



REPORT

Strathbogie Shire Rural Residential Strategy

July 2004

Jointly prepared by
Strathbogie Shire Council



and

BecaPtyLtd



▪ report

Strathbogie Shire Rural Residential Strategy

Prepared for
Strathbogie Shire Council

By
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July 04

Table of Contents

1	<i>Introduction</i>	1
1.1	What is “Rural Residential Development”?.....	2
1.2	What is a “Rural Residential Strategy”?.....	3
1.3	Methodology.....	6
2	<i>Key Issues</i>	8
2.1	Strategic Issues	8
3	<i>Vision and Objectives</i>	14
3.1	Vision.....	15
4	<i>Policy Framework</i>	18
4.1	Ministerial Direction No. 6	18
4.2	State Planning Policy Framework	18
4.3	Local Planning Policy Framework	19
4.4	Regional Catchment Strategies	21
4.5	Zones.....	22
4.6	Overlays.....	25
5	<i>Rural Residential Areas</i>	28
5.1	Existing Rural Residential Areas	29
6	<i>Development Trends</i>	50
6.1	Development Applications.....	50
6.2	Real Estate Interviews	54
7	<i>Strategies for Rural Living</i>	56
7.1	Evaluation of Existing Rural Living Areas.....	56
7.2	Approach to Rezoning	58
8	<i>Recommendations and Conclusions</i>	59
8.1	Conclusions.....	59
8.2	Recommendations for Implementation.....	59
8.3	Priorities	61
8.4	Process	62
8.5	Consultation.....	63
9	<i>Appendices</i>	65
	Demographics of buyers.....	67

Growth	67
Euroa.....	67
Planning Conditions.....	68
Type of land and housing demanded.....	68
Current developments	68
Ideal locations for residential subdivisions	68
Commercial properties	68
Places not recommended for development	69
 <i>Appendix 2 – Weighting Spreadsheet.....</i>	 <i>71</i>

1 Introduction

The Strathbogie Shire Council, located approximately one and half hours north of Melbourne along the Hume Freeway, is increasingly coming under pressure to develop rural land for lifestyle purposes. Pressure for rural and lifestyle development is currently being experienced around the Shire with no real strategy as to where this is appropriate in the long term. Council has expressed a strong desire to develop a strategy, which can be implemented through its Planning Scheme.



The experience of shires nearer Melbourne and also those adjoining Strathbogie indicates that the pressure for rural lifestyle development will continue to grow, and if left unplanned, can have significant adverse impacts on the rural landscape. Shires such as Murrindindi, Mitchell, Greater Shepparton, Benalla and Mansfield have experienced development pressures due to

their proximity to Melbourne and the increasing demand for rural lifestyle blocks within reasonable commuting distance of the City or nearby regional centres, such as Shepparton. The table below represents annual population change in a regional context and demonstrates the relative growth in Strathbogie compared with other shires in north-eastern Victoria. Although Strathbogie Shire has smaller comparative growth it has undergone similar landscape and settlement change as seen in other areas within the region.

The decline in traditional farming methods towards alternative industries such as equine and intensive animal industries, timber plantations and sub commercial farming has also impacted on the Shire. The location and style of housing within the Shire reflects this change in farming practices and economic activity. Anecdotally, local real estate agents suggest that bush areas under 24 hectares with no capability for farming are also increasing in popularity, and this is but one indicator of the search for rural lifestyle and amenity that characterised this section of the market.

Population Change 1986-2001

	1986	1991	1996	2001	Average Annual Change 86-01
Gr. Shepparton	48763	50773	51902	55210	0.8%
Mitchell	21745	25289	24933	27542	1.6%
Murrindindi	9553	10993	12451	13109	2.1%
Strathbogie	8301	8568	8794	9169	0.7%

Source: ABS Census

In addition to the demand for alternative industries, recent population growth has occurred beyond the fringe of major towns within Strathbogie Shire, which is demonstrated by the following table on population change from 1986 to 2001, which shows that the 'Balance' areas of the Shire are growing more than other parts. Aside from high growth in Nagambie, the other interesting trend to note is the growth of Avenel, the southern most town in the shire with direct access to the Hume Freeway. Rural Residential demand in this location is likely to be high in coming years.

Population in Strathbogie Shire 1986-2001

	1986	1991	1996	2001	Average Annual Change 86-01
Euroa	2,730	2,765	2,697	2,710	0.0%
Nagambie	1,099	1,219	1,335	1,409	1.7%
Violet Town	594	597	580	593	0.0%
Avenel	487	525	546	552	0.8%
Balance	3,391	3,462	3,636	3,905	0.9%
Shire	8,301	8,568	8,794	9,169	0.7%

Source: ABS Census

On a national scale, Australia's population is ageing and it is no exception at the regional level in the Strathbogie Shire. In addition to the ageing population, declining family household numbers has led to increased housing development, although with reasonably static population growth the level of development is not as significant as it could be, for example, when the Craigieburn by-pass results in Strathbogie being effectively "15 minutes closer" to Melbourne.

This report is the first stage in providing a clear strategy for the Shire of Strathbogie to address these development pressures in a manner that protects prime agricultural land and fosters sustainability throughout the region. It aims to prioritise actions by applying new rural residential zones and proactively meeting the needs of the Shire to provide additional rural residential opportunities. In this sense this strategy will form and infirm part of the process for reviewing rural zones in the Shire, which is a significant test. As rural towns are under pressure to survive, planning for future growth and attracting a diverse population to the Shire will improve the economic and social sustainability of the Shire. In addition, new population will aid in the collection of rates and will assist in protecting rural towns from economic decline. By preparing a comprehensive strategy, the Council will be able to provide strategic justification for the rezoning of rural land to both Low Density Residential and Rural Living.

1.1 What is "Rural Residential Development"?

Rural residential development can be defined in broad terms as houses in the rural area on properties that are primarily for residential purposes. As rural areas are typically large expansive environments, usually modified by farming activities that are sparsely populated, it is important to strategically plan development in order to reduce the impacts of increased density. Residential development in rural areas is low-density development outside of the township zone. Although rural residential development will include a variety of lot sizes, if a Rural Living zone is implemented, residential development will

comprise a minimum lot size of 8 hectares if no other size is specified in the planning scheme.

As the demand for rural 'lifestyle' properties is increasing and improvements are made to road infrastructure, particularly to Melbourne via City Link and the Hume Freeway, rural living is more accessible for commuters and multiple home owners with houses in both rural and city locations. This will be discussed later in section 2.2.

1.2 What is a "Rural Residential Strategy"?

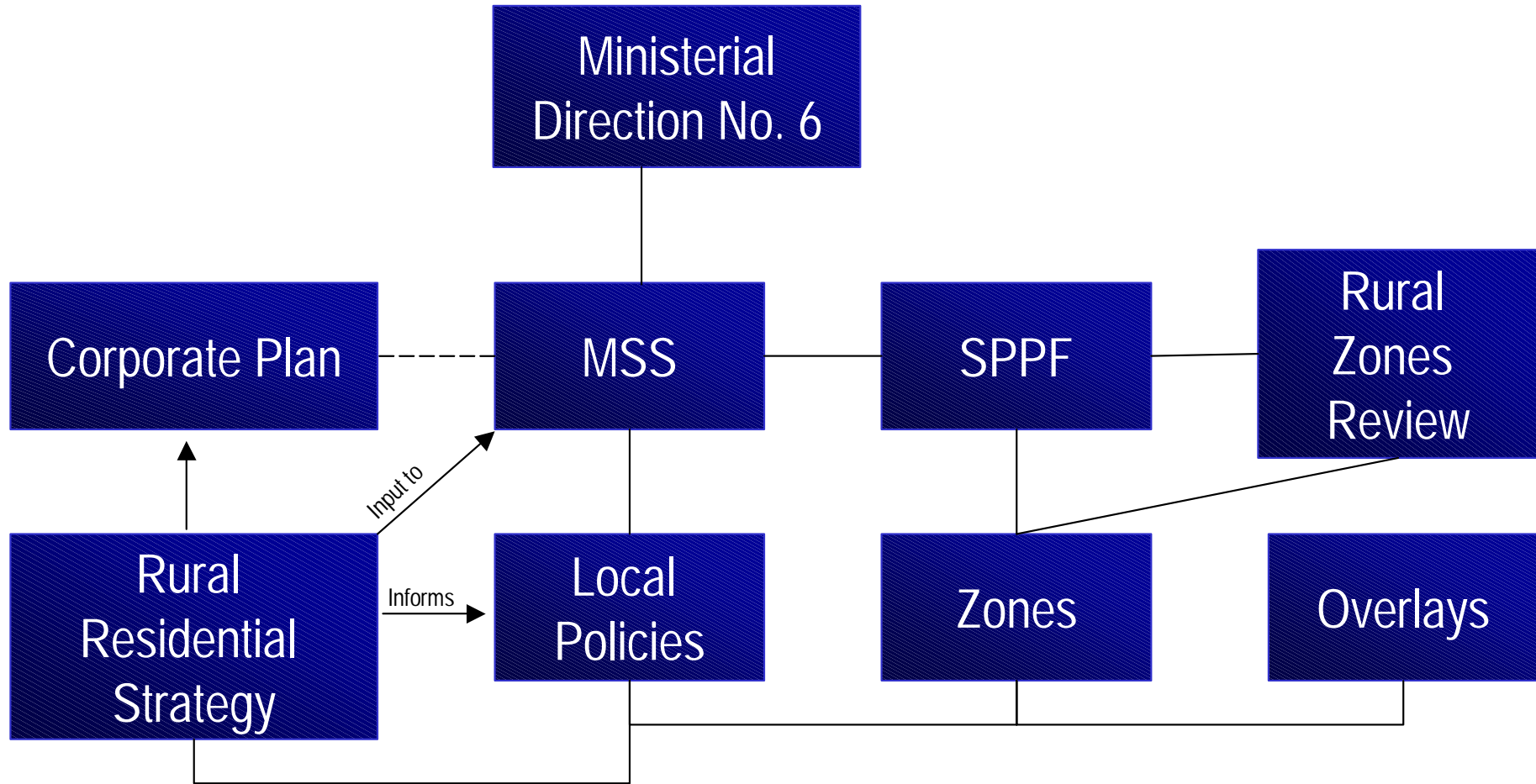
The requirement to undertake a Municipal Strategic Statement for each Shire within the Victoria Planning Provisions system clearly indicates that the decision making process needs to be driven by strategy rather than detailed rules. In the context of managing dynamic issues such as land use change and demand for residential development, a lack of strategic planning can lead to poor outcomes, ill-considered cumulative effects, dissatisfied 'customers' (i.e. the Shires residents and businesses) and an unsustainable environment. While the Municipal Strategic Statement and imposition of local policies and schedules provides a key mechanism for implementing strategy, it is important to consider the range of options that may be available prior to undertaking changes to the planning framework. In this instance, the Strathbogie Shire Council has initiated a Rural Residential Strategy to identify the appropriate approach to managing land use change and the issues associated with it. This is a first step and one which is followed by the more formal consultation and statutory processes associated with planning scheme amendment processes that will be required to rezone specific areas.

Put simply, strategic planning is a management tool that is used to help an organisation do a better job. In the context of local government, this means focussing energy to ensure that the Council is able to deliver services and outcomes to the standards expected by its constituent community. It ensures political representatives, staff and communities are aware of, and working towards, the same common goals. It is a tool that complements the Planning Scheme, and ensures the various pieces of the 'jigsaw' required to achieve longer term outcomes can be put in place (i.e. asset management programmes, community development, education and information services).

Strategic planning ensures that Council is able to be responsive in a changing and dynamic environment, while still achieving the outcomes it is seeking - although possibly by using different tools. A longer-term strategy for rural residential development may be continuously updated and monitored by Council, and may drive changes to the planning scheme or its administration, asset management and so forth. A sound strategy for rural residential development will establish a way of thinking which is outcome focussed to ensure the fundamental decisions needed to achieve common goals are made at the right time, and that the actions required to support those decisions are carried out in the best way possible.

While a Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) provides guidance on the important issues for the Shire, this does not negate the need for good strategic planning leading into the

formal MSS process. The MSS must provide strong guidance for planning matters; however, various influences in Strathbogie have resulted in significant changes in the rural economy and local activities. These include changes in rural production, drought, increased conflicts between rural and other activities, and demand for rural lifestyles particularly with Melbourne becoming 'closer'. These changes have emphasised the need for proactive planning in rural areas, and that in managing rural areas, Councils must ensure there is a strong vision in place so that all involved have a common sense of purpose.



Strategic planning requires decision-makers to take a long-term view on the implications of today's decisions. In the case of Strathbogie Shire, the current framework for planning is the Planning Scheme, and the various rural zones within the Victoria Planning Provisions available to the Council.

1.3 Methodology

A number of key stages have contributed to the development of the Rural Residential Strategy and are listed in the following table. In order to identify the key issues involved and to address the key objectives of Council, the methodology includes a review of background information as well as an inception workshop with Council staff.

Understanding the local property market is important when identifying and prioritising areas for strategic rezoning in order to determine development trends. This is integrated into the methodology by interviews with local real estate agents, while field trip observations and consultation with Councillors enables a broader understanding of the existing conditions and potential demand.

Task	Description	Completion date
<i>Inception Workshop</i>	Two hour workshop with Council staff to discuss key issues from the perspective of planning scheme administration and policy setting. Defining criteria for Judging 'good and bad' examples of rural residential development.	<i>March 2004</i>
<i>Development Review</i>	Using Council data on recent development applications in the last six years to determine the number of dwellings permitted in the rural zone, and to understand development trends and demand. Create maps from Council's development database of the location of rural residential development.	<i>March/April 2004</i>
<i>Interviews with real estate agents</i>	A series of interviews with real estate agents in different parts of the Shire to ask those in the property market where they suggest development pressure is highest.	<i>March 2004</i>
<i>Develop criteria for rural residential development</i>	Identify parts of the Shire where rural residential may be appropriate and those where it is undesirable. Criteria will be relevant to landscape protection, strategic development opportunities, infrastructure/servicing issues, land uses. Shire planners will develop a list of model conditions for managing rural residential development.	<i>April/May 2004</i>
<i>Fieldtrip around Shire</i>	A full day fieldtrip around the Shire to look at the type of recent rural residential development, and smaller rural towns. Photographic records and examples of 'good and bad' development judged against criteria from inception workshop.	<i>April 2004</i>

Task	Description	Completion date
Review Policy Framework	A review of the policy framework, and the recent rural zones review was undertaken in the context of identifying opportunities to improve the current local planning provisions.	May 2004
Develop strategy and identify potential zones	Where practical those zones that are appropriate for rural residential development, and those that are not will be identified. Spatial planning will be undertaken through a workshop process.	July 2004

2 Key Issues

2.1 Strategic Issues

In our view, the key issues arising for Council in managing the rural area are:

1. The **potential for conflict** between rural-residential and productive uses, including within the proposed Strathbogie Special Use Zone for Food and Logistics;
2. **Loss of landscape and rural amenity** through poorly managed rural development;
3. **Foreclosing future options for urban growth** due to lack of strategic rural planning around the key townships of Euroa, Nagambie, Violet Town and Avenel;
4. **Development drivers** that are difficult to predict and understand, and therefore difficult to accommodate within a Shire wide strategy;
5. **Level of planning control** that can be exercised on existing titles, developments and areas is potentially limited and may undermine the overall strategy.

In relation to development drivers, there are a number of key influences. The Melbourne Metropolitan Strategy (Melbourne 2030) has a number of implementation plans including protecting Melbourne's green wedges. As part of this protection, an urban growth boundary has been developed and as a consequence, urban densities within the boundary are encouraged to increase. According to local real estate agents (discussed in section 6) there is a demand for larger properties and ranch style homes that are becoming more difficult to gain permission to build closer to Melbourne.



Market driven farming trends such as hobby farms for olives and mushrooms also create a demand for rural blocks and depending on the success of the market may change.

Observations of real estate agents were also made in regard to the minimum number of years people stay in the Shire, being six years.

This demand includes the purchase of traditional farming properties that are larger than the area required for a permit for the construction of a dwelling. The property has been primarily bought for rural lifestyle living and in these instances is unlikely to be used for agricultural purposes. This causes conflict in that farmers cannot afford the increased cost of purchase price of land or the subsequent land use may conflict with the Shire's overall agricultural use (e.g. pest plants etc).

Planning itself may create a perception of demand, as current lot sizes may not be reflecting true demand, as there is no alternative available to potential buyers. All of these

factors plus a range of other economic and land availability issues make it difficult to predict the actual future demand. However, that demand will occur over a larger period of time can be certain.

The degree to which each of these issues becomes problematic in the future is largely derived from the approach to rural residential development versus the demands of the markets (or development drivers). A review of existing development trends is included later in this report, and from this, specific local issues are identified.

As well as considering the potential impacts of development, it is also important to consider the impacts that could arise if there is insufficient guidance. A lack of strategic planning for rural residential development could have a number of adverse impacts such as:

- an increase in conflicts with rural production activities;
- foreclosure of the potential for future industry to locate at strategic locations near good access/markets/isolated areas;
- foreclosure of the most logical, environmentally sustainable or cost effective urban growth options by allowing rural residential as an interim land use;
- causing rural towns to decline due to scattered population;
- poor amenity for future residents if poorly located (e.g. too close to the Hume Freeway);
- remote locations leading to a lack of services and utilities (e.g. power).

While some of these issues may or may not be legitimate to consider in the context of the Planning Scheme, they are legitimate concerns for the future of the Strathbogie Shire and its current and future community. Clearly there are other strategic issues, however, from this initial review, these are the most pressing in relation to rural areas. There are also a number of “non-issues” which are often raised in the rural area. Some issues in the Strathbogie area can be considered non-issues in this context primarily due to a lack of environmental ‘threat’ from rural residential development. For example, while the loss of high quality soils is a concern, it is not a significant concern as there would appear to be insufficient rural residential development to cause this effect and the potential for subdivision to small rural lots does not exist (with 40, 80 and 100 hectare minimum lot sizes).

As Council has acted early enough to develop this strategy, it is unlikely that significant and irreversible impacts on the rural environment will occur, although the potential does exist. The consideration of soils amongst a range of other factors will ensure that the recommendation bordering future rural residential zones avoids or minimises serious contractual issues.

One of the key issues and questions that is important to understand are the drivers of development. That is, why do rural landowners want to develop rural residential blocks and what is the market looking for. This is, in part, addressed later in this report in relation to information gathered from two in-depth interviews with local real estate

agents. While the reasons for development occurring may seem obvious, the drivers can affect the policy responses. For example, if the drivers are to develop a second dwelling near a farm house for retirement purposes or a relative, it will be important to that landowner to be able to develop on their site. Alternatively, if another landowner simply wants to make additional money from the land, this could be achieved in a number of ways. In some cases the land may be worth more to develop as smaller blocks for rural residential than as agricultural land. In parts of the Shire (e.g. Strathbogie Ranges/Plateau) there is a diversifying landscape with smaller farming blocks and alternative crops.

The following table identifies a range of issues under four key matters that need to be considered in developing the rural residential strategy:



Managing Conflict	“Environmental” Impacts (incl. Rural character/amenity)	Foreclosing Options	Development Drivers	Planning Control
Protecting existing industry/agribusiness from rural residential development must be a key outcome;	Development and proposals being received in rural areas includes Bed and Breakfasts, Vineyards, golf courses;	Development of flood prone land around Euroa for ‘large lot’ residential development or rural residential development is occurring, and may not be good for towns. The cost of servicing flood prone areas could be less efficient than smaller residential blocks. Issues with infill development due to flooding needs to be resolved.	Economic activity can be generated from development, however, the Shire should not necessarily seek rural residential development at any cost;	Most development occurring on existing titles, so cannot control subdivision;
Business plans should be required for development proposals, especially if they are claiming some for of ‘business’ need for subdivision or development permits	Farmers are not buying into the Shire for broad-acre farming;	Ensure that rural residential development around towns doesn’t result in them becoming landlocked, resulting in township growth ‘leapfrogging’ rural residential development;	Decline of small communities around the Shire causes concern, but people from outside the Shire have moved in creating, in some locations, a more thriving community;	Identifying boundaries (whether artificial or physical) of areas where development may be encouraged is difficult;
Achieving a balance between development and protecting rural agribusiness and rural character is crucial;	Small lots with septic tanks, may need to put these properties on a special rate to environmentally manage disposal of effluent;	Ribbon development along arterial roads is occurring, but this may not be the best form of development;	For new development to avoid the need for subsidies they will either need to accept a lower level of service and include this into ‘development agreements’ or promote a development pattern that is more easily and economically serviced i.e. there needs to be some flexibility;	There are a number of 5-12 acres subdivisions in the Shire, some of which have been built on. There are also a lot of titles in the 20-100 acre range that landowners may seek to develop;

Managing Conflict	“Environmental” Impacts (incl. Rural character/amenity)	Foreclosing Options	Development Drivers	Planning Control
Food & Logistics Precinct is critical – need to protect the opportunity for development of rural activities without intrusion of sensitive activities;	Waterway protection should be taken into consideration;		Shire needs to encourage rural lifestyle but get the “mix” right;	There needs to be a level of control, the key question is how far to go in terms of control/management;
	Rural residential development may provide opportunities for re-vegetation and improved land management practices;		Need to identify areas where there is room for growth without infrastructure or servicing issues	Existing situation with land size and subdivision requirements can create unwanted expectations of development potential;
Policy framework needs to ensure complaints about farming activities from rural ‘lifestylers’ are avoided in farming areas;	Must protect rural character;		The existing population is ageing, and while there are new people and investment coming into the Shire, development should not be subsidised by Council;	Ensure conditions for permit approvals are correct, and where feasible, establish common or standard conditions that address issues typically associated with rural residential development;
Need to ensure that dwellings are tied to agricultural enterprises;	Capacity for septic tanks in specific areas should be a criteria for determining appropriate level of development;		Time scale for developing the land into Rural Living must be determined in relation to cash flow;	Need to look at alternative approaches to identifying areas where rural residential development should go, such as where can’t rural residential develop;
	Weed and land management is important over both farming		The policy approach needs to be open to trends and	

Managing Conflict	“Environmental” Impacts (incl. Rural character/amenity)	Foreclosing Options	Development Drivers	Planning Control
	and rural residential uses;		changes in the rural environment, e.g. people who own farmland but live in towns etc;	
			Social infrastructure is an important consideration; there is currently little or no demand for rural schools. Most social services delivered through the towns;	Require some level of control, but balance is important;
			Developer contributions need to reflect the real costs of development;	

3 Vision and Objectives

In developing a 'vision' and strategic objectives for dealing with Rural Residential development in the Shire, it is necessary to identify the issues raised by Council. At a workshop to 'kick-start' the strategy process, Councillors noted that:

There is demand for rural residential development in the Strathbogie Shire. The Shire wants to encourage rural residential development and growth in general, including economic development, subdivision and development and population growth. However, the general strategy is that rural residential development should be located in specific areas of the Shire and by implication should be avoided in areas where there may be conflicts with other rural production activities, or where other issues make rural residential development unsustainable.

While this strategic position was agreed by Council, the approach and means by which this is achieved identified a range of complex policy issues, approaches and more diverse views. There was no debate about the first two aspects of this strategic position, but when considering those areas that should be promoted as suitable for rural residential development, and conversely those areas where it should be discouraged, the challenges of planning for rural residential development emerged.

One of the key debates is whether Council through its planning scheme should become 'directive' in terms of identifying those areas where development is appropriate versus a more flexible and reactive approach.

Furthermore, identifying areas where rural residential development should be discouraged was found to be problematic, as the criteria for identifying these areas can be open for debate. The strategy is also pragmatic in the sense that it attempts to recognise some existing issues with the location of development in less desirable places. Ultimately, Council has taken the view that a strategy should be developed in an attempt to resolve these issues. This document attempts to articulate that Strategy, so that Planning Scheme Amendments and other actions can be undertaken to ensure this long term issue is dealt with effectively and proactively.

3.1 Vision

The Municipal Strategic Statement notes that the overall vision for the Shire is:

To improve the range and value of economic development in the Shire while protecting and enhancing the Shire's natural assets.

From this vision statement, and in developing a strategy for rural residential development it is appropriate to consider or reconsider the future of rural housing and rural residential development in the Shire. This involves understanding how the Council and community would like to see the rural areas develop and look in say 10, 20 and 30 years time. In broad terms, there might be three different scenarios considered, each with different consequences and results:

Market Driven Approach	Strategic and Planned Approach	Reinforce Existing Patterns
<p>Scenario 1: Rural Residential Development becomes core housing policy of the Shire</p>	<p>Scenario 2: Strategic Guidance on locations and standards for Rural Residential Development</p>	<p>Scenario 3: Status Quo – Rural Zones with scattered Rural Residential development</p>
<p>Under this scenario, the Shire would actively encourage and facilitate rural residential development to become the main means of housing future growth of the population. This approach would recognise the demand for lifestyle blocks, largely from life stylers living in the Shire and commuting on occasion to Melbourne.</p>	<p>Under this scenario, Council identifies locations where rural residential development is supported, and as a result, those areas where rural residential development is to be discouraged.</p>	<p>This approach would see Council continue to support scattered rural residential development around the Shire based on current planning provisions. In addition, those areas that have developed as rural residential areas (i.e. those noted in this report) will continue to intensify as applications are put before Council and would be supported in broad terms.</p>
<p>The advantages of this approach might include that the Shire becomes known as a rural lifestyle area, and the population grows as a result. The Councils rating base increases. The market determines where rural residential development might occur based on land value, and while it must continue to operate within the zone provisions, these may become less restrictive and Council will</p>	<p>The advantages of this approach might include that the rural community is clear on where rural residential development should be occurring, local townships can be supported by rural residential development and are thus easier to service. Existing areas where rural residential has occurred in the past, which is deemed to be inappropriate into the future area addressed.</p>	<p>The advantages of this approach are that the existing areas that have developed as rural residential 'enclaves' around the Shire are reinforced. Little change is needed in terms of the approach to planning for rural residential development.</p>

Market Driven Approach	Strategic and Planned Approach	Reinforce Existing Patterns
be more reactive to demand with rezoning and through permit approvals.		
The disadvantages of this approach are that the development is scattered in an ad hoc manner around the Shire, resulting in servicing demands being widespread and uneconomic. The Shires towns may also become less sustainable as the population drifts to the rural area.	The disadvantages with this approach are that individual landowners will have necessarily need to have some of their perceived existing development rights removed in rural areas to avoid scattered rural residential development. Council will need to administer the planning scheme rigidly to ensure success of the approach.	The disadvantages with this approach are that the existing rural residential areas have not been developed as part of any strategic approach, and the existing issues with some areas will be exacerbated over time. Servicing issues and expectations continue to be spread thinly.

Strathbogie Shire Council's preferred approach is **Scenario 2**, with a clear strategy for the location of rural residential development. This Strategy document has proceeded on this basis. The vision that might be developed for the Shire to be consistent with such a description of the rural environment, and supporting strategic objectives are defined on the following page.



Changing Economy
To recognise and support economic need to diversify and develop new rural industries given the range of pressures facing the rural sector in Victoria

Agriculture
To protect the economic value of agricultural land, and the ability of agricultural businesses to continue to operate without hindrance from new rural lifestyle dwellers

VISION
The Strathbogie rural area provides the best of rural 'amenity' lifestyle and agricultural business opportunities with well-serviced and sustainable communities.

Rural Character
To protect and where appropriate enhance the rural character and amenity of the Shire

Reinforcing Towns
To ensure land uses within the Shire reinforce existing investment and development of local townships so that they remain sustainable

Rural Housing
To ensure that rural residential development within the Shire provides for a range of rural housing opportunities

4 Policy Framework

The policy framework for dealing with rural residential living is relatively complex and is outlined in the following sections:

4.1 Ministerial Direction No. 6

The purpose of Ministerial Direction No 6 (Rural Residential Development) is *“to ensure that an amendment which has the effect of allowing rural residential development is prepared only after having regard to appropriate strategic considerations and the sustainability of land for that development”*.

Attached to the Ministerial Direction are Guidelines for Rural Residential Development. The guidelines note that any amendment for rural residential use or development must be accompanied by a report that deals with the follow issues:

- The State Planning Policy Framework
- Local Planning Policy Framework
- Regional Catchment Strategies
- Urban Areas Integration – in particular to ensure that rural residential development does not impede the proper long term growth of an urban area;
- Supply and demand – in particular the impact of any proposed additional supply on the landscape and other values, and to ensure that supply is provided in an orderly manner.
- Consultation with relevant agencies.

While this strategy does not purport to provide the level of analysis required for such a report, it does provide a framework for the consideration of these issues at a strategic level to the extent that this is possible without detailed rezoning proposals being identified at this stage in the process.

The ministerial direction also includes some localised considerations for the evaluation of rezoning proposals. These criteria area included, with additional local criteria, for discussion later in this report.

4.2 State Planning Policy Framework

As any development occurring in rural areas deals with complex issues, there are a number of clauses within the State Planning Policy Framework that relate to rural living and associated impacts. Clause 16.03 identifies land suitable for rural living and rural residential development and states that land should only be zoned for rural living where it:

- Is located close to existing towns and urban centres, but not in areas that will be required for fully serviced urban development.
- Can be supplied with electricity and water and good quality road access.

- Land should not be zoned for rural living or rural residential development if it will encroach on high quality productive agricultural land or adversely impact on waterways or other natural resources.

One of the main concerns that is often raised with the location and scale of rural residential development is the potential loss of agricultural land and impact on the rural economy. While the policy framework provides clear guidance in this respect, Shire Councillors also note that in many locations within the Shire farming is becoming less and less economically viable, with many properties surviving only as a result of 'off-farm' income. Clause 17.05 of the State Planning Policy Framework identifies the following objective in relation to agricultural land:

To ensure that the State's agricultural base is protected from the unplanned loss of productive agricultural land due to permanent changes of land use and to enable protection of productive farmland which is of strategic significance in the local or regional context.

A number of criteria are also included at Clause 17.05-2, which relate to consideration of development of agricultural and rural land. In considering a proposal to subdivide or develop agricultural land, the following factors must be considered:

- The desirability and impacts of removing the land from primary production, given its agricultural productivity.
- The impacts of the proposed subdivision or development on the continuation of primary production on adjacent land, with particular regard to land values and to the viability of infrastructure for such production.
- The compatibility between the proposed or likely development and the existing uses of the surrounding land.
- Assessment of the land capability.

4.3 Local Planning Policy Framework

The Strathbogie Local Policy Planning Framework provides a local context for planning controls and additionally sets out the Council's objectives and local policies in order to manage the Shire's growth and development in a regulated and sustainable manner. The Local Planning Policy Framework is made up of the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and local policies. Within this framework there are a number of Council objectives and vision statements, which relate to rural residential and low-density residential development.

4.3.1 Municipal Strategic Statement

Clause 21 of the Strathbogie Planning Scheme, The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), sets out the Council's objectives and visions in regard to its future security by developing the Shire's agricultural, commercial, tourist, and land resources without compromising the natural features or village and rural lifestyle. It is the objective of Council to expand its rate base by capitalising on the Shire's strategic location and promoting these strengths. This strategy therefore supports the Council's objectives.

The following statements come from Council's vision (Clause 21.04-3) and have most relevance to the current rural residential strategy:

- Fostering growth and ensuring prosperity within the main towns and townships in the Shire and planning strategically for rural living development in association with appropriate infrastructure and environmental considerations.
- Improving employment opportunities by encouraging industry and business development in towns and rural areas.

It is also an objective to focus future residential development in and around the major serviced towns. Strathbogie Shire's residential and urban development is based on a series of small towns and settlements, which largely serve as rural service centres. The Shire's larger towns with their existing facilities, services and water and sewerage infrastructure will be the focus for future residential, commercial and industrial development (Clause 21.05-2).

A Council strategy has been to implement directions for the use and development of land within Euroa, Nagambie, Violet Town, Avenel, Longwood and Strathbogie while managing urban growth in conjunction with improvements to infrastructure. Clause 21.05-3 "Rural Land and Agricultural Investment" of the MSS recognises the importance of the Shire's agricultural land and the need to protect it from residential encroachment. It includes the following strategies:

- The productive capacity of the Shire's rural land represents the municipality's greatest resource. Areas of high quality agricultural land associated with major streams such as the Goulburn River are a particular asset which need to be managed to avoid fragmentation, use and development that does not use its productive potential.
- The Council's strategy is to promote and support new housing in the Rural Zone only when it is in association with an agricultural use of the land. Such development should be on lots larger than 20 hectares in area on the basis that lots smaller than this size are rarely able to support agricultural enterprises.
- Scattered rural housing development needs to be managed to avoid loss of land to non-productive land uses and conflicts with the operation of agricultural activities.
- Productive agricultural land creates opportunities for further specialty farming activities, diversification in agricultural production and local value adding.

Under the infrastructure section (Clause 21.05-6) the MSS states that to support the Shire's population and further development, the provision and maintenance of high standards of physical infrastructure is critical. This has significant impact when considering ad hoc development scattered throughout rural zones where title sizes permit house construction, versus a strategic focussed approach based on rural residential zoning.

4.3.2 Local Planning Policies

The Strathbogie Planning Scheme sets out individual policies for each town within the Shire. These provide guidance for development of towns and surrounds and will be relevant for rural residential development. For example:

The town of Avenel's objectives include:

- To retain a defined urban form by integrating future residential subdivision including low density residential development within the existing urban form.

The Strathbogie Planning Scheme also includes a local policy on "Houses in the Rural Zone" which states, *"The maintenance and development of agricultural production and to minimise the use of productive agricultural land for non productive uses and developments is important. The residential use of existing lots may lead to the loss of productive land. The Shire has a large number of existing small crown allotments. Services and infrastructure, particularly roads, cannot be provided to a large number of existing lots."*

This policy raises some of the issues that are relevant to the Strategy. Objectives of the policy are:

- To ensure that the use of existing crown lots will not result in the loss of productive agricultural land or land use conflict with adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.
- To provide for the construction of houses on rural lots when the house is associated with and required to support a commercial agricultural enterprise.
- To require the upgrading of infrastructure services including access roads as a prerequisite for the development of houses on rural lots at the developer's expense.

Either one of these zones, Rural Living or Low Density Residential, could be applied to future rural residential areas.

4.4 Regional Catchment Strategies

In addition to the Victoria Planning Provisions, there are other documents relevant to the consideration of rural residential development issues in Strathbogie.

Ministerial Direction No 6 also requires that any rezoning proposal consider the implications of Regional Catchment Strategies. The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority has a Catchment Management Strategy dated November 2003. The key elements of this strategy in so far as they relate to rural residential development are:

The vision (3.3)

"A catchment recognised locally, nationally and internationally for quality agricultural produce where community values contribute to the benefits of abundant and well-maintained environmental assets used for tourism and recreational activities."

The environmental footprint of irrigation and dry land farming will be significantly reduced, with farmers occupying less land and using less water whilst managing their resources more sustainably. New opportunities will arise for increasing the ecosystem services provided by the land retired from agriculture and by improved environmental flows.

The region's economy will be robust, with much of the agricultural produce processed within the region, generating employment and wealth creation opportunities for a regional community actively engaging in natural resource management programs. "

Looking at current trends across the Catchment, it is expected that there will be a significant shift in land use patterns over the next 50 years and this will strongly affect the future landscape. The result in relation to this strategy being a mosaic of land made up of:

- An intensive agricultural zone with a smaller ecological footprint - 'double the production from half the land'
- An increased 'conservation' zone where the land no longer used for traditional agriculture is managed for nature conservation and ecosystem services; and
- Rural living areas where land, particularly near urban centres, is converted to hobby farms and smaller farms where the main household income is from activities other than agriculture and which may offer additional conservation benefits.

Priority areas include:

- Market-based approaches such as using 'auction' systems to reveal the price landholders are willing to accept for delivering Catchment natural resource management benefits.
- Biodiversity Action Planning to protect and enhance biodiversity assets from farm to landscape scale are determined and can be overlaid on priorities for other issues such as salinity.

However, in broad terms, the MSS ensures that all use and development of land in catchment areas accords with proper land management practices relating to revegetation, erosion control and management, vermin and weed eradication and management, salinity and flooding control. In addition to this, there is also the presentation and enhancement of the existing character, historical elements and form of townships and villages and heritage places in rural areas.

4.5 Zones

4.5.1 Rural Zones Review

In March 2003, the Minister for Planning released the *Rural Zones Review Reference Group Discussion and Options Paper January 2003* for public comment. In addition to this review as part of the Metropolitan Strategy, *Melbourne 2030 Planning for Sustainable Growth*, two new zones were proposed and adopted into the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPPs) to implement the Strategies *Green Wedges Implementation Plan 5*. These new zones are the Green Wedge Zone and the Rural Conservation Zone. The latter being designed for use in

rural Victoria and meets the Reference Group’s recommendation for a zone with a strong environmental focus to replace the existing Environmental Rural Zone.

In November 2003, two new draft zones, *Farming Zone* and the *Rural Activity Zone* were proposed and the existing *Rural Living Zone* was revised and released for comment. Over 2,700 submissions were received from Councils, professional organisations and individuals. In responding to these submissions, the Government has decided on rural zones for Victoria that:

- Recognise the State, regional and local importance of agriculture as an industry and provide greater protection for productive agricultural land.
- Provide a wider choice of zones with clear purposes and controls to match.
- Discourage ad hoc and incompatible use and development.
- Recognise the changing nature of agricultural activities and reduce the potential for conflict between agriculture and other, more sensitive, land uses.
- Recognise that rural areas are places where people live and work.
- Recognise and protect rural areas that are environmentally sensitive.
- Remove the need for permits for minor matters.

The final combination of new rural zones will be the Farming Zone, Rural Activity Zone, Rural Living Zone and Rural Conservation Zone.

In broad terms, the following zones are relevant to Strathbogie Shire and the consideration of rural residential development, and development on the periphery of existing townships:

(a) Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ)

The existing Low Density Residential Zone purpose is to:

- To provide for low-density residential development on lots which in the absence of sewerage can treat and retain all wastewater.
- Each lot must be a minimum size of 0.4 hectares.

The following table provides an indication of key permit requirements for the LDRZ.

Use	Permit requirements
House	No permit is required for a house. Must be only dwelling on lot.
Agricultural Uses	All agricultural uses need a permit. Intensive animal husbandry is prohibited
Other Uses	A landowner may apply for a permit for a range of accommodation, commercial, recreation and community facility uses.
Subdivision	A permit is required to subdivide land. Each lot must be at least the area specified for the land in a schedule to this zone. Any area specified must be at least 0.4 hectares. If no area specified each lot must be at least 0.4 hectares.
House lot excisions	A permit may be granted to create lots smaller than 0.4 hectares if the subdivision: Excises land which is required for a road or utility installation Provides for the subdivision of existing lots and the number of lots is not increased

(b) Rural Living Zone (RLZ)

The revised Rural Living Zone purpose is:

- to provide for residential use in a rural environment;
- to ensure the protection of natural resources, landscape and heritage values and the biodiversity of the area;
- to ensure that subdivision promotes effective land management practices and infrastructure provision;
- to encourage development of sustainable rural living enterprises.

The following table provides an indication of key permit requirements for RLZ (Department of Sustainability, 2004).

Use	Permit requirements
Houses	No permit is required for a house on a lot greater than 8 hectares or the minimum lot size set by Council. A land owner may apply for a permit for a house on a lot smaller than 8 hectares or the minimum lot size set by Council. A landowner may apply for a permit for additional houses on a lot.
Agricultural Uses	All agricultural uses need a permit. Intensive animal industries (such as broiler farms and piggeries) are prohibited.
Other uses	A landowner may apply for a permit for a range of accommodation, tourism, recreation and commercial uses in the zone. Industry, warehouses, offices, transport terminals, take away food places and convenience restaurants are prohibited.
Subdivision	A permit is required to subdivide land. The minimum lot size is 8 hectares or the lot size set by the Council
House lot excisions	As is the case now, house lot excisions are prohibited.
Exempt minor buildings	Additional exemptions have been included in the zone so that a permit is not required to alter or extend an existing house if the additional floor area is less than 50 square metres or the floor area set by the Council.

(c) Rural Zone (RUZ)

In order to understand the significance of rezoning land to Rural Residential and Low Density Residential from the Rural zone, it is important to understand what the current Rural zone limitations are and how the introduction of new zones will meet the objectives of rural residential development. As the primary objectives of the RUZ protects and encourages agricultural and intensive animal husbandry, residential uses located in close proximity to this land often in practice result in conflicting uses. Therefore a separate zone is required to direct development and sensitive uses to areas that foster sustainable growth that complement the surrounding rural zone.

The purposes of the RUZ are:

To provide for the sustainable use of the land for extensive animal husbandry (including dairying and grazing) and crop raising (including Horticulture and Timber Production).

To encourage:

- An integrated approach to land management
- Protection and creation of an effective rural infrastructure and land resource
- Improvement of existing agricultural techniques
- Value adding to agricultural products at source
- Promotion of economic development compatible with rural activities
- Development of new sustainable rural enterprises

To ensure that subdivision promotes effective land management practices and infrastructure provision.

Use	Permit requirements
Houses	The lot must be at least the area specified in a schedule to this zone. If no area is specified the lot must be at least 40 hectares. It must be the only dwelling on the lot. If the dwelling does not meet these conditions a permit is required.
Agricultural Uses	A permit is required (other than animal keeping, Apiculture, Broiler farm, Cattle feedlot, Crop raising and Extensive animal husbandry).
Other uses	A landowner may apply for a permit for a range of accommodation, leisure and recreation, commercial enterprises.
Subdivision	A permit is required to subdivide land. Each lot must be at least the area specified in the schedule to this zone. If the area is specified, each lot must be at least 40 hectares.

4.6 Overlays

Overlays can be used to manage development in specific areas, to be considered in addition to the requirements of the zone. When applied to an area the overlay requirements must be addressed before a decision can be made. Overlays that can be applied to enable the sustainable development of rural residential living within the Shire of Strathbogie are the *Design Development Overlay*, *Restructure Overlay*, and the *Environmental Significance Overlay*.

4.6.1 Design Development Overlay

The purpose of the Design Development Overlay is to identify areas that are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development. A schedule to the overlay must contain a statement of the design objectives to be achieved for the area affected by the schedule.

Use	Permit Requirements
Buildings and works	<p>A permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works. This does not apply: if a schedule to this overlay specifically states that a permit is not required.</p> <p>Buildings and works must be constructed in accordance with any requirements in a schedule to this overlay. A schedule may include requirements relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building setbacks

Use	Permit Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Building height ■ Plot ratio ■ Landscaping ■ Any other requirements relating to the design or built form of new development
Subdivision	<p>A permit is required to subdivide land. This does not apply if a schedule to this overlay specifically states that a permit is not required. Subdivision must occur in accordance with any lot size or other requirement specified in a schedule to this overlay. A permit may be granted to subdivide land which is not in accordance with any lot size or other requirement in a schedule to this overlay, unless the schedule specifies otherwise.</p>

4.6.2 Restructure Overlay

The purpose of the Restructure Overlay is to identify old and inappropriate subdivisions, which are to be restructured. It is also used to preserve and enhance the amenity of the area and reduce the environmental impacts of dwellings and other development.

Use	Permit Requirements
Subdivision	<p>A permit is required to subdivide land. A subdivision must be in accordance with a restructure plan for the land listed in the schedule to this overlay. This does not apply if the subdivision is for one of the following purposes and no additional lots or subdivision potential is created:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To realign boundaries between lots that have been consolidated in accordance with the restructure plan. ■ To consolidate a restructure lot with a section of closed road or other land not included in a proposed restructure lot.
Dwellings and other buildings	<p>A permit is required to construct or extend a dwelling or other building. A permit must be in accordance with a restructure plan for the land listed in a schedule to this overlay. This does not apply if: No restructure plan is listed in the schedule and the permit is required to extend an existing dwelling or other building. The land is a lot for which a permit had been granted under Clause 45.05-1</p>

4.6.3 Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)

The purpose of the ESO is to identify areas where the development of land may be affected by environmental constraints. It also aims to ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.

A Schedule to this overlay must contain a statement of environmental significance and the environmental objective to be achieved.

Use	Permit requirements
Building and works	A permit is required to construct or carry out works. This does not apply if a schedule to this overlay specifically states that a permit is not required.
Subdivision	A permit is required to subdivide land.
Remove, destroy or lop any vegetation	A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation. This does not apply if: a schedule to this overlay specifically states that a permit is not required.

5 *Rural Residential Areas*

The focus of the Rural Residential Strategy is to identify areas where future rural residential development might be appropriate. The aim is ultimately to be more strategic about rural land development. The first step in achieving this is to identify those existing and potential areas where rural residential development occurs presently, or might be appropriate in the future. There are twenty areas identified across the Shire that fit into this category. These areas have been identified by the Shire planning staff, through interviews with Real Estate agents, and general review of development trends around the Shire.

The following figures identify each of the 20 areas. On some maps, large 'circles' indicate areas where rural residential development occurs now or where investigation for future zones should occur in the future. Other maps with areas shaded 'pink' denoting existing rural residential development and in these instances it is recommended that zoning should be limited to these areas, and is proposed to ensure the Planning Scheme reflects what has happened on the ground. This does not imply that additional development is supported in these locations in fact, the reverse is more accurate. This analysis is not able to be comprehensive at this point. However, the general purpose of the strategy is not to 'draw lines' around specific areas that should be rezoned. Rather, the aim is to identify areas and priorities for rezoning, so that each area can in turn be assessed in detail for rezoning. In the case of the areas where lines are drawn, this is to indicate that additional development should not be supported outside these areas. In some locations, overlays are proposed to investigate the impacts of development. In each locality, there are a number of issues that would need to be addressed in detail, such as flooding, rural character protection, landscape values, infrastructure servicing etc. The time for these assessments would be at the stage when Council chooses to progress rezoning for each particular area based on the hierarchy and priorities identified in this strategy. The order of areas identified in the following figures does not represent any initial views on priorities. The 20 areas identified are as follows:

- Area 1 (Euroa)
- Area 2 (Gooram)
- Area 3 (Strathbogie)
- Area 4 (Violet Town)
- Area 5 (Arcadia-Two Chain Road)
- Area 6 (McKindleys Road)
- Area 7 (Goulburn Weir)
- Area 8 (Nagambie North)
- Area 9 (Kirwans Bridge Area)
- Area 10 (Allowah Drive, Whroo)
- Area 11 (Whroovale Court, Whroo)
- Area 12 (Gold Diggers Court Area, Bailieston East)
- Area 13 (Keavenys Road, Graytown Area)
- Area 14 (Costerfield Area)
- Area 15 (Tabilk)
- Area 16 (Mangalore Township)
- Area 17 (Avenel)
- Area 18 (Old Longwood & Gap Road Area)
- Area 19 Ruffy
- Area 20 Longwood

The Rural Residential Strategy is a tool that can be used by Council to guide and inform decision making and to prioritise areas as listed above, based on research, field trip observations and local knowledge for future rezoning. It is designed to address the issues and objectives outlined in Section 2 with a prioritised approach to areas that need immediate attention and strategic rezoning to those that need “tidy up” zoning. The strategy recognises local issues and addresses the need for rural residential development in a sustainable way while protecting prime agricultural land.

5.1 Existing Rural Residential Areas

The following sections provide a description of each area and proposed recommendations:

5.1.1 Area 1 (Euroa)

The land identified for Area 1 that is currently used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The lot sizes range from 1 to 10 acres (.4 to 4 hectares). These allotments have mainly been developed over the years through precedent established by Council; however some dwellings were approved in conjunction with an agricultural use. Other land identified in this area are those that have established dwellings on the land with no obvious link to an agricultural enterprise.

Recommendations for Implementing Strategy:

- a) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for Euroa to identify areas for Rural Residential and Low Density Residential rezoning surrounding the town boundary in the areas shown.
- b) Consider development opportunities that encourage new land owners to manage weed infestations as part of a subdivision requirement, particularly in Balmattum Hill.
- c) As part of the evaluation process, consider the following areas:
 - Land between Siems Road, Drysdale Road, Cowells Lane and Birkett St.
 - Land in the area above Boundary Road North
 - Land in the area between Birkett Street, Siems Road, Cowells Lane and Euroa-Shepparton Road
 - Land between Creek Drive, Wignell Street, Boundary Road South and Kennedy Street
 - Land in the area between Boundary Rd South, Barns Road, Creek Drive and Euroa-Mansfield Road
 - Land on other land south of Boundary Road South, including south of the Hume Freeway (except locations already mentioned above)

Figure 1: Area 1 (Euroa)



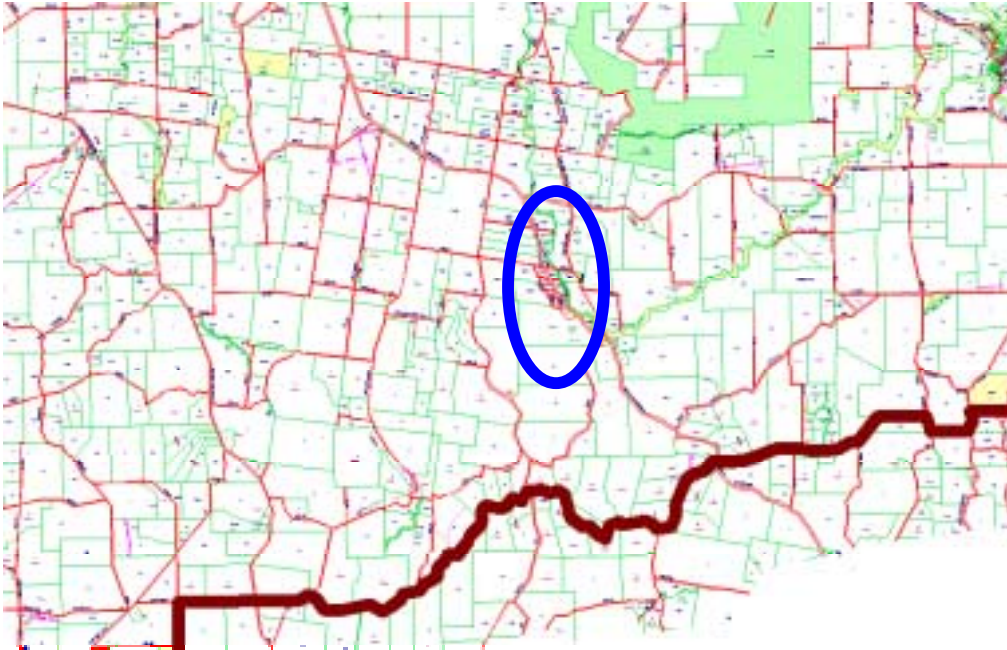
5.1.2 Area 2 (Gooram)

The land identified for Area 2 that is currently used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The lot sizes range from 2 to 10 acres (.8 to 4 hectares). These dwellings were developed over the years as a result of an association to a small scale agricultural enterprise on the land, however more recently, dwellings have been approved through precedent and are not linked to an agricultural enterprise on the land. Most parcels of land in this area are within close proximity to the Sevens Creek. The aesthetics of this area is the main attraction, being within a valley close to the Hume Freeway and Euroa.

Recommendations for Implementing Strategy:

- a) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for Gooram to identify areas for Rural Residential development.

Figure 2: Area 2 (Gooram)



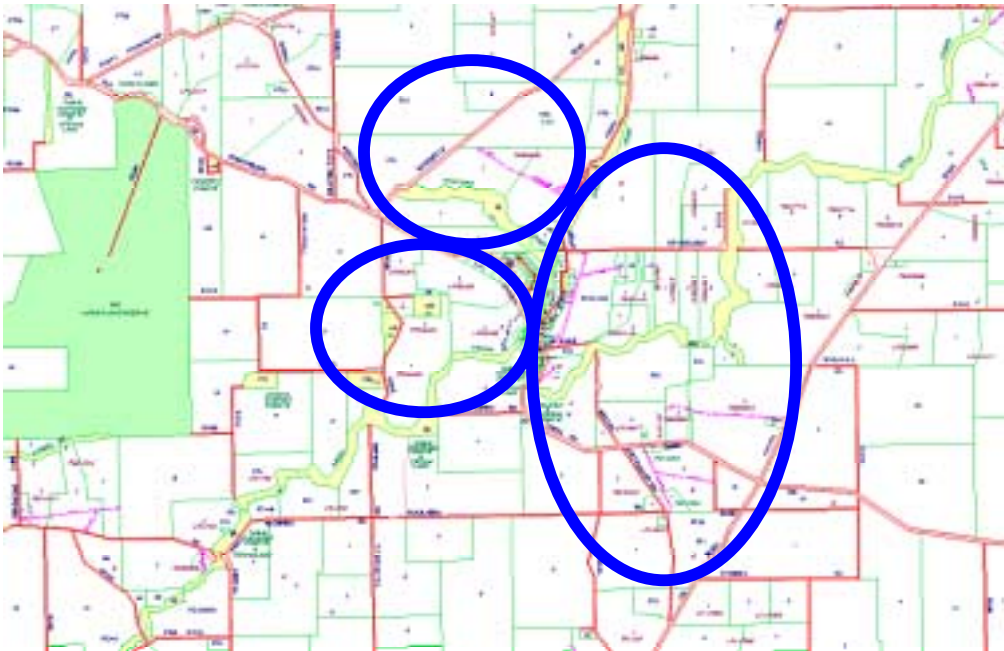
5.1.3 Area 3 (Strathbogie)

The land identified for Area 3 that is used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The lot sizes range from 5 to 20 acres (2 to 8 hectares). These properties have mostly been developed for low scale agricultural use. More recently, proposals for rural living purposes have been approved where they have included a horticultural enterprise, and have made a case for the operational need for a dwelling. Although some properties have established orchards etc., many are being used for hobby farms. The area has moved away from traditional farming.

Recommendations for Implementing Strategy:

- a) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for Strathbogie to identify areas for Rural Residential and Low Density Residential rezoning.

Figure 3: Area 3 (Strathbogie)



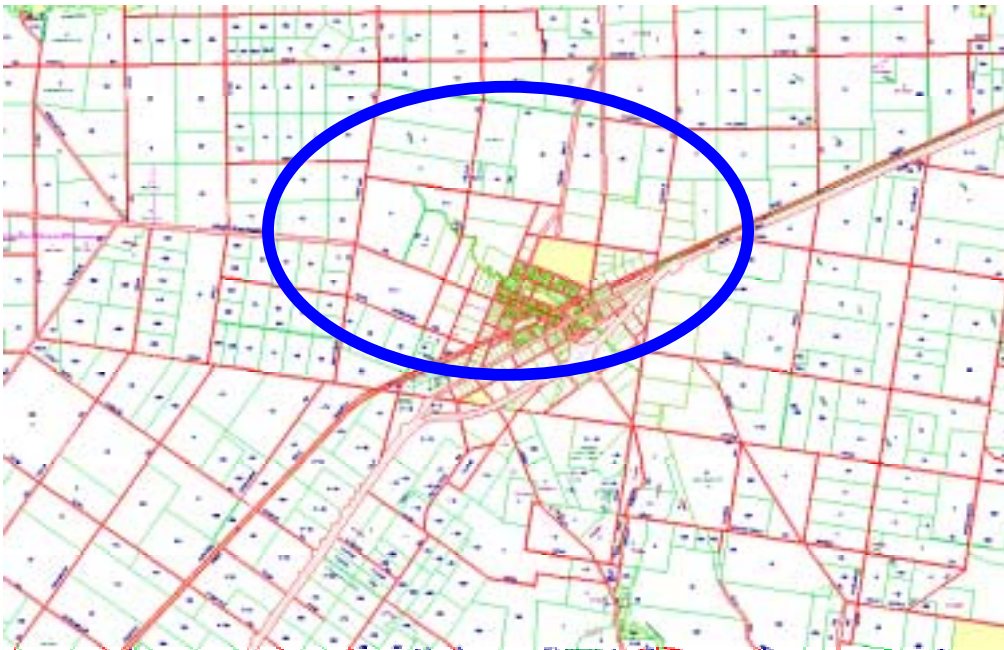
5.1.4 Area 4 (Violet Town)

The land identified for Area 4 that is used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The lot sizes range from 5 to 30 acres (2 to 12 hectares). Only a few of these allotments are developed, though recent approval was given for houses on land as small as 12 acres (4.8 hectares).

Recommendations for Implementing the Strategy:

- a) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for Violet Town to identify areas for Rural Residential and Low Density Residential rezoning
- b) As part of the evaluation process consider the following areas:
 - All land identified north of High Street
 - Land south of High Street
 - Urban Design Frameworks should be taken into account

Figure 4: Area 4 (Violet Town)



5.1.5 Area 5 (Arcadia-Two Chain Road)

The land identified for Area 5 that is used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The smallest lot size in this subdivision is 6 acres (2.4 hectares). These properties are mostly developed through precedent that has been established by Council over the years.

Recommendations fro Implementation of the Strategy:

- a) Restructure Overlay or Design Development Overlay could be applied to minimise or avoid future inappropriate development.
- b) No further subdivision in this rural location

Figure 5: Area 5 (Arcadia-Two Chain Road)



5.1.6 Area 6 (McKindleys Road)

The land identified for Area 6 that is used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The smallest lot size in this subdivision is 5 acres (2 hectares). These properties are mostly developed through precedent that has been established by Council over the years.

Recommendations for Implementation of Strategy:

- a) In the area specified below tidy up zoning is recommended to reflect the existing nature of development.
- b) No further subdivision in this location.

Figure 6: Area 6 (McKindleys Road)



5.1.7 Area 7 (Goulburn Weir)

The land identified for Area 7 that is used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The area is in a tourist region, which was previously subdivided for residential purposes. All of the lots are in close proximity to the Goulburn River and backwater, and serve no agricultural purpose. Most of the properties are developed, and those that are not, would be likely to be approved through established precedent in the area, subject to referral authority requirements. Low Density Residential is unlikely to be acceptable in this location due to the proximity of Lake Nagambie. This should be considered as part of the overall detailed investigation.

Recommendations for Implementation of Strategy:

- a) In the area specified below tidy up zoning is recommended to reflect the existing nature of development.
- b) No further subdivision in this location.

Figure 7: Area 7 (Goulburn Weir)



5.1.8 Area 8 (Nagambie North)

The land identified for Area 8 that is used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The area is in close proximity to established rural living development and the Nagambie Township. The majority of lots are subdivided into 10 acres (4 hectares). Most of the land is being used for agricultural purposes.

Recommendations for Implementation of Strategy:

- a) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for Nagambie North to identify areas for Rural Residential rezoning
- b) As part of the evaluation process consider the following areas as shown on the map:

Figure 8: Area 8 (Nagambie North)



5.1.9 Area 9 (Kirwans Bridge Area)

The land identified for Area 9 which is presently used for rural living purposes and which may be investigated further for broader rezoning is pictured below. The area is in close proximity to the Goulburn River and several kilometres from the Nagambie Township. The majority of lots are subdivided into 2 acres (.8 hectares). A number of lots in the area have already been developed with dwellings.

Recommendations for Implementation of Strategy:

- a) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for Kirwans Bridge Area to identify areas for Rural Residential and Low Density Residential rezoning
- b) As part of the evaluation process consider the following areas on the map:

Figure 9: Area 9 (Kirwans Bridge Area)



5.1.10 Area 10 (Allowah Drive, Whroo)

The land identified for Area 10 that is used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The area is several kilometres from any township and within close proximity to public land (State Forest). The majority of lots in the subdivision are 10 acres in size (4 hectares). Most properties have been developed with dwellings over the years and very few are used for agriculture.

Recommendations for Implementation of Strategy:

- a) In the area specified below tidy up zoning is recommended to reflect the existing nature of development.
- b) No further subdivision in this location.

Figure 10: Area 10 (Allowah Drive, Whroo)



5.1.11 Area 11 (Whroovale Court, Whroo)

The land identified for Area 11, which is being used for rural living purposes, is pictured below. The area is almost 20 kilometres from Nagambie Township and is within close proximity to public land (State Forest). The majority of lots in the subdivision are 10 acres in size (4 hectares). Most properties have been developed with dwellings over the years and none appear to be used for agriculture. The area is relatively remote from Nagambie in real terms and relatively difficult to service.

Recommendations for Implementation of Strategy:

- a) In the area specified below tidy up zoning is recommended to reflect the existing nature of development.
- b) No further subdivision in this location.

Figure 11: Area 11 (Whroovale Court, Whroo)



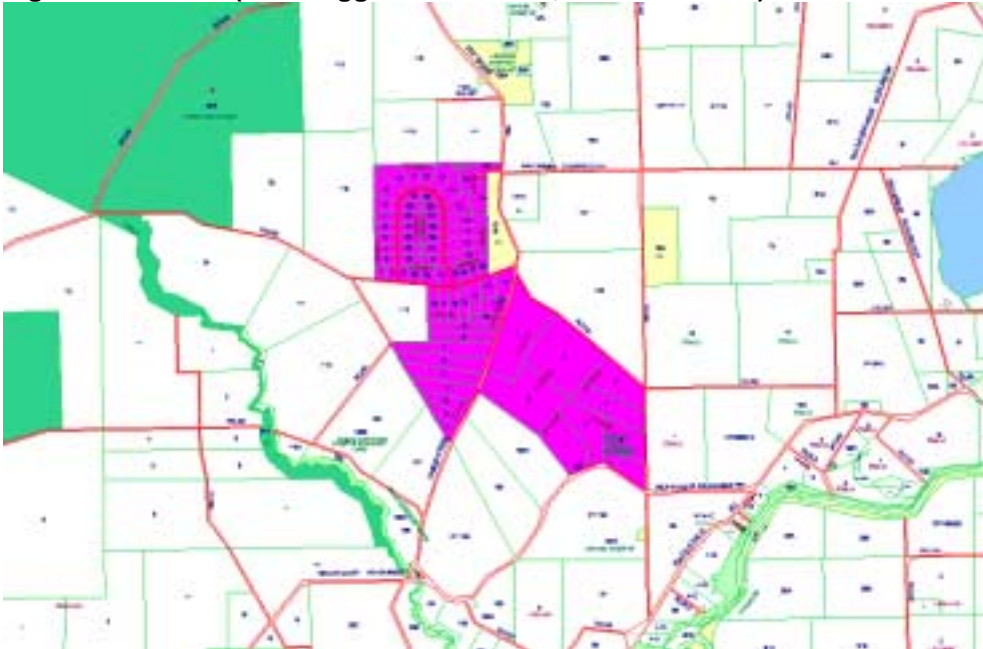
5.1.12 Area 12 (Gold Diggers Court Area, Bailieston East)

The land identified for Area 12 which is being used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The area is almost 10 kilometres from the Nagambie Township and is heavily vegetated. The smallest lots in the subdivision are approximately 7 acres (2.8 hectares). Many properties have been developed with dwellings over the years and none appear to be used for agriculture.

Recommendations for Implementation of Strategy:

- a) In the area specified below tidy up zoning is recommended to reflect the existing nature of development.
- b) No further subdivision in this location.

Figure 12: Area 12 (Gold Diggers Court Area, Bailieston East)



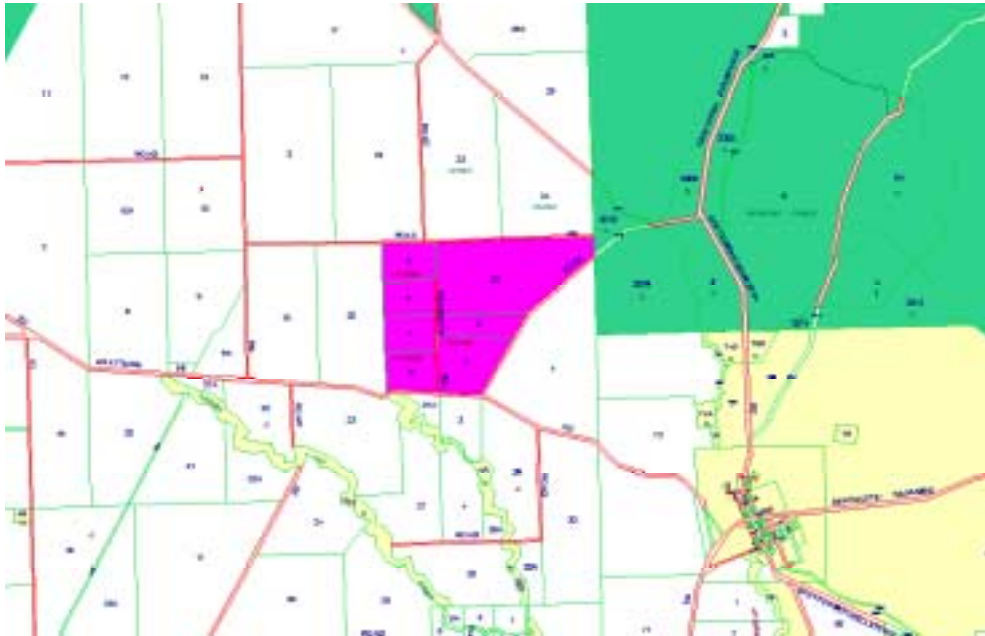
5.1.13 Area 13 (Keavenys Road, Graytown Area)

The land identified for Area 13 that is used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The area is several kilometres from any township and within close proximity to public land (State Forest). The majority of lots in the subdivision are 50 acres (20 hectares) in size. Approximately 50 per cent of lots have been developed with dwellings. Some properties have approval for dwellings associated with an agricultural enterprise. Council does not wish to promote additional development in this location.

Recommendations for Implementation of Strategy:

- a) In the area specified below tidy up zoning is recommended to reflect the existing nature of development.
- b) No further subdivision in this location.

Figure 13: Area 13 (Keavenys Road, Graytown Area)



5.1.14 Area 14 (Costerfield Area)

The land identified for Area 14 that is used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The area is almost 20 kilometres from the Nagambie Township and many allotments are heavily vegetated. The smallest lots in the subdivision are approximately 4 acres (1.6 hectares). Many properties have been developed with dwellings over the years however none of them appear to be used for agriculture.

Recommendations for Implementation of Strategy:

- a) In the area specified below tidy up zoning is recommended to reflect the existing nature of development.
- b) No further subdivision in this location.

Figure 14: Area 14 (Costerfield Area)



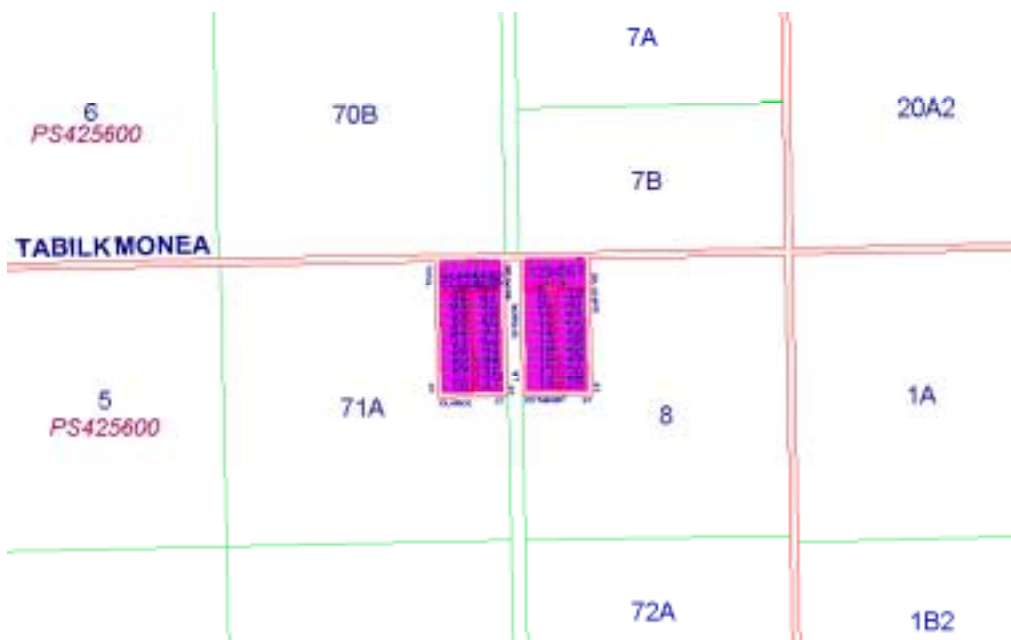
5.1.15 Area 15 (Tabilk)

The land identified for Area 15 that is currently used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The area is located between Nagambie and Avenel. The majority of lots are subdivided into half-acre allotments (2000 square metres) and therefore the area has a “small town” character identity. Most properties have been developed with dwellings east of the railway line however none have been developed to the west. For public safety reasons it is strongly recommended that development not occur on the western side of the railway.

Recommendations for Implementation of Strategy:

- a) It is recommended that the area highlighted below be assessed for tidy up zoning to the east
- b) A possible Restructure Overlay should be considered for the western part of Tabilk.
- c) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for Tabilk to identify areas for Rural Residential rezoning.

Figure 15: Area 15 (Tabilk)



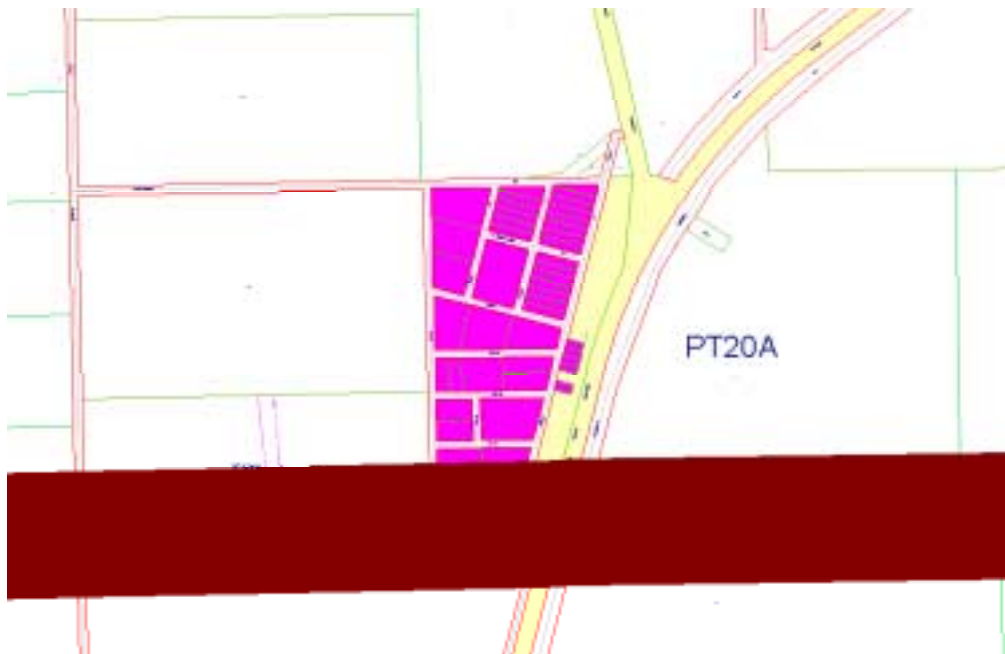
5.1.16 Area 16 (Mangalore Township)

The land identified for Area 16 that is currently used for rural living purposes and which may in future be considered for rural residential is pictured below. The area is located between Avenel and Seymour. The smallest allotments are 1000 square metres in size. The precinct is known as Mangalore Township, although it is zoned rural. The Mangalore Airport Environs Overlay occurs further north and while future planning for this area should be aware of this, future expansion of the town is unlikely to be encumbered by the overlay. The proposed Special Use Zone in this area is likely to effectively limit the township to roughly its present boundary/extent.

Recommendations for Implementing Strategy:

- a) In the area specified below tidy up zoning is recommended to reflect the existing nature of development.
- b) No further subdivision in this location.

Figure 16: Area 16 (Mangalore Township)



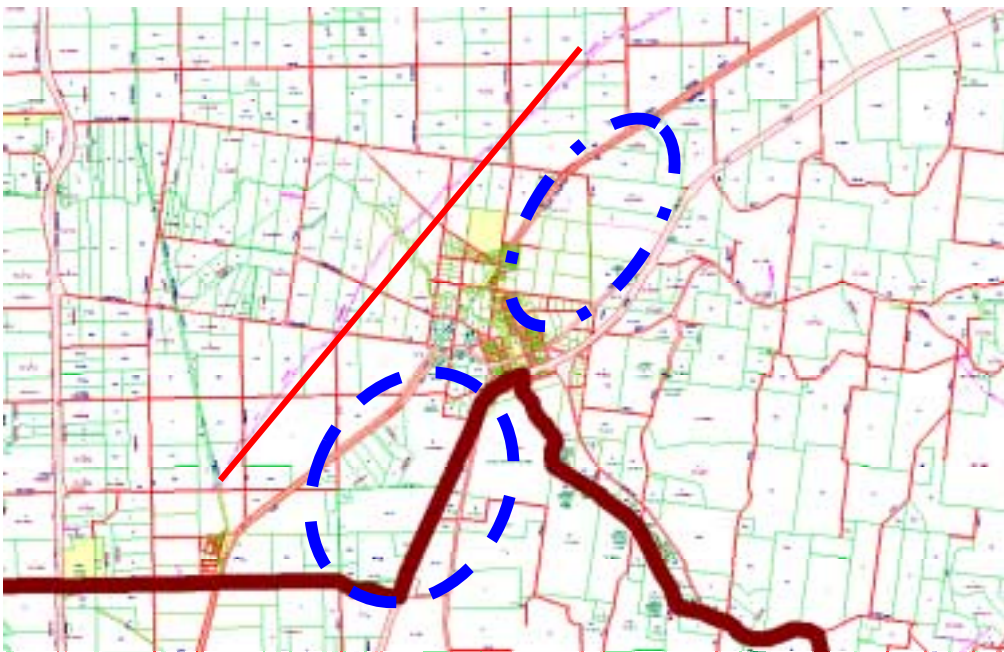
5.1.17 Area 17 (Avenel)

The land identified for Area 17 that is currently used for rural living purposes is pictured below. The lot sizes range from 2 to 50 acres (.8 to 20 hectares). Some of these properties have been developed over the years with dwellings and are rarely associated with an agriculture use. Other land identified as being potential rural living are those that have established dwellings with no obvious agricultural enterprise linked to the property, or those that are close to town, or unsuitable for agriculture due to potential residential conflict. Land west of the railway that is outside the present town zones should not be rezoned due to the proposed SUZ and Mangalore Airport Environs Overlay.

Recommendations for Implementing Strategy:

- a) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for Avenel to identify areas for Rural Residential and Low Density Residential rezoning
- b) As part of the evaluation process consider the following areas:
 - Land north of Avenel between the Hume Freeway and Melbourne –Sydney Rail line
 - Land south of Avenel between the Hume Freeway and Melbourne –Sydney Rail line

Figure 17:Area 17 (Avenel)



5.1.18 Area 18 (Old Longwood & Gap Road Area)

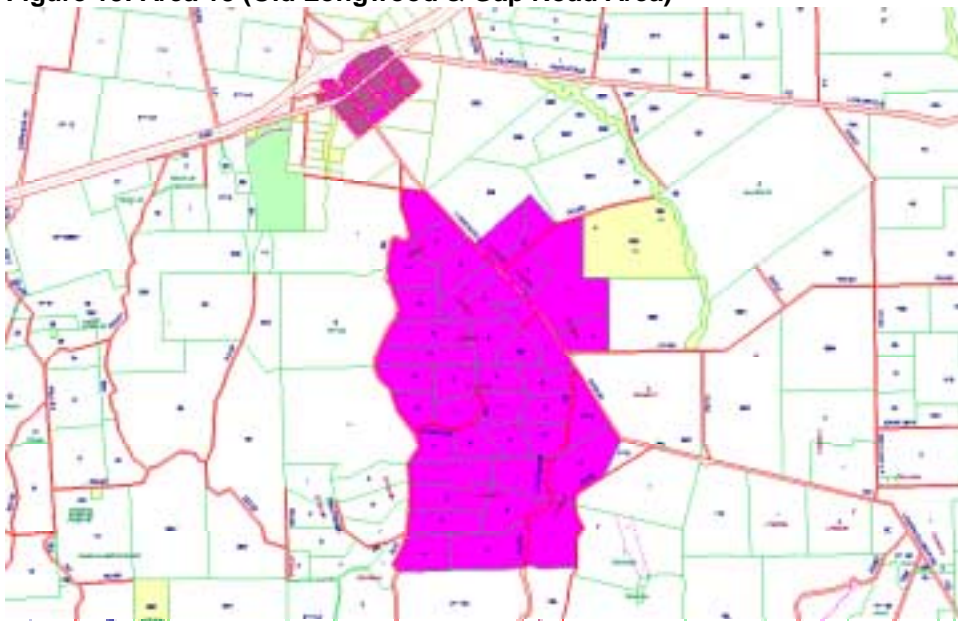
The land identified for Area 18 that is currently as being used for rural living and which may upon further investigation be suitable for future rural residential development purposes is pictured below. The Gap Road area is approximately 4 kilometres from the Longwood Township. The majority of lots are subdivided into 50 acre (20 hectare) allotments. Most properties have been developed with dwellings over the years and very few are associated with an agricultural enterprise.

The Old Longwood area is approximately 2 kilometres from the Longwood Township and was originally identified as the location for the town centre. The majority of lots are subdivided into 2000 square metre allotments. Very few of the properties have been developed over the years. While larger and unserviced lots would be preferable in this location, the review should also consider the merits of developing near to the Hume Freeway, from an amenity perspective. In addition the 'safety' issues of creating additional development across the freeway from Longwood should be considered.

Recommendations for Implementing Strategy

- a) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for Old Longwood and Gap Road Area to identify areas for Rural Residential and Low Density Residential rezoning
- b) As part of the evaluation process consider the following areas:
 - Gap Road area
 - Old Longwood – retain as Rural zone and investigate the addition of overlays that would require consolidation of the lots rather than development and further subdivision.
 -

Figure 18: Area 18 (Old Longwood & Gap Road Area)



5.1.19 Area 19 (Ruffy)

Further to the original eighteen areas recommended for inclusion in the Rural Residential Strategy, the township of Ruffy has been identified as a potential rural living destination. The town itself was originally surveyed more than a century ago, however it has barely been developed since then, and is predominantly utilised by the farming community surrounding it. Ruffy is a village that operates one small produce store. The town has a State Primary School, town hall and community centre (cricket and tennis). The land in the area is used for sheep and cattle grazing with various boutique enterprises including vineyards, nurseries, trail riding facilities and bed & breakfasts etc. More recently, the town of Ruffy has seen weekend visitors taking advantage of the slow pace and scenery. Allotment sizes range from 5 acres to 20 acres.

Recommendations for Implementing the Strategy:

- a) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for to identify areas for Rural Residential and Low Density Residential rezoning.



5.1.20 Area 20 (Longwood)

This area south of Longwood is a possible location for future rural residential development between the existing town and the freeway. This area should be considered jointly with Area 19 (Old Longwood) particularly with a view to restoring the issue of separation created by the Hume Freeway for a low density rural residential population; this may not be of concern but should be considered. The proposed “Special Use Zone” provides an area around Longwood to allow the town to grow over the long term, albeit only in that area between the Melbourne to Sydney rail line and Hume Freeway.

The town itself has plenty of available land zoned Township Zone, which is yet to be utilised. The area is approximately 1 kilometre long and mostly undeveloped. The towns close proximity to the Hume Freeway and closeness to Euroa makes it appealing for a rural ‘escape’. Some enterprises in the immediate area include major thoroughbred studs, vineyards etc. The land is mostly flat with views of the Strathbogie Ranges. The land parcels are greater than 50 acres.

Recommendations for Implementing the Strategy:

- a) Undertake more detailed evaluation of specific planning and technical issues for to identify areas for Rural Residential and Low Density Residential rezoning.

Figure 19: Area 20 (Longwood)



6 Development Trends

6.1 Development Applications

Development within the rural zone in the Shire of Strathbogie has been occurring at a steady rate over the past six years according to Council data on development applications for dwellings. Discussions with real estate agents within different parts of the Shire of Strathbogie revealed that there is a demand for rural lifestyle blocks within close proximity to the town centres, but with prospective buyers still seeking to maintain a rural 'feel'.

Dwellings Permitted in the Rural zone 1998 - 2003							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Euroa	8	8	7	18	39	28	108
Strathbogie	10	16	8	6	9	7	56
Avenel	9	6	6	6	7	4	38
Violet Town	2	10	6	3	6	3	30
Longwood	4	7	6	2	4	6	29
Nagambie	3	4	5	8	4	1	25
Goulburn Weir	3	3	4	3	2	7	22
Kirwans Bridge	2	3	3	4	3	3	18
Boho South	2	4	2	3	2	2	15
Balmattum	3	2	3	1	3	2	14
Miepoll	3	3	0	2	4	2	14
Creightons Creek	4	2	2	1	1	3	13
Mitchellstown	1	0	1	2	2	3	9
Gooram	0	1	2	2	0	3	8
Graytown	0	1	0	0	3	3	7
Overall	54	70	55	61	89	77	406

There are many external influences that can impact on the number of permit applications received and granted, and therefore the demand for residential properties within the rural zone. Among these include the introduction of the new format Strathbogie Planning Scheme that occurred on 14 October 1999. The introduction of the state wide Rural zone as part of the new format Strathbogie Planning may have influenced the number of permits granted in the zone due to the changing requirements and eligibility of uses within the zone.

In addition, the introduction of GST in July 2000 saw an increase in dwellings permitted in the year preceding while the "first home owners" grant in the same year was an encouragement to purchase property and also may have influenced the number of permits granted. There are many other issues and policies that will affect rural residential demand, including the implementation of this Strategy. The following graphs provide illustrative interpretations of permits granted for dwellings in the Rural zone from 1998-2003 in Strathbogie's key towns/areas.

Chart 1: Euroa

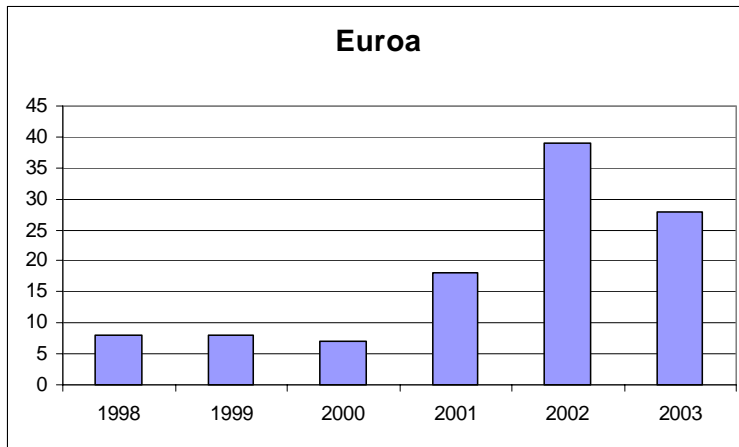


Chart 2: Strathbogie

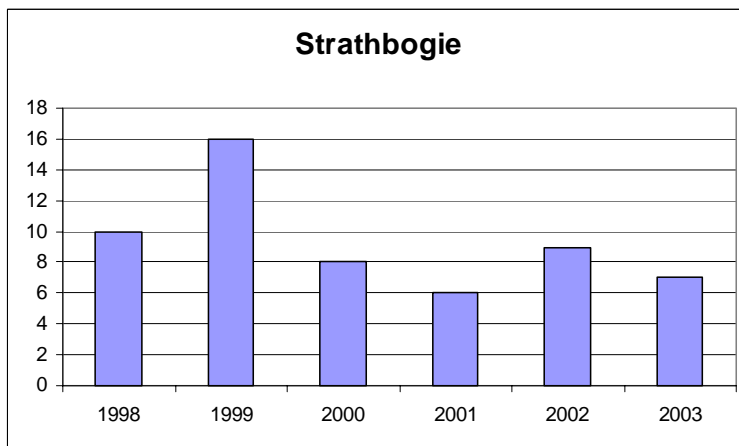


Chart 3: Violet Town

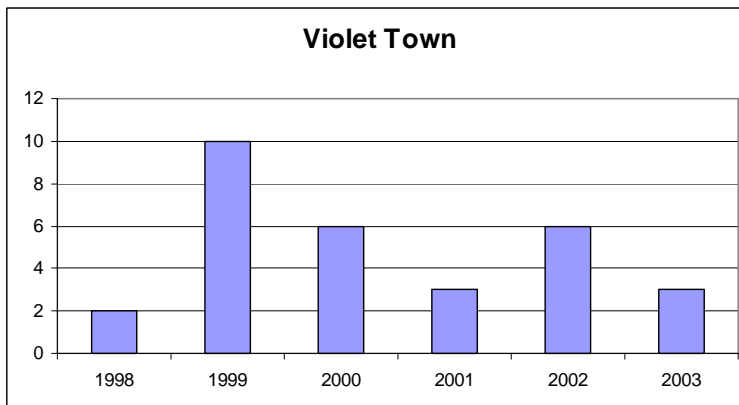


Chart 4: Avenel

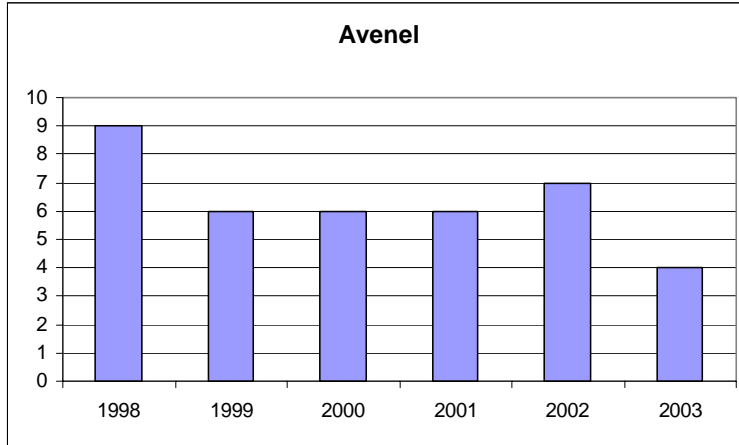


Chart 5: Longwood

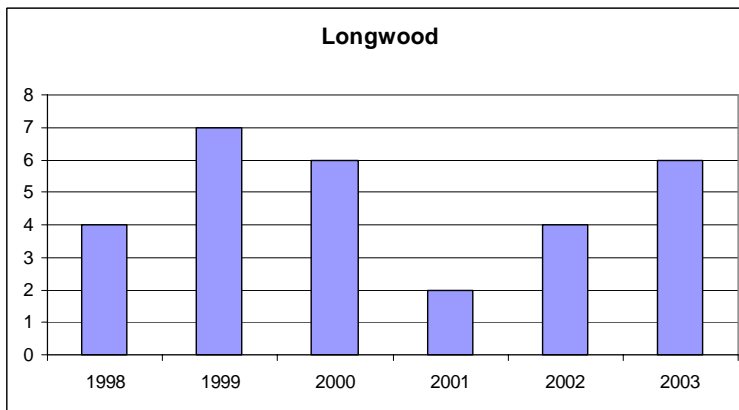


Chart 6: Nagambie

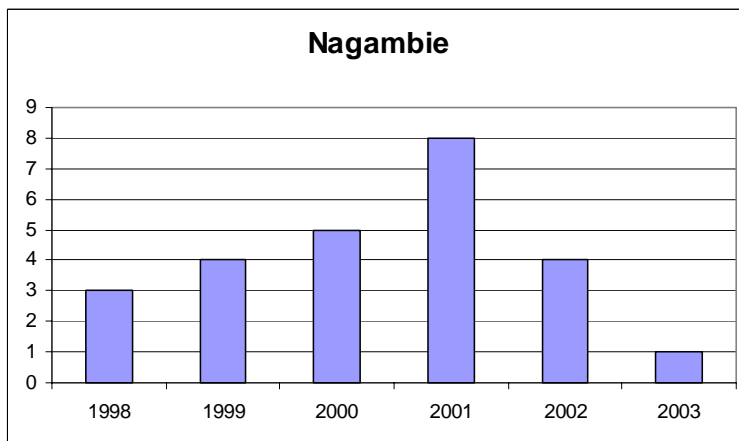


Chart 8: Kirwans Bridge

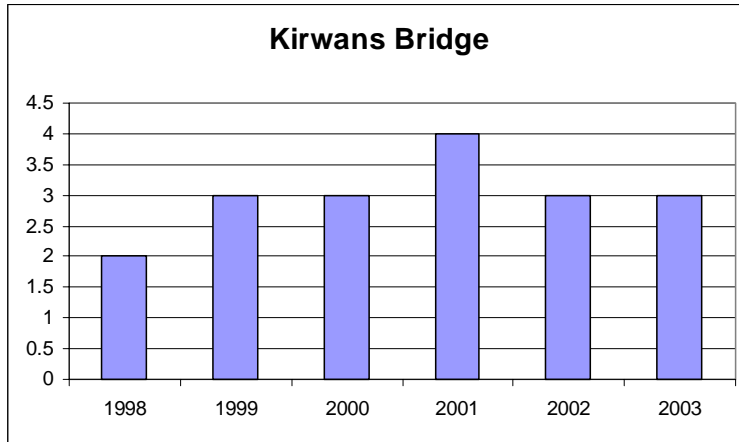


Chart 14: Gooram

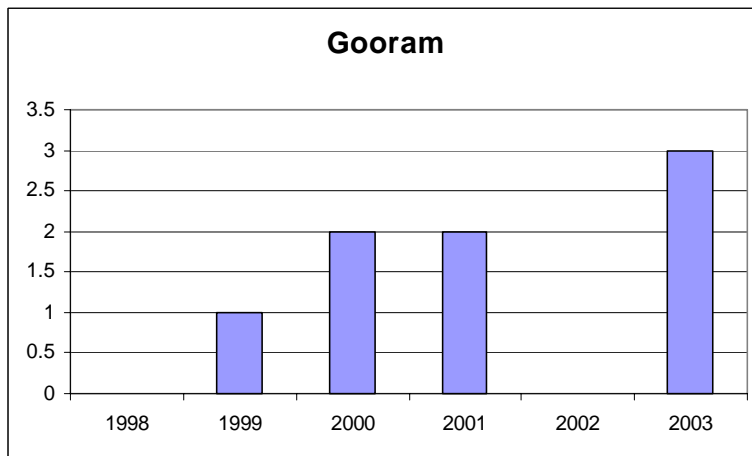
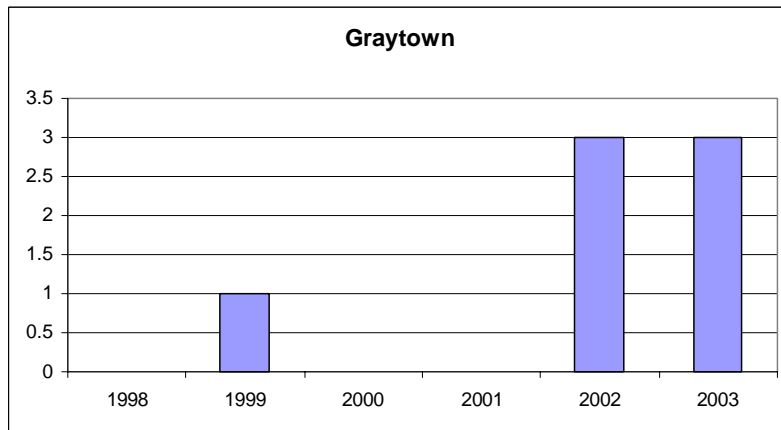


Chart 15: Graytown



6.2 Real Estate Interviews

In order to gain an understanding of the demand for land in rural areas, interviews with selected real estate agents in Strathbogie Shire were conducted where agents were able to provide their time. Potential areas for rural residential development and areas that have presented the most demand were highlighted on a map of the Strathbogie Shire by the interviewees. Alternatively any areas that for some reason should not be developed were also identified. In broad terms many, if not all of the areas identified, are considered in this Strategy with many coming through for a variety of reasons as being recommended for rezoning.

Mr John Stringer from Wesfarmers Landmark, and Mr Warren Langford from North Eastern Country Real Estate, both suggested similar areas for development and comparably described the demographic of land buyers and the type of land in demand. The following information provides an overview of the interview discussions (refer to appendix 1 for detailed interview notes).

Demographics of buyers

Most of the population in the Strathbogie Shire are new people over 40 years old, some own two properties, one in Melbourne and one in the country. Professionals may work 2-3 days a week in Melbourne and live the remainder of the week in their country home. There is a tendency for people to stay in the area for periods of seven years or less and then move on therefore it is not a permanent lifestyle choice to move to the country. Many land buyers will move back to the city to be close to their children or grandchildren.

Over the last 15 years the Strathbogie Shire has attracted Melbourne based clientele wanting a country lifestyle with small acreage. The types of properties include 0.4 – 2 hectares (1-5 acres) on the edge of town, with a small 'ranch style' house or on approximately 8 to 20 hectares (20-50 acres) for children to be able to play.

It was also suggested that covenants on land or other planning tools be implemented as to maintain minimum standards for example, housing style, fencing and colours. There have been common requests for smaller land parcels as lot sizes of 100 hectares or more are too large for most professional people still working in Melbourne during the week. Currently bush areas under 24 ha (60 acres) have no capability for farming but the rural properties with rocks, hills, bush and views are in demand.

Other properties in demand are for hobby farmers that will spend between \$300,000 – \$750,000 (2004 prices) on a farmhouse on 80-120 hectares (200-300 acres) to graze stock or grow olives. Mr Stringer commented that 'cashed up' property people will buy on impulse and therefore if land is available for residential development it will sell. As the current minimum subdivision in some parts of the rural zone is 40 hectares (100 acres) an amendment to the planning scheme will enable smaller lot sizes more suited to those in demand.

According to Mr Stringer, there have been extra property sales of 50-100 per year (refer to Table 1). In 1991, since the opening of City Link, demand increased considerably due to the enhanced accessibility of a country lifestyle.

Table 1: Growth in land sales (personal communication, John Stringer 5th March 2004)

Year	Sales (\$) in million
2000-2001	42
2001-2002	50
2002-2003	73
First half of 2004	54

Suggested Locations for Development

Euroa's location is ideal for future residential development as it is close to the snowfields, and close to Melbourne, with views overlooking the Strathbogie Ranges and country atmosphere. As the Strathbogie Shire is across the Great Dividing Range from Melbourne, there is a climate change immediately entering Avenel. Avenel has been suggested as an ideal location for development as it is close to Seymour, which is a significant employment area to which people currently living in Avenel commute on a daily basis.

Other areas that have already been marked for development include Mansfield Road, Boundary Road North, Butter Factory Lane and Lydiard's Road. There is also a surge of commercial properties being developed within the Strathbogie Shire such as horse breeding and vineyards, which employ large numbers of local people, therefore residential subdivision is necessary in order to house and service these employees. It is also important for the economy of the Strathbogie Shire to gain the rates in order to survive.

Areas not suitable for Development

Areas listed as not suitable or not recommended for development include Kelly Estate (90 x 10 acre subdivision), land to the west of the Hume Freeway, and Graytown where it was suggested that the market/rural zone should dictate development.

7 *Strategies for Rural Living*

In broad terms there are a number of potential strategies for identifying and confirming the approach to rural residential development within the Shire.

7.1 Evaluation of Existing Rural Living Areas

The process of determining priorities for rezoning and implementing the strategy are determined by evaluating each area identified in the strategy against a series of objective criteria. These criteria have been developed to reflect the likely requirements of a more detailed investigation to assist in the rezoning of particular areas subsequent to adoption of this Strategy. The aim of developing objective criteria is to allow Council to identify and assess other future candidate areas for rural residential development as they may arise in the future either through its own investigations or as a result of rural residential subdivision proposals from developers. These criteria, the Strategy and the MSS assist in providing consistent guidance and assessment of such situations at a Strategic level. Criteria reflect the Ministerial Direction No. 6, Victoria Planning Provisions objectives, and Local Policy requirements.

For each area, an assessment is made against each criterion. At this stage of the strategy process, the assessment is based on a 'High, Medium and Low' assessment of the likely consistency between the area being considered and the criteria. This assessment is made on the basis of officer knowledge. Further consideration of this assessment will follow any public input to the strategy, including more detailed evaluation of specific areas.

In addition to assessing each area against criteria, the criteria themselves are weighted. This reflects the nature of the strategy, which is to provide high-level guidance as to where and how rural residential development will occur in the Shire. In considering this issue, there are a number of criteria that reflect issues of greater importance to the Shire and the Strathbogie community, and hence are weighted higher. By implication, the weight assigned to specific factors reflects the strategic objectives sought by the Shire.

The weighting of criteria is based on the following assumptions:

Table 2: Weighting of Criteria

Weighting	Description
10	Highly significant strategic factor for the consideration of future rural residential development.
5	Important factor for evaluating local proposals for rural residential rezoning.
2	Detailed factors that can be considered by subsequent applications for development within the zone.
1	Insignificant factors to the decision to rezone.

Table 3: Criteria for evaluation

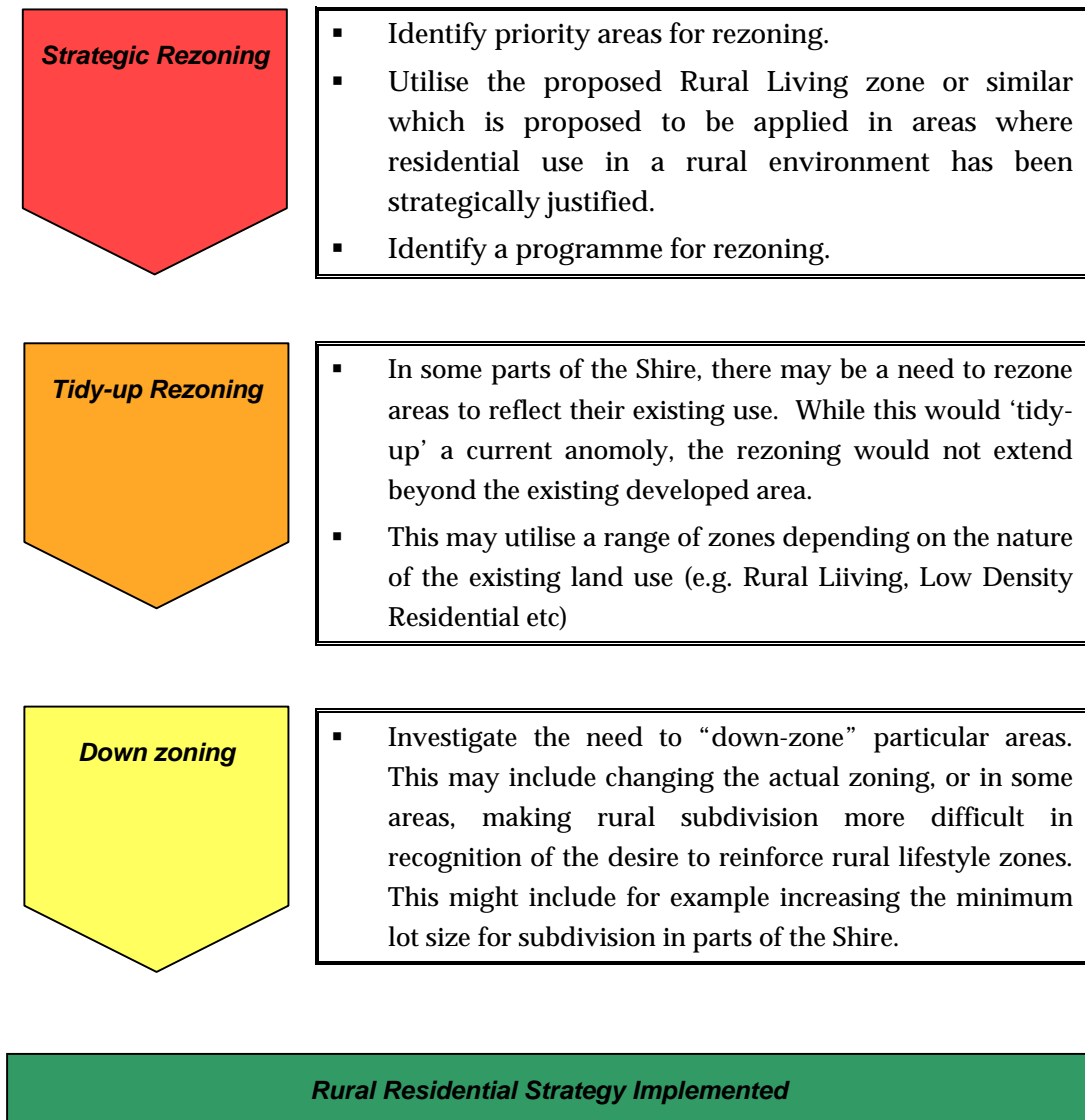
<i>Impact of Rural Residential Development in this area:</i>	<i>Weighting (relative importance of criteria)</i>
Policy Requirements	
Adjoins and will reinforce an existing township.	10
Future development unlikely to cause conflict with existing farming activities.	10
Landscape and amenity values of future development not compromised.	10
Is not located on high quality agricultural land or high class soils.	10
Is cost effective for locating future populations.	10
Consistent with Regional Catchment Management Strategy.	5
Will not result in significant vegetation clearance.	5
Will enhance the landscape values of the local area.	5
Wildfire management issues insignificant.	5
Not within close proximity (500m) to National Park, Wilderness area or State Park.	5
Not within 200m of Crown Land stream reserves.	5
Not within proximity to industrial land (including the Food & Logistics Precinct)	5
Not within the Mangalore Airport noise contour protection.	5
Generally protects important ecological values.	5
Development Conditions	
Is not subject to soil salinisation.	5
Local stability of land is suitable for rural residential development, including avoids landslips and steep slopes.	5
Will not exacerbate or be affected by flooding problems.	5
Is suitable for on-site sewage disposal.	2
Servicing:	
Road access is currently good or easy to provide.	10
Feasible to service with water.	5
Feasible to service with utilities (power, gas etc).	5
Feasible to provide local Shire services (rubbish etc).	5
Market demand:	
Will meet market demand.	5

The results of the evaluation of each area against these objective criteria are included in Appendix 2.

7.2 Approach to Rezoning

The approach to rezoning recommended in the Strategy is to take a ‘hierarchy’ of steps to put the strategy in place over time. This might revolve around ‘strategic rezoning’ of some areas, remedying existing zoning in existing developed areas as appropriate, and in other locations down-zoning. This is depicted in the following diagram:

Figure 20: Strategic Hierarchy of Measures for Rezoning



While in the first round of analysis, no areas have been identified for “down zoning”, this may occur as more detailed investigations are undertaken in specific areas. For example, it may be found that an area currently zoned for LDRZ may be inappropriate for that density of development due to flooding, and a Rural Living zoning should be applied.

8 Recommendations and Conclusions

8.1 Conclusions

Planning for sustainable growth and rural residential development is the first step to achieving desired outcomes. This Rural Residential Strategy has been developed to guide the Strathbogie Shire Council in achieving a more sustainable option for rural residential development.

This strategy has identified areas within the Shire that are best suited at a strategic level to accommodate future rural residential development. It has adopted a prioritised approach to enable Council to address the areas within the Shire that need to be rezoned immediately while others may be longer term actions.



This Strategy addresses the strategic objectives for rural residential development and has recommended rezoning that recognises the need to protect prime agricultural land, while ensuring that land uses within the Shire reinforce existing investment in development of local townships. The Strategy recommends two alternative rezoning options dependent on the type and surrounding uses of the land, these being strategic rezoning or tidy up zoning, whereby the land already accommodates residential properties and therefore the zone needs to reflect the current use (discussed in 8.2). On the other hand, for areas that have been recommended for strategic rezoning, Council is planning for future growth around these areas in a controlled way rather than allowing for ribbon development or market led ad hoc development. This will also enable Council to deliver services in a more sustainable manner to its present and future communities.

8.2 Recommendations for Implementation

The following table is an evaluation of each site within the Strathbogie Shire that has potential for rural residential development. After assessing each site against a number of criteria including policy requirements, development conditions, servicing and market demand, each site was given a weighting (Appendix 2). Zoning recommendations were determined by these scores (refer to section 8 for weighting and scoring details):

- Strategic Rezoning > 300
- Tidy Up Zoning or Down zoning < 250

Table 4: Recommendations for rezoning

Area no.	Area	Recommendation	Comments from excursion
1	Euroa	Strategic Rezoning	Needs improved infrastructure and access Sewerage and water Flooding an obvious problem
2	Gooram	Strategic Rezoning	Build on existing development, in- fill development Mansfield Road Rural living to Gooram Falls
3	Strathbogie	Strategic Rezoning	Township 2 Zone should be RLZ
4	Violet Town	Strategic Rezoning	Freeway buffer locations
5	Arcadia –Two Chain Rd	Tidy Up Zoning	Kelly Estate- DDO if rezoned RLZ Property values increasing, Recommended RO
6	McKindley's Rd	Tidy Up Zoning	Similar to Kelly Estate
7	Goulburn Weir	Strategic Rezoning	Possibility for a LDRZ or a RLZ
8	Nagambie North	Strategic Rezoning	Large overlays near rail line to protect development
9	Kirwans Bridge	Strategic Rezoning	Woodlea Court RLZ
10	Allowah Drive	Tidy Up Zoning	
11	Whroovale Court	Tidy Up Zoning	
12	Gold Diggers	Tidy Up Zoning	Wild fire overlay
13	Graytown Area	Tidy Up Zoning	Restructure overlay needed
14	Costerfield Area	Tidy Up Zoning	
15	Tabilk	Tidy Up Zoning	Restructure possibility
16	Mangalore	Tidy Up zoning	Protect airport overlay
17	Avenel	Strategic Rezoning	Close to township should allow area to be filled in with development of remaining blocks
18	Old Longwood	Strategic Rezoning	Potential redevelopment
19	Ruffy	Strategic Rezoning	
20	Longwood	Strategic Rezoning	

After considering the background information, public opinion and demand as well as an excursion of the Strathbogie Shire area and the information in Table 1, specific areas have been recommended for future rural residential development.

As it appears, most of the areas reserved for rural residential development have been identified as areas that require strategic rezoning with the exception of; Allowah Drive, Whroovale Court, Gold Diggers, Graytown, Costerfield and Tabilk which have been recommended for Tidy Up Zoning. In the cases of these areas, they will not be rezoned for future rural residential development rather will be rezoned to recognise the current use of the land, albeit acknowledging that further expansion of these areas beyond the boundaries shown will not be supported by Council.

8.3 Priorities

As previously mentioned, the Rural Residential Strategy has taken a prioritised approach to allow for investigation and ultimately rezoning of each area. This approach was used because although there is a need to provide for housing within the Rural zone, there are practical limitations and sound planning reasons as to why the rezoning of all areas can not and should not occur at the same time.

Firstly, the demand for rural land does not warrant the immediate rezoning of all the areas specified, and secondly there is a lack of resources to rezone each parcel of land in the near future in terms of the resources/investigations and consultation required. Development drivers such as land values and property prices will influence the number of people moving from the city to the country as will farming trends, lifestyle choices and housing options. By prioritising areas that have demonstrated the need for further investigation and technical studies, the Strathbogie Shire is therefore responding to the demand while being proactive in planning for development in a way that achieves the objectives of rural residential development.

By identifying a set of areas that need to be addressed immediately, the Strategy aids Council in decision making and guiding development in a sustainable and economically viable way.

The sections below identify each individual area and its priority:

- High = initiate investigation and undertake rezoning as soon as practicable;
- Medium = investigation and rezoning to occur over the next 4-5 years (or earlier if resources and planning justification can be provided); and
- Low = investigation and rezoning to occur over the next 5-10 years (or earlier if resources and planning justification can be provided).

For the areas prioritised as medium to low, the assumption has been made that the demand will not exceed the existing rural zoning limitations and therefore no urgent planning response is required.

The following table provides an overview of the areas that have been prioritised for strategic rezoning.

Table 5: Priorities for Implementation of Strategy

No	Area	PRIORITY		
		High	Medium	Low
1	Euroa			
2	Gooram			
3	Strathbogie			
4	Violet Town			
5	Arcadia –Two Chain Road			
6	McKindley’s Road			
7	Goulburn Weir			
8	Nagambie North			
9	Kirwans Bridge			
10	Allowah Drive			
11	Whroovale Court			
12	Gold Diggers			
13	Graytown Area			
14	Costerfield Area			
15	Tabilk			
16	Mangalore			
17	Avenel			
18	Old Longwood			
19	Ruffy			
20	Longwood			

The larger towns such as Euroa, Strathbogie, Violet Town and Nagambie North, have been prioritised as needing immediate action as development pressures exist surrounding established towns. The majority of people according to local real estate agents, seeking rural land for lifestyle blocks prefer to be closer to a township centre in order to have access to services and facilities such as schools, shops and community activities. The other areas marked for high priority include Goulburn Weir and Avenel. Goulburn Weir has already developed into a low density residential area, with no agricultural activity. Similarly, Avenel has a number of established dwellings with no agricultural enterprise, and this, amongst other factors, such as demand, location, the need to reinforce the existing town, leads to the recommendation that areas north and south of Avenel are suitable for rural residential living.

Those areas that have medium to low priority have been incorporated into the strategy to be rezoned at a later stage albeit simply to ‘tidy-up’ existing zoning anomalies, and depending on the conditions and demand for rural living will be subject to further investigation when the need arises.

8.4 Process

After the Council adopt the Strategy the next step is to develop a consultation strategy to define the areas that were listed as priorities in the previous section. Extensive

consultation will ensure that all stakeholders are able to participate in determining specific areas for rezoning rural residential within the Strathbogie Shire.

Each area will need to be investigated further and technical studies will be undertaken to understand the complexities of each area and the feasibility of rezoning, depending on the scale, type and condition of the land. Technical studies may include:

- Floodplain investigation
- Flora and fauna surveys
- Traffic management
- Geo-technical and erosion investigation
- Soils mapping
- Landscape
- Servicing and infrastructure costs
- Effluent capabilities

Once the areas have been determined the Strathbogie Planning Scheme will need to be amended to accommodate the new zones and to enable the immediate implementation of the zones for development applications. Amending the Planning Scheme can take some time to work through the process. Following technical investigations and consultation, the amendment proposal will be displayed on public exhibition to allow for submissions from stakeholders and interested parties. Once all the submissions have been accounted for the proposal will be taken to a Panel hearing where independent Panel members will assess the proposal with recommendations. The Council will be presented with the findings of the Panel and a decision will be made to either adopt the amendment or abandon the amendment. If the Council chooses to adopt the amendment, it still needs final approval by the Minister for Planning who will then choose to approve or abandon the amendment.

Once the Minister has decided, and if it is approved the new zones will be added to the Strathbogie Planning Scheme in order to implement sustainable rural residential development.

8.5 Consultation

The overall aim of the consultation process to take this project forward is suggested as:

“to provide an inclusive consultation process which enables the local community, industry, businesses, landowners, other stakeholder groups and Council to discuss, debate and seek agreement on strategic directions for the future of rural residential zoning and development in identified parts of the Shire.”

The conceptual framework for a successful approach to consultation is an iterative one and should:

- provide accurate, up to date information on the project to keep the community informed;

- seek stakeholder reaction to information and then ask them to identify the issues / ideas / information they want to see considered in the further refinement and assessment of the rezoning of specific areas;
- ask for the community to identify their needs in relation to the development of possible future planning options;
- consider and incorporate the issues identified by stakeholders into a draft planning amendment proposal and planning provisions;
- test this draft proposal with stakeholders for acceptability and to highlight any remaining issues that need to be considered; and
- carry out an 'independent consultation' with landowners to determine and identify key issues.

The next steps involve formal consultation on the planning scheme amendment process. Prior to this it may be beneficial to the process to continue to provide information to people regarding the rezoning. It is therefore another recommendation of this Strategy that the Council implement a consultation strategy that is able to explore and identify the issues that are created by rural residential development in order to successfully reach a collaborative resolution.

9 *Appendices*

Appendix 1- interview notes

Rural Residential Strategy – Strathbogie Shire Council

Interviews with Real Estate Agents

Wesfarmers Landmark - Mr John Stringer

Demographics of buyers

Last 15 years Strathbogie has attracted Melbourne based clientele wanting to move to country lifestyle and small acreage. The types of properties include 1-5 acres on the edge of town, small house, 20-50 acres for children to be able to play, 100 acres too much for most professional people. Spending \$300,000 –750,00 on a farmhouse, 200-300 acres, hobby farmer, qualified as a farmer. If 'cashed up' people will buy on impulse.

Most people are over 40 years old and have an early retirement, some even own tow properties, one in Melbourne and one in the country. Professionals may work 2-3 days a week in Melbourne and live the remainder of the week in the country.

People work in Seymour and commute from nearby, Seymour is not an ideal location to live.

Early retirement, own two houses one in Melbourne the other in the country.

People buy on impulse, sell their house and immediately buy and want to spend their money.

Farming is no longer feasible as at least 800 ha is required to make a reasonable living. Not many full time farmers left approximately 20 in the Shire, husband and wife, husband farms and the wife works in the town could not survive on farming alone. Therefore the Shire is dependent on outsiders to maintain the economy.

Growth

\$42 million in property sales between 2000 and 2001

\$50 million 2001-2002

\$73 million 2002-2003

\$54 million in the first half of this year

There have been extra sales of 50-100 per year. In 1991 since the opening of City Link, demand increased considerably.

Euroa

Rural Residential Strategy needed urgently as Euroa has 13 eating houses and 2,800 people, these need to survive on visitors. Land around Euroa should have a combination of minimum lot sizes of 5 acres and 1 or 2 ha. As people want water service preferably and

to be near town. It would be ideal to have residential around the town and then rural surrounding the town.

As farmers are unsubsidised, there is a need for subdivision in order for farmers to make money. The area west of the highway from Euroa could be subdivided into 40 ha lots, as it is flat land, however Kelly's Estate was subdivided into smaller 10 acre lots and it has been a disaster.

Planning Conditions

Currently growth is hindered by bad planning conditions where home buyers need to have a bone fide farm business therefore people are lying to purchase 10 acres lots.

Type of land and housing demanded

Small acreage, 20-50 acres

Current minimum subdivision is 100 acres

Stay seven years and then move on, not a permanent lifestyle choice

Want access to water, hills, rocks and views of the Strathbogie Ranges

Ranchstyle homes, not interested in suburban style homes.

Current developments

Mansfield Road, five acre development, has all been sold.

Boundary Road North, Butterfactory Lane and Lydiards Road, 5 acre block. Most people are proud of their property and wish to maintain it. Covenants on land need to be implemented as a key tool to keep to minimum standards for example, housing style, fencing and colours. A 'ranch style' home is preferred.

Ideal locations for residential subdivisions

Euroa's location is ideal, close to the snowfields, and close to Melbourne, with views overlooking the Strathbogie Ranges and country atmosphere. As the Strathbogie Shire is across the Divide from Melbourne, there is a climate change immediately entering Avenal. Avenal has been suggested as an ideal location for development as it is close to Seymour for those that commute.

Boundary Road North

Butter Factory Lane

Lyidiard's Road

Commercial properties

Horse breeding, thoroughbreds.

Vineyards and horse studs, employing up to 30 people. These commercial ventures need services and facilities as well as housing for their workers.

Places not recommended for development

West of the Highway, less than 100 acres from Euroa towards Shepparton- Kelly's Estate, 90 x 10 acre subdivision, has become a Shanty Town. Graytown let market/rural zone dictate development.

Rural Residential Strategy – Strathbogie Shire Council

Interviews with Real Estate Agents

North Eastern Country Real Estate-Mr Warren Langsford

(a) Clientele

Melbourne market wanting 100 acre properties that are slowly declining in availability. Scarce availability of 5 acre lots and larger blocks means they are more expensive. Euroa is an ideal location as it is 5 minutes off the Hume Highway and a maximum drive of 1 ½ - 2 hours from Melbourne.

(b) Population migration and characteristics

Shepparton, residential sales,
Internal moving out of Benalla to Melbourne to be near children
Retirees large demographic and weekenders from Melbourne also but mostly permanent people especially in the Strathbogie Ranges.

Mansfield Road- area for development

(c) Type of property in demand

Looking for an older home, up to 50 acres to graze stock or grow olives. These people are not farmers; they want the country lifestyle, hobby farms. Minimum of 40 acre blocks, people do not want to see their neighbour. They are looking for a rural lifestyle, some want to "hobby farm". Generally most people require water services as tank water is not preferable for all water use. Views are not as important as a rural outlook.

People with young families want to be closer to the towns and services.

MFLP needed for jobs

Melbourne market does not want to buy subdivided land in the MLFP

Farming land \$800-1200 per acre, Rural Residential \$1500-2000 per acre and up to \$4000 top price.

Larger blocks Shepparton \$1000 acre for broad acre.

Developers zoning into towns (9-30 lot subdivisions)

Retirement villages, units in towns

Kelly Estate, flat clay land, bores salty underground no capital growth, capital growth elsewhere in Strathbogie.

Outside Violet Town 1, or 2 acre allotments

Rural, rock, hills, bush, views minimum of 50 acres –60 acres can be too small

Need the developments for Shire's rates.

Permanent water supply, underground dams.

Land around Arcadia Road is close to Shepparton but is not attractive and broad acre farming.

North of the Hume Highway, broad acre farming

Under 60 acres, bush area with no capability for farming

Euroa is starved of industry, increasing number of youth, future of the town

Leave a gap from highway.

\$800-\$1200 an acre- broad acre farm – 1000 acres

\$15,000- \$400,000 an acre (5 acre lots)

Retirement village

Strathbogie- broad acre farming

Common requests for smaller land parcels

Real estate agents do not necessarily hear about subsequent expectations.

Rule on having viable business is not workable.

Appendix 2 – Weighting Spreadsheet



Assessment of Each Potential Rural Residential Area Against Range of Policy Factors

	Weighting	Area 1 (Euroa)		Area 2 (Gooram)		Area 3 (Strathbogrie)		Area 4 (Violet Town)	
		Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
Policy Requirements									
Adjoins and will reinforce an existing township	10	3	30	1	10	3	30	2	20
Future development unlikely to cause conflict with existing farming activities	10	2	20	0	0	2	20	3	30
Landscape and amenity values of future development not compromised	10	3	30	1	10	1	10	3	30
Is not located on high quality agricultural land or high class soils	10	2	20	2	20	2	20	2	20
Is cost effective for locating future populations	10	3	30	3	30	1	10	3	30
Consistent with Regional Catchment Management strategy.	5	2	10	1	5	1	5	3	15
Will not result in significant vegetation clearance	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Will enhance the landscape values of the local area	5	2	10	0	0	1	5	3	15
Wildfire management issues insignificant	5	3	15	2	10	1	5	3	15
Not within close proximity (500m) to National Park, Wilderness area or State Park	5	3	15	3	15	2	10	3	15
Not within 200m of Crown Land stream reserves	5	1	5	3	15	2	10	1	5
Not within proximity to industrial land (including the MFLP)	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Not within the Mangalore Airport noise contour protection	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Generally protects important ecological values	5	3	15	1	5	1	5	3	15
Development Conditions					0		0		0
Is not subject to soil salinisation	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Local stability of land is suitable for rural residential development, including avoids landslips and steep slopes	5	3	15	3	15	1	5	3	15
Will not Exacerbate or be affected by flooding problems.	5	0	0	3	15	3	15	1	5
Is suitable for on-site sewage disposal	2	1	2	2	4	3	6	2	4
Servicing:			0		0		0		0
Road access is currently good or easy to provide	10	3	30	3	30	0	0	3	30
Feasible to service with water	5	2	10	1	5	0	0	3	15
Feasible to service with utilities (power, gas etc)	5	3	15	2	10	1	5	3	15
Feasible to provide local Shire services (rubbish etc)	5	3	15	2	10	2	10	3	15
Will not require drainage to allow development	10	1	10	3	30	3	30	1	10
Market demand:			0		0		0		0
Will meet market demand	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	1	5
TOTAL			372		314		276		384

Assessment of Each Potential Rural Residential Area Aga									
	Weighting	Area 5 (Arcadia-Two Chain Road)		Area 6 (McKindleys Road)		Area 7 (Goulburn Weir)		Area 8 (Nagambie North)	
		Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
Policy Requirements									
Adjoins and will reinforce an existing township	10	0	0	0	0	1	10	3	30
Future development unlikely to cause conflict with existing farming activities	10	2	20	2	20	3	30	2	20
Landscape and amenity values of future development not compromised	10	2	20	2	20	0	0	2	20
Is not located on high quality agricultural land or high class soils	10	3	30	1	10	1	10	1	10
Is cost effective for locating future populations	10	2	20	1	10	2	20	3	30
Consistent with Regional Catchment Management strategy.	5	3	15	3	15	1	5	2	10
Will not result in significant vegetation clearance	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	2	10
Will enhance the landscape values of the local area	5	2	10	1	5	1	5	1	5
Wildfire management issues insignificant	5	3	15	1	5	3	15	1	5
Not within close proximity (500m) to National Park, Wilderness area or State Park	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Not within 200m of Crown Land stream reserves	5	3	15	3	15	0	0	3	15
Not within proximity to industrial land (including the MFLP)	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Not within the Mangalore Airport noise contour protection	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Generally protects important ecological values	5	3	15	2	10	3	15	2	10
Development Conditions			0		0		0		0
Is not subject to soil salinisation	5	3	15	2	10	3	15	2	10
Local stability of land is suitable for rural residential development, including avoids landslips and steep slopes	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Will not Exacerbate or be affected by flooding problems.	5	0	0	0	0	2	10	2	10
Is suitable for on-site sewage disposal	2	2	4	1	2	1	2	2	4
Servicing:			0		0		0		0
Road access is currently good or easy to provide	10	3	30	2	20	2	20	3	30
Feasible to service with water	5	0	0	0	0	2	10	2	10
Feasible to service with utilities (power, gas etc)	5	1	5	2	10	2	10	2	10
Feasible to provide local Shire services (rubbish etc)	5	1	5	2	10	3	15	2	10
Will not require drainage to allow development	10	0	0	0	0	3	30	1	10
Market demand:			0		0		0		0
Will meet market demand	5	0	0	1	5	3	15	3	15
TOTAL			294		242		312		334

Assessment of Each Potential Rural Residential Area Aga									
	Weighting	Area 9 (Kirwans Bridge)		Area 10 (Allowah Drive)		Area 11 (Whroovale Court)		Area 12 (Gold Diggers)	
		Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
Policy Requirements									
Adjoins and will reinforce an existing township	10	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Future development unlikely to cause conflict with existing farming activities	10	3	30	2	20	2	20	2	20
Landscape and amenity values of future development not compromised	10	1	10	2	20	2	20	2	20
Is not located on high quality agricultural land or high class soils	10	1	10	2	20	2	20	2	20
Is cost effective for locating future populations	10	2	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Consistent with Regional Catchment Management strategy.	5	1	5	2	10	2	10	2	10
Will not result in significant vegetation clearance	5	3	15	1	5	1	5	1	5
Will enhance the landscape values of the local area	5	1	5	2	10	2	10	2	10
Wildfire management issues insignificant	5	3	15	1	5	1	5	0	0
Not within close proximity (500m) to National Park, Wilderness area or State Park	5	3	15	1	5	1	5	1	5
Not within 200m of Crown Land stream reserves	5	0	0	3	15	3	15	3	15
Not within proximity to industrial land (including the MFLP)	5	2	10	3	15	3	15	3	15
Not within the Mangalore Airport noise contour protection	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Generally protects important ecological values	5	1	5	1	5	1	5	1	5
Development Conditions			0		0		0		0
Is not subject to soil salinisation	5	3	15	2	10	2	10	2	10
Local stability of land is suitable for rural residential development, including avoids landslips and steep slopes	5	2	10	2	10	2	10	2	10
Will not Exacerbate or be affected by flooding problems.	5	2	10	3	15	3	15	3	15
Is suitable for on-site sewage disposal	2	1	2	3	6	3	6	3	6
Servicing:			0		0		0		0
Road access is currently good or easy to provide	10	2	20	1	10	1	10	1	10
Feasible to service with water	5	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feasible to service with utilities (power, gas etc)	5	2	10	2	10	2	10	2	10
Feasible to provide local Shire services (rubbish etc)	5	2	10	1	5	1	5	1	5
Will not require drainage to allow development	10	3	30	1	10	1	10	1	10
Market demand:			0		0		0		0
Will meet market demand	5	3	15	1	5	1	5	1	5
TOTAL			297		226		226		221

Assessment of Each Potential Rural Residential Area Aga									
	Weighting	Area 13 (Graytown Area)		Area 14 (Costerfield Area)		Area 15 (Tabilk)		Area 16 (Mangalore)	
		Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
Policy Requirements									
Adjoins and will reinforce an existing township	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	20
Future development unlikely to cause conflict with existing farming activities	10	2	20	2	20	1	10	1	10
Landscape and amenity values of future development not compromised	10	2	20	2	20	2	20	2	20
Is not located on high quality agricultural land or high class soils	10	2	20	2	20	0	0	2	20
Is cost effective for locating future populations	10	0	0	0	0	1	10	2	20
Consistent with Regional Catchment Management strategy.	5	2	10	2	10	1	5	2	10
Will not result in significant vegetation clearance	5	1	5	1	5	3	15	2	10
Will enhance the landscape values of the local area	5	2	10	2	10	2	10	2	10
Wildfire management issues insignificant	5	0	0	0	0	2	10	2	10
Not within close proximity (500m) to National Park, Wilderness area or State Park	5	1	5	1	5	3	15	2	10
Not within 200m of Crown Land stream reserves	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Not within proximity to industrial land (including the MFLP)	5	3	15	3	15	0	0	3	15
Not within the Mangalore Airport noise contour protection	5	3	15	3	15	2	10	3	15
Generally protects important ecological values	5	1	5	1	5	2	10	2	10
Development Conditions			0		0		0		0
Is not subject to soil salinisation	5	2	10	2	10	2	10	3	15
Local stability of land is suitable for rural residential development, including avoids landslips and steep slopes	5	2	10	2	10	3	15	2	10
Will not Exacerbate or be affected by flooding problems.	5	3	15	3	15	2	10	3	15
Is suitable for on-site sewage disposal	2	3	6	3	6	2	4	2	4
Servicing:			0		0		0		0
Road access is currently good or easy to provide	10	2	20	2	20	2	20	3	30
Feasible to service with water	5	0	0	0	0	1	5	3	15
Feasible to service with utilities (power, gas etc)	5	2	10	2	10	2	10	2	10
Feasible to provide local Shire services (rubbish etc)	5	1	5	1	5	2	10	2	10
Will not require drainage to allow development	10	1	10	1	10	1	10	2	20
Market demand:			0		0		0		0
Will meet market demand	5	1	5	1	5	1	5	2	10
TOTAL			231		231		229		334

Assessment of Each Potential Rural Residential Area Aga

	Weighting	Area 17 (Avenel)		Area 18 (Old Longwood)		Area 19 (Ruffy)		Area 20 (Longwood)	
		Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
Policy Requirements									
Adjoins and will reinforce an existing township	10	3	30	1	10	3	30	3	30
Future development unlikely to cause conflict with existing farming activities	10	3	30	2	20	2	20	3	30
Landscape and amenity values of future development not compromised	10	2	20	1	10	2	20	3	30
Is not located on high quality agricultural land or high class soils	10	2	20	2	20	2	20	3	30
Is cost effective for locating future populations	10	2	20	1	10	2	20	2	20
Consistent with Regional Catchment Management strategy.	5	2	10	2	10	2	10	3	15
Will not result in significant vegetation clearance	5	2	10	1	5	2	10	2	10
Will enhance the landscape values of the local area	5	2	10	1	5	2	10	2	10
Wildfire management issues insignificant	5	2	10	1	5	2	10	2	10
Not within close proximity (500m) to National Park, Wilderness area or State Park	5	3	15	3	15	3	15	3	15
Not within 200m of Crown Land stream reserves	5	2	10	3	15	3	15	2	10
Not within proximity to industrial land (including the MFLP)	5	1	5	3	15	3	15	1	5
Not within the Mangalore Airport noise contour protection	5	2	10	3	15	3	15	3	15
Generally protects important ecological values	5	2	10	1	5	2	10	2	10
Development Conditions			0		0				
Is not subject to soil salinisation	5	3	15	2	10	3	15	2	10
Local stability of land is suitable for rural residential development, including avoids landslips and steep slopes	5	2	10	2	10	2	10	3	15
Will not Exacerbate or be affected by flooding problems.	5	3	15	3	15	2	10	2	10
Is suitable for on-site sewage disposal	2	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4
Servicing:			0		0				
Road access is currently good or easy to provide	10	3	30	3	30	1	10	3	30
Feasible to service with water	5	2	10	1	5	1	5	2	10
Feasible to service with utilities (power, gas etc)	5	2	10	2	10	1	5	2	10
Feasible to provide local Shire services (rubbish etc)	5	3	15	2	10	1	5	2	10
Will not require drainage to allow development	10	2	20	2	20	2	20	2	20
Market demand:			0		0				
Will meet market demand	5	3	15	2	10	3	15	2	10
TOTAL			354		284		319		369