

21.13 ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE VALUES

22/06/2017
C51

OVERVIEW

21.13-1 Rural and Natural Landscapes

19/12/2013
C70

The Shire's rural areas contain some of the most ecologically important and diverse areas in the State. These have high intrinsic natural values and are a significant factor in attracting people to reside and visit the Shire. There are significant environmental landscape issues facing the Shire's rural areas, including inappropriate residential development and the protection of vegetation habitat. Infrastructure development can have significant detrimental effects on the landscape. The rural amenity of the Shire is an asset which warrants protection. Residents and tourists derive pleasure from the scenic values of the rural landscapes. Even the highly modified areas of the Shire possess high landscape values. The Macalister Irrigation District, with its picturesque, green irrigated dairy country set against the foothills of the Great Dividing Range is an excellent example of the region's aesthetic assets.

Objective 1

To protect, improve and sustainably manage the Shire's natural environment and diverse landscapes.

Strategies

- Promote the use of appropriate building materials, the retention of native vegetation and revegetation that enhance the scenic landscapes of the Shire's rural areas.
- Discourage residential development and associated uses in areas which have high agricultural value, environmental and/or scenic significance, or are near main landfill sites.
- Consider the impacts of timber production activities on public and private land on the surrounding landscape.
- Locate and design activities such as abattoirs and intensive animal husbandry to minimise environmental damage and loss of amenity to surrounding areas taking into account matters such as effluent control, odour, noise, soil compaction, erosion and protection of water quality.

Objective 2

To recognise the visual, landscape and recreational importance of the Gippsland Lakes and coastal environment to the region.

Strategy

- Protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of coastal and coastal hinterland areas.
- Minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the Gippsland Lakes or Ninety Mile Beach or areas of high visibility.

21.13-2 Biodiversity

19/12/2013
C70

The recognition and management of remnant native vegetation on both public and private land is important in the protection of species. Development of land adjacent to State and National Parks should take into account the potential impacts upon these areas.

In agricultural landscapes native vegetation has largely been cleared, resulting in many of the area's native species and communities being listed as highly significant and threatened (Federal and State legislation) including the Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland vegetation community. Remnant native vegetation in agricultural landscapes form important biolinks between the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves, the Gippsland Lakes, Ninety Mile Beach, the Strezelecki Ranges and Nooramunga Inlet. These biolinks are important for species migration and are threatened by changes in climate and the clearing of native vegetation.

Objective 1

To protect biodiversity, including important natural landscapes, endangered flora and fauna species and indigenous vegetation on public and private land.

Strategy

- Recognise and protect native flora and fauna and maintain biological diversity within the Shire, particularly in alpine, coastal, and wetland systems.

Objective 2

To retain native vegetation on private land, Crown land, declared water stream-side reserves and roadsides.

Strategies

- Encourage revegetation programs to use indigenous species.
- Encourage the retention of appropriate vegetation and fauna habitat in new development.
- Ensure the need for removal of native vegetation is minimised through the appropriate siting of dwellings in rural areas.

Objective 3

To recognise the ecological importance of the Gippsland Lakes and coastal environment to the region.

Strategy

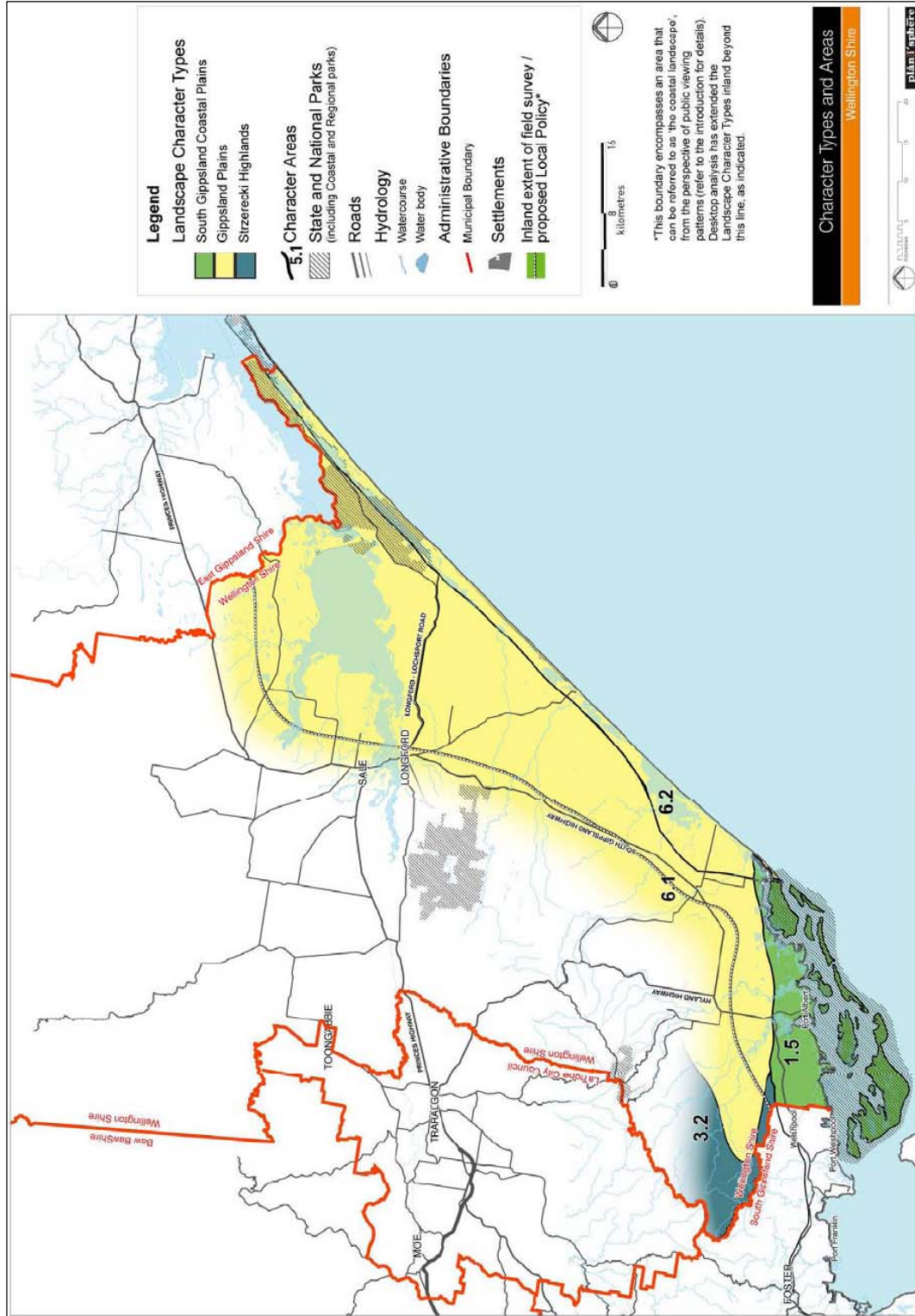
- Encourage the revegetation of riparian buffers along waterways, gullies, ridge-lines, property boundaries, and recharge areas.

21.13-3

19/12/2013
C70

Coastal Landscape Character and Significance

The *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study* (2006) identifies landscape character areas as shown on the map below.



Map One: Wellington Shire Coastal Landscapes Character Types and Areas

The Ninety Mile Beach and the Gippsland Lakes coastal landscapes within the Shire are of State significance. The Ninety Mile Beach coastal landscape is protected by the Significant Landscape Overlay. When considering planning permit applications for development in coastal areas specific strategies and objectives apply to the Ninety Mile Beach Character

Area shown as Area 6.2. For other coastal landscapes, the general objectives and strategies should be considered.

Objective 1

To ensure that coastal related development responds appropriately to the landscape setting and character.

Strategies

- Minimise the impacts of development and human activity on the ecological values of the coast and around the Gippsland Lakes.

Edges of Settlements:

- Retain undeveloped breaks between settlements by focussing further development within existing township boundaries and avoiding ribbon development, particularly along the coastal strip and key touring routes.
- Utilise existing landscape features, where they exist, (e.g. topography, vegetation coverage, vistas) to define edges to settlements, protecting the surrounding landscape character.
- Scale the height and form of new development at the coastal edge of settlements to be sensitive to surrounding development, the surrounding landform and the visual setting of the settlement, particularly when viewed from the foreshore.
- Support a hierarchy of built form within coastal settlements, with lower buildings adjacent to the foreshore and higher buildings away from the foreshore.

Between Settlements – Coastal Locations:

- Retain the natural and undeveloped character of the coastal strip between settlements by avoiding or carefully siting and designing development, and using colours and materials which are appropriate in a coastal environment and minimise contrast with the surrounding landscape.
- Retain a dominant natural character, particularly within 500 metres of the coast, by setting development back from the coast in flatter locations, avoiding loss of vegetation and minimising the visibility and impact of pedestrian and vehicular access paths and site servicing on the coastal landscape.
- Protect sensitive coastal vegetation, in particular heath-lands and dune vegetation from clearing, pollution, grazing and trampling.

Between settlements – Hinterland Locations:

- Ensure building design strongly responds to the natural setting in relation to siting, materials and colours to minimise visibility, particularly in prominent and highly visible locations and when viewed from main road corridors and key public use areas.
- In open rural areas, set buildings back long distances from roads and/or group buildings in the landscape among substantial landscaping of indigenous or non-invasive exotic / native feature planting (including existing shelterbelts).
- Maximise the undeveloped area of a lot and utilise permeable surfacing to support vegetation and minimise surface run-off.
- Retain trees that form part of a continuous canopy beyond the property, and plant new trees in a position where they will add to such a continuous canopy.

Objective 2

To ensure that development is subordinate to the natural, visual and environmental landscape character and significance

Strategies

- Ensure development minimises the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, and avoids further visual clutter across the landscape at settlement entrances and exits, including through the use of large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage and advertising signage.
- Locate power lines, access tracks and other infrastructure in areas of low visibility, preferably in previously cleared locations, and avoid the use of materials that contrast with the landscape.

Objective 3

To maintain locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of the coastal and coastal hinterland region.

Strategies

- Site infrastructure away from highly scenic locations, key views and near-coastal locations, or underground wherever possible in the case of powerlines and other utility services.
- Use vegetation to screen infrastructure from key viewing corridors and public use areas.
- Protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of coastal and coastal hinterland areas, particularly from the Longford-Loch Sport Road to Lake Wellington and Lake Reeve and to the coastal dunes of the Ninety Mile Beach.

Objective 4

To strengthen the presence of native and indigenous vegetation throughout the Character Area, particularly at roadsides, and in settlements and riparian strips.

Strategies

- Protect and enhance indigenous vegetation.
- Encourage the planting of appropriate indigenous vegetation for rehabilitation works and landscaping around development
- Retain existing shelterbelts, and non-indigenous feature planting where they are features of the area and the species are non-invasive.

21.13-4

22/06/2017
C51

Specific Character Areas**Ninety Mile Coast (Character Area 6.2)**

In this Character Area, recent coastal and alluvial landforms have formed a series of narrow spits and peninsulas which separate the Bass Strait Coast at Ninety Mile Beach from the extensive inland lakes system of Gippsland Lakes. There is an unspoilt natural character in the northern half of the Character Area where extensive indigenous coastal vegetation dominates and the intersection of landforms and lakes creates a scenic setting to minor settlements and recreation locations. In the south, the Character Area has been substantially cleared and less dramatic landform and only a low density scattering of built development creates a uniform rural character to the coast edge.

Objectives

To protect indigenous coastal vegetation and ensure that it is the dominant feature of the landscape at the coastal edge of the Character Area and adjoining inland lakes.

To strengthen the presence of indigenous coastal vegetation, particularly south of Seaspray and within existing settlements.

To ensure that development in and around existing settlements does not impact on the characteristics of surrounding landscapes, including the natural and unbuilt character at the edge of the Gippsland Lakes and Ninety Mile Beach.

Strategy

- Encourage the design of buildings near lakes and waterways to be low scale and set back a sufficient distance to allow for the protection or rehabilitation of a substantial zone of riparian vegetation (e.g. over 100 metres).

Objectives

To protect locally significant views and vistas, including expansive open views across the inland lakes, natural and unbuilt views along Ninety Mile Beach.

To minimise any increase in development visible above the dunes and coastal vegetation outside settlements, when viewed from the beach, foreshore or offshore.

To avoid buildings set high on dunes or development that will be visible on the skyline.

To protect the largely natural and unbuilt views of Lake King, Lake Victoria and Lake Wellington from the shores of the lakes.

Strategies

- Ensure development proposals avoid any buildings or structures visible from the foreshore on the Bass Strait coast by setting new developments back from the coast and natural coastal landforms. Where development within the coastal strip cannot be prevented:
 - site developments on the inland slope of dunes (avoid buildings protruding above the dune ridgeline);
 - set buildings and structures among existing vegetation, maximising the retention of coastal vegetation;
 - utilise appropriate indigenous vegetation to further integrate the development with the landscape;
 - design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site and avoid visually dominant elevations;
 - minimise overlooking of the foreshore; and
 - avoid access in highly visible or undisturbed areas.
- Within the smaller Ninety Mile Beach settlements (e.g. Golden Beach /Paradise Beach, Seaspray, McLoughlins Beach) minimise visual intrusion by utilising low scale building forms, tucked into the landscape and colours and materials that reduce contrast and distant visibility (particularly at the coastal edge settlements or locations or in vistas to the coast from main roads).

Objective

To recognise and protect the landscape of the Gippsland Lakes as a place of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.

Strategy

- Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.

Implementation

These environment and landscape value strategies for rural and natural landscapes, biodiversity and coastal landscape character will be implemented by:

Using zones, overlays, policy and the exercise of discretion

- Applying appropriate zones and overlays
- Applying the *Special Water Supply Catchment Areas* policy at Clause 22.01
- Applying the *Rural* policy at Clause 22.02
- Applying the *Car Parking* policy at Clause 22.04
- Applying the *Aerodrome and Environs* policy at Clause 22.05
- Applying the *Coal Resources* policy at Clause 22.06
- Applying the *Coal Buffers* policy at Clause 22.07
- Applying the *Ninety Mile Beach* policy at Clause 22.08.
- Implement any relevant coastal action plan
- Use County Fire Authority guidelines on subdivision, group accommodation, and recreation accommodation in assessing whether a development proposal adequately addresses fire safety issues.
- Apply the following standards for use, development and subdivision in areas subject to fire risk:
 - Buildings, public open space and roads are to be sited, designed and constructed to minimise the impact of emergency conditions arising from fire.
 - Development associated with residential and public use is to incorporate fire prevention measures in accordance with relevant fire prevention guidelines.
 - Access, fencing, and location of dams are to maximise fire fighting potential and minimise interference with fire fighting measures.
 - Plantations are to be designed to minimise the risk of fire.
 - The modification of fuel levels to suitably minimise fire risk.

Undertaking further strategic work

- Prepare an amendment to apply the Vegetation Protection Overlay and the Environmental Significance Overlay to sites of biological significance and remnant native vegetation.
- Develop a Local Conservation Strategy to provide a strategic approach to conserving the Shire's environmental assets.
- Develop a policy to promote water sensitive urban design in the Shire in relation to urban run-off.
- Consider the application of the Design and Development Overlay to highways, main roads and tourist routes.

Other Actions

- Implement the recommendations of the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study 2006*.
- Implement the Municipal Domestic Wastewater Management Plan.

- Council/EPA to identify further candidate sites for the Environmental Audit Overlay.
- Use Integrated Catchment Management Plans, Salinity Action Plans, and Whole Farm Plans to promote responsible resource management in rural areas.