

Draft rural land use strategy

Equine summary

Introduction

In 2006, Macedon Ranges Shire Council introduced the shire's inaugural 2002 Rural Land Strategy. The Strategy identified critical issues facing the shire arising from growing competition for rural land. Since 2006 there have been changes in the shire's rural areas, a raft of state and local strategies have been adopted and Ministerial amendments to the suite of rural zones have been gazetted.

All of these have implications for rural land use and development. To address these changes, the Macedon Ranges Shire Council has prepared the draft Rural Land Use Strategy to update the rural framework plan and policy directions for rural land. It has regard for the changing nature of rural land use, the strategic and policy context and the unique circumstances associated with Macedon Ranges Shire's peri-urban location. The draft Rural Land Use Strategy addresses all land currently in the Farming Zone and the Rural Conservation Zone.

Overview

The equine industry includes activities such as horse breeding, equine education, horse training/equestrian coaching, private leisure horses, equestrian clubs and associations as well as ancillary services such as equine health, husbandry services, fodder and other suppliers. In Macedon Ranges, the industry is comprised predominantly of leisure horse breeding, training/equestrian coaching and thoroughbred training and ancillary services such as quarantine and specialised equine veterinary services. Most equine businesses are clustered between Romsey and Monegeetta and between Trentham and Kyneton.

The industry was estimated to have generated a direct economic impact of \$140 million in Macedon Ranges in 2009-10 equivalent to an employment impact of 900 full time equivalent full time jobs per year.

Anecdotally, the shire's equine industry has experienced substantial growth in the breeding and training of horses for the leisure and racing markets. This has been driven by the closure of facilities in Melbourne, the high cost of suitable property in metropolitan areas and the area's proximity to Melbourne, the Flemington, Moonee Valley and Caulfield racecourses and Tullamarine Airport. Recent development includes an equine quarantine facility near Bolinda and investment in a new training facility by an internationally renowned horse trainer.

The draft rural land use strategy is now open for consultation

Further details on this consultation can be found here: mrsc.vic.gov.au/yoursay

You can also find copies of the Rural Land Use Strategy, other strategy summary documents, and details of the engagement program on this web page as well.

Submissions should be addressed to:
**Rural Land Use Strategy Submission,
C/- Macedon Ranges Shire Council**



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Industry growth

There is opportunity for equine industry growth due to the shire's proximity to Melbourne, major racecourses and Melbourne International Airport at Tullamarine. Demand comes from the thoroughbred sector that are seeking large-scale properties as well as the leisure industry that can be accommodated on smaller properties. There is also opportunity for value chain development such as education and training facilities, veterinary services and feed supplies.

Land management

Standards of land management amongst equine landholders varies considerably. While there are examples of optimal land management, overgrazing and poor weed control by equine landholders are common complaints made to Council.

Strategic implications

The equine industry is an economically important industry in Macedon Ranges with potential for further growth. The shire has significant comparative advantages due its proximity to metropolitan racetracks and Melbourne International Airport as well as land types suited to the equine industry. Industry opportunities range from thoroughbred breeding and training through the leisure and tourism industry. Similar to agriculture, fragmentation and land use conflict are significant challenges to further industry investment. This rural land use strategy will clearly identify locations where the equine industry will be supported over other non-agricultural rural uses.

It is also recommended that Council continues to implement education, incentives and capacity building programs for rural landholders, with a focus on the equine industry, to encourage optimal and productive land management and reduce land use conflict.

