

Draft rural land use strategy

Background studies

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

In the lead up to preparing the Rural Land Use Strategy, Council prepared the "Farming Zone Review Research and Investigation Paper" and the "Rural Conservation Zone Research and Investigation Report". These two review documents covered all land within the Macedon Ranges Shire that was included in Rural Land Use Strategy project scope.

The key findings were that private rural land covers around 132,500ha or 75% of the shire and the Farming Zone covers 85,000 hectares or 49% of the Shire. Macedon Ranges' rural areas are attracting increasing visitor numbers, and people seeking a rural lifestyle. Population growth within the Shire and the proximity of significant population within Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary is escalating pressure for rural land use change.

Since the preparation of the first Rural Land Strategy in 2006, a number of significant changes have been made to regulation and policy that impacts on how land in the rural area of the shire is used and managed, which necessitate a review of rural planning

controls. These changes include: -

- A revised Ministerial Direction that made changes to content and structure of zones and overlays;
- The introduction of the Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan (May 2014) and Plan Melbourne 2017-2050;
- A new Planning Policy Framework that replaced the former State Planning Policy Framework

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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- Release of the Macedon Ranges Protection Advisory Committee Report (July 2016);
- The release of Planning for Sustainable Animal Industries (October 2016);
- Changes to biodiversity and native vegetation controls, and the introduction of a revised Native Vegetation Framework; and
- Bushfire protection provisions, including new areas to be contained within the Bushfire Management Overlay and changes to bushfire management policy and controls;
- Gazettal of the Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy (December 2019);

The Farming Zone and Rural Conservation Zone Research and Investigations Reports identified principles and key directions to inform development of the Rural Land Use Strategy.

These include:

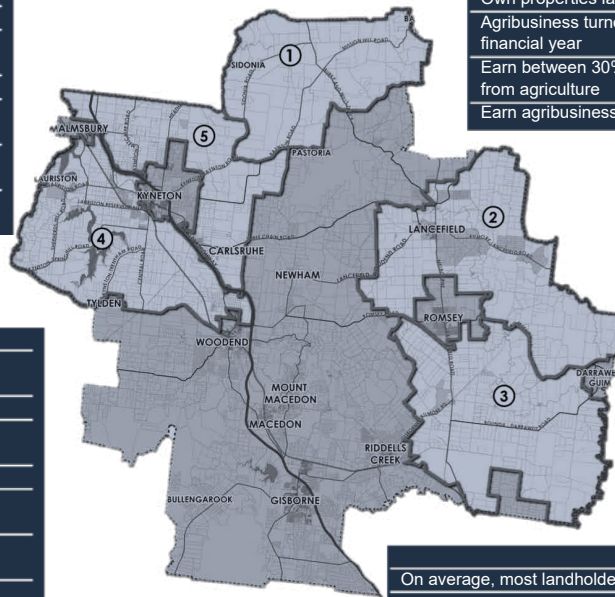
- Housing, rural living and employment will be accommodated in established towns within defined settlement boundaries and non-urban breaks will be maintained between settlements.
- Support and encourage agricultural land uses that strengthen the economy and contribute to the rural landscape.
- Provide for a diverse and sustainable visitor economy compatible with the natural and cultural values of the area.
- Respond to the challenges and threats of climate change and natural hazards.
- The highest priority is given to significant landscapes, biodiversity, the environment and water catchments and protecting life and property from bushfire.

On average, most landholders in the Farming Zone in Area 5:

- Purchased farming land for retirement and the availability of infrastructure
- Own properties mostly less than 10ha
- Agribusiness turnover was less than \$20,000 last financial year
- Earn less than 30% of household income from agriculture
- Earn agribusiness income from hay and silage and rural tourism

On average, most landholders in the Farming Zone in Area 1:

- Purchased land to farm
- Own properties larger than 100ha
- Agribusiness turnover was more than \$100,000 last financial year
- Earn between 30% and 50% of household income from agriculture
- Earn agribusiness income from livestock



On average, most landholders in the Farming Zone in Area 2:

- Purchased land to farm
- Own properties mostly between 10ha and 100ha
- Agribusiness turnover was between \$20,000 and \$100,000 last financial year
- Earn agribusiness income from hay and silage

On average, most landholders in the Farming Zone in Area 4:

- Purchased farming land for rural lifestyle and retirement
- Own properties less than 10ha
- Earn less than 30% of household income from agriculture
- Agribusiness turnover was less than \$20,000 last financial year
- Earn agribusiness income from horticulture

On average, most landholders in the Farming Zone in Area 3:

- Purchased land to farm and because of its proximity to Melbourne
- Own properties mostly between 10ha and 100ha
- Agribusiness turnover was less than \$50,000 last financial year
- Earn agribusiness income from equine industry