

22.02 RURAL POLICY16/10/2014
C89

This policy applies to land in the Farming Zone, Rural Conservation Zone and Rural Activity Zone.

22.02-1 Policy basis01/05/2014
C55(Part 1)

The following factors are evident in the rural areas of the Shire:

- Agricultural and timber industries are of fundamental importance to the Shire's economic prosperity.
- Productive agricultural land, including the Macalister Irrigation District and the extensive dryland areas, is the cornerstone of the Shire's agricultural sector.
- Infrastructure for access to water is crucial, as without irrigation water, much of the agricultural land within Wellington Shire has lower productivity.
- Fragmentation and loss of productive agricultural land from production will diminish the value of the Shire's agricultural sector.
- Small lot subdivision and houses in rural areas can cause problems including:
 - Long term loss of strategically important agricultural land;
 - Conflicting lifestyles and expectations of people with non agricultural backgrounds and farming land owners;
 - Land use conflict; including opposition to traditional farming practices
 - Poor management of small lots (including control of animals and weeds) where productive use is not the primary objective of land management;
 - Increased demands for urban based services in outlying areas which cannot be provided effectively or efficiently;
 - Detriment to environmental or landscape character values caused by the proliferation of houses and associated outbuildings and earthworks.

22.02-2 Objectives01/05/2014
C55(Part 1)

To protect agriculture and agricultural land from inappropriate encroachment by urban and non-production based rural land use and settlement.

To discourage the creation of small lots on farming properties.

To encourage the consolidation of farm lots for more efficient agricultural production.

To discourage dwellings on small lots that do not support and comprise rural production activities and operations.

To ensure that inappropriate small rural lot development does not occur in areas of environmental significance and sensitivity.

To discourage subdivision which re-aligns boundaries, particularly in irrigated areas, for the purpose of creating small lots for housing purposes.

To ensure that the infrastructure for getting water to agricultural land is not compromised.

To discourage the use and development of agricultural land that would be incompatible with its sustainable use for ongoing agricultural production.

22.02-316/10/2014
C89**Policy**

It is policy that the following matters will be taken into account when considering applications to subdivide, use or develop land within the Farming Zone, Rural Conservation Zone or Rural Activity Zone.

Subdivision

- Subdivision of rural land should be strongly discouraged unless it can be demonstrated that it will facilitate and provide greater flexibility for continued agricultural production.
- Encourage the consolidation of farming operations which support agricultural viability and environmental sustainability.
- Boundaries should only be realigned to: a) make minor adjustments including taking into account topographical or public infrastructure features; or b) support more productive agricultural outcomes particularly through farm consolidation.
- Realignment of boundaries should not create additional subdivision potential.
- The area of land remaining after a small lot is created should comply with the minimum lot size specified in the relevant zone. An agreement under Section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* should be entered into to restrict the ability to use the small lot provision again in respect of the effected land.
- House lot excision that is likely to lead to such concentration of lots as to change the general use or development of the area where this is not consistent with the purpose of the zone should not be permitted.
- House lot excisions should only create a lot for an existing and long established farm house where the owner seeks to remain on the land.
- Discourage creation of irregular shaped lots which do not support efficient agricultural practices.
- Small rural lots should be located to minimise impact on significant environmental features such as remnant vegetation, wetlands, coastal reserves and waterways and should be strongly discouraged in domestic water supply catchment areas.
- Small rural lots should support ongoing agricultural production and be located adjacent to sealed roads and be close to utilised community services.
- Small rural lots intended for housing purposes should generally have a maximum size of 1 hectare on irrigated land and 2 hectares elsewhere.
- Applications for creation of small rural lots should be accompanied by a detailed report that fully addresses all the relevant issues identified within the Decision Guidelines of the zone.

Housing

- The use and development of dwellings should be strongly discouraged unless it can be demonstrated that the dwelling is necessary for carrying out an economically viable and sustainable rural activity on the land, and where the sustainability of the agricultural resource is not threatened by the use of the land for housing.

Tourism

- Encourage new opportunities for rural based tourism enterprises which are compatible with agricultural/primary production, environmental and landscape characteristics of the area.

- Rural based tourism enterprises should be located in areas with appropriate infrastructure provision such as roads, water, electricity and communications.

Timber

- Encourage the establishment of value adding timber production activities.
- Encourage timber production and agroforestry on marginal agricultural land.

Other

- Ensure that use or development in rural areas, including advertising signage, is compatible with and has an association with surrounding agricultural activity.
- Discourage use and development adjacent to main roads in rural areas that is unrelated to agriculture or rural based tourism.
- Discourage the use and development of productive agricultural land, particularly in the Macalister Irrigation District, for dog breeding and boarding facilities.
- Strongly discourage commercial, industrial and other land uses that do not demonstrate a direct link with ongoing and sustainable agricultural land use or rural dependent tourism enterprises. Such uses should be encouraged to locate in urban areas.