

21.0319/01/2006
VC37**STATE AND REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The MSS has been prepared within the context of the region and the State Planning Policy Framework. Within the context of the state and region, the key resources of the Shire which relate to the State Planning Policy Framework include:

- The importance and significance of the Shire's agricultural industry to the region and State. The Shire contributes 25% of Victoria's total production of wheat and barley.
- The land and water resources of the catchments and region to support the highly productive agricultural land. Water is scarce, and largely harvested for irrigation and domestic and stock use.
- The transport infrastructure encompassing the important rail, road and air links to other cities and regional centres which support the Shire's economy, particularly the grain industry. The Marma Lake Grain Receival Terminal at Murtoa which is on the main Melbourne to Adelaide railway line provides a most strategically located and significant point for receiving grain in Victoria. This and other rail-based grain terminals on the standard gauge system provide direct access to Portland with the future possibility of access to Geelong subject to the extension of the standard gauge line into the Port of Geelong. Those in the north, on the Mildura line, provide access to Geelong.
- The unique and diverse natural resources which include the Big Desert State Forest, the Little Desert National Park, Wyperfeld National Park, Wathe Corridor, Wathe State Forest and Lakes Hindmarsh and Albacutya. These resources provide the bases for recreation and products for the tourism industry.
- The built and natural heritage of the Shire which reflects the history of settlement and industry of the agricultural community in the region.
- The potential economic viability of mineral sands and gypsum deposits in the Shire.

In view of their strategic significance, these matters will need to be planned for and administered in the planning scheme. As such particular attention need to be given to the following provisions and clauses in the State Planning Policy Framework:

- 15.01 Protection of waterways, groundwater and catchments
- 15.02 Floodplain management
- 15.03 Salinity
- 15.09 Conservation of native flora and fauna
- 15.11 Heritage
- 17.03 Industry
- 17.04 Tourism
- 17.05 Agriculture
- 17.06 Intensive animal industries
- 17.08 Mineral resources
- 18.01 Infrastructure

The MSS and the Local Planning Policies provide recognition of, and decisions on, proposals for changes of use and new developments which take into account:

- The opportunities for value adding to and processing of local and regional produce;
- The importance of the quality of the Shire's natural resource base to support agriculture and its expansion in a sustainable manner;

- The roles of and functions of the grain handling and storage facilities, and the transport linkages to support existing and future industry bases;
- The potential for quality tourism development based on the Shire's natural and built features;
- The proximity to large regional centres, such as Horsham which will serve the southern portion of the Shire whilst the northern part of the Shire is likely be served by cities such as Mildura and Swan Hill for higher order goods and services, and medical facilities;
- The need to strengthen the role, employment base, presentation and facilities in the Shire's main towns; and
- The environmental and economic sustainability of new developments.