Appendix 2: Background

The background context for Rural HIGAP includes a description of the planning and regulatory framework that guides planning for rural and semi-rural areas outside the Urban Growth Boundary and close to airport environs, including Bulla Township. It also discusses the context at a State, Regional and Local level in which the rural areas sit and introduces overarching challenges facing the rural areas.

Planning and Regulatory Framework

The following planning and regulatory framework contain relevant objectives with incorporated strategies to achieve planning outcomes in the rural areas within the municipality. Council must work within this framework when developing policies and guidelines for the rural areas.

Planning Legislation

State Legislation – Planning and Environment Act 1987

Part 3AA- Metropolitan Green Wedge Protection

Part 3AA of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, establishes protective procedures for metropolitan green wedge land. Part 3AA affects proposals for planning scheme amendments that affect the land outside the Urban Growth Boundary and the location of the UGB. Authorisation from the Minister for Planning is required to prepare an amendment to a metropolitan fringe planning scheme that would:

- amend or insert a UGB; or
- amend or insert a provision that relates to or affects green wedge land. This includes the effect of altering or removing any controls over the subdivision of any green wedge land to allow the land to be subdivided into more lots or into smaller lots than specified in the planning scheme.

In addition Part 3AA requires ratification by both houses of the State Parliament to amend subdivision controls that apply to land in the green wedge.

Hume Planning Scheme

State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF)

Clause 11.06 Metropolitan Melbourne

Clause 11.06-4 Place and Identity

Objective: To create a distinctive and liveable city with quality design and amenity.

Strategies:

- Create innovative tourism experiences and encourage investment that meets demand and supports growth in the tourism.
- Respect and protect Melbourne’s Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Strengthen protection and management of green wedge land.

Clause 11.06-6 Sustainability and resilience

Objective: To create a more sustainable and resilient city that manages its land, biodiversity, water, energy and waste resources in a more integrated way.

Clause 11.06-7 Green Wedges

Objective: To protect the green wedges of Metropolitan Melbourne from inappropriate development.
**Strategies:**

- Ensure strategic planning and land management of each green wedge area to promote and encourage its key features and related values.
- Support development in the green wedge that provides for environmental, economic and social benefits.
- Consolidate new residential development within existing settlements and in locations where planned services are available and green wedge area values can be protected.
- Plan and protect major state infrastructure and resource assets that serve the wider Victorian community, such as airports and ports with their associated access corridors, water supply dams and water catchments and waste management and recycling facilities.
- Protecting important productive agricultural areas such as Werribee South, the Maribyrnong River flats, the Yarra Valley, Westernport and the Mornington Peninsula.
- Support existing and potential agribusiness activities, forestry, food production and tourism.
- Protect areas of environmental, landscape and scenic value such as biodiversity assets, national and state parks, Ramsar Wetlands and coastal areas.
- Protect significant resources of stone, sand and other mineral resources for extraction purposes.
- Provide opportunities for renewable energy generation.

**Clause 12 Environmental and Landscape Values**

**Clause 12.01-1 Protection of Biodiversity**

*Objective:* To assist the protection and conservation of Victoria's biodiversity, including important habitat for Victoria's flora and fauna and other strategically valuable biodiversity sites.

**Clause 12.04-1 Environmentally sensitive areas**

*Objective:* To protect and conserve environmentally sensitive areas.

**Clause 12.04-2 Landscapes**

*Objective:* To protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments.

**Clause 13 Environmental Risks**

**Clause 13.03-2 Erosion and landslip**

*Objective:* To protect areas prone to erosion, landslip or other land degradation processes.

**Clause 15 Built Environment and Heritage**

**Clause 15.03-1 Heritage Conservation**

*Objective:* To ensure the conservation of places of heritage significance.

**Clause 15.03-2 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage**

*Objective:* To ensure the protection and conservation of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

**Clause 16 Housing**

**Clause 16.02-1 Rural Residential Development**

*Objective:* To identify land suitable for rural living and rural residential development.

**Clause 18 Transport**

**Clause 18.04-1 Melbourne Airport**

*Objective:* To strengthen the role of Melbourne Airport within the State's economic and transport infrastructure and protect its ongoing operation.
Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF)

Clause 21 Municipal Strategic Statement

Clause 21.01 Municipal Profile

Clause 21.01 is broken down into subclauses which describe the context of the municipality and the vision and key influences for the City.

With regards to Hume's local and regional context, subclause 21.01-1 describes the spatial setting of the municipality which is bound by the Merri Creek, Maribyrnong River, Western Ring Road, Calder Freeway, Jacksons Creek and the foothills of the Macedon Ranges. Substantial tracts of rural land are present throughout the municipality, with the upper reaches of the Maribyrnong River and Moonee Ponds Creek located within the rural and green wedge areas.

Subclause 21.01-2 identifies key issues and influences on land uses within the Hume region, highlighting issues related to non-urban land including, population growth, uncertainty for land owners in terms of rural businesses and farming, and the management of green wedge areas. Protecting areas of environmental and heritage significance and areas of significant landscape. The protection and sustainable use of agricultural land, significant landscape, heritage significance, and protection of the curfew free status of Melbourne Airport were also identified.

Subclauses 21.01-3 contains an excerpt of the ‘Vision’ and ‘Mission’ statement from the Hume City Council Plan 2013-2017:

Vision: Hume City Council will be recognised as a leader in achieving social, environmental and economic outcomes with a common goal of connecting our proud community and celebrating the diversity of Hume.

Mission: To enhance the social, economic and environmental prosperity of our community through vision, leadership, excellence and inclusion

This subclause lists strategic planning aims which influence land use and development in the municipality. These aims provide objectives for both the urban and rural areas and relate to the provision of access and choice to a diverse range of housing, employment and regional facilities; and the provision of necessary major and local infrastructure which support growth and maximise the benefits of change to the community. The subclause also identifies the integration of the built environment with the conservation and protection of Hume’s significant biodiversity and landscape values.

Subclause 21.01-3 also articulates spatially the land use and development visions specific for the municipality. This includes areas of significant hilltops, conservation and open space areas and existing and proposed land uses, regional facilities and major transport infrastructure.

Clause 21.02 Urban Structure and Settlement

21.02-2 Hume Corridor

Objective 2: To ensure that the planning for growth in Hume minimises the impact on the environment and heritage.

Strategies:

2.1 Ensure biodiversity, landscape, heritage and waterway values are appropriately considered during the planning process.

2.2 Ensure new development maximises the retention of biodiversity, including scattered trees.

2.3 Protect the significant waterways, conservation and open space areas identified in Figure 2 in Clause 21.01.

2.4 Ensure waterways, conservation and open space areas are well integrated within the built environment and provide for appropriate community access.

Objective 7: To reinforce the role of Melbourne Airport as one of Victoria’s key economic assets.

Strategies:

7.1 Support land-use and development within the airport precinct that is consistent with its specialist function as a Transport Gateway.

7.2 Ensure that land use and development protects the airport’s curfew
free status and is compatible with the operation of Melbourne Airport in accordance with the Melbourne Airport Master Plan.

21.02-4 Non-Urban Land

**Objective:** To protect the role and enhance the viability of Hume’s non-urban areas.

**Strategies:**

- Ensure the green wedge retains a physical separation between the Hume Corridor and Sunbury.
- Support rural activities that provide for the sustainable and economical management of non-urban land.
- Discourage the use of non-urban land for urban land uses that would be better located and supported within the Urban Growth Boundary.
- Discourage small lot excisions and the construction of more than one house on allotments in the rural areas unless it can be demonstrated that there is a link with an established rural enterprise on the land.
- Discourage small lot excisions and the construction of more than one house on allotments in the rural areas unless it will assist in the protection of biodiversity values or an identified heritage site.
- Ensure any future planning of land north west of Sunbury recognises erosion and land management issues and the native vegetation and visual qualities of the area.

**Objective:** To limit the expansion of the Bulla township.

**Strategies:**

- Contain the development of Bulla within the existing township boundary.
- Encourage the consolidation of smaller allotments in accordance with the Bulla Restructure Plan.
- Support low density rural residential development within the Bulla township.

Clause 21.04 Built Environment and Heritage

21.04-3 Landscape Character

**Objective:** To ensure development protects significant and unique landscape values which contribute to Hume’s character and identity.

**Strategies:**

- Ensure that development adjacent to waterways, conservation and open space areas is sited and designed to protect the conservation and landscape qualities of these spaces and considers the opportunity for improved community access.
- Ensure the retention of existing vegetation incorporates the necessary buffers to appropriately manage its ongoing protection.

**Objective:** To protect significant views and vistas of hilltops, escarpments, ridgelines, and creek valleys and waterways.

**Strategies:**

- Protect the deeply incised creek valleys and escarpments of Jacksons Creek, Emu Creek, Harpers Creek, Deep Creek and Merri Creek and their tributaries.
- Ensure that the siting and design development on hillsides responds to contours to minimise its visual impact on the landscape and avoid extensive earthworks which will substantially alter the natural landform.

**Objective:** To protect and encourage significant roadside vegetation that contributes to Hume’s landscape character.

- Ensure the upgrade on rural roads to an urban standard retains existing vegetation in the road reserve.
21.04-4 Heritage

**Objective:** To identify, recognise and protect places of heritage, cultural and social significance.

**Strategies:**
- Ensure that the productive use of non-urban land does not compromise identified heritage values.
- Ensure development maintains the visual prominence of historic buildings and local landmarks.
- Ensure that additions, alterations and replacement buildings are sympathetic to the heritage place and surrounds.
- Ensure that the use and development of heritage places and adjoining land is compatible with and does not adversely affect the significance of the place.

**Clause 21.08 Natural Environment and Environmental Risk**

21.08-1 Natural Heritage

**Objective:** To protect, conserve and enhance natural heritage for biodiversity, amenity and landscape character purposes.

**Strategies:**
- Ensure development seeks to preserve the diversity and long term security of terrestrial and aquatic species and their environments.
- Ensure development seeks to retain native vegetation, including scattered indigenous trees.
- Conserve and re-establish areas of natural habitat where appropriate.
- Protect and enhance existing habitat and open space corridors, including waterways, with significant landscape and/or flora and fauna values.

21.08-2 Environmental Land Management

**Objective:** To improve the land health of the natural environment.

**Strategies:**
- Ensure development avoids, minimises or mitigates the impacts of erosion.
- Encourage the appropriate use of protective measures for erosion including geotechnical recommendations, storm water flow and volume measures, and the appropriate use of construction materials, landscaping, watering systems and impervious surfaces.
- Encourage the retention of vegetation on erosion prone soils.
- Ensure development works avoid, minimise and mitigate the generation of fill.
- Ensure recipient sites for large scale fill deliver improvements to the land which generates a net improvement to the natural landscape.
- Ensure that the placement of fill on rural land is controlled through an Environmental Management Plan.

21.08-3 Water Quality and Conservation

**Objective:** To protect water quality and ensure that water resources are managed in a sustainable way.

**Strategies:**
- Ensure land use and development proposals identify and consider their impact on surrounding waterways and have the capacity to manage storm water onsite.
- Ensure the siting, design, operation and rehabilitation of landfills minimises impacts on groundwater and surface water.
Clause 22.02 Rural Land Character and Urban Design Local Policy

Clause 22.02 adds further details to Council’s approach in the protection of rural land character. It ensures the siting and design of developments protect and enhance the character of the City’s rural areas and that significant landscape features are safeguarded from poor design outcomes. Policy sets out a number of urban design strategies including for building siting, development on/near ridges, hillsides and hilltops, and approach roads.

Clause 22.04 Townships Local Policy

Specific content to townships located in the municipality is detailed in Clause 22.04. It contains objectives which aim to preserve and enhance significant natural and cultural heritage features and amenities that contribute positively to the character of the townships. Strategies within this policy specific to Bulla Township state:

Within the Deep Creek valley:
- Access roads and service lines should follow contour lines as far as possible.
- Strong ‘architectural statements’ and buildings that are not residential in scale are avoided.
- Buildings are sited to maximise the retention of existing remnant vegetation.
- Single-storey or split-level buildings are preferred.

Planning Scheme Controls

ZONES

Green Wedge and Green Wedge A Zones apply to all private land in Hume’s rural areas. These zones were applied in May 2004 under Amendment VC23. The zoning pattern is illustrated at Figure 3.

Clause 35.04 Green Wedge Zone

The Green Wedge Zone (GWZ) occupies the majority of land within the scope of the study area, with the purposes of:
- Providing for the use of land for agriculture.
- Recognising, protecting and conserving green wedge land for its agricultural, environmental, historic, landscape, recreational and tourism opportunities, and mineral and stone resources.
- Encouraging use and development that is consistent with sustainable land management practices.
- Encouraging sustainable farming activities and provide opportunity for a variety of productive agricultural uses.

- Protecting, conserving and enhancing the cultural heritage significance and the character of open rural and scenic non-urban landscapes.

Green wedge zones are designed to encourage use and character of land for agricultural purposes in rural areas whilst still supporting a range of social, environmental and economic outcomes. The substantial tract of land within the GWZ provides an opportunity for a variety of farming enterprises and production.

Under the GWZ a planning application may be made for uses such as an exhibition centre, hall, and a function centre or winery. However these uses must also be in conjunction with agriculture, natural systems, outdoor recreation facility or rural industry.

The GWZ also allows for the use of land to be developed into an indoor recreation facility, however it must be for equestrian based leisure, recreation or sport. Places of worship, primary and secondary schools may be allowed under this clause subject to planning approval.

A schedule to the GWZ limits the use of land for rural residential living by setting requirements for minimum subdivision size. Figure 1 correlates to the following requirements for minimum subdivision size:

- Area A: 80 hectares
- Area B: 12 hectares
- Area C: 8 hectares
- Area D: 6 hectares.

In addition, the schedule to the zone also changes the permit requirements for earthworks so that a permit is required for all land where earthworks involving the receipt, importation, stockpiling or placement of more than 100 cubic metres of fill is proposed to be undertaken.
Clause 35.05 Green Wedge Zone A

The Green Wedge Zone A (GWZA) is applied in the western region of the municipality to the north and south of Sunbury. Only the GWZA area south of Sunbury is within the scope of this project as the areas to the north of Sunbury are included in the urban growth boundaries.

The purposes of the GWZA include:

■ To provide for the use of land for agriculture.
■ To protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity, natural resources, scenic landscapes and heritage values of the area.
■ To ensure that use and development promotes sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.
■ To protect, conserve and enhance the cultural heritage significance and the character of rural and scenic non-urban landscapes.
■ To recognise and protect the amenity of existing rural living areas.

GWZA is similar to the GWZA as they both recognise and protect non-urban land outside the Urban Growth Boundary UGB and encourage the use of land for agricultural purposes. Amenity impacts on these existing areas are accommodated through a schedule to the zone. These include:

■ Changes to requirements for minimum subdivision size, with land identified on Figure 2 below:
  ○ Area A: 8 hectares
  ○ Area B: 6 hectares
  ○ Area C: 1 hectare

■ Changes the permit requirements for earthworks so that a permit is required for all land where earthworks involving the receipt, importation, stockpiling or placement of more than 100 cubic metres of fill is proposed to be undertaken.

Figure 2: Areas of Green Wedge Zone A land subject to minimum subdivision size

OVERLAYS

A range of overlays throughout the rural areas of the municipality operate together with zone requirements listed above. Overlays allow Councils to determine the type of development that occurs and are generally used to respond to a specific issue or set of issues, such as an environmental concern or flooding. Figures 7 and 8 (pages 16 and 17) illustrate the location of overlays applying in Hume’s rural areas.
Clause 42.01 Environmental Significance Overlay

The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) is applied to protect the waterways located in the municipality which present significant visual and geological features of the rural landscape which service important environmental, drainage and recreation functions. These functions contribute to the character, amenity and identity of the region. The overlay is designed to achieve a wide range of environmental objectives aimed to protect and maintain ecological, waterway, recreational, landscape character and heritage values.

Clause 42.02 Vegetation Protection Overlay

The Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) is present in the north-western region of the municipality, and is designed:

- To protect areas of significant vegetation.
- To ensure that development minimises loss of vegetation.
- To preserve existing trees and other vegetation.
- To recognise vegetation protection areas as locations of special significance, natural beauty, interest and importance.
- To maintain and enhance habitat and habitat corridors for indigenous fauna.
- To encourage the regeneration of native vegetation.

The VPO protects rare vegetation of the Valley Grassy Forest vegetation community, which includes several species of Eucalypt that are not found anywhere else within the municipality and thus, are regionally significant. The Overlay also recognises and protects the only areas of true Koala habitat in Hume to the north east of Sunbury. Mt Holden reserve and the Sunbury Landfill are also areas which are protected by the VPO.

Clause 43.01 Heritage Overlay

There are a number of heritage places located in the green wedge. The purpose of the overlay is:

- To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.
- To conserve and enhance those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places.
- To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.
- To conserve specifically identified heritage places by allowing a use that would otherwise be prohibited if this will demonstrably assist with the conservation of the significance of the heritage place.

Clause 45.01 Public Acquisitions Overlay

The Public Acquisitions Overlay (PAO3) applies to a band of land over the rural region of the municipality. The PAO3 has been applied to enable land to be acquired in the future for the Outer Metropolitan Ring/E6 Transport Corridor of which VicRoads is the planning authority.

Clause 45.08 Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay

A significant portion of the Green Wedge Zone is occupied by the two schedules to the Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay (MAEO) (refer Figure 8).

The MAEO is designed:

To ensure that land use and development are compatible with the operation of Melbourne Airport in accordance with the relevant airport strategy or master plan and with safe air navigation for aircraft approaching and departing the airfield.

- To assist in shielding people from the impact of aircraft noise by requiring appropriate noise attenuation measures in dwellings and other noise sensitive buildings.
- To provide for appropriate levels of noise attenuation depending on the level of forecasted noise exposure.
The Airport has critical implications for surrounding land uses, in particular sensitive uses that may be most affected by exposure to aircraft noise. The MAEO denotes areas where a high number of aircraft movements occur at the loudest noise level. The purpose of this Overlay is to regulate use and development that would otherwise be permitted under the zone that applies to the land. It ensures that planning permits for land use and development are compatible with the operation of Melbourne Airport, and that the exposure to aircraft noise is limited.

The green wedge plays a significant role in providing a protective buffer between Melbourne Airport and the surrounding urban and rural landscape. It restricts development in areas of frequent aircraft movement, and limits the existing and potential impacts to the natural environment, biodiversity, heritage and rural landscapes.

Schedule 1 of the MAEO identifies areas that are subject to high levels of aircraft noise based on the 25 Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) contour. It applies the need for a permit to use land and construct a building or carry out works for a Dwelling and/or Dependent person’s unit and restricts the use of a lot to a maximum of one Dwelling and one Dependent person’s unit. A permit is also required for a range of uses such as a host farm, place of assembly, restricted recreation facility and veterinary centre. Certain uses including a childcare care centre, education and hospital facilities are prohibited.

Schedule 2 identifies areas that may be subject to moderate levels of aircraft noise based on the 20-25 ANEF contours. This schedule applies the need for a permit to use land for a dwelling, and the development of a single lot for two or more dwellings which must not exceed a density of one dwelling per 300 square metres. A permit is required for uses such as accommodation, childcare and education centres, office and place of assembly.

**Clause 44.04 Land Subject to Inundation Overlay**

The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) can be found around waterways. The purposes of this overlay are:

- To identify land in a flood storage or flood fringe area affected by the 1 in 100 year flood or any other area determined by the floodplain management authority.

- To ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity.

- To reflect any declaration under Division 4 of Part 10 of the Water Act, 1989 where a declaration has been made.

- To protect water quality in accordance with the provisions of relevant State Environment Protection Policies, particularly in accordance with Clauses 33 and 35 of the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria).

- To ensure that development maintains or improves river and wetland health, waterway protection and flood plain health.

**Clause 57.01 Metropolitan Green Wedge Land**

Clause 57.01 is specific to green wedge land which occupies a majority of the rural areas in the municipality. It is designed to protect the agricultural, environmental and cultural heritage values from incompatible uses and development. In addition, Clause 57.01 provides deeming provisions for metropolitan green wedge land.
State and Local Strategies & Plans

Metropolitan strategies

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 is the current Metropolitan Planning Strategy which provides directions and initiatives specific to Rural HIGAP with regards to agricultural and biodiversity uses in non-urban areas. It places a high emphasis on maintaining the current Urban Growth Boundary and protected the green wedges for its agricultural, natural resource, environmental, cultural and health and well-being benefits to the wider community.

The following directions and policies are most relevant:

- Direction 1.4 – Support the productive use of land and resources in Melbourne’s non-urban areas.
- Policy 1.4.2 – Identify and protect extractive resources (such as stone and sane) important for Melbourne’s future needs.
- Direction 4.5 – Plan for Melbourne’s green wedges and peri-urban areas.
- Policy 4.5.1 – Strengthen protection and management of green wedge land.
- Policy 4.5.1 – Protect and enhance valued attributes of distinctive areas and landscapes.
- Policy 6.1.2 – Facilitate the update of renewable energy technologies. (The policy detail recommends “investigating opportunities for renewable energy initiatives in Melbourne’s green wedges and peri-urban areas”.)

In addition to these specific Directions and Policies, Plan Melbourne outlines Desired Planning Outcomes for Green Wedges and Peri-Urban Areas, such as:

- Environmental and Biodiversity assets - Protecting and enhancing environmental and biodiversity assets, including rivers and creeks, forests and grasslands. Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.
- Landscape and Open Space - Protect significant views, maintain non-urban breaks between urban areas, and conserve the cultural significance, tourism appeal and character of scenic rural landscapes. Recognised high-value landscape features include open farmed landscapes, sites of geological significance, ranges, hills and ridges.
- Water supply catchments - Manage and protect groundwater and waterways to improve water quality, protect the environment and provide a reliable and secure water supply.
- Natural Hazards - Avoid significant land disturbance, reduce the occurrence and impact of soil erosion and salinity.
- Agricultural Land - Protect agricultural land from incompatible uses, maintain farm size, promote the continuation of farming and provide a secure long-term future for productive and sustainable agriculture. Key agricultural areas include Keilor.
- Recreation - Provide land for a range of open space functions to meet community needs for active and passive recreation and for protection of the environment.
- Tourism - Facilitate sustainable year-round tourism, and new tourism development (including diverse attractions, accommodation and eating establishments) that maintains the integrity of the natural environment, provides social benefits for communities and visitors and contributes to local economies.
- Cultural heritage - Provide for the protection and management of sites of Aboriginal and post-European settlement.
- State-significant infrastructure - Protect regionally significant assets such as metropolitan landfills, airports and flightpaths. Provide opportunities for renewable energy generation.
Mineral, sand and stone resources - Protect sand and stone resources for future extraction to ensure a continuous supply of construction material.

Economy - Maintain a strong, dynamic economy and employment base by building on the comparative advantages in agriculture, timber, transport, tourism, education, manufacturing, the service industry and commerce.

Population, settlements and local infrastructure - Manage the growth and sustainable development of green wedge townships and settlements, having regard for their distinct character and environmental and servicing constraints.

Rural Living - Manage rural living to prevent negative impacts on agriculture, biodiversity and landscape values.

Transport and accessibility - Provide a high-quality road and rail transport network with a range of sustainable, efficient, accessible and affordable transport options that readily connect neighbourhoods, workplaces, community facilities, services and enable people to participate in community life.

Facilitate improvements to transport networks and facilities that support tourism, such as airports.

Importantly, Direction 2.1 will “manage the supply of new housing in the right locations to meet population growth and create a sustainable city”. To achieve this Policy 2.1.1 will:

Maintain a permanent urban growth boundary around Melbourne to create a more consolidated, sustainable city.

Policy 2.1.1 emphasises its interrelationship with other priorities of the Plan which are to:

Reduce urban sprawl.

Protect the values of non-urban land opportunities for productive agricultural land and significant landscapes.

Local strategies

Hume Horizons 2040

Hume Horizons 2040 is a community plan that sets out the community's vision for the future. A key objective in this strategy aims to achieve a sustainably built and well maintained city with an environmentally engaged community, through the protection, enhancement and maintenance of the city's natural heritage, environment and rural spaces.

Land and Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019

The Land and Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019 provides an action plan to manage land, heritage and biodiversity within Hume. The plan identifies significant agricultural uses of land in rural areas, with grazing predominantly occupying 85% of rural land. It also identifies a minimum of 30% of native vegetation cover in rural areas which is considered necessary for bird and mammal persistence. The native vegetation cover as of 2015 is 24% and therefore there is currently a shortfall of 6%. Actions have been identified in order to achieve the protection, management and enhancement of these significant aspects.

- Action No. 1: Develop a Landscape Connectivity Plan that identifies existing and potential vegetation corridors, buffers and stepping stones between core habitat areas and barriers to species movement throughout the landscape.
- Action No. 5: Implement the actions of the Environmental Planning Audit 2014, including updating the existing planning mechanisms to protect significant landscapes, features, conservation areas and offset sites.
- Action No. 8: Identify green wedge values and optimal land use options to support a productive and well-managed green wedge.
- Action No. 17: Undertake a heritage study to identify Indigenous cultural heritage sites on Council land and provide recommendations for their protection.
Action No. 18: Adequately protect and manage cultural heritage sites and ensure they are included in relevant masterplans, management plans, maintenance regimes, and contractor site introductions.

Economic Development Strategy 2030

The Economic Development Strategy 2030 provides a key strategic goal to support existing industries and enterprises to prosper and develop sustainably. It identifies opportunities for rural agri-businesses to develop sustainably and identify other suitable business uses in the rural area. These include uses which align with agriculture, the rural industry and natural systems under the GWZ, such as markets, restaurants, residential hotels and freezing and cooling storage.

An objective in this strategy is to ‘Stimulate a Green Economy’, and will be implemented by supporting new emerging uses in the green wedge area including the development of sustainable agri-businesses, tourism-related businesses and alternative energy generation.

With reference to the Hume Tourism Strategy 2011-2015, Tourism-related businesses include tours or network of outlets/ direct to public businesses, which provide a hands-on experience; and places of accommodation (i.e. hotels and bed and breakfasts).

Hume Agribusiness Project

The Hume Agribusiness Project was completed in 2013 and includes a comprehensive study on the production activity and capability study of agriculture and agribusiness within the municipality. It details changes in uses, climatic conditions and physical attributes of Hume’s rural land which have shaped the shifts in the agribusiness industry over the past 30 years. Findings include the challenges that have arisen over time and resulted in reduced production capacities, low agricultural returns and uncompetitive and unviable agri-businesses.

The project findings also include the trends and issues impacting the future use of rural land, which include:

- weed control;
- water availability and low rainfall throughout Hume City;
- carrying out farming practices living in urban-rural interface areas;
- farm viability, and producing income from agri-business industries;
- lost sense of rural community within rural Hume, including Hume no longer recognised as a rural area by organisations and government departments; and
- planning restrictions and overlays which affect land use activities and restrict agricultural practices.
Tourism Strategy 2011-2015

The Tourism Strategy 2011-2015 identifies strengths, weaknesses and potential opportunities for tourism in the municipality.

The strategy:

- Identifies green wedge planning controls as an inhibitor of some tourism opportunities in Hume, such as accommodation, recreation and hospitality industries.
- Identifies opportunities to improve the tourism potential of the rural area.
- Identifies greater utilisation of Woodlands Historic Park for tourism activity (e.g. wildlife, cycling and Indigenous education).

It aims to:

- Increase awareness of Hume’s current and historic aviation heritage. Explore aviation heritage in Hume. Audit and profile aviation events and history. Promote plane spotting vantage points within Hume.
- Hold discussions with Parks Victoria with regards to Woodlands Historic Park and explore partnership opportunities.

Hume Corridor Hume Integrated Growth Area Plan (HIGAP) 2015

The Hume Corridor Integrated Growth Area Plan is a two-part local strategy containing a spatial strategy and infrastructure and delivery strategy. The plan aims to achieve the objectives set out in Hume Horizons 2040 by implementing policies and strategies which reflect Council’s position in land use and infrastructure provision. HIGAP contains sections which outline the changes required to manage growth and deliver the vision. The strategy also aims to identify issues and opportunities the Hume Corridor faces, including the lack of access to a diverse range of jobs, tertiary education, hospital facilities and adequate public transport. HIGAP aligns very closely with The Growth Corridor Plans approved by the State Government in 2012.

In regards to rural areas, HIGAP addresses the UGB and significant natural heritage areas located on the periphery of the Hume corridor. HIGAP aims to protect the land west of Mickleham Road, north of Somerton Road by aiming to support landholders in maintaining viable businesses and continuing to improve natural heritage values. It establishes Council’s position on the protection of the UGB, and the restricted changes considered.

Sunbury Hume Integrated Growth Area Plan (HIGAP) 2012

Sunbury HIGAP has a similar format to the Hume Corridor Plan, a spatial strategy accompanied by a delivery and infrastructure strategy. The plan aligns closely with the principles set out in The Growth Corridor Plans mentioned in the previous paragraph. Sunbury HIGAP acknowledges Sunbury’s status as a self-contained township, with the ability to absorb the scale of growth proposed by the State Government. The plan aims to manage the growth in the township by establishing strategies which reflect improvements to transport connectivity and large scale health and education facilities.

Within the plan, it is acknowledged that Sunbury is surrounded by rural land occupied by agricultural uses such as wineries and vineyards. In order to maintain and protect the surrounding rural landscape, strategies guiding the future scale, location and form of a diverse range of land uses and development outcomes are addressed. This includes minimising the visual intrusion of new development on Sunbury’s landscape by implementing building height controls and setbacks.