

21.10 NATURAL RESOURCES

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21.10-1 Overview

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Maroondah has a high quality natural environment which characterises a significant portion of the municipality. Protection and enhancement of the natural environment through the encouragement of sustainable development is a key strategy of Maroondah City Council. The quality of our environment is important for economic and social reasons. In particular, environmental quality has been instrumental in attracting both new residents and world class companies.

Maroondah is physically dominated by two geographical features locally referred to as the Wicklow Hills Ridge and the Loughnan Warranwood Ridge. In the context of the municipality as a residential suburb, these two natural features are primarily characterised by low density subdivision, developed with a variety of housing choices and covered by an extensive canopy of native and exotic vegetation.

Waterways of Maroondah extend to major catchment areas that ultimately lead to Port Phillip Bay. The northern portion of the municipality drains to the Yarra Catchment, whilst the southern section drains to Dandenong Creek.

Major threats to the natural environment in Maroondah include the loss of native vegetation, waterway degradation, and pollution and climate change resulting from wasteful resource consumption.

21.10-2 Objectives, strategies and implementation

11/07/2014
C91

Objective 1

- To ensure the quality and attractiveness of Maroondah's urban areas.

Strategies

- Protect non invasive, exotic vegetation which contributes to Maroondah's character.
- Protect sites of natural significance from inappropriate urban development pressures.

Objective 2

- To minimise the physical impact and stress of development and land use on the natural environment.

Strategies

- Adopt a consistent approach to the concept of sustainable land use development in terms of environmental management issues.
- Minimise the visual and physical impact of land use and development on waterway assets.
- Require the undergrounding of all utility services.

Objective 3

- To encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment including the maintenance of clean air and water and protection of canopy vegetation.

Strategies

- Preserve existing communities of indigenous flora and fauna and encourage the re-establishment of indigenous species.
- Undertake joint native revegetation programs with relevant authorities environmental groups and the local community.
- Reduce the level of air pollution generated by domestic and commercial activities.
- Enhance the natural environment through innovative planning techniques.
- Assist local businesses to adopt environmentally sustainable business practices.
- Improve the treatment of waterways and drainage systems.
- Investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of introducing litter traps in appropriate areas to restrict the flow of waste debris into waterways.
- Develop wetlands and retarding basins where possible, to capture and filter stormwater, while creating habitat for aquatic life.
- Identify land with drainage and flood constraints and ensure development responds to these constraints.
- Prevent any form of degradation below the existing levels of visual and aesthetic amenity.

Objective 4

- To prevent the overdevelopment of the ridgelines.

Strategies

- Promote the unique role of both ridgelines in Maroondah's urban and environmental context.
- Control the design and siting of single dwelling construction and extensions in sensitive residential areas such as the ridgelines and drainage catchment areas.
- Ensure the visual amenity of the ridgeline is not compromised by dwelling design, building bulk or construction materials.
- Protect sites of natural and biological significance from inappropriate urban development pressures.
- Limit the site density of new housing development to a level which is reflective of the surrounding housing pattern and respectful of environmental constraints.
- Minimise the fragmentation of current land holdings below the existing subdivision pattern and density.

Objective 5

- To encourage the complete regeneration of the Wicklow Hills Ridge and Loughnan Warranwood Ridge environment.

Strategies

- Encourage and promote the re-vegetation of private and public land with indigenous flora.
- Enhance the natural ridgeline environment through innovate planning techniques and community education.
- Develop and implement environmental management techniques to prevent degradation of the drainage catchment and watercourse.
- Ensure that new housing is developed on sites and in a manner where there will be minimal loss of canopy vegetation and biologically significant native understorey.
- Preserve existing communities of indigenous flora and fauna and encourage the re-establishment of indigenous species on both public and private land.
- Enhance the natural features of the catchment environment through innovate planning techniques.

Objective 6

- To promote the benefits of controlled and sustainable residential development in headwater catchments and minimise any form of degradation of the catchment or watercourse of both the Yarra River and Dandenong Creek.

Strategies

- Limit the amount of impervious, hard surface construction on sites within the catchment, to minimise the volume of stormwater entering the creek headwater.
- Ensure that the visual amenity of the catchment is not compromised by dwelling design, building bulk or construction materials.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented by:

Local policy and exercise of discretion

- Ensuring all industrial use and development is in accordance with the Industrial Urban Design and Development Clause 22.07.
- Ensuring all use and development is in accordance with the Waterways Protection Clause 22.01.
- Ensuring all residential development is in accordance with: Maroondah Residential Neighbourhood Character Clause 22.02; Ringwood Central Activities Area Development Clause 22.06; and the Croydon Major Activities Area Development Clause 22.09 .
- Ensuring vegetation removal is in accordance with the Sites of Biological Significance Clause 22.04.
- Requiring all new development to underground all utilities infrastructure.
- Discouraging the removal of native, indigenous and endemic vegetation.
- Ensuring all use and development is in accordance with the Non Urban Areas Clause 22.03.

- Preventing the fragmentation of current land holdings below the existing subdivision pattern and density which characterises the low density residential environment on the Wicklow Hills Ridge and Loughnan Warranwood Ridge.
- Limiting the amount of impervious, hard surface construction on allotments located on the ridgelines, to minimise the volume of stormwater runoff flowing overland.
- Encouraging the re-establishment of riparian indigenous vegetation.

Zones and overlays

- Applying native vegetation, canopy tree protection and environmental controls to the ridgeline and drainage catchment features across the municipality.
- Implementing specific environmental controls to sensitive rural residential areas located in the eastern and northern fringe areas of the municipality.
- Applying the Special Building Overlay to land affected by overland flows in storm events that exceed the capacity of underground drainage systems.
- Applying a Significant Landscape Overlay to areas of the municipality with medium to good canopy tree coverage and ridgeline areas with poor canopy tree coverage.
- Applying a Significant Landscape Overlay and Vegetation Protection Overlay to prevent the loss of both native and exotic vegetation from the sensitive ridgeline environmental areas.
- Implementing a Design and Development Overlay to control subdivision density and built form issues in the sensitive ridgeline residential areas of the municipality.
- Applying a Significant Landscape Overlay and Vegetation Protection Overlay to prevent the loss of both native and exotic vegetation from the Jumping Creek headwater catchment.
- Applying a Design and Development Overlay to control subdivision density and built form issues in the sensitive Jumping Creek headwater catchment area.
- Applying the Special Building Overlay to land affected by overland flows in storm events that exceed the capacity of underground drainage systems.

Future strategic work

- Developing a set of standards and protocols relating to the control of waste and emissions from all forms of urban development to sensitive environmental areas including waterways.
- Reviewing the extent of the Significant Landscape Overlay.
- Preparing guidelines for sustainable development and facilitating their adoption and application by the local development industry and local community and environmental groups.
- Adopting the home energy rating scheme in the assessment of multi dwelling applications and promoting the scheme to the local development industry.
- Preparing guidelines for the sustainable development of dwellings on the ridgeline areas, in terms of siting, building bulk, construction materials, cut and fill methods and colours.
- Strengthen the principles and controls established in the Design and Development Overlay.
- Developing a set of standards and protocols relating to the consistent assessment of planning applications for all forms of development on land forming both ridgelines.

- Regularly reviewing planning determinations to ensure that the Design and Development Overlay is producing appropriate planning outcomes for subdivision density in the Jumping Creek headwater catchment.
- Preparing guidelines for the sustainable development of dwellings in the Jumping Creek headwater catchment, in terms of siting, building bulk, construction materials, cut and fill methods and colours.

Other actions

- Enhance local waterways through the protection of the quality of stormwater transferred to permanent waterways.
- Liaising with local environmental groups in the preparation of management plans for significant bushland reserves throughout Maroondah.
- Enhance habitat corridors in accordance with the Habitat Corridors Strategy.
- Adopting the home energy rating scheme in the assessment of multi dwelling applications and promoting the scheme to the local development industry.

Reference documents

Sites of Biological Significance in Maroondah, G.S. Lorimer, J.C. Reid, L.P. Smith and H. Moss, 1997

Notable Tree Strategy, Maroondah City Council, 1997

Roadside Conservation and Street Tree Strategy, Maroondah City Council, 1996

Best Practices in Litter Management, Waste Management Council, 1996

Assessment of the Tree Canopy Cover in the City of Maroondah, J.J O'Neill, 1995

Croydon Town Centre Structure Plan, Planisphere, 2006

Maroondah Neighbourhood Character Study, Planisphere, 2006