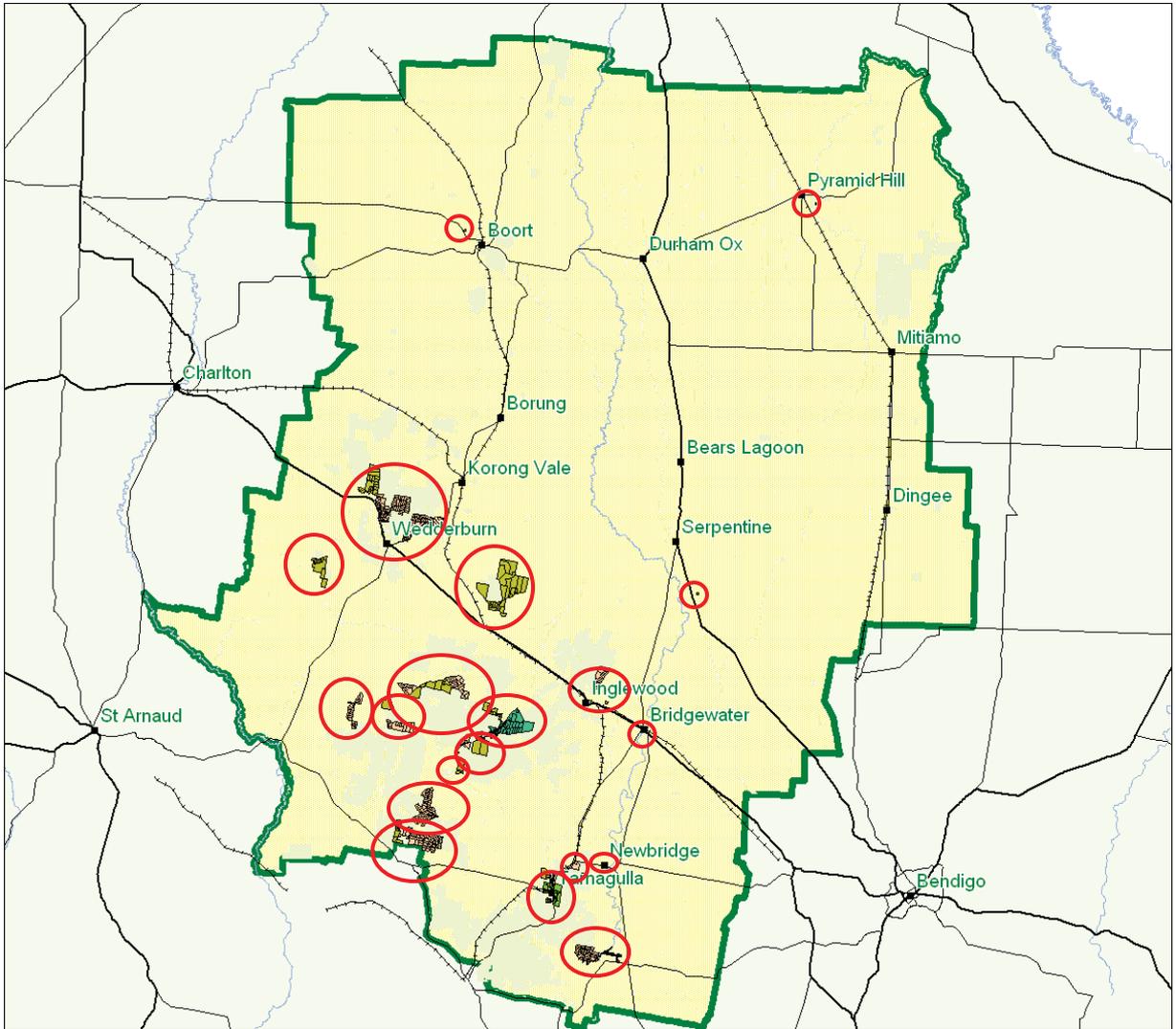


Appendix 6 Lots Over 40 Hectares

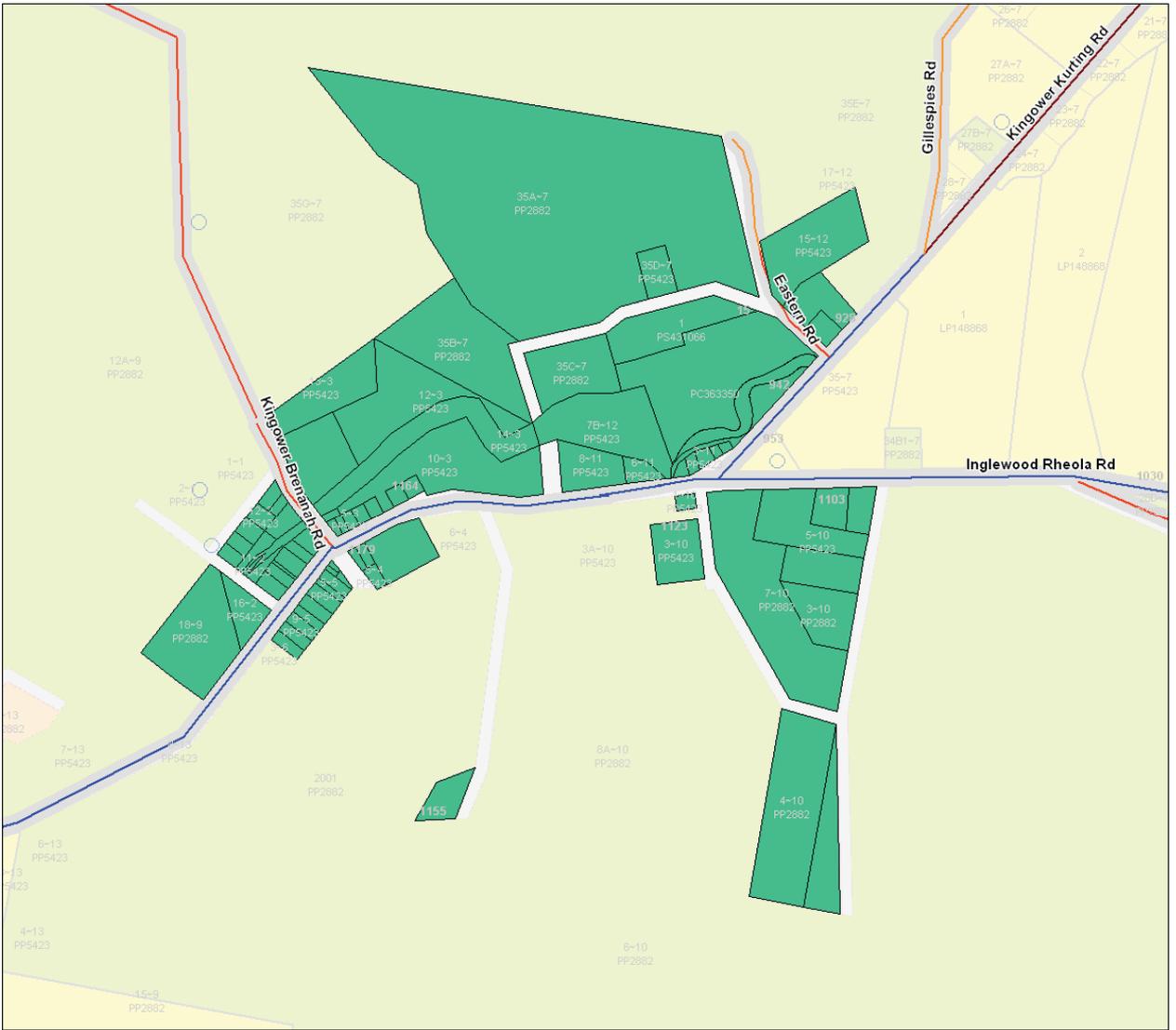
Map 8: Parcels (lots) over 40ha



Appendix 7 Recommended Rezoning



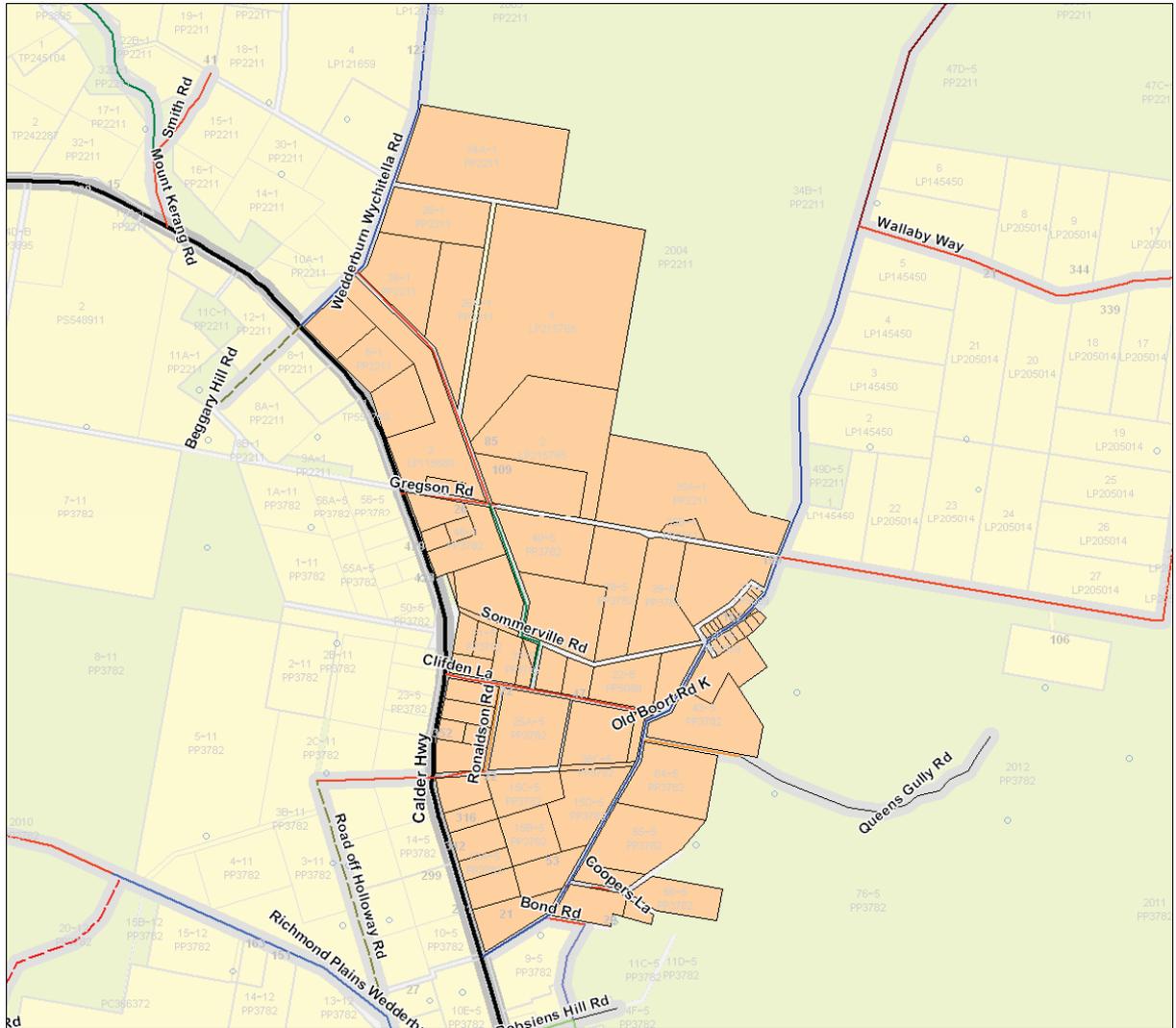
Loddon Shire areas recommended for rezoning



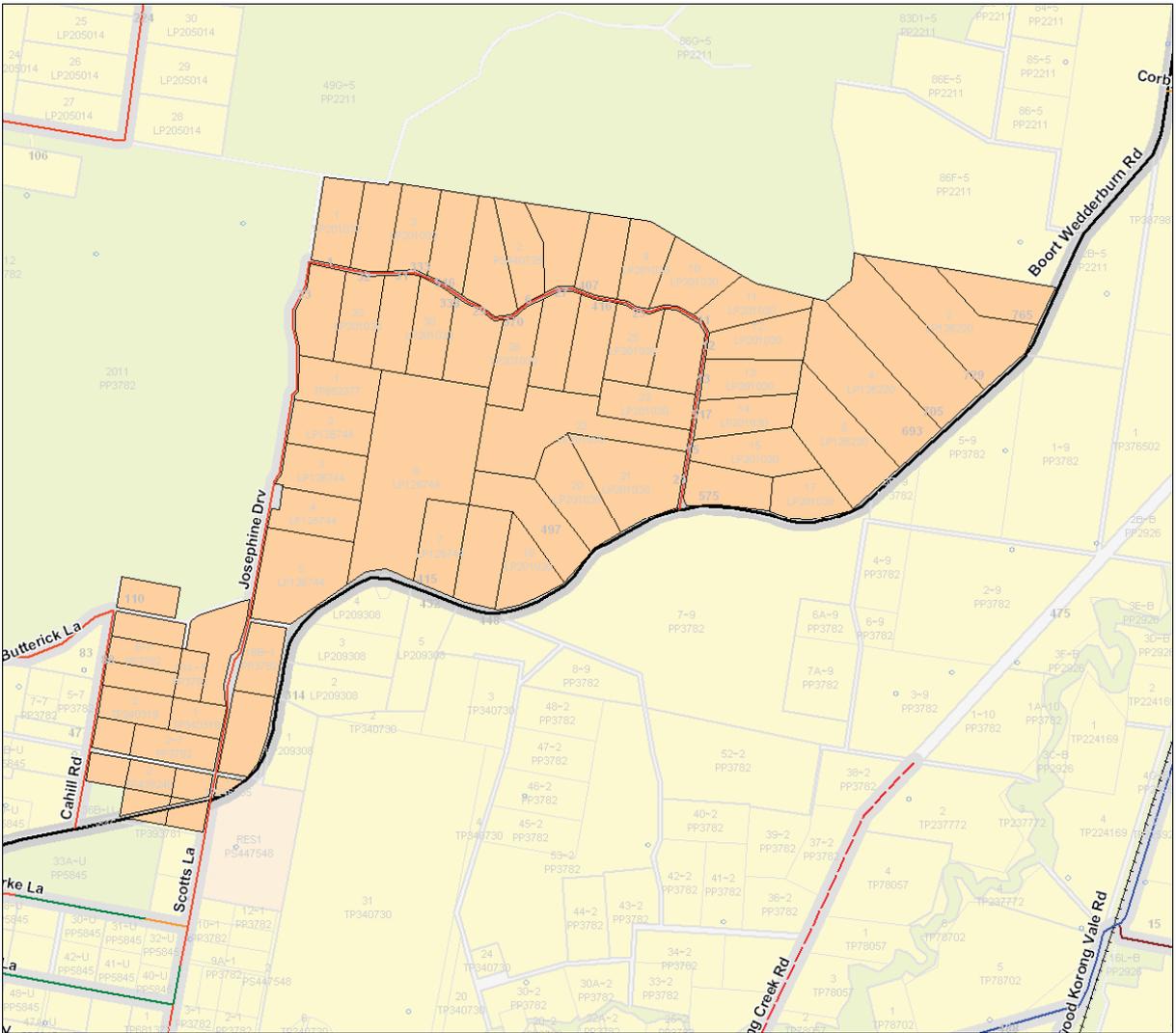
Kingower Brenanah Road area - Rezone to Rural Activity Zone

Appendix 9 Recommended Rural Living Zone

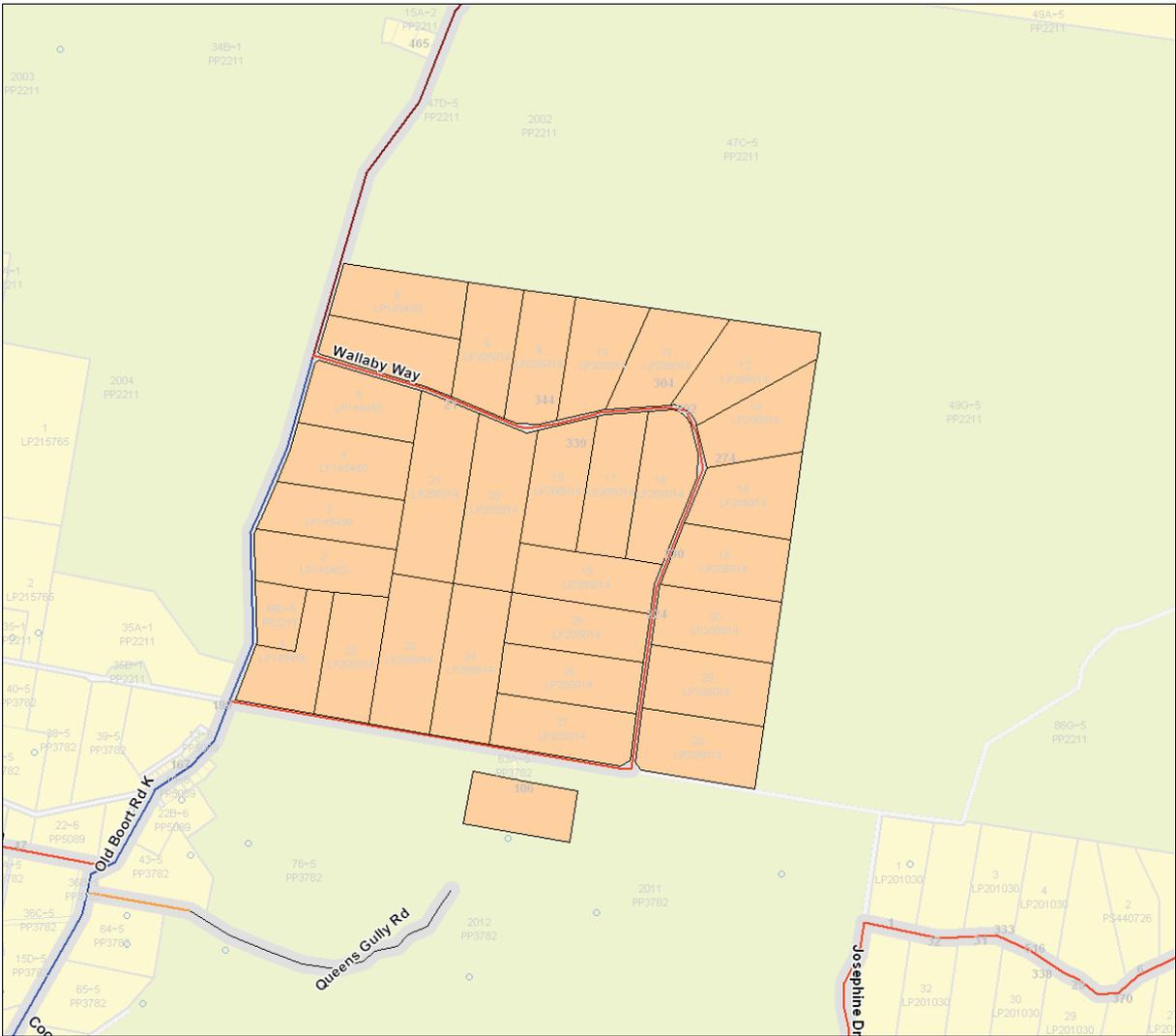
Wedderburn



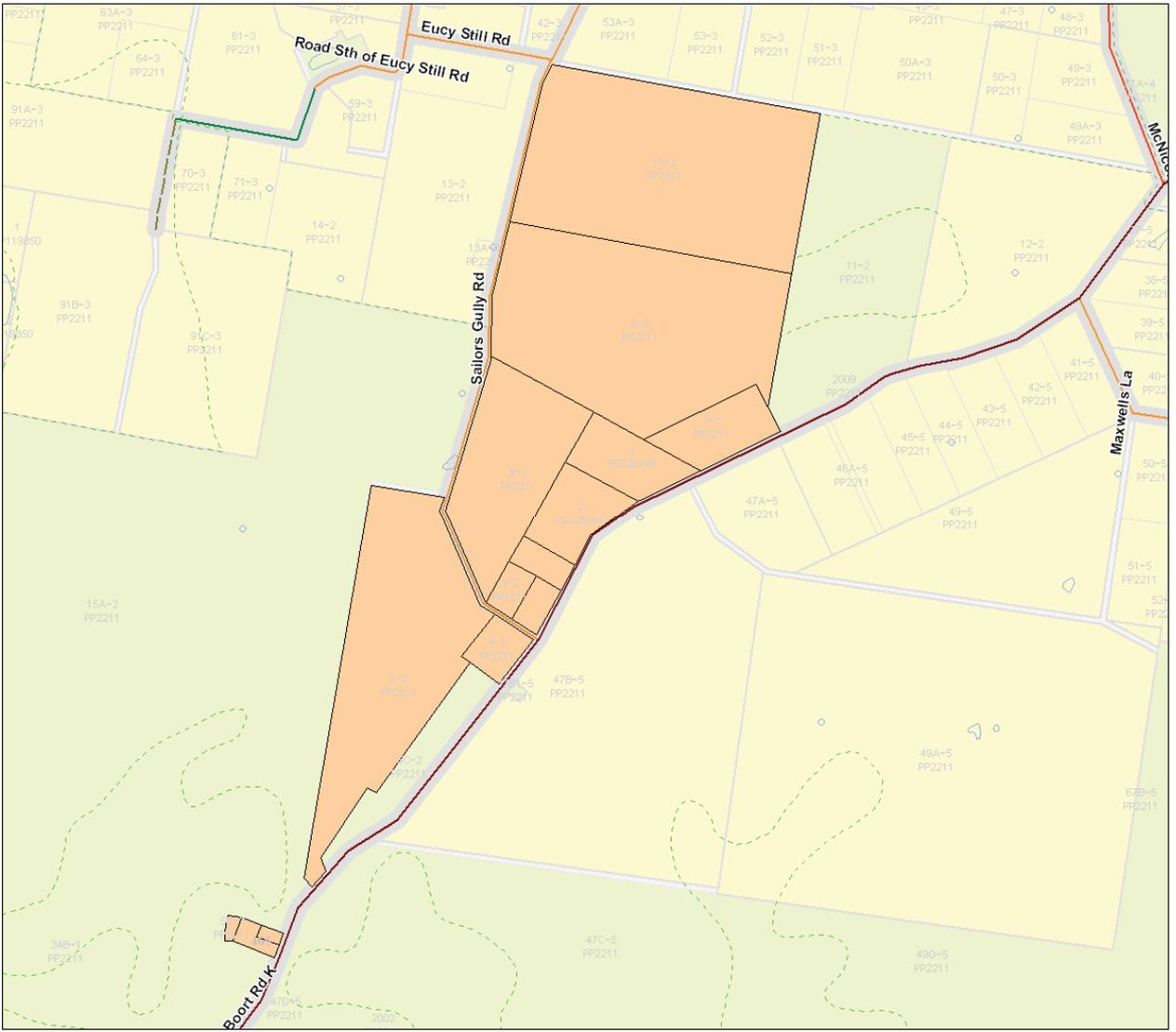
Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone – Clifden Lane/ Gregson Road area



Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone – Josephine Drive area

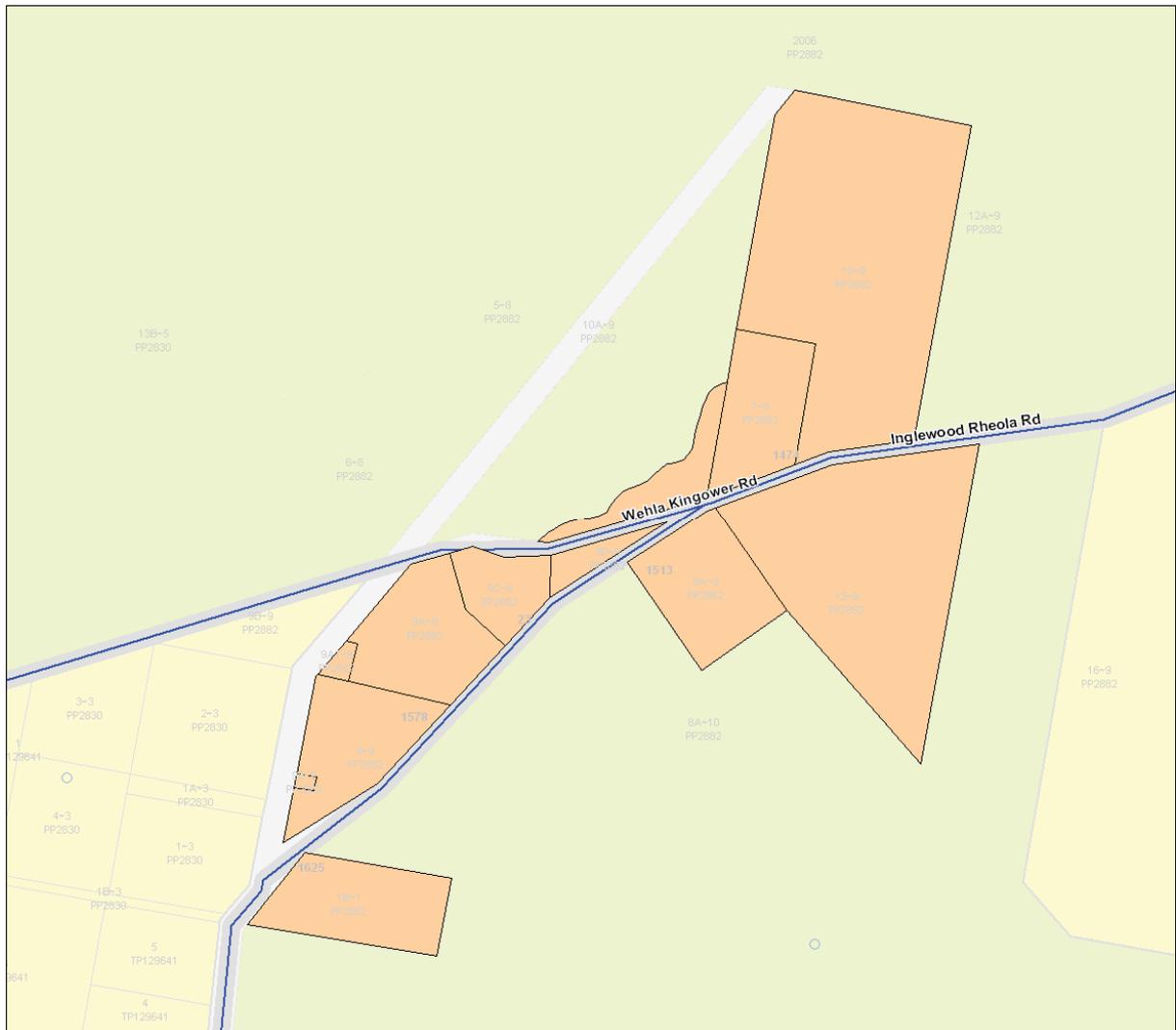


Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone – Wallaby Way area



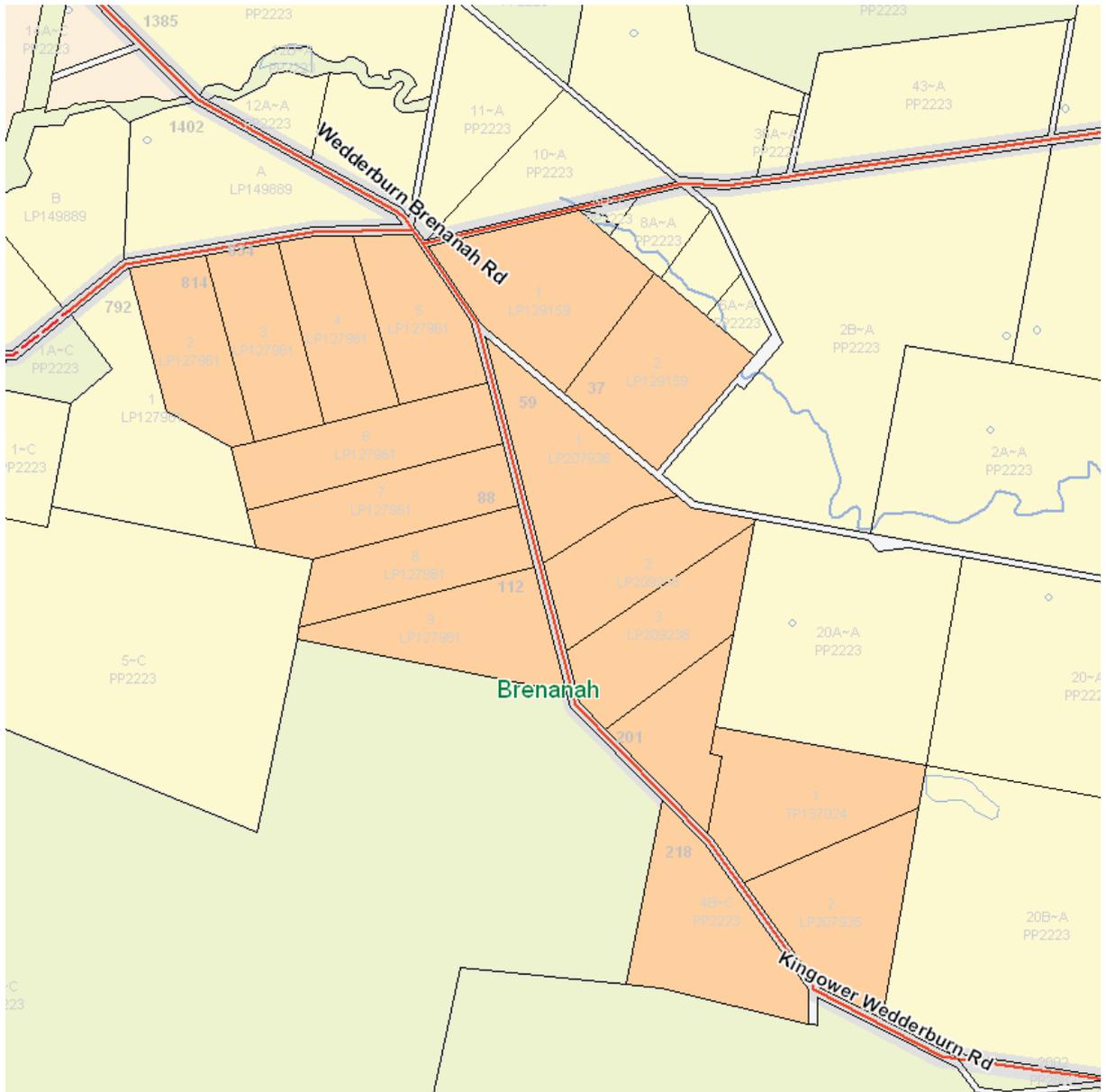
Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone – Woolshed Flat area

Kingower

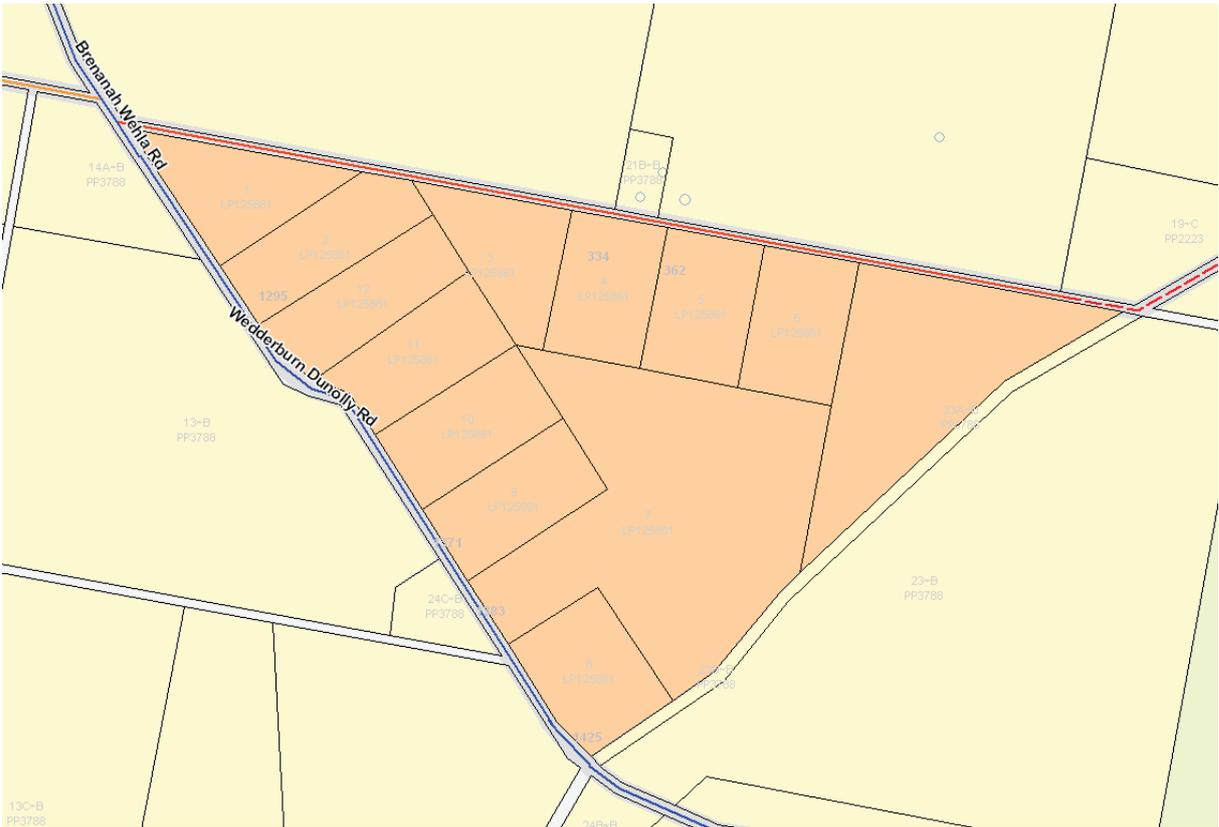


Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone – Wehla Kingower Road area

Brenanah

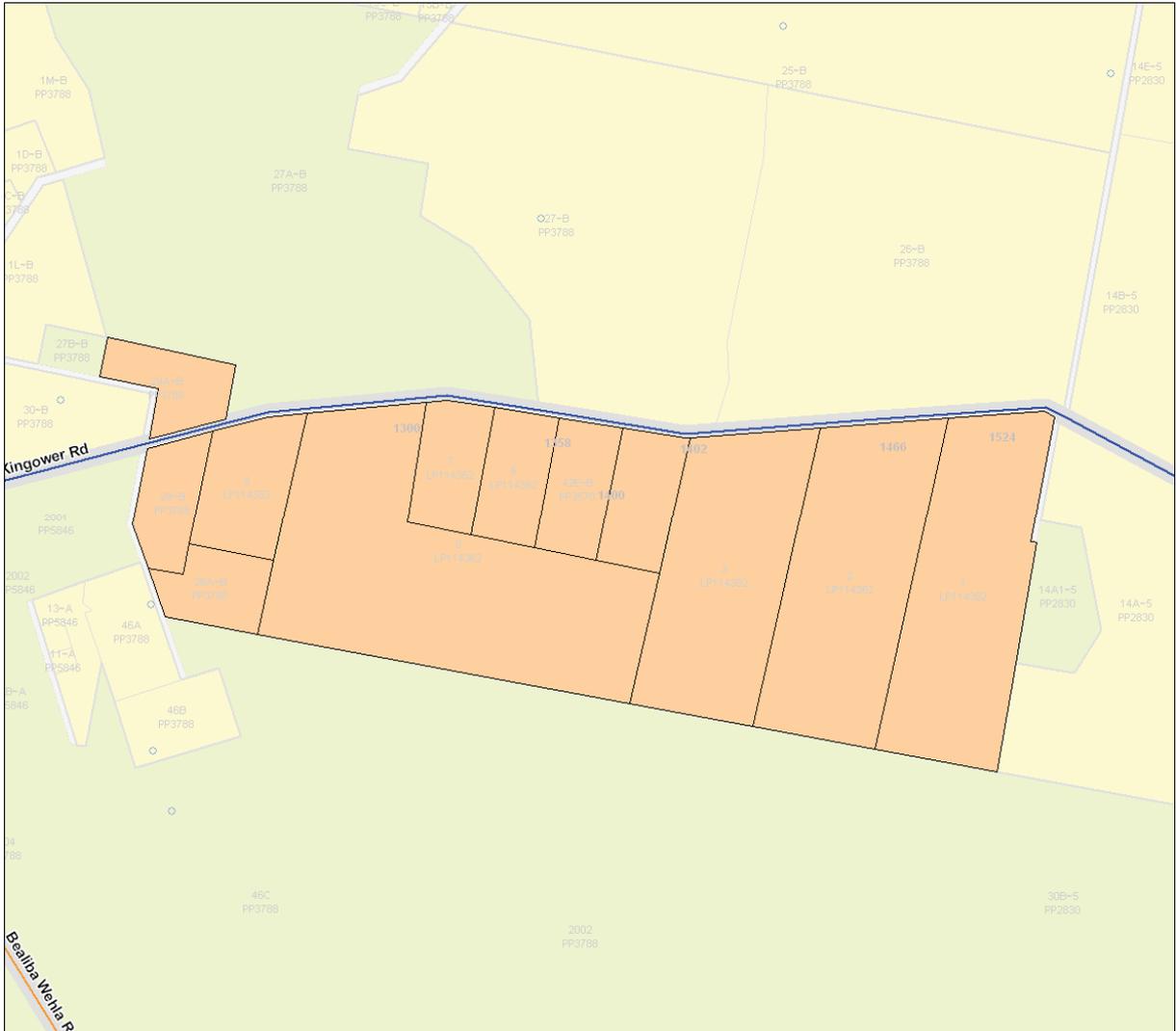


Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone – Kingower Wedderburn Road area



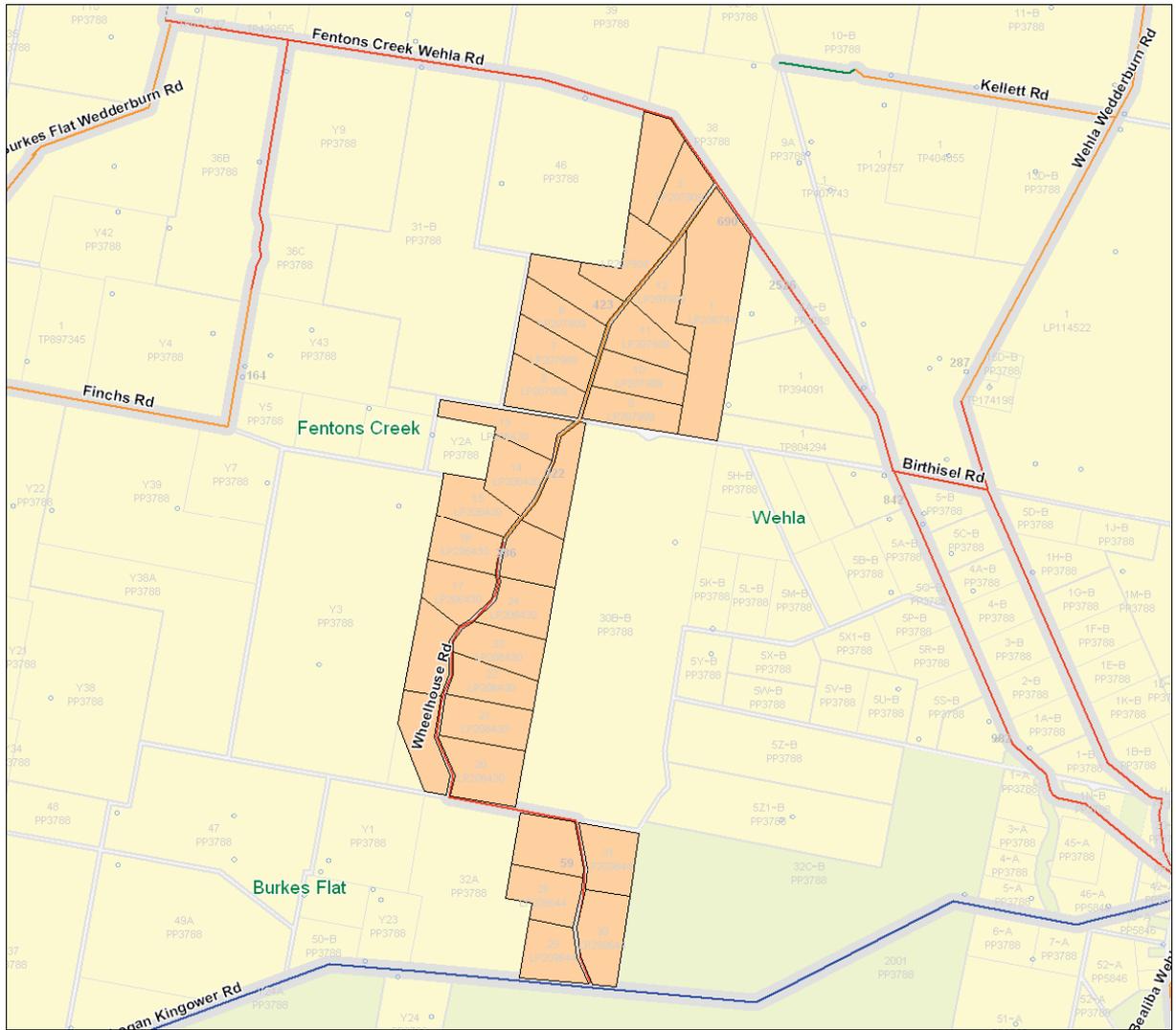
Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone – Brenanah Wehla Road area

Wehla



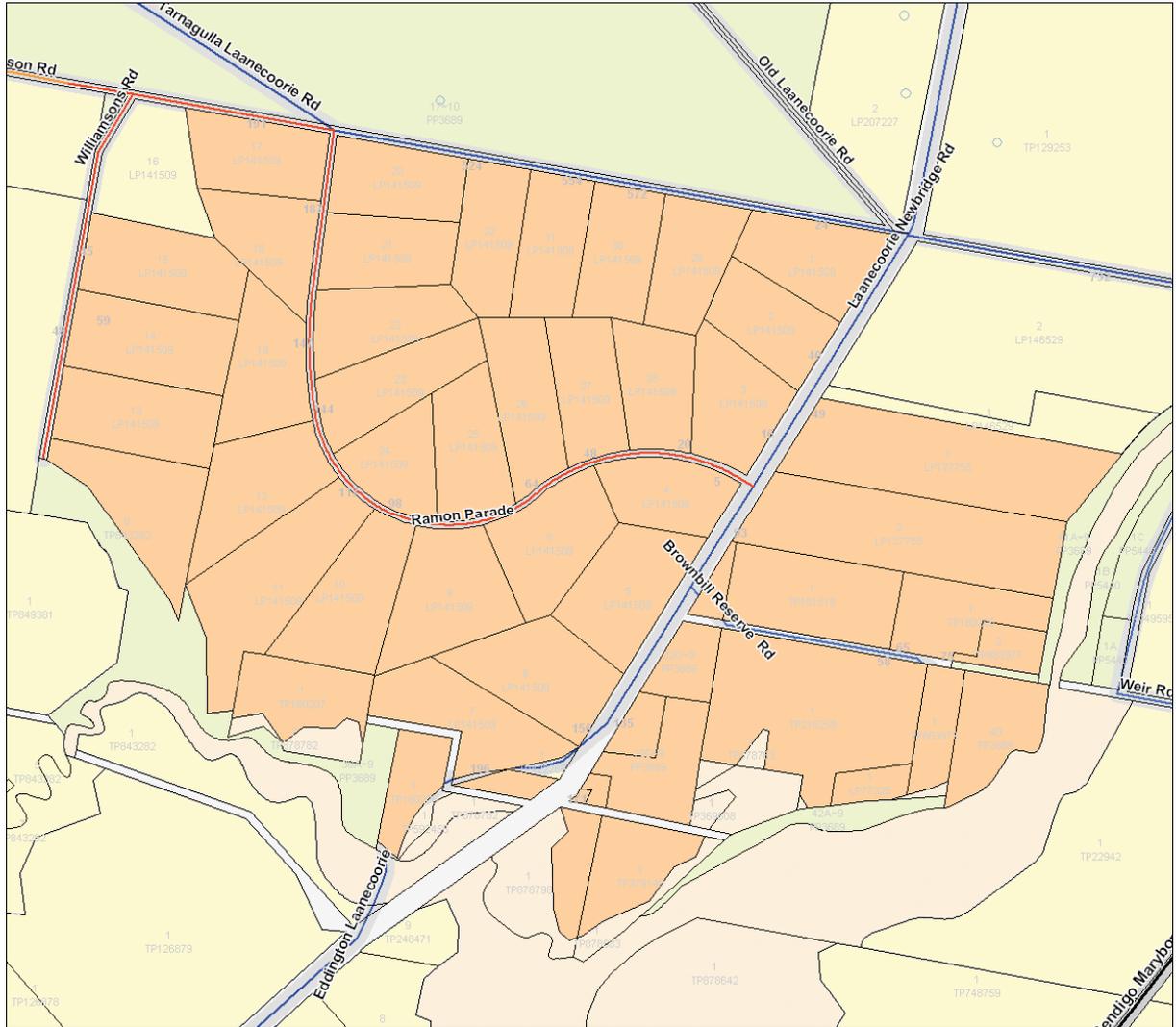
Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone - Logan Wehla Rheola Road area

Fentons Creek



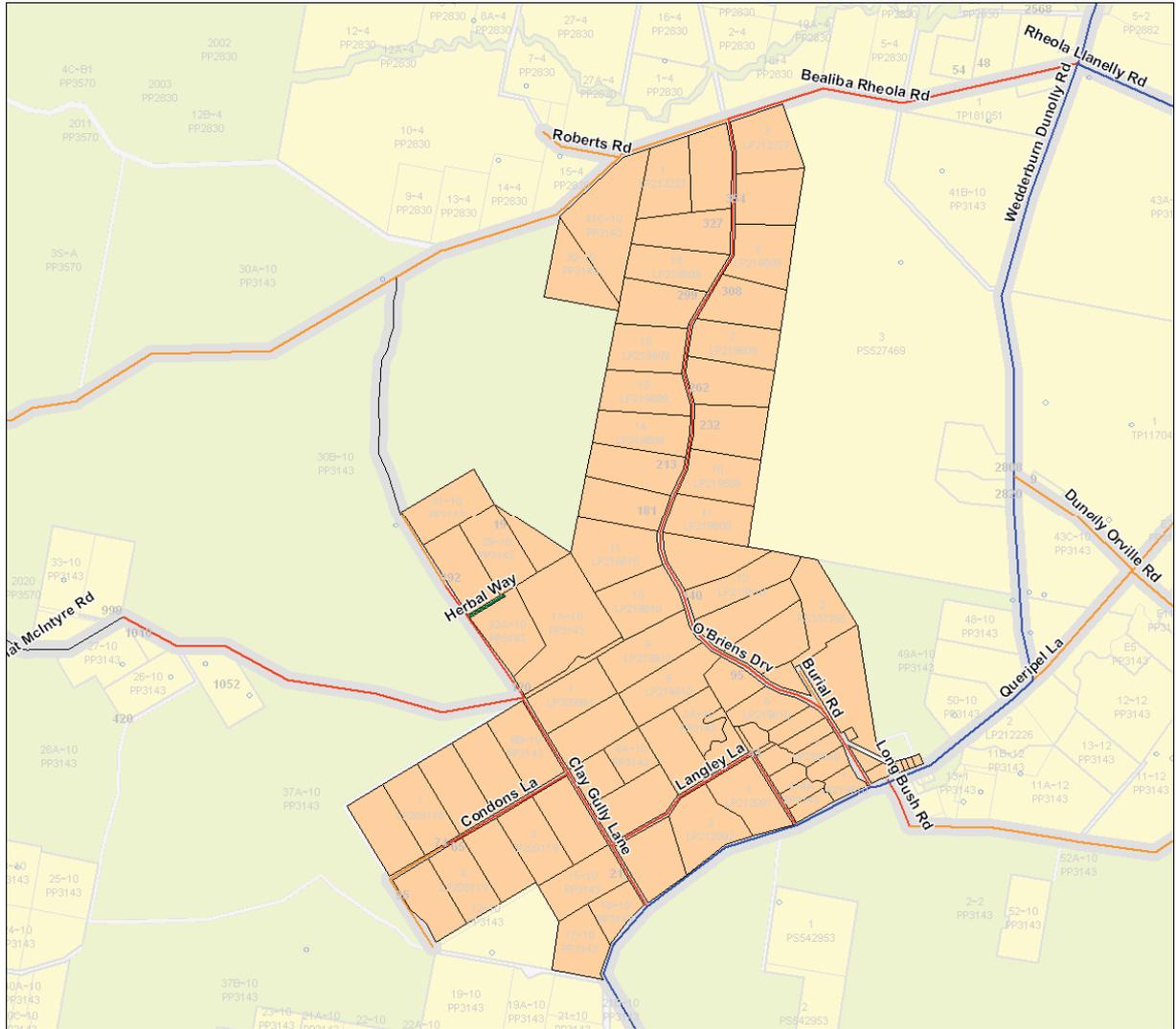
Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone – Wheelhouse Road area

Laanecoorie



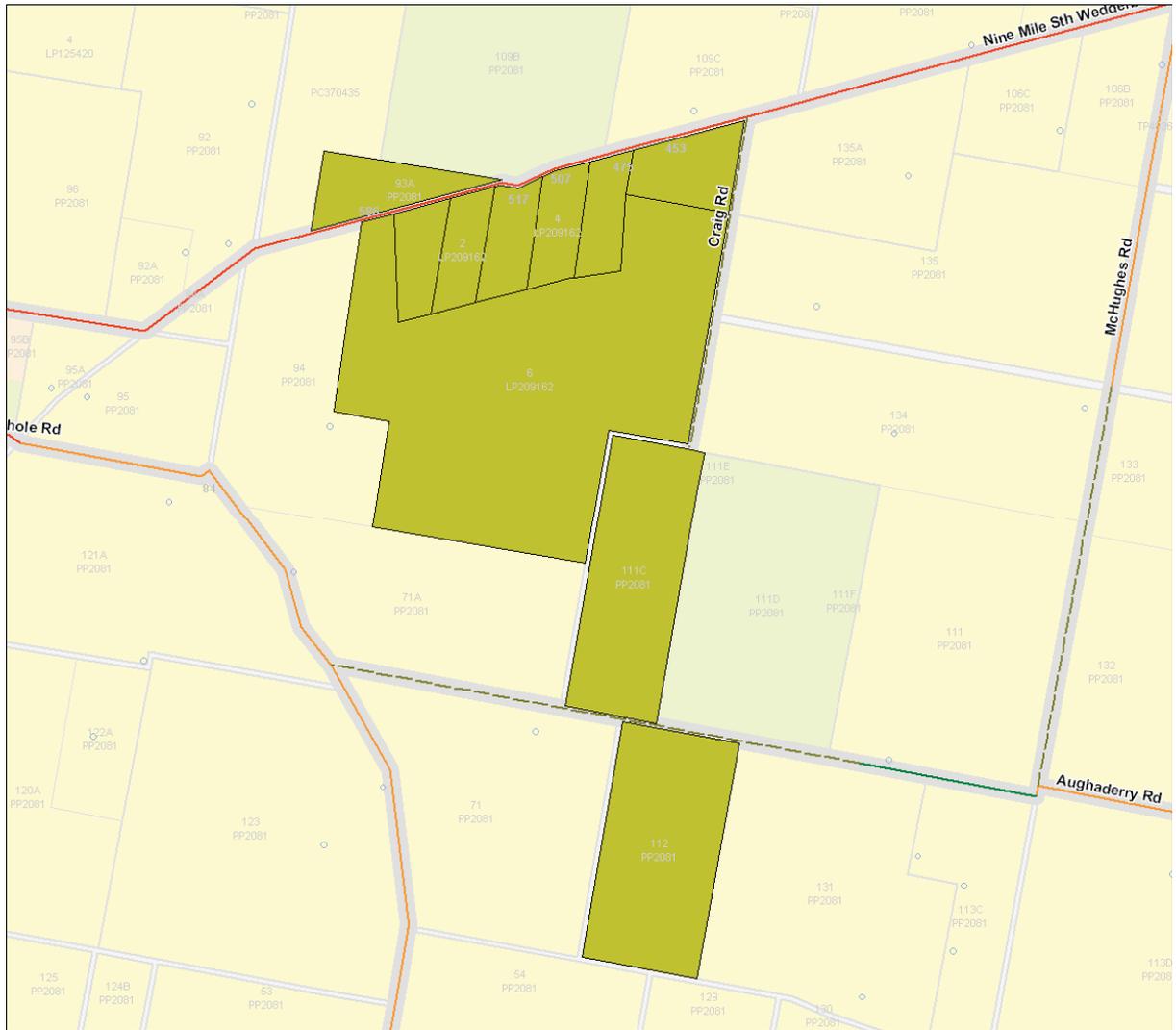
Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone – Ramon Parade area

McIntyre



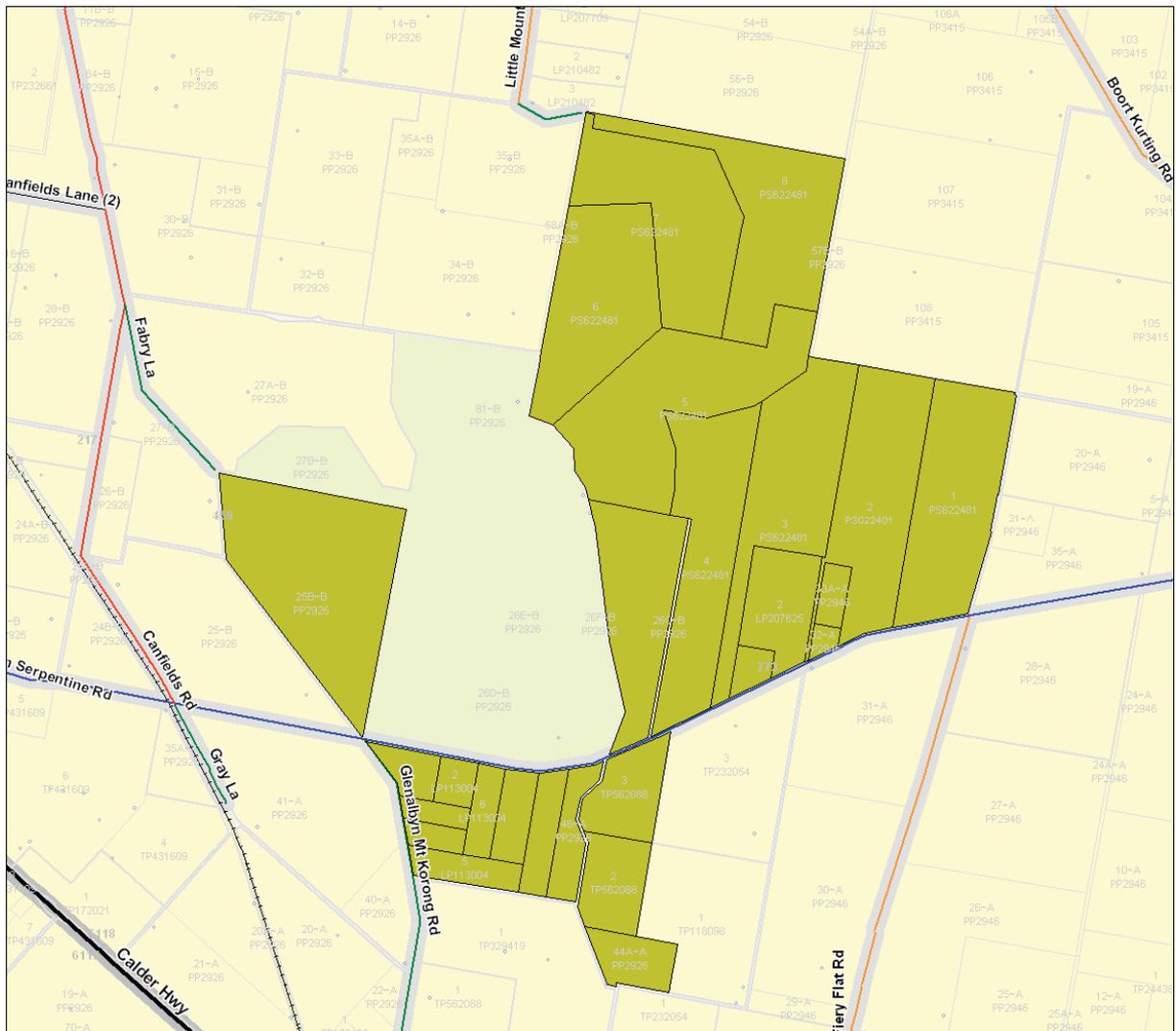
Recommended area to be rezoned to Rural Living Zone – McIntyre Township area

Nine Mile



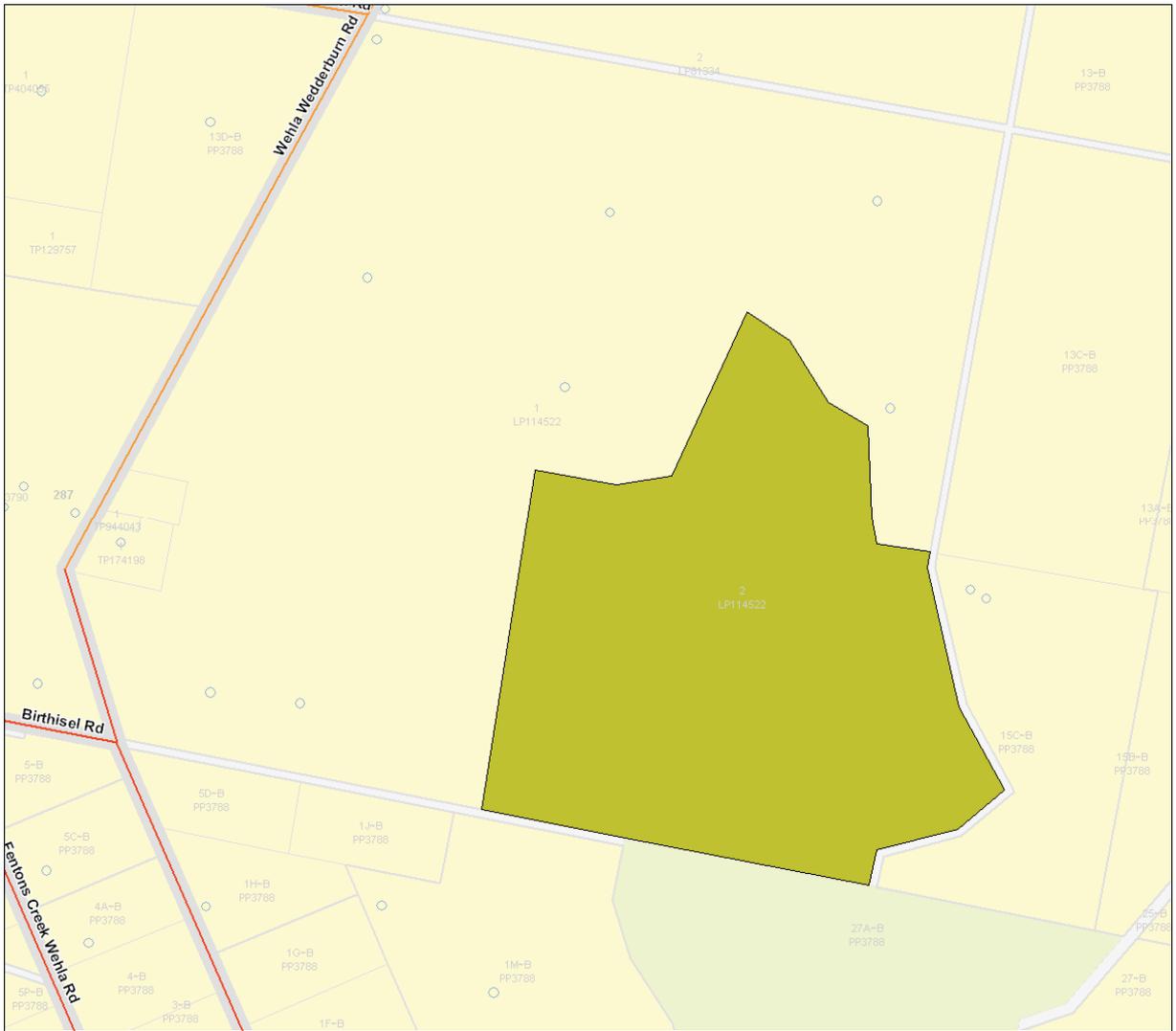
Nine Mile area - Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone

Mount Korong

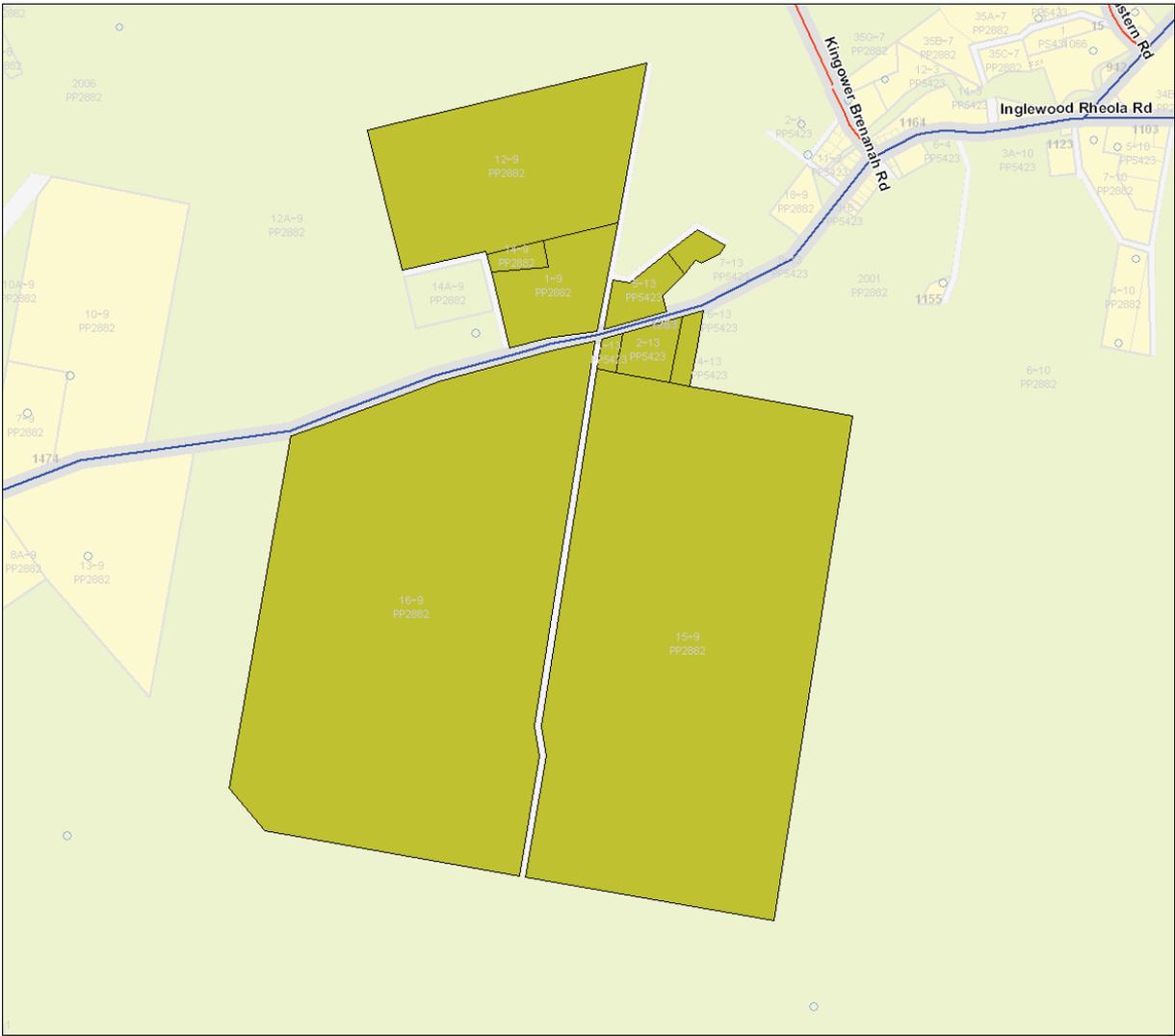


Mount Korong area - Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone

Wehla

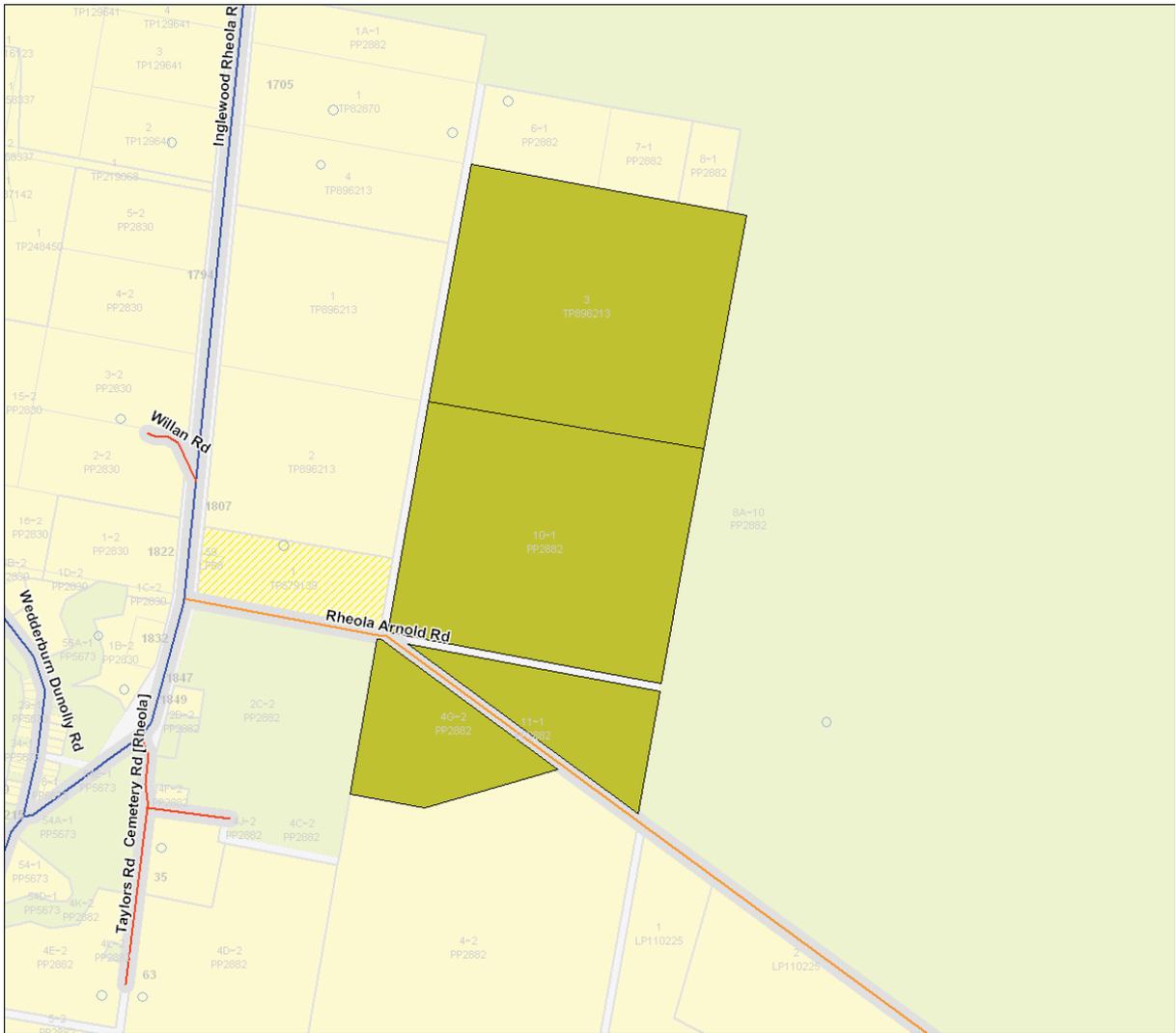


Birthisel Road area - Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone



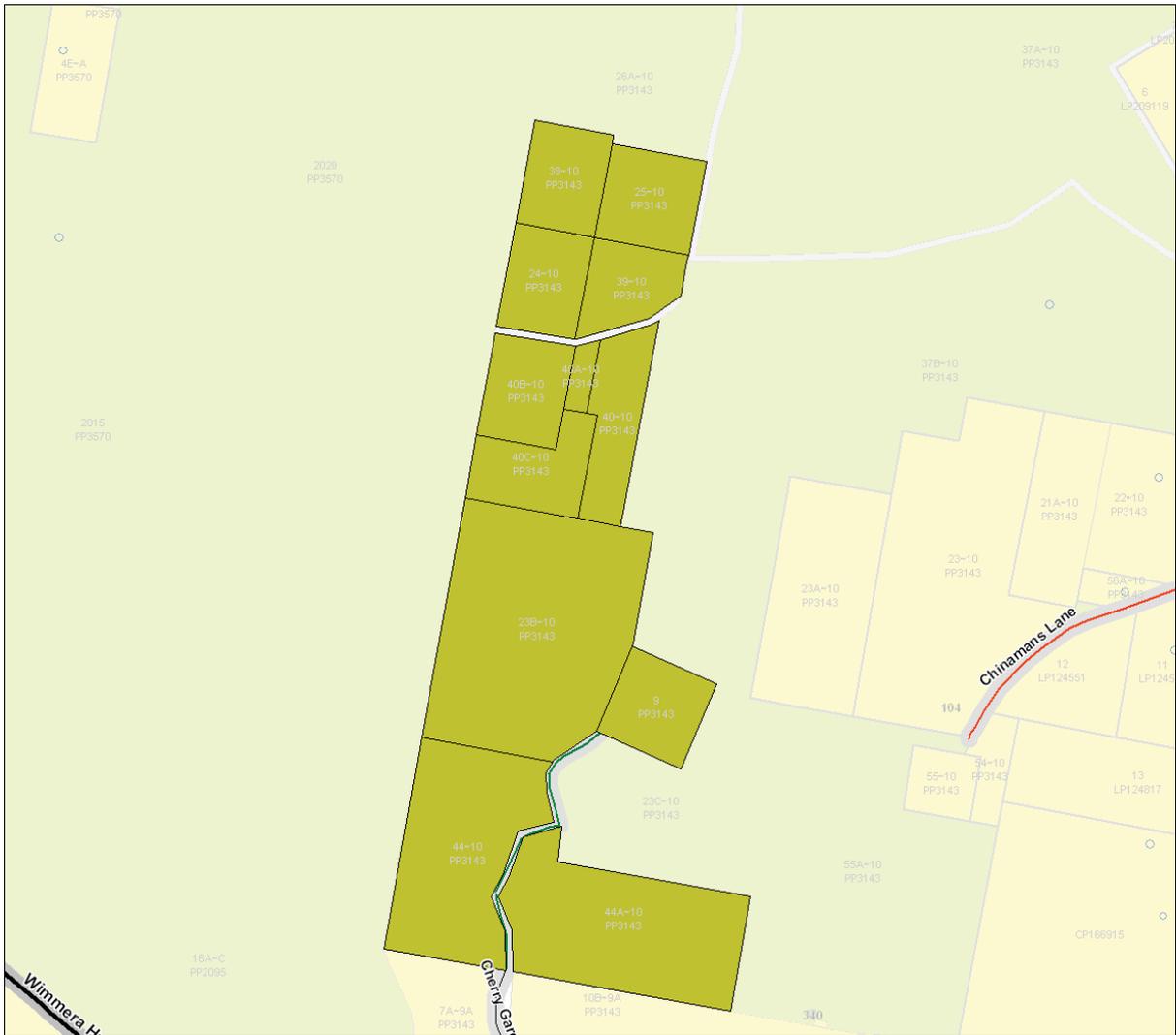
Wehla Kingower Road area - Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone

Rheola



Rheola area - Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone

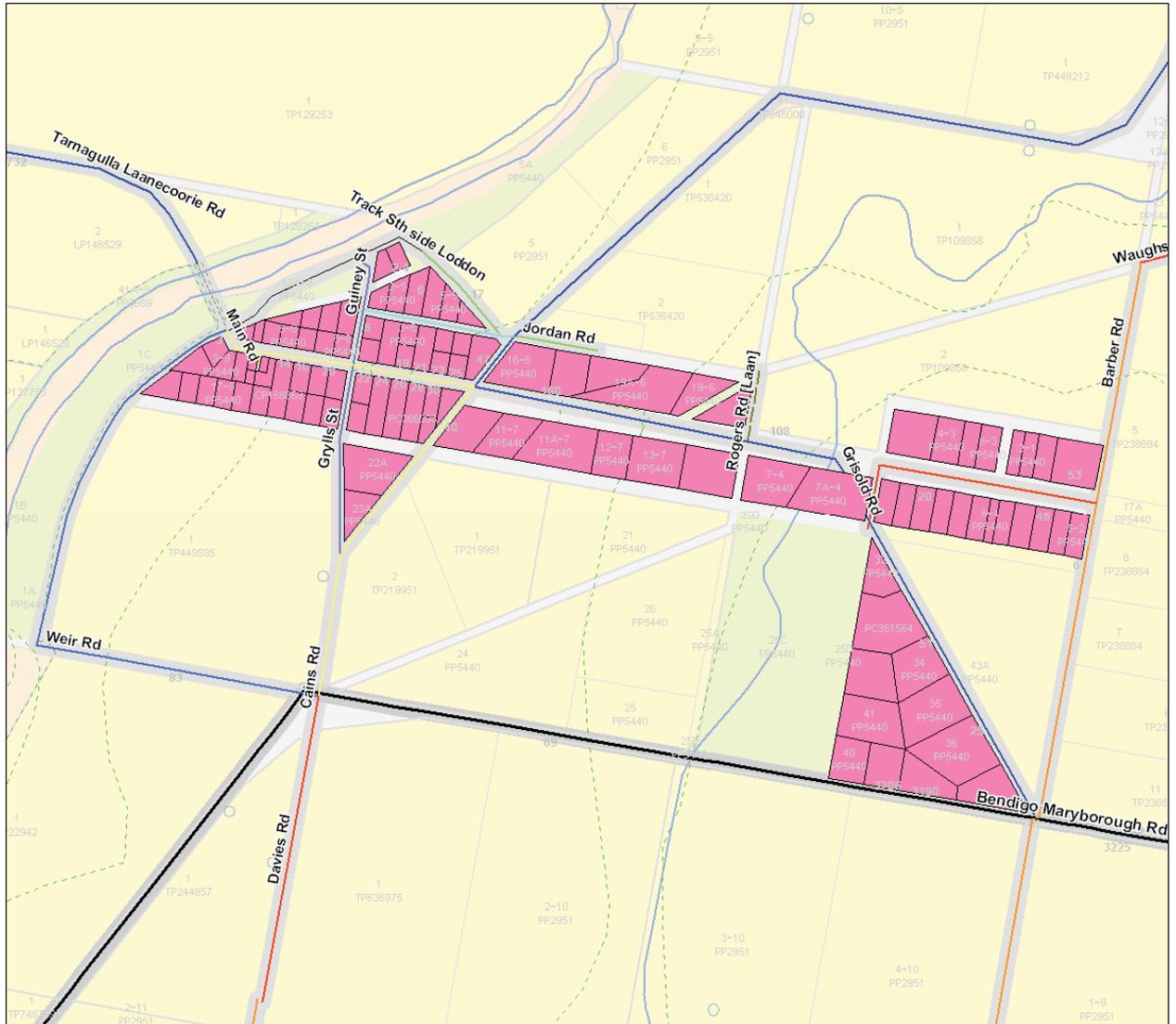
Moliagul



Cherry Gardens Road area - Rezone to Rural Conservation Zone

Appendix 11 Recommended Township Zone

Laanecoorie



Recommended area to be rezoned to Township Zone

Appendix 12 Recommended Public Park and Recreation Zone

Newbridge



Recommended area to be rezoned to Public Park and Recreation Zone - Newbridge

Laanecoorie



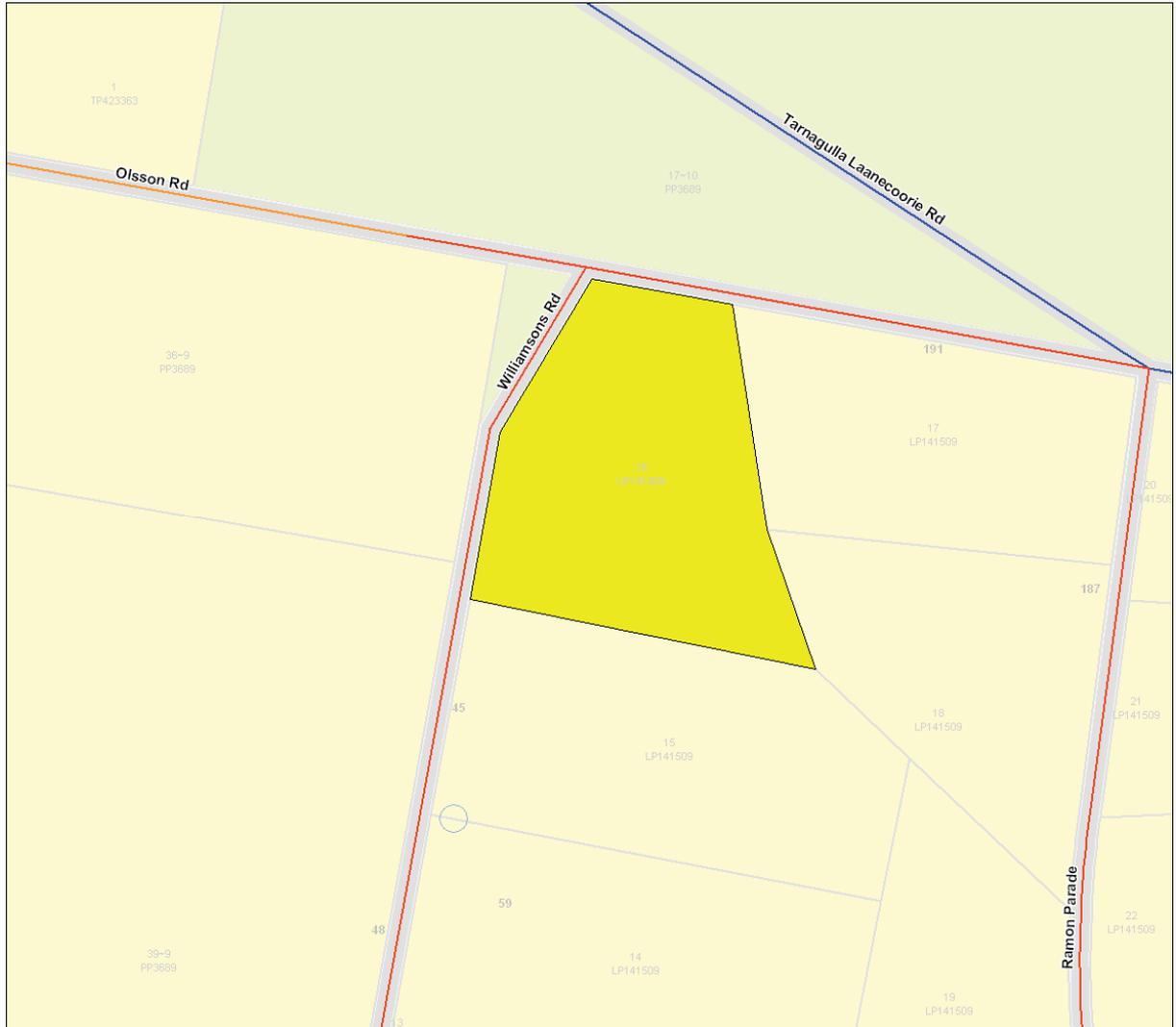
Recommended area to be rezoned to Public Conservation and Resource Zone - Laanecoorie

Loddon River Corridor



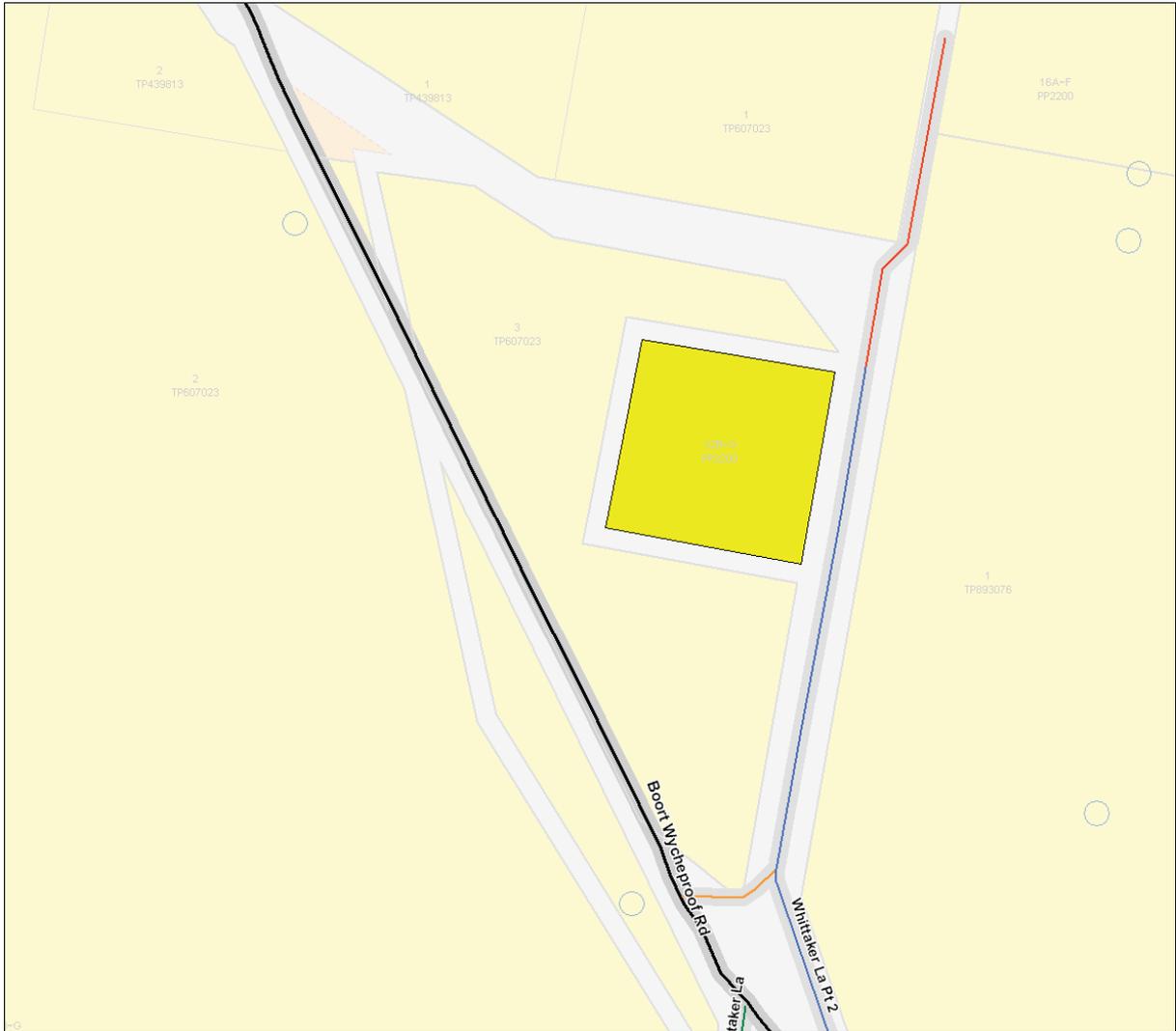
Recommended area to be rezoned to Public Conservation and Resource Zone – Loddon River Corridor

Laanecoorie



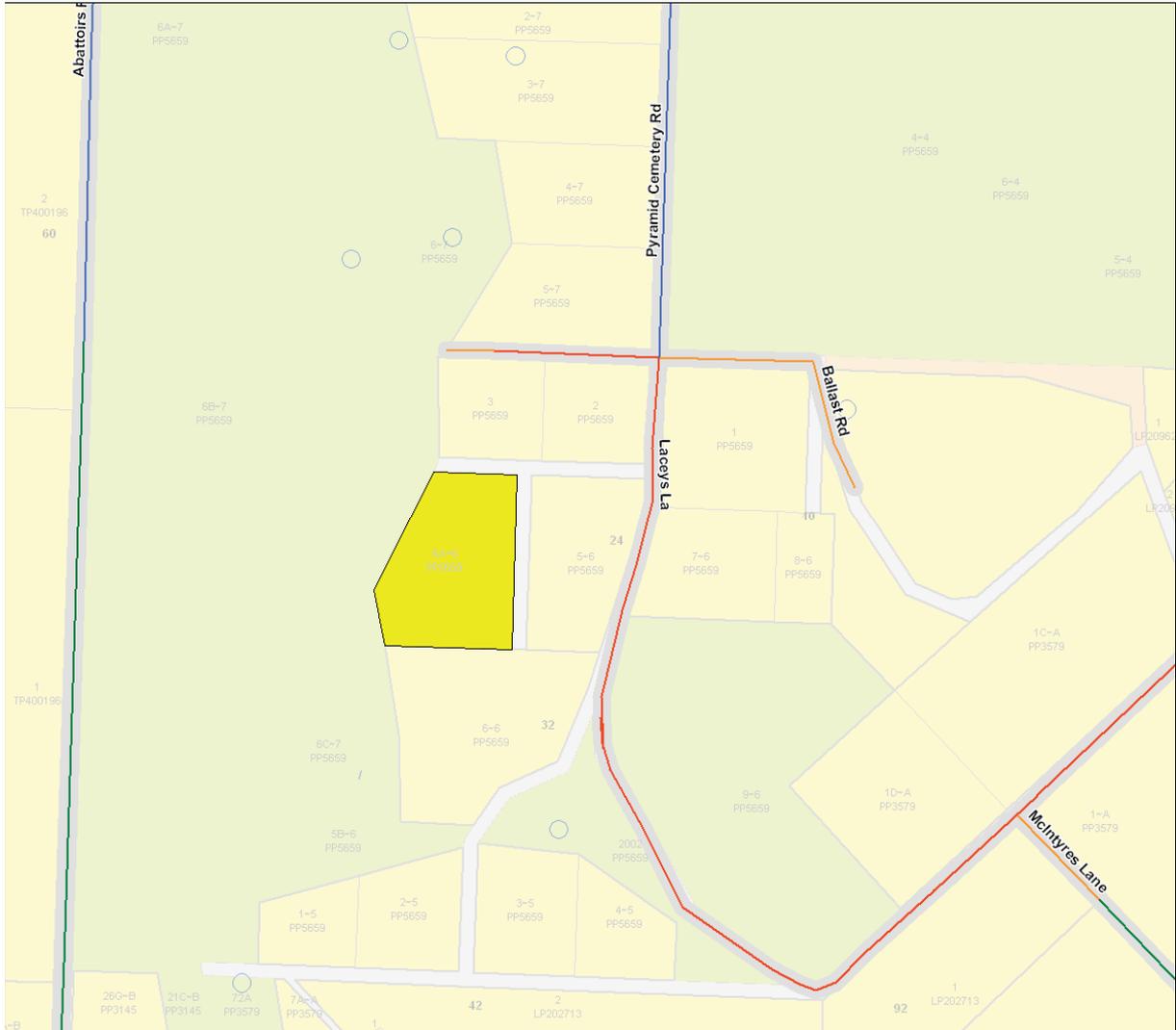
Laanecoorie Water Treatment Plant – Rezone to Public Use Zone

Boort



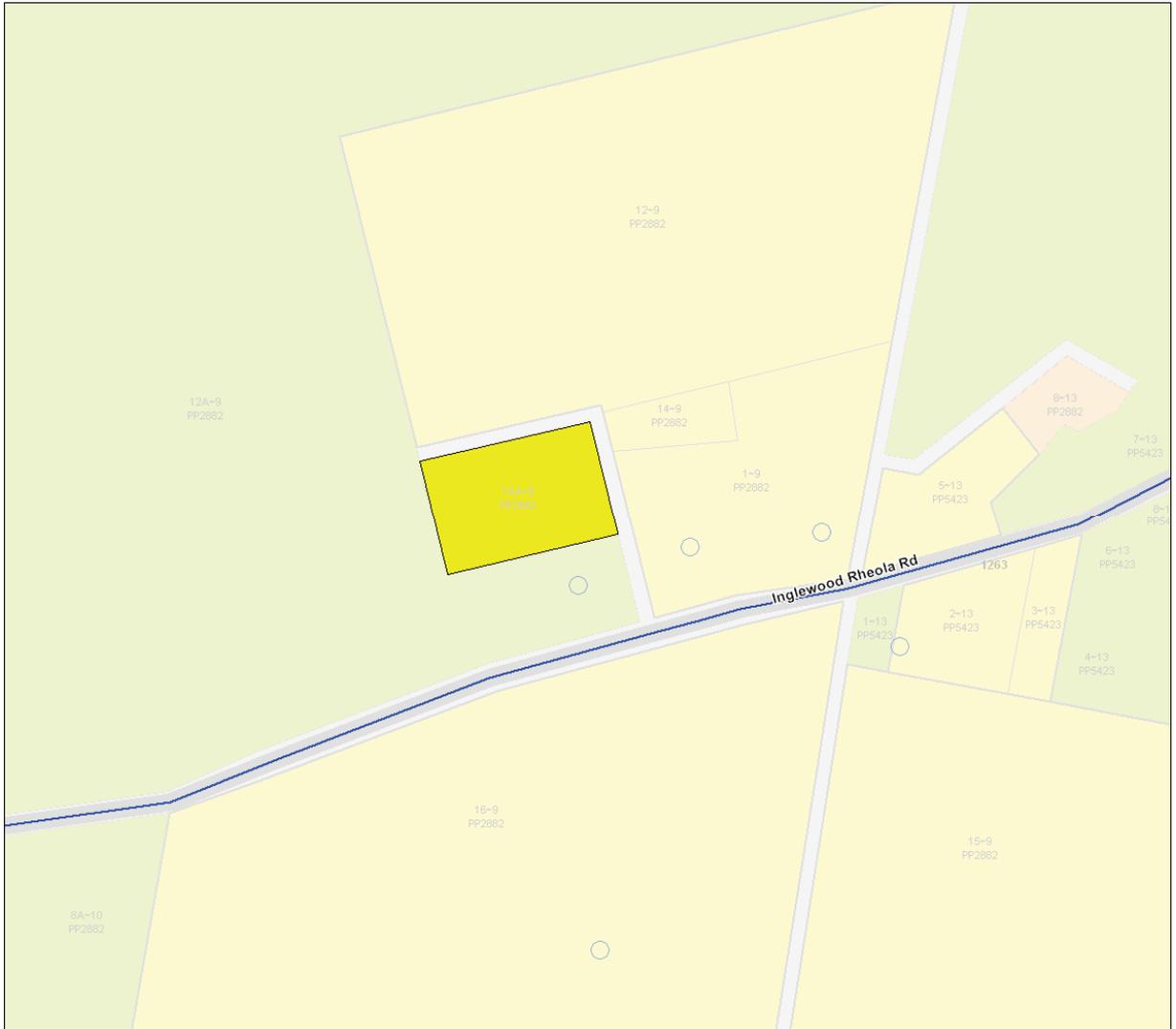
Boort Cemetery – Rezone to Public Use Zone

Pyramid Hill



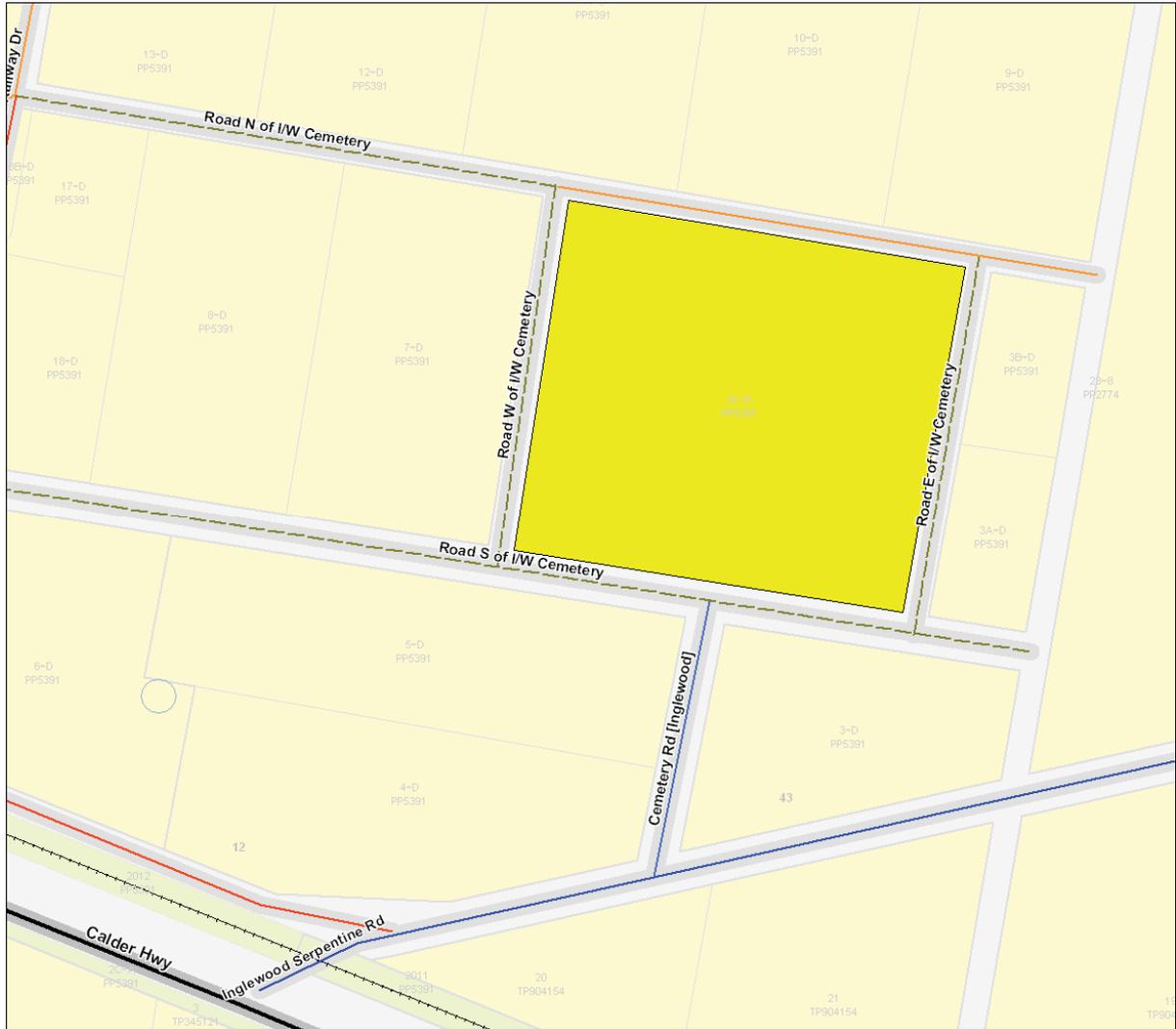
Pyramid Hill Cemetery – Rezone to Public Use Zone

Kingower



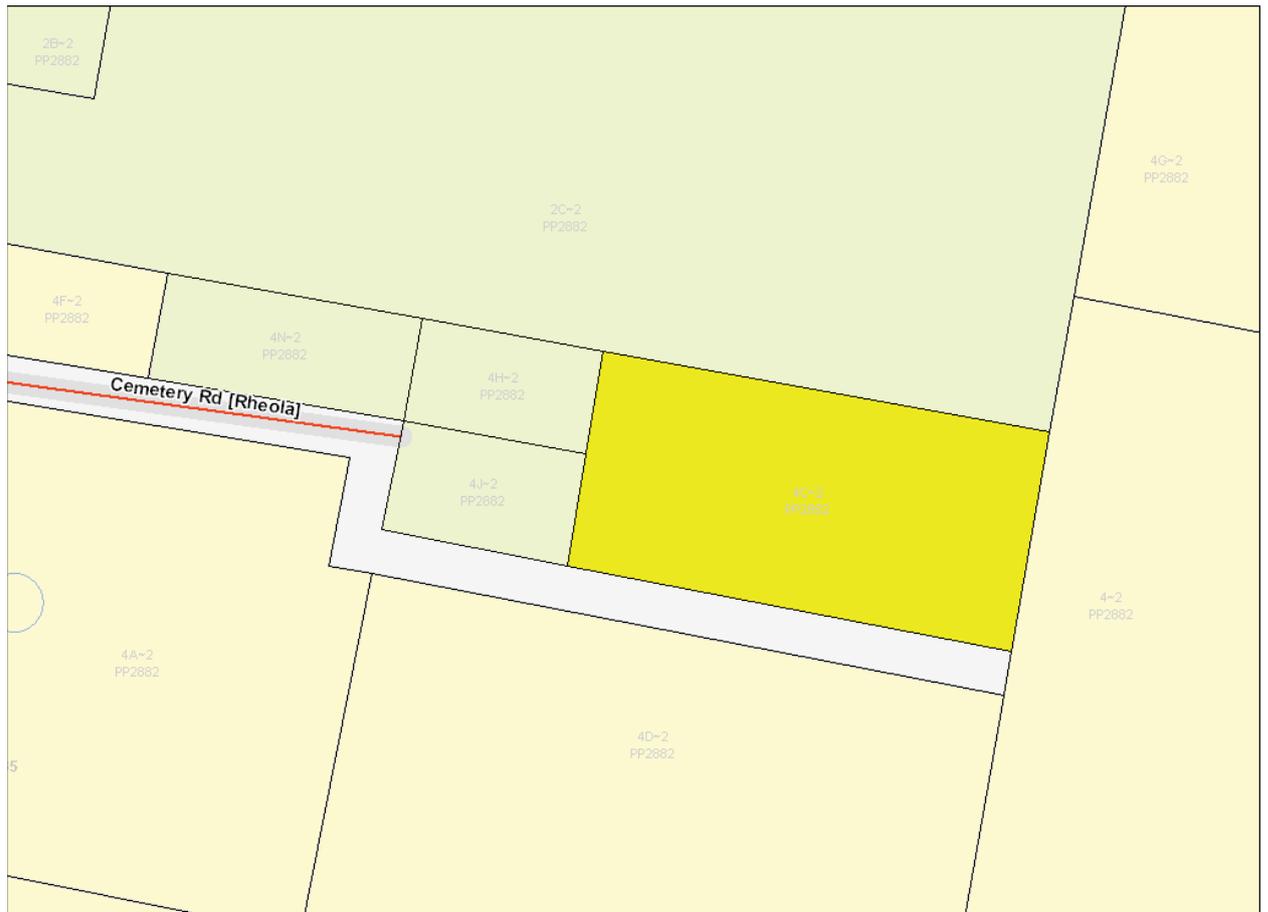
Kingower Cemetery – Rezone to Public Use Zone

Inglewood



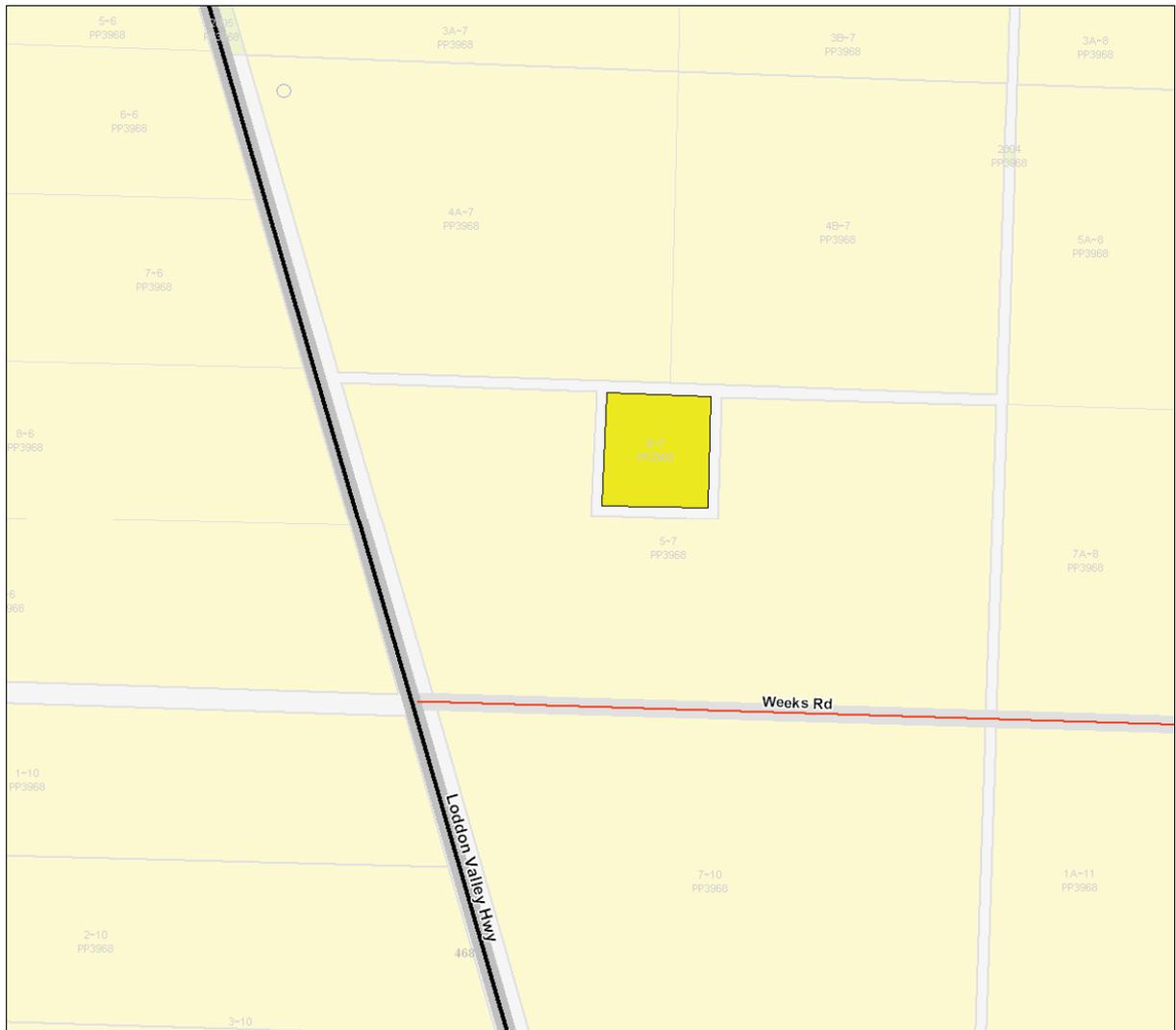
Inglewood Cemetery – Rezone to Public Use Zone

Rheola



Rheola Cemetery – Rezone to Public Use Zone

Yarrayne



Yarrayne Cemetery – Rezone to Public Use Zone

