VISION – STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PLAN

Municipal vision

The Council Plan (2013-17) establishes the following vision for the municipality:

*We aspire to provide leadership in this inspiring region by providing the opportunity for all to live a fulfilling life, while continuing to protect our heritage, environment and sense of community through our shared commitment to a sustainable Macedon Ranges.*

Land use vision

Development and land use planning will be guided by the following vision:

- The Shire remains predominantly rural, with a hierarchy of settlements set in an attractive and productive rural environment.
- Agriculture remains an important part of the character and economy of the Shire, especially the high quality soils in the east of the Shire and in the north where there has been less land fragmentation. Effective land management is a key priority.
- Protection of water quality, especially potable water supply, is fundamental. Land use and development, particularly unserviced development in open water supply catchments, is minimised and managed to ensure water quality is not compromised.
- Native vegetation is retained and enhanced, balanced with fire protection considerations. Native vegetation is vital for the environmental health of the Shire and is a significant component of the Shire’s character.
- Development complements the nature and character of the rural landscapes of the Shire. Landscapes, in particular the landscapes around Mount Macedon and Woodend, are highly valued by residents and visitors and facilitate tourism which plays a key economic role in the Shire.
- Development occurs in an orderly and sustainable manner, maintaining clear distinctions and separations between settlements. A diverse range of residential and commercial opportunities are provided in appropriate locations, including appropriately zoned and serviced land to meet the needs of the Shire’s changing demographic. Growth is generally directed to the transport corridors, in-line with infrastructure provision and cognisant of constraints.
- Economic growth and development is encouraged to deliver jobs and reduce escape expenditure. This occurs in appropriate locations within the settlement boundaries, apart from agriculture based business.
- Rural living areas will be planned for well in advance and areas will be identified to achieve a fixed supply up to 2045 in well serviced areas with good internal connectivity and integration with external road and path networks.

Strategic framework plans

The Macedon Ranges strategic framework plan interprets the land use vision and identifies the vision’s key elements influencing land use planning up to 2036. This plan indicates the high quality agricultural land, key transport infrastructure, significant landscapes; land at risk of bushfire as well as water courses and the regional centre, large district towns and district towns.

The table below defines settlement types.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement type</th>
<th>Settlement hierarchy definitions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional centre</td>
<td>A centre with a large, diverse population (10,000 plus), employment and housing base. All essential services are connected and higher order goods and services are provided. All levels of education are offered and access to large hospitals and numerous medical facilities is generally provided. Regional centres have strong relationships with surrounding settlements of all types.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large district town</td>
<td>A town with a substantial and diverse population base (6,000 to 10,000) and a dominant business district with a moderate employment base. All essential services are provided. Access to services such as police stations, medical/hospital facilities and a range of education facilities is generally high. A variety of accommodation types and sizes are available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>District town</td>
<td>A town with a moderate population (2,000 to 6,000) with connections to all essential services. District towns tend to have a dominant town centre with a variety of retail services, post office, schools, police station and some basic medical facilities. Employment is generally in higher order centres.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small town</td>
<td>Town population levels vary with general service provision (500-2,000) and there are strong employment relationships with larger towns. All are connected to reticulated water, and electricity, and in most cases have sewer connection available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>A settlement with a low population (less than 500).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamlet/locality</td>
<td>A cluster of houses on smaller than average rural sized allotments in a non-urban zone (population less than 100). Reticulated water and/or sewer are generally not available.</td>
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Rural framework plan

The vision and strategic direction for the identified rural area types shown on the rural framework plan is:

- **Agricultural landscapes:** Continue to use agricultural landscapes for stock raising (including sheep, cattle and horses) and intensive and extensive cropping. Development should not prejudice these agricultural activities because they contribute to the character and economy of the Shire.

- **Living forests:** Enhance the significant and sensitive environmental assets - including Mount Macedon, forested areas around Woodend, the Cobaw Ranges and special water supply catchments. Limit residential development on existing lots where positive environmental outcomes are achieved and existing vegetation will not be compromised by requirements for dwelling sites, fire protection buffers and other associated infrastructure.

- **Cobaw biolink:** Establish a biolink between the areas of significant vegetation of the Macedon and Cobaw Ranges. Housing that provides revegetation and environmental improvement works will be permitted in these areas to achieve this environmental goal.

- **Northern and southern catchments:** Protect water quality and quantity, agricultural productivity in the northern catchment and encourage rural residential only in the more fragmented southern catchment where detailed land capability studies demonstrate there is no negative impact on water quality or agricultural uses.

- **Rural living area:** Encourage and support rural living development in Rural Living Zone areas. The vision for these areas is a rural area with a range of property sizes offering different lifestyle opportunities and landscapes from low density residential to part time farming. Any new development including housing, subdivision or re-subdivision is to preserve the existing rural character.

These areas are not mutually exclusive and overlap; where conflicts are present, the catchment provisions prevail.

**Reference document**

Macedon Ranges Rural Land Review, 2002

In the Rural Living Zone, September 2015