

21.03

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ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE VALUES

This clause provides local content to support Clause 12 (Environmental and Landscape Values) of the State Planning Policy Framework.

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Biodiversity

Much of the native vegetation that existed in the City prior to settlement has been removed or substantially modified. Remnant vegetation serves an important role in the preservation of natural biodiversity, provision of habitat, protection of koala populations, and environmental benefits such as water quality control, ground water management and soil stabilisation. Vegetation also provides scenic qualities and contributes to amenity and character. Remnant native vegetation exists in small pockets on private land scattered across the City as well as along linear reserves (waterways, road reserves, rail reserves) and on other public land. Ballarat also includes wetlands, grasslands and the habitat of threatened species which are considered highly significant.

Objective 1

To protect and enhance habitats and biodiversity.

Strategies

- 1.1 Encourage retention and enhancement of native and remnant vegetation when designing the subdivision or development of sites.
- 1.2 Protect the bushland setting of fringe settlement areas, including Mount Helen and Nerrina.
- 1.3 Minimise the environmental impact of infrastructure development and utility services, especially on native vegetation.
- 1.4 Protect remnant vegetation, particularly in road reserves and along waterways.
- 1.5 Encourage the use of indigenous vegetation in open spaces.
- 1.6 Create and enhance habitat linkages for native flora and fauna.
- 1.7 Support design treatments which enhance or restore natural systems.
- 1.8 Encourage the installation of services within a common trench located away from significant vegetation to prevent damage to trunks and roots.
- 1.9 Encourage protection measures for remnant vegetation, such as fencing pockets of remnant vegetation or providing vegetation corridors along waterways.

Objective 2

To green Ballarat as part of an urban forest.

Strategies

- 2.1 Encourage the planting of vegetation in private open spaces including roof top greening.
- 2.2 Encourage the provision of street tree plantings as part of infill and subdivision developments.
- 2.3 Ensure development contributes towards achieving the forty percent canopy coverage for Ballarat by 2040.
- 2.4 Protect significant vegetation on private land where its removal would degrade the established natural character and amenity of the area.

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Significant environments and landscapes

Ballarat has a range of important vistas including sweeping views of gently undulating grazing land, treed roadsides, mountains, lakes and wetlands. It also has important natural features and areas of high natural biodiversity values (remnant vegetation and habitat values). Key areas include Mount Buninyong, Mount Bolton, Lake Wendouree, Lake Learmonth, Lake Burrumbeet, Mount Warrenheip (Moorabool Shire), Winter Swamp, high conservation value roadsides, Canadian Forest, native grasslands (e.g. Victoria Park, roadsides and the Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail), the Buninyong Corridor, Nerrina Invermay Corridor, waterways and wetlands.

Indicative character areas also typify important natural, cultural and historic landscape values across the municipality. These are identified in the Ballarat Strategy 2015. Unsuitable design which significantly impacts the landscape values and key viewlines can reduce the experience of living in the Ballarat municipality.

Objective 3

To rehabilitate, protect and enhance landscapes with identified values.

Strategies

- 3.1 Protect and enhance the vegetation, biodiversity, habitat, amenity and attractiveness of identified landscape values and significant environmental features.
- 3.2 Protect historic trees, both native remnants and planted specimens, with cultural or historic values.
- 3.3 Maintain the natural state of the volcanic cones (the 'Bald Hills').
- 3.4 Prevent development and revegetation that would detract from the 'bald' appearance of the 'Bald Hills'.

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Implementation

The strategies will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

Zones and overlays

- Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay (Schedule 5) to areas of core koala habitat.

Policy guidelines

- Apply the Koala and Koala Habitat Protection Policy (Clause 22.04).

Further strategic work

- Review and revise schedules to the Significant Landscape Overlay.
- Investigate and identify important elements of Ballarat's natural, cultural and historic landscape.
- Review biodiversity mapping to ensure consistency with Vegetation Protection Overlays and Environmental Significance Overlays.
- Investigate appropriate means by which significant native vegetation and habitat on undeveloped residential land can be protected.
- Investigate application of the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) to areas of significant native grasslands and heavily vegetated privately owned land.
- Revise the application of the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO3) to include all potable water catchment areas.