

MURRINDINDI SHIRE

SMALL TOWNS

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK



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Prepared by



Murrindindi Shire Council

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- Members of the community who attended the town walk.
- Members of the community who made submissions to the Analysis Report and/or Draft Urban Design Framework.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
SPPF	State Planning Policy Framework
LPPF	Local Planning Policy Framework
MSS	Municipal Strategic Statement
UDF	Urban Design Framework

Introduction

Background

Murrindindi Shire Council commissioned Urban Enterprise Pty, in conjunction with Land Design Partnership and John Piper Traffic, to prepare *Urban Design Frameworks* for the townships of Buxton, Glenburn, Molesworth, Narbethong, Strath Creek, Taggerty, Thornton and Yarck.

The Urban Design Frameworks will take the form of key strategic documents to guide:

- future design of buildings, landscapes, open space and streetscapes;
- use and development of land, including gateway entrances into the towns;
- prioritisation of capital works, budget allocations and external funding bids;
- changes to strategic directions, structure plans, zoning and overlays in the Murrindindi Planning Scheme as required.

The document provides advice that is relevant for the short and longer term, extending to the next 20 years. It is designed to be a flexible document that contains sufficient information for the concepts identified to be tested on a regular basis.

Urban Design

Urban Design involves applying a design approach to how towns and urban areas are analysed and developed. Urban Design concerns physical solutions for urban problems and is a consultative, interactive and responsive process.

In an Urban Design Framework, non-physical actions and opportunities are also very important, in that they allow the physical actions and opportunities to be co-ordinated with other aims and agendas of Council and stakeholder groups. These may include social, environmental, management and economic actions.

The objectives of an urban design framework are reflected in Clause 19.03 of the State Planning Policy Framework, which states that design and built form should:

- Reflect the particular characteristics, aspirations and cultural identity of the community.
- Enhance livability, diversity, amenity and safety of the public realm.
- Promote attractiveness of towns and cities within broader strategic contexts.

Project Objectives

The Brief for the Murrindindi Shire Small Towns UDF identified the following specific objectives and tasks:

- (a) Identify and consider a range of general land use and development issues, opportunities and constraints for the towns, including design, streetscape, essential character elements, recreation and open space linkages, transport, tourism, environmental, economic, infrastructure, and social issues.
- (b) Provide demographic analysis for the area, including documentation of existing and possible future populations and housing needs.
- (c) Identify, protect and build on the essential town, street and building character elements of the towns.
- (d) Make specific recommendations for enhancing the tourism and economic potential of the towns.
- (e) Develop and make recommendations for land use, economic and social directions and implementation for the towns, covering the range of issues identified in objective (a)
- (f) Make recommendations for changes in a format acceptable for inclusion into the Murrindindi Planning Scheme, including strategic directions, framework plans, policies, zoning and overlay changes.

Key Influences

Murrindindi Shire identified the following key influences for the preparation of the Urban Design Frameworks:

- Land use, design, tourism, economic and historic significance of the towns.
- Proximity of the small towns to the metropolitan Melbourne, Yarra Valley and Plenty Valley areas and land use pressures, with resultant land use pressures on the towns resulting from these areas.
- Location of the towns along highways and major roads in Murrindindi Shire.
- Need to strengthen the local communities and towns to be considered under this framework.
- The ad hoc nature of existing development in the small towns.
- Guide the provision of new services to the towns and their environs.

The location of the eight towns is shown on the location map displayed on the following page.

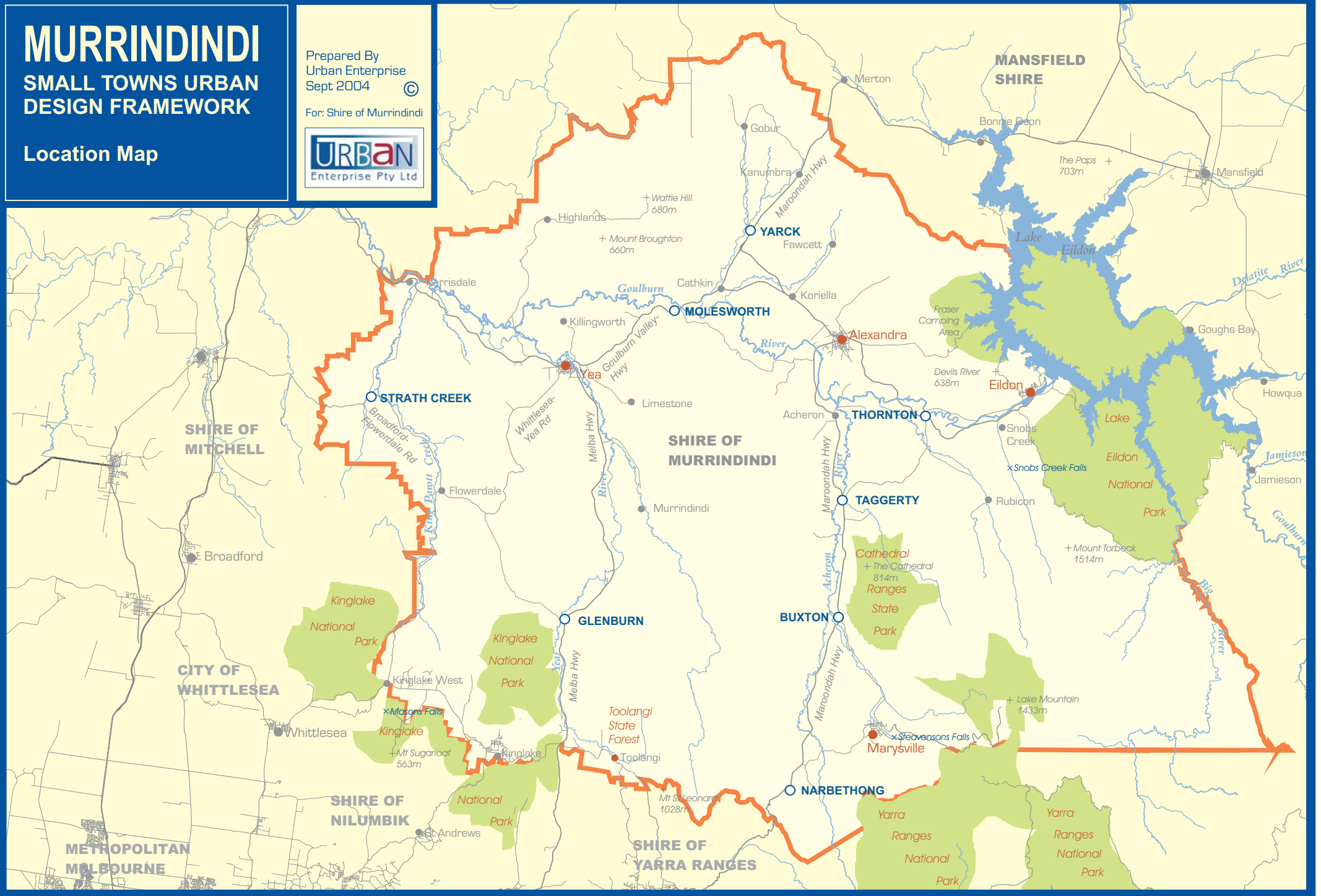
MURRINDINDI

SMALL TOWNS URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Location Map

Prepared By
Urban Enterprise
Sept 2004

For: Shire of Murrindindi



Strategic Planning Context

Introduction

An Urban Design Framework needs to be considered within the broader strategic framework of the State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks and other strategic planning policies. This section provides an overview of these policies and identifies the policy directions that are most relevant for the preparation of the Urban Design Framework.

State Planning Policy Framework

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) forms part of every planning scheme in Victoria, and applies to all land in the State.

The State Planning Policy Framework provides the context for planning decision making by planning and responsible authorities. The primary objective of the SPPF is to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land. Planning authorities and responsible authorities must take account of and give effect to the general principles and the specific policies contained in the SPPF.

The SPPF comprises general principles for land use and development and specific policies. The following policies are considered to be most relevant for the Urban Design Framework.

Clause 14 - Settlement

The State Planning Policy for settlement states that planning authorities should plan to accommodate population growth over at least a 10 year period, taking account of opportunities for redevelopment and intensification or existing urban areas, as well as the limits of land capability and natural hazards, environmental quality and the costs of providing infrastructure. Clause 14 also states that in planning for urban growth, planning authorities should encourage consolidation of existing urban areas while respecting neighbourhood character.

Clause 15 - Environment

The State Planning Policy for the environment states that planning and responsible authorities should consider the impacts of catchment management on downstream water quality. They should also ensure that land use activities reduce contaminated water runoff to waterways and consider flood risk in making planning decisions. Clause 15 also contains policies in relation to air quality, open space and the conservation of native flora and fauna. In particular, planning authorities should have regard to Victorian's Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action (DNRE, 2002).

Clause 16 – Housing

The State Planning Policy for housing states that subdivisions should be located with access to physical and community infrastructure and should provide a range of lot sizes. It also aims to encourage opportunities for increased residential densities in close proximity to existing infrastructure. Clause 16 states that rural residential development should only occur close to existing towns, but not in areas required for fully serviced urban development or on high quality agricultural land.

Clause 17 – Economic Development

The aim of this policy is to encourage the concentration of major retail, commercial, entertainment, administrative and cultural developments into activity centres. Clause 17 also states that industrial activity in industrial zones should be protected from the encroachment of unplanned commercial, residential and other sensitive uses which would adversely affect industrial viability.

Local Planning Policy Framework

The Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) sets out the local and regional strategic policy context for the municipality. It must be consistent with the State Planning Policy Framework. The LPPF comprises the Municipal Strategic Statement and specific Local Planning Policies, which are described in more detail below.

MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) in the Murrindindi Planning Scheme forms the strategic vision for the Shire. The MSS is part of the Local Planning Policy Framework and is a statement of the key strategic planning, land use and development objectives for the municipality and strategies and actions for achieving those objectives.

The Municipal Strategic Statement has specific strategic directions that directly influence the small townships that are being considered under this framework, including:

- A municipal vision to consolidate and focus development into townships to improve and utilise existing infrastructure and community facilities.
- A clear recognition that tourism, natural resource management, lack of infrastructure, proximity to Melbourne, proximity to Lake Eildon and agriculture are key issues affective the shire.

- A specific direction for unserviced townships (Clause 21.09) that encourages servicing issues to be addressed and reticulated sewerage and water to be provided, minimises environmental impacts and servicing difficulties of growth of unserviced settlements, and encourages a strategy in conjunction with Goulburn Valley Water to bring reticulated water services to towns.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

The Local Planning Policies are policy statements of intent of expectation. They state what the responsible authority will do when a particular planning issue arises, or its expectation as to what should happen in a particular area (Using Victoria's Planning System p7).

An LPP helps the community to understand how a proposal will be considered and what will influence decision-making. Over time, the consistent application of policy should achieve the desired outcome (Using Victoria's Planning System p7).

The Local Planning Policies that directly influence the small townships that are being considered under this framework include a policy for urban areas in Clause 22.03, which aims to ensure that:

- all new use and development has regard to the existing townscape, to design, siting and landscaping issues;
- all use and development assists in the presentation of the main road entrances into townships;
- identify future car parking area.

The policies relate to design, car parking, sheds and outbuildings and industry and the provision of information for new uses and developments.

Community Plan

Council's 2003-2006 Community Plan sets out the strategies and actions that Council will undertake in order to address the needs of the Murrindindi Community.

The main issues identified in the Community Plan that are considered relevant to this study have been summarised below. These issues provide the broad strategic context for the preparation of the UDF. They identify the influences that will shape the Shire over the coming years and will underpin changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement.

- The Shire's population is expected to grow at a rate of 5.5% over the next twenty years which will be a slower rate compared to the average across regional Victoria (9.2%), but consistent with smaller Shires in the North East of the state.
- Development pressures across the Shire, and particularly in the south of the Shire, are expected to increase as a consequence of the extension of outer metropolitan urban development from the Plenty and Yarra Valley corridors.
- There is a growing demand for alternative rural residential style living and hobby farms throughout the Shire and increased pressure for rural subdivision.
- The Shire's population is very dispersed, with more people living outside major towns than within them.
- Changes to the availability of, and access to, water within the Shire is emerging as a major issue which has the potential to impact significantly on future development within the Shire.
- Whilst Primary Production remains the dominant sector of the economy, tourism is becoming a more significant component, and is expected to continue to grow as a significant economic sector.

- Consistent with state and national trends, overall the Shire's population is ageing and consideration will be given to the future impact these trends have on the provision of health and community services and housing within the Shire.
- Costs associated with maintaining and upgrading civil infrastructure, including local roads, buildings, bridges and drainage are increasing.

Zones

Zones specify the controls that apply to the use and development of land. Development includes buildings and works and subdivision. A key purpose of each zone is that they are to be administered to implement the State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks, including the MSS and Local Planning Policies.

In the Murrindindi Planning Scheme, the Township Zone (TZ) is used for unsewered townships that have a network of local streets and other elements of a traditional township structure (eg Buxton, Taggerty). The Rural Zone (RUZ) is used for small rural settlements such as Glenburn and Molesworth. Outlined below is a summary of the land use controls in the zones that are referred to in this report.

Township Zone (TZ) The purpose of this zone is to "provide for residential development and a range of commercial, industrial and other uses in small towns".

The Township Zone is used in small towns where there is no consistent structure of commercial, industrial and residential land use and where no reticulated sewerage is available.

The controls affecting land use in this zone are reasonably flexible. Dwellings do not require a permit, but many other uses are allowed in the zone subject to planning approval, including

- Accommodation (eg camping and caravan park)
- Agriculture (animal husbandry, crop raising)

- Office
- Motor Repairs (eg mechanic, motor vehicle sales)
- Trade Supplies (eg automotive goods, landscape garden supplies)
- Medical centre
- Market
- Shop (supermarket, bottle shop, convenience store)

Manufacturing industries and warehouses uses are prohibited in the Township Zone.

Rural Zone (RUZ): The purpose of this zone is to “provide for the sustainable use of land for Extensive animal husbandry (including dairying and grazing) and Crop raising (including Horticulture and Timber production).” This is the zone that is applied to most of the rural areas in the Shire.

The controls affecting land use in this zone are relatively flexible. A wide range of land uses do not require a town planning permit, including Dwelling, Bed & Breakfast (subject to conditions), Crop raising and Extensive animal husbandry. Almost all other land uses are allowed subject to planning approval, including Accommodation, Industry, Warehouse and Retail Premises.

Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ): The purpose of this zone is to “provide for low-density residential development on lots which, in the absence of reticulated sewerage, can treat and retain all wastewater”.

The uses that do not require a town planning permit in this zone include Dwelling, Bed & Breakfast (subject to conditions). The uses that require a permit in this zone include accommodation, cafes, convenience shops, take away food premises and service stations. These uses are permitted subject to conditions relating to siting and floor area. The uses that are prohibited in this zone include Industry (other than car wash) and office (other than medical centre).

Public Use Zone (PUZ): The purpose of this zone is to “recognise public land use for public utility and community services and facilities and to provide for associated uses that are consistent with the intent of the public land reservation or purpose”. This is the main zone for public land used for utility or community service provision.

The use controls in this zone are restrictive. Apart from a small number of government related uses, all uses must be for a particular purpose outlined in the schedule to the zone. These include Education, Health & Community and Local Government. All other uses are prohibited.

Overlays

In addition to the requirements of the zone, further planning provisions may apply to a site or area through the application of an overlay. A key purpose of each overlay is that they are to be administered to implement the State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks, including the MSS and Local Planning Policies.

Outlined below is a summary of overlays that currently apply to areas within several of the townships being considered in this study.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT OVERLAYS

Floodway Overlays (FO): The purpose of this overlay is to identify waterways and areas which have the greatest risk of being affected by flooding and to ensure that development maintains free passage and temporary storage of floodwater and minimizes flood damage. A permit is required for buildings and works, with the exception of minor house extensions and small outbuildings and sheds. A permit is required for subdivision, which cannot create any new lots.

For areas along the Goulburn River, including the townships of Molesworth and Thornton, a Local Floodplain Development Plan has been incorporated into the planning scheme. This plan contains more detailed development requirements for works and for the siting of new buildings and dwelling extensions. It allows for subdivision of land to create additional lots if strict criteria are met in relation to elevation above the flood level.

Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO): This overlay identifies land affected by the 1 in 100 year flood and its purpose is similar to that of the Floodway Overlay. The overlay has less restrictive requirements in relation buildings and works that require a planning permit. A permit is required for subdivision, however new lots can be created.

For areas along the Goulburn River, including the townships of Molesworth and Thornton, a Local Floodplain Development Plan has been incorporated into the planning scheme. This plan contains additional, more restrictive development requirements for works and for the siting of new buildings and dwelling extensions. It allows for subdivision of land to create additional lots if strict criteria are met in relation to elevation above the flood level.

Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO): The purpose of this overlay is to identify areas that have a high bushfire hazard, as determined by the CFA. A permit is required for buildings and works associated with a range of uses (eg accommodation / dwellings, industry, retail premises). The overlay contains specific requirements in relation to water supply, access, building sand works, vegetation and subdivision.

ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE OVERLAYS

Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO): The purpose of this overlay is to identify, conserve and enhance significant landscapes. The overlay includes separate schedules that states the reasons or characteristics that make up the significance of the landscape, together with the intended outcomes of the requirements imposed by the overlay.

Schedule 1 of the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO1) refers specifically to the Cathedral Range, recognising it as a dominant land mass that is classified by the National Trust. The schedule aims to protect the nature of the Cathedral Range in terms of visual intrusion and inappropriate development. A town planning permit is required for most buildings and works and applications must be referred to the Department of Sustainability and Environment for comment. Council may also seek comments from the National Trust (Victoria).

Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO): The purpose of this overlay is to identify, areas where the development of land may be affected by environmental constraints and to ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values. A town planning permit is required for most buildings and works.

Schedule 1 of the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1) aims to protect high quality agricultural areas located along the Great Dividing Range at Toolangi and Kinglake and along the Goulburn River floodplain from degradation and conversion to non-soil based development.

Rural Zones Review

The Department of Sustainability and Environment has recently undertaken a review of the rural zones in Victoria. The Reference Group that was responsible for the review recommended that the existing rural zones should be replaced with a new set of zones with clearer purposes and tighter controls.

The review has resulted in Amendment VC24, which makes changes to every planning scheme in Victoria. The changes include modifications to the State Planning Policy Framework and a new set of zones for rural areas in the State.

The new zones have not yet been applied to rural land in Murrindindi Shire. This will occur by planning scheme amendment as part of the three-year review of the MSS, which is scheduled to occur in 2005. Council will need to undertake further strategic planning work to determine how the new zones will be applied in Murrindindi Shire. This may include assessments of land capability and analysis of existing land uses.

Overview of the New Zones

The new rural zones consist of a new Farming Zone, a new Rural Activity Zone, the new Rural Conservation Zone and a revised Rural Living Zone. The following descriptions of the new zones contain material reproduced from the DSE Advisory Note for the new zones (Department of Sustainability & Environment, 2004).

Farming Zone (FZ): This zone caters for agriculture as an industry and encourages the use of land for a range of agricultural activities. Discouraging uses that could undermine agriculture is a key purpose of the zone. A limited range of non-agricultural uses that support and improve agricultural activities may be considered, but the controls on use and development in this zone are much tighter than those in the existing Rural Zone and the new Rural Activity Zone. This zone will replace the existing Rural Zone.

Rural Activity Zone (RAZ): The Rural Activity Zone is designed to be applied to selected areas where agricultural activities and other land uses can co-exist. A wider range of tourism, commercial and retail uses may be considered in the zone. Agriculture has primacy in the zone, but other uses may be established if they are compatible with the agricultural, environmental and landscape qualities of the area. Councils will need to consider where this zone can appropriately be applied.

Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ): The Rural Conservation Zone will protect and enhance the natural environment for its historic, archaeological, scientific, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values. Agriculture is allowed in the zone provided it is consistent with the environmental and landscape values of the area. A schedule to the zone requires the specific conservation values of the land to be clearly stated. This zone will replace the Environmental Rural Zone.

Rural Living Zone (RLZ): The revised Rural Living Zone provides for residential use in a rural environment. This zone applies to rural areas in selected locations where residential use is specifically encouraged.

Detailed information about the use and development controls for each of these zones is provided in Appendix B.

Implications for the Urban Design Framework

The new rural zones are particularly important for towns in this study that are located wholly within the existing Rural Zone, namely Glenburn and Molesworth. They are also relevant to portions of land in the southern part of Narbethong that are also located in the Rural Zone.

The new rural zones will provide greater protection of agricultural land uses within the towns by introducing zones with clearer purposes and tighter controls.

A potential issue is that new rural zones could place significant constraints on the existing uses in existing rural zones that will become non-conforming (prohibited) uses. These businesses could be prevented from expanding or diversifying in the future.

There is an opportunity for the UDF to provide guidance as to how and where the new rural zones to be implemented in Narbethong, Glenburn and Molesworth. If the rural zones are not found to be suitable, there is an opportunity for the UDF to recommend the use of an existing zone in the Victorian Planning Provisions that better meets the strategic objectives and vision for the town.

Murrindindi Economic Development Strategy

The Murrindindi Shire Economic Development Strategy (2003-2008) focuses on three key industry sectors in Murrindindi Shire: agriculture, forestry and tourism. These sectors were identified as being the most important sectors (excluding retail and government) in terms of employment, business locations and future growth.

Key observations made in the report are:

- *The agriculture industries in the Shire of Murrindindi have changed over the past decade, from a small range of traditional industries (cattle, sheep, wool) and horticulture products to a more diverse range of industries.*
- *Key agriculture industries include cattle, beef, wool, trout, and stone fruit.*
- *The forestry industry in the Shire of Murrindindi comprises two key sectors: native hardwood and plantation timber. The native hardwood industry is undergoing a restructure.*
- *Tourism is a major economic driver for the Shire of Murrindindi and the tourism industry provides a significant level of employment.*
- *There is significant potential to improve the competitive position of the Shire of Murrindindi tourism sector.*
- *There is an emerging food, wine and tourism sector in the Shire.*

The actions that are considered relevant for the future development of the eight small towns have been summarised below in priority order as identified in the Economic Development Strategy (high/medium/low):

Attractions

- *Develop a touring loop that links the Shires villages and incorporates the major tourism assets (High Priority).*

- *Undertake the second stage of the feasibility study for the Mitchell to Murrindindi Rail Trail and continue to identify and develop new tracks and trails within the Shire (High Priority).*
- *Undertake a feasibility study for a canoe trail for the Goulburn River (High Priority).*
- *Develop a touring route from Melbourne that provides a scenic alternative to the Hume Highway and includes the Yarra Valley and King Valley Wangaratta, Murrindindi, Yarra Ranges & King Valley (longer term).*

Branding / Awareness

- *Strengthen the awareness of the Shire of Murrindindi as an important hub and link between the Yarra Valley and the High Country (high priority).*

Roads & Amenities

- *Review tourism signage in the Shire to facilitate tourism and develop a signage strategy. Review tourism signage and directional signage at the Shire's gateways (high priority).*
- *Support the implementation of township streetscape projects (high priority).*
- *Maintain communications with VicRoads and provide industry input regarding the condition of the Black Spur Road. Lobby VicRoads for improved turnouts (ongoing).*

Murrindindi Shire Rural Residential Study

Murrindindi Shire Council has prepared a Rural Residential Study for the Shire (July 2003). The Rural Residential Study looks at the supply of land zoned Low Density Residential (LDR) and Rural Living (RLZ). The objective of the study was to investigate and make recommendations for changes to the Murrindindi Planning Scheme relating to the LDRZ and RLZ.

The study was prepared in response to the lack of land zoned for large-scale residential subdivision and small lot rural subdivision in the Shire. It recognises that there is continued demand for this type of development within the Shire because of:

- the proximity of the Shire to the northeast of Melbourne;
- the Shire's naturally attractive foothills, valleys and landscapes;
- the area having or being a gateway to major recreation and tourism assets;
- the presence of attractive towns with significant character that provide a range of physical and community services.

The study recommends changes the planning scheme in Buxton, Yarck, Glenburn and Taggerty to accommodate rural residential development. A more detailed assessment of the findings of the Rural Residential Study for each of these towns is provided in the relevant section of this document.

Conclusion

A review of the planning policy framework for Murrindindi Shire has identified a number of key influences that will affect the Shire in the future. These include greater pressure for rural residential type development and an agricultural sector that is likely to become more diverse and less reliant on traditional industries.

Whilst there has been an increased awareness of the land use planning issues facing the region, little strategic planning has been undertaken for the eight small towns at the local level. The issues that are currently identified in the MSS and Council's Community Plan relate primarily to servicing constraints and the need to consolidate old and inappropriate subdivisions.

There is a need to identify, through the UDF process, the particular issues and opportunities that will affect the eight small towns over the next 20 years. This will underpin changes to the MSS, which will in turn provide the strategic justification for any changes to the detailed controls contained within the Planning Scheme.