

21.05 NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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

Specific references to individual towns are also included in Clause 21.09 (Local Areas).

21.05-1 Key issue - Agriculture

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Agriculture is important to the economic, social and physical development of the municipality. The generally reliable rainfall has long supported various agricultural endeavours including dairy farming. The area also benefits from ample natural timber resources. There is a considerable area of rural land within the municipality which has multiple roles in managing and sustaining that land. The agricultural industry in Latrobe is worth about \$57 million a year and is based primarily on dairy farming (45% of the value of Latrobe's agricultural production) and livestock (a further 36% of the value).

While the protection of rural land for agriculture is not as significant an issue as the protection of coal and plantation resources, there remains a need to improve industry efficiency, protect the agricultural land resource base and encourage new sustainable enterprises amid ongoing structural changes in rural industries. The *Assessment of Agricultural Quality of Land in Gippsland 1984* provides guidance on the location of productive agricultural land in Latrobe City. Moreover, due to its naturally high rainfall, Latrobe is well placed to supply food production given dry conditions in other parts of the state.

Pressure for rural residential development in rural areas is acknowledged as a legitimate land use, however high value rural land and natural resources need to be protected. Land use conflict has arisen with the different expectations of persons seeking a rural residential lifestyle and farmers in terms of noise, domestic animals, hours of operation and right-to-farm issues. The threat of bushfire is another constraint and is often not a comfortable mix with a rural residential outcome.

Objective 1

To protect productive agricultural land from non-agricultural use and development.

Strategies

- 1.1 Implement any adopted Latrobe City Rural Land Use Strategy.
- 1.2 Encourage productive agricultural land to be used primarily for farming and horticultural purposes except where the land supports significant vegetation of local provenance.
- 1.3 Limit subdivision, use or development of land that is incompatible with the use of the land for a sustainable resource.
- 1.4 Encourage land uses that complement and enhance the viability of agricultural activity.

21.05-2 Key issue - Water

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Water is among Latrobe's most valuable resources; water quality, security and management are key opportunities. Latrobe City has a more secure water supply and larger capacity sustainable waste water system than any other Victorian region. The area supports a number of proclaimed potable water catchments that provides for useable drinking water.

The Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy 2011 has found that the Gippsland Region is one of the few areas in Victoria where the available water resources have not been fully allocated. In addition, it is anticipated that while climate change will lead to reduced rainfall in the region, relative to other districts, Gippsland will retain superior rainfall. This available water could be used to support additional development and agricultural activity in the region with Gippsland increasingly becoming the food bowl of Victoria.

Objective 1

To protect and improve water quality and river health.

Strategies

- 1.1 Provide urban development buffers to waterways to maintain water quality.
- 1.2 Encourage Water Sensitive Urban Design principles in all developments.
- 1.3 Maintain community wetlands and infrastructure (such as gross pollutant traps) in urban areas.
- 1.4 Protect potable water supply catchments to enable the provision of useable drinking water.

Objective 2

To reduce corporate and community water use.

Strategies

- 2.1 Promote water re-use and water conservation in new developments to maximise the amount of water available for river health and human use.
- 2.2 Promote the use of recycled water for industrial, agricultural and domestic land use and development.

Objective 3

To protect waterways, aquatic areas, floodplains, wetlands, swamps and catchments.

Strategies

- 3.1 Protect, enhance and reinstate environmental values of the waterway.
- 3.2 Encourage connectivity of waterways to open space and other natural environment and landscape features.

Objective 4

To protect riparian land, vegetation communities, waterway valleys and escarpments.

Strategies

- 4.1 Protect and enhance waterway corridors through use of good urban design, appropriate built form, water sensitive urban design, appropriate plantings and land management.

21.05-3 Key issue - Sustainable technologies

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The Latrobe Valley brown coal electricity generators supply around 90% of Victoria's electricity. The low cost electricity generated has contributed to Victoria's economic prosperity. However, the high moisture content of brown coal has meant that greenhouse gas emissions produced are high compared to other forms of electricity generation and also make the coal unsuitable for bulk exports. Research is being undertaken to examine alternative uses for brown coal generation and to develop clean coal technologies, such as coal drying processes, carbon capture and storage, bio-sequestration and algae based technology.

Situated on the fringe of Latrobe Valley, the Gippsland Basin is one of Australia's most prolific and mature petroleum provinces. With approximately two thirds of the basin located offshore from the Gippsland coastline it is a major source of natural gas with some 24 oil and gas fields currently in operation. Emerging Victorian and Australian Government carbon and energy policies will provide opportunities to harness local resources to achieve long term sustainable technologies.

Objective 1

To protect and promote sustainable technologies that create prosperity resulting from natural resource use and research.

Strategies

- 1.1 Improve the balance between reliance on existing natural resources and the need to promote the liveability of the Latrobe community as an attractive region to live and work.

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Coal Resources

The City's rich brown coal reserves, forestry and agriculture all represent a major contribution to Victoria's economy. Latrobe City is an urban and rural area, built on one of the largest brown coal reserves in the world, and traditionally recognised as the centre of Victoria's electricity industry. The electricity generated in the Latrobe Valley from brown coal resources has contributed significantly to the state's economic prosperity. Latrobe City currently supplies over 90% of Victoria's electricity generation requirements; around 11% of the population is directly employed within the sector, with an additional eight percent of jobs indirectly supported within the local economy. The electricity generation sector accounts for 21% of the areas Gross Regional Product.

The coal resource in the Latrobe Valley remains an asset of national and state importance and is a significant component in the economy of the municipality. The following key issues are relevant to the development of the coal resource:

- The significance of the Gippsland Coalfields Policy Area in providing, directly or indirectly, the major proportion of Victoria's energy supplies, in the form of brown coal.
- The presence of established communities, including the urban settlements of Latrobe City, as a networked urban system.
- The significance of fire as a major hazard to people, plant and equipment employed in the winning and utilisation of brown coal and of the major consequences of interruption of the electricity supply system.
- The importance of established agricultural activity.
- The water resource, both surface and underground, to the quality of the regional water catchment.
- The profound effect of major industries on the physical and social environment of the municipality.
- The need for co-operation between all levels of government, the private sector and the community and the importance of the adequate recognition of all sectors in decision making for the region.

The Gippsland Coalfields provide, directly or indirectly, the major proportion of Victoria's energy supplies in the form of brown coal. There are two separate issues with the development of the Gippsland Coalfields being; the resource itself, and the buffer area from the resource. The categories shown in the Gippsland Coalfield's Policy Area and associated Maps indicate timeframe and location of when the coal resource may be utilised. This includes:

- Category A coalfields - development possible within 10-30 years.
- Category B coalfields - development possible within 30-60 years.
- Category C coalfields - other coal areas – development more than 60 years off.

In the coal resource area, the extraction and use of coal is the primary consideration.

Objective 1

To facilitate orderly coal development so that the coal resource is utilised in a way which is integrated with state and local strategic planning.

Strategies

- 1.1 Ensure that coal excavations, overburden dumps and other associated developments are planned, managed and progressively rehabilitated to the highest practicable future use.

- 1.2 Ensure that coal resource development and use takes into account the interests of the existing and future Victorian community, the needs and views of the local community and local Council, equity in the provision and distribution of employment, housing and community services and the likely social and environmental impacts of development.
- 1.3 Ensure that mining licence and associated works approvals take into account adopted local town structure plans and established urban coal buffers.
- 1.4 Encourage when practicable and cost effective, the use of quarry and other materials recovered from coal development.
- 1.5 Ensure that transport corridors are protected and maintained.

Objective 2

To designate land for future coal resource development or for buffer areas on the future use of land.

Strategies

- 2.1 Ensure that planning for coal resource development and use takes into account areas and features of recognised value for nature conservation, recreation, tourism, and landscape quality.
- 2.2 Ensure that the catchments of the river systems and underground waters are planned and managed to ensure adequate water supply and quality for development, management and use of water resources, complementing and integrating with coal resource planning in the local and regional catchment.

Objective 3

To ensure that new development is not undertaken in such a way as to compromise the effective and efficient use of existing or future infrastructure or resources such as coal resources, timber production and high quality agricultural land.

Strategies

- 3.1 Ensure that development and use of coal resources ameliorates adverse effects and promotes the positive benefits of developments.
- 3.2 Ensure that timber production is planned in a manner which will complement the orderly development of the coal resource.
- 3.3 Ensure that timber production takes into account the need for effective fire protection for the coal resource.
- 3.4 Encourage land uses in the coal resource area prior to coal development, which are productive and minimise the social and financial cost of coal development.
- 3.5 Encourage extensive animal husbandry and other rural land uses in areas of potential coal production.
- 3.6 Discourage 'incompatible uses' such as residential, rural living, commercial or non-coal related industrial land use and development in areas of potential coal production.

Objective 4

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

Strategies

- 4.1 Encourage existing uses on land identified as required for coal exploitation to continue until such time as the land is required for brown coal winning or processing.
- 4.2 Consider alternative uses on a temporary basis if it can be demonstrated that they would not adversely affect the future development of the coal.

Objective 5

To maximise the protection of the coal resource to ensure resource security in the future.

Strategies

- 5.1 Ensure that environmental quality and protection against pollution are primary considerations in coal resource planning.

Objective 6

To ensure that the use, development and management of land in the coal resource areas mutually protect urban amenity and coal resource development, as well as the continued social and economic productive use of land.

Strategies

- 6.1 Encourage uses of land which maintain and enhance land use capability, productivity and quality of the landscape and minimise fire and soil erosion hazards.
- 6.2 In making decisions, ensure that if strategies relating to land use conflict with one another then:
- In the coal resource area, the extraction and use of coal should be the primary consideration. At every stage of development of that coal due account should be taken of the other principal resources of the coal resource area. Land uses which do not impede that objective may be considered in that policy area.
 - In the identified coal related buffer areas, the mutual protection of urban amenity and coal development areas are to be primary considerations.
 - In existing urban areas and land identified for urban purposes, urban land uses should be the primary considerations.
 - In high quality agricultural areas, the use of land for rural activities is to be the primary consideration. However, coal development remains the primary consideration in relation to those identified coal areas or for land required for facilities for or associated with the use of that coal.
 - Timber production has a lesser priority than the extraction of coal and agricultural land use activity unless a proper economic assessment shows it to be viable.
 - Within zoned urban areas and areas identified for future urban use, low density residential and rural living use and development has a lower priority than timber production, the extraction of coal, high quality agricultural activity and urban land uses.

21.05-5 Implementation

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The objectives, strategies and policy guidelines arising from this clause are implemented through the application of appropriate zones and overlays as described in Clause 21.10.

