

Southern Grampians

Significant Landscape Assessment

planisphere



DRAFT REPORT FOR COMMUNITY EXHIBITION

August 2013



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PROJECT CONTROL

Status	Version	Checked PM	Checked PD	Date released
Draft Report	2	KP/IM	CS	20/10/11
Draft (Exhibition) Report	1	KP/IM	CS	01/12/11
Draft (Exhibition) Report	2	KP/IM	CS	13/01/12
Draft (Exhibition) Report	3		CS	6/8/13

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In undertaking this work, we recognise that the Shire of the Southern Grampians encompasses the traditional lands of the Gunditjmarra, Tjap Wurrung and Bunganditj people, and acknowledge them as the traditional custodians of the landscape.

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FOREWORD

The Grampians surrounds is a highly scenic and complex landscape at the southern tip of the Great Dividing Range. The mountains form a spectacular backdrop to the agricultural plains and townships nestled at their base. Other landscape features include rugged ridges and escarpments, River Red Gum woodlands, and other stands of native vegetation along streams and incised valleys.

The landscape reflects its Aboriginal cultural heritage, with many features being influenced by traditional land management practices. Today's land use and settlement pattern is also a reflection of post contact heritage, starting with the exploration by Europeans in the 1830s.

All landscapes are valued by different people for different reasons, and the Grampians and their surrounds are no exception. The scenic beauty, tranquillity, cultural heritage, environment, biodiversity, geo-morphological significance, recreation and artistic inspiration are just some of the reasons why the community feels a strong connection to the Grampians landscape.

The Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment is an important and challenging project, and Planisphere has been delighted to work with the Council and local community to deliver its objectives for such a visually stunning and economically important landscape.

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	9	Significant Views	77
Background.....	10	Significant Viewing Corridors	89
Study Area.....	11	Other Notable Views.....	92
Study Process	13	Implementation.....	99
Landscape Assessment Methodology	14	Applying the Landscape Management Framework	100
Community Values.....	15	Appendices	113
Background References & Policy Context.....	16	Appendix 1: Project Brief.....	115
Summary of Recommendations.....	18	Appendix 2: Meetings & Community Consultation	127
Landscape Character.....	19	Appendix 3: Background.....	149
Defining Landscape Character	20	Appendix 4: Statutory Implementation Options.....	171
Landscape Character Areas.....	22		
Character Area 1: Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds.....	25		
Character Area 2: Rolling Tableland	33		
Character Area 3: Volcanic Agricultural	41		
Change in the Landscape	47		
Landscape Management Guidelines	48		
Landscape Significance.....	59		
Introduction	60		
Character Area 1	62		

1

INTRODUCTION



BACKGROUND

PROJECT SCOPE AND AIM

The primary purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of the visual character and significance of the Grampians landscape, and prepare up to date planning policy and controls to ensure the landscape's protection, within a context of appropriate development, economic growth and investment.

The study is focussed on visual significance, or the aesthetics of landscape, but there are other influencing factors that require consideration. These include aboriginal cultural heritage, post contact heritage, environmental considerations, archaeology and social significance.

The key requirements of the project were detailed in the brief as follows:

- Undertake a landscape character assessment, including definition of landscape features or character areas based on an analysis of landscape, environmental, topographic, scientific, visual, social and other relevant attributes.
- Undertake a landscape significance assessment, including quantifying the significance of each landscape feature or character area using appropriate criteria and community feedback.
- Prepare recommendations for the protection and management of the Southern Grampians landscape, including development guidelines, planning scheme controls and other relevant initiatives.
- Engage and liaise with Council, the community and other key stakeholders in a meaningful way during preparation of the study.

The above requirements included, but were not limited to, the following key tasks also outlined in the project brief:

- Assessment of vistas to and from the Grampians at key viewing locations.

- Assessment of views from scenic approaches to the Grampians, particularly along major tourist routes.
- Identification and management of urban growth areas, and their impact on the Grampians landscape.
- Qualification of the importance of the pastoral landscape in the scenic qualities of the landscape.
- Determination of the significance of the Grampians in the local context and as a national tourist attraction.
- Articulation of different associations and meanings of landscape for the diverse local community.
- Assessment of the role that the landscape plays in maintaining connections with heritage, establishing community identity, and providing for community aspirations.
- Assessment of the surrounding area as an important biological component of the Grampians National Park.
- Understanding that the landscape is an economic driver for tourism and agriculture, and acts as a lifestyle and environmental attractor for residents and business. Moreover, its protection and management will contribute to job creation and the vitality of the local community.

A full copy of the Project Brief can be found at Appendix 1.

STUDY AREA

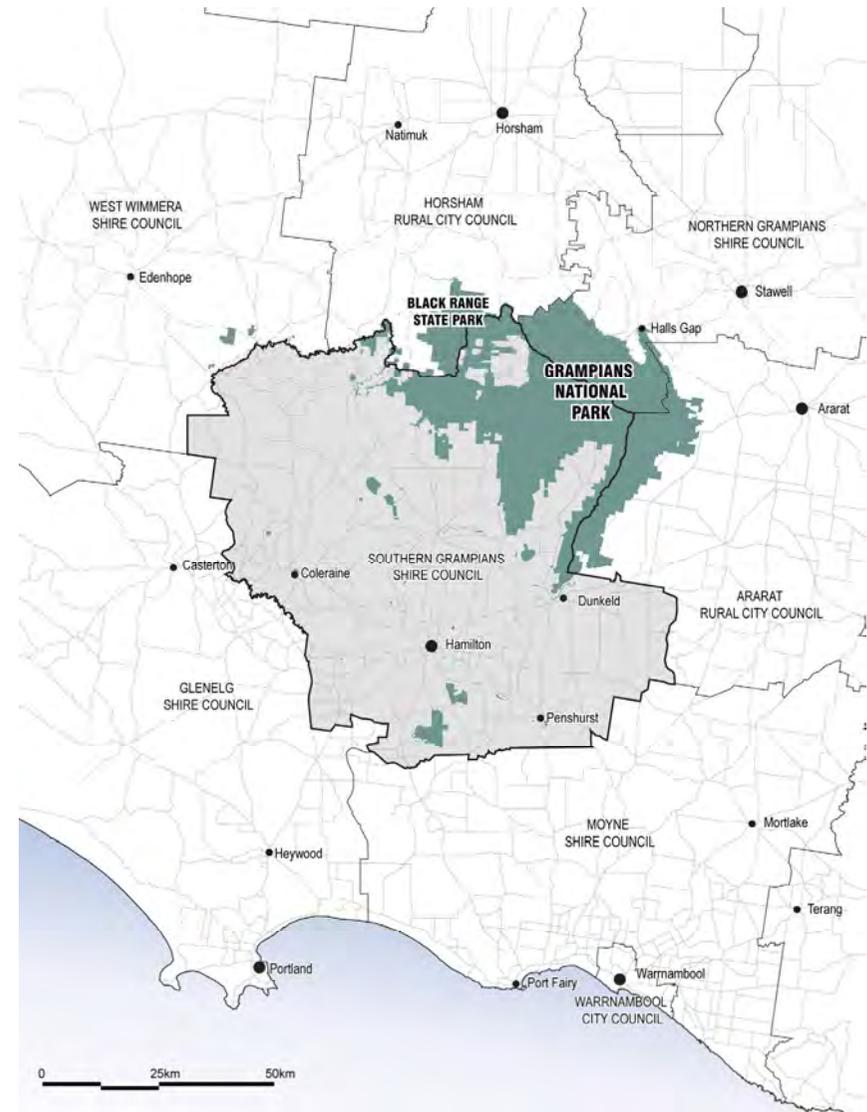
An indicative and preliminary study area of 20km radius from the Grampians National Park boundary was defined in the project brief, with the requirement to further define this study area as the project progressed.

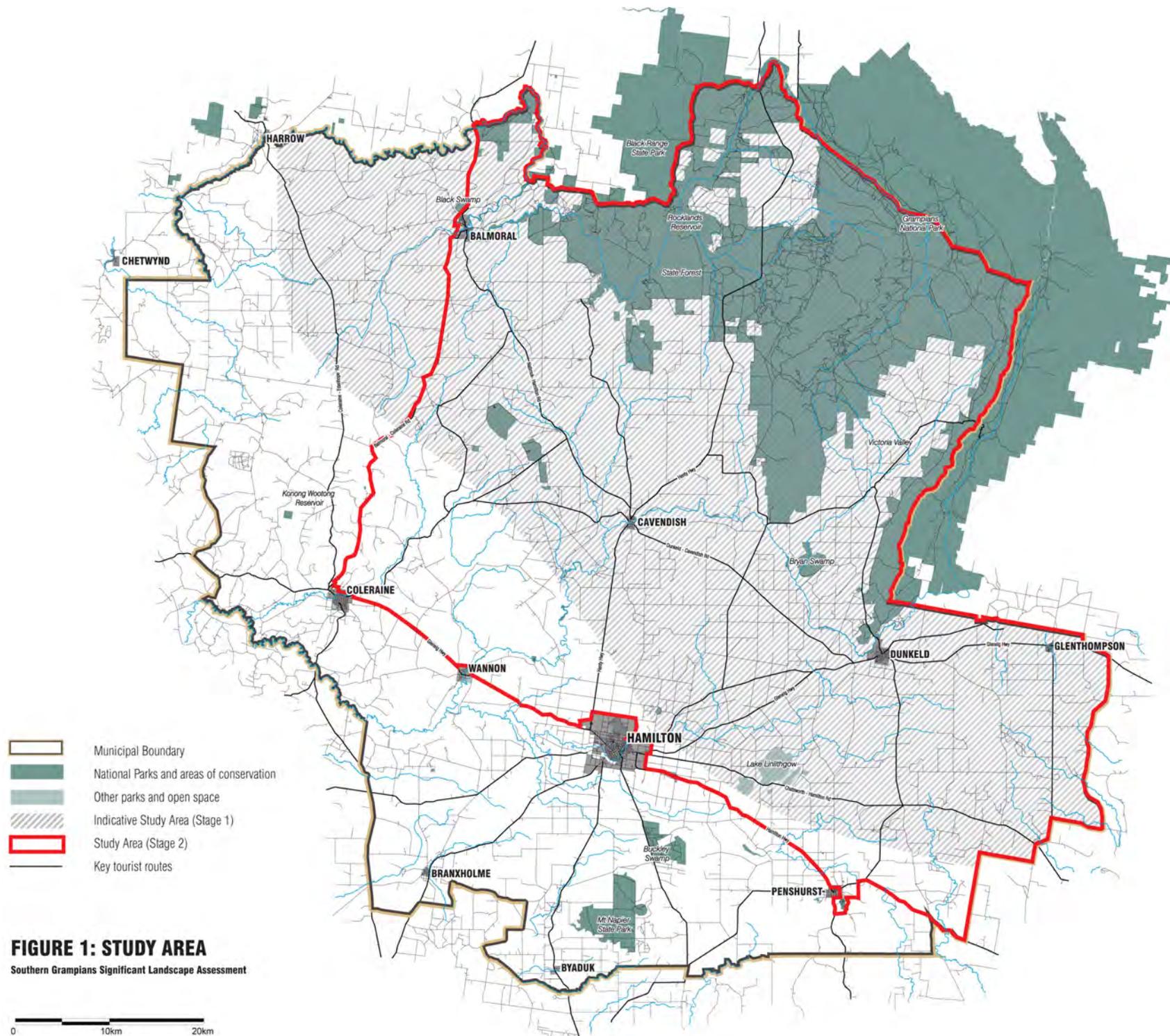
The study area was more clearly defined following the landscape character survey at the beginning of stage 2 of the project, and further revised and finalised following feedback from the Steering Committee.

In summary, following the landscape character survey, the southernmost boundary of the study area, east of Hamilton, was defined as the Chatsworth-Hamilton Road. However, Steering Committee feedback included that the first ‘good view’ of the Grampians from the south is available from Mt Rouse. As such, the study area was extended further south to include the land to the north of the Hamilton Highway, plus the immediate surrounds of Mt Rouse itself. Importantly, the final study area boundary covers the view available from Mt Rouse, which is considered to be significant.

It should be noted that the study excludes residential zoned land (e.g. Township and Low Density Residential Zones), though settlements within the study area were considered broadly for their relationship to the surrounding landscape, particularly at their interface with rural land.

The study area is illustrated in Figure 1 on the following page.





STUDY PROCESS

The study was undertaken in four stages:

STAGE 1

Inception & Background confirmed Council's requirements, established a detailed timeline in the form of a project plan, commenced a background review and developed a community engagement strategy.

This stage also involved familiarisation with the preliminary study area, as well as desktop mapping work to form the basis of further character and significance analysis. It utilised the information gathered through the document and planning scheme review to analyse issues, and their implications for the Grampians landscape. At the conclusion of this stage the program and outputs of the project were clearly outlined, data gathered and a general understanding of the issues were established.

STAGE 2

Character Assessment & Documentation involved a comprehensive assessment of the landscape character of the Grampians National Park surrounds and confirmation of the exact study area boundary based on character, topography, landscape features and views. A Community Workshop was also held at the beginning of this stage in order to seek and include the community's values on the character and significance of the landscape, and to hear their concerns and aspirations for the study.

This stage of the project also involved detailed desktop analysis (utilising established landscape classification methodologies as a reference), a comprehensive field survey, analysis and mapping of the survey data and findings, resolution of character area boundaries, and a preliminary assessment of the areas of significance. The conclusions of the landscape character assessment were informed by, and tested with, members of the Steering Committee, and all key stakeholders.

STAGE 3

Significance Assessment & Documentation involved establishing the boundaries and characteristics of the most aesthetically significant landscapes and views, and rating the level of significance of those landscapes and views. This included conducting a second detailed field survey to confirm the location and qualities of the landscapes of significance, and to delineate their boundaries for the purposes of applying the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO). Community values gathered via the workshop, Steering Committee meetings, the photographic exercise and project blog contributed to this significance work.

STAGE 4

Statutory Implementation involved the development of implementation recommendations, based on the character and significance findings of the previous stages, combined with a detailed analysis of potential threats to the landscape and existing gaps in the protection and management regime. The focus of this stage was on the statutory implementation of the study through the planning scheme, and the preparation of planning scheme amendment documentation necessary for public exhibition and proceeding with an amendment.

Meetings with the Project Control Group and Steering Committee were held at each project stage, and the draft Final Report was also circulated to Reference Group members for their feedback.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The methodology of understanding landscape significance has been developed over several similar projects. A simple formula is applied:



In essence, the formula means:

- Understanding of landscape character and community values provides a basis for evaluating landscape significance.
- Change in the landscape needs to be considered, in several dimensions: The landscape is continually evolving – it is not a fixed entity; change is part of landscape character; past change has produced the landscape we see today; trends and future changes need to be anticipated and evaluated for their effect – positive and negative – on significance and valued character. The negative changes are in effect the ‘threats’ to which the study must respond.
- The existing policy and control regime needs to be examined to assess the extent to which it recognises the character and significance of the landscape, and adequately responds to the changes or threats identified. These are the policy gaps.
- If a landscape has significance, is subject to present or anticipated threats, and there are gaps in controls and policies, then a strategic justification exists to take action (e.g. to amend the planning scheme, or other appropriate action).

COMMUNITY VALUES

A number of different methods were used to engage and consult with the local community throughout the process.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

A Community Workshop was held in Cavendish early in stage 2 of the project. The objectives of the workshop were:

To inform the local community about the significant landscape assessment and how they be involved.

To engage the local community in the process, and to gather information from them about the landscape.

The agenda and findings from the workshop are detailed in Appendix 2.

COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHIC EXERCISE

A Community Photographic Exercise was also launched at the workshop, with local community members encouraged to take photos of:

A feature, place or view you think is significant, scenic or beautiful of the Grampians and surrounds.

A 'threat' to the landscape (or a feature, place or view that has been spoiled) within the Grampians and surrounds.

It was intended that the photos would be used to gain a better understanding of the community's perceptions and values about the landscapes that they believe to be significant, and what sorts of issues, challenges and threats exist in managing those landscapes.

COMMUNITY BULLETINS & LOCAL MEDIA

Community Bulletins were also prepared to inform the community about the study progress, seek feedback, and provide details about how to be involved. Similar information was also included in local newspaper articles and advertisements.

PROJECT BLOG

A project blog was also established and linked to Council's website. The blog provided an ongoing opportunity for local community members and a wider audience to be involved in the project on an on-going basis. Live updates and information were included on the blog, and it also provided the opportunity for people to post comments and photographs.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee comprising local community members and agency representatives was also established to oversee the project and provide feedback following the production of material at key stages. Members of the Steering Committee also participated in the community photographic exercise.

Detailed material associated with all community engagement methods used during this project is included in the Appendices.

A **Reference Group** comprising other agencies not represented on the Steering Committee was also established to review the draft Final Report for the project.

BACKGROUND REFERENCES & POLICY CONTEXT

A detailed review of background references and the policy and statutory context of the Southern Grampians Planning Scheme has been undertaken. This review has assisted in gaining an understanding of landscape character and significance in the study area and informed the development of implementation recommendations in the latter stages of the project.

The key findings of this review are summarised below, with detailed analysis included in Appendix 3.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

A number of studies relating to the heritage, landscape and environmental significance of the Southern Grampians Shire have been undertaken, including:

Grampians Surround Strategy (1991)

Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study: Volume 1 Report & Thematic History (2004)

Decline of Our Veterans: A Study into the Decline of Remnant Red Gums within the Glenelg Hopkins Region (2008)

Southern Grampians Roadside Vegetation Assessment (2011)

These studies illustrate the contribution to landscape significance of the Shire's vegetation, water courses, distinct landforms and, in some instances, built heritage. They also show the strong connection people have made over time with the unique landscapes of the study area.

The recommendations of the 2004 heritage study have recently been translated into five Significant Landscape Overlays and numerous sites have been added to the Heritage Overlay with the gazettal of Amendment C6 in January, 2011.

Protection of native vegetation is provided through the State-wide provisions of Clause 52.17 of the planning scheme. There are currently no overlay controls to protect specific types of vegetation within the Shire.

ESTABLISHED LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION

A system to classify all bioregions of Australia has been developed by the Federal Government as basis of the Natural Reserve System – Australia's network of protected areas. The Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) has been achieved through the collation and mapping of data on vegetation and land systems from the collective work of State government and agencies. This information is used to identify regional ecosystems across Australia and to assess and measure levels of protection. Across Australia 85 bioregions and 403 subregions have been identified. Three bioregions are represented in the Southern Grampians Shire; the Greater Grampians, the Dundas Tablelands, and the Victorian Volcanic Plain.

The boundaries set by these classifications are useful as a starting point for landscape assessment in this project and defining the character areas. IBRA is a means by which the landscapes of the study area can be compared with other landscape types of the region, and beyond, and their significance better understood at a broader level.

PLANNING SCHEME POLICY AND PROVISIONS

An analysis of the Southern Grampians Shire Planning Scheme has been undertaken to assess the policy and statutory context of the study area as it relates to the protection and management of landscape character. This has included the directions of State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks as well as the detailed requirements of the individual zone and overlay controls. The analysis has highlighted gaps in the current planning scheme in protecting the landscape significance of the Grampians and surrounds (a shortfall also recognised by Council during its planning scheme review, which was completed in August 2010), and has informed the recommendations for statutory implementation.

Council is currently undertaking a planning scheme re-write, which will potentially see all local policies amalgamated into a restructured Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS). The key policy directions relating to this landscape assessment study are currently included in Council's MSS at Clause 21.04-5 Natural Environment and Clause 21.04-7 The Grampians, and the Local Policy at Clause 22.01-3, Landscape environment and protection. As part of the current re-write, it is proposed that these provisions are amalgamated into a new section of the MSS - Clause 21.03 Environment and Landscape Values.

The majority of the study area is contained within the Public Conservation and Resource Zone or the Farming Zone. The Public Park and Recreation Zone applies to small areas of public open space, and the Grampians National Park. Generally, the Low Density Residential Zone and/or Township Zone apply to the small towns and settlements within the study area

Overlay controls relating directly to landscape or environmental protection have been applied in six discrete locations. Otherwise, there are currently no overlay controls that address, at the broader level, landscape, vegetation or ecological significance across the Shire or the study area. Several overlay controls relating to particular aspects of land management apply to the study area, such as flood and fire management, and these may have an indirect impact upon landscape character.

Overlay controls within adjoining municipalities have also been reviewed, in order to understand the approach to management of landscape character or significance across municipal boundaries. Within the Ararat Rural City, Horsham Rural City, and the Northern Grampians Shire, extensive areas of the Grampians landscape are covered by the Significant Landscape Overlay(SLO) to protect their landscape, environmental and/or vegetation significance. The SLO has also been applied to Mt Rouse within the Moyne Shire.

PARTICULAR ISSUES

Issues of native vegetation protection, protection of significant roadside vegetation, timber production and the development of wind farms have relevance to the management of significant landscapes. These issues are governed by various controls and policies set out by the State Government and Council, and are discussed in more detail at Appendix 3.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Three distinctive landscape character areas have been identified within the study area.

One of these landscape areas, the Grampians (Gariwerd) and Surrounds, has been determined to be of National significance for its visual landscape qualities. As such, part of this landscape (land immediately surrounding the Grampians Ranges, excluding the Grampians National Park) has been recommended for additional planning scheme controls through the application of the Significant Landscape Overlay.

The study has found that the remnant River Red Gums are an important component of the significance of the Grampians (Gariwerd) and Surrounds Landscape Character Area, and have therefore been assessed for their contribution to this significance.

Significant views from formalised viewing points and viewing corridors (important scenic roads) have also been assessed as having high to exceptional visual qualities. The introduction of a planning permit trigger to allow the closer assessment of proposed development within these views is also recommended.

Changes to the Local Planning Policy Framework of the planning scheme are also proposed to implement the findings of the study, including adding the final report as a reference document.

2

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



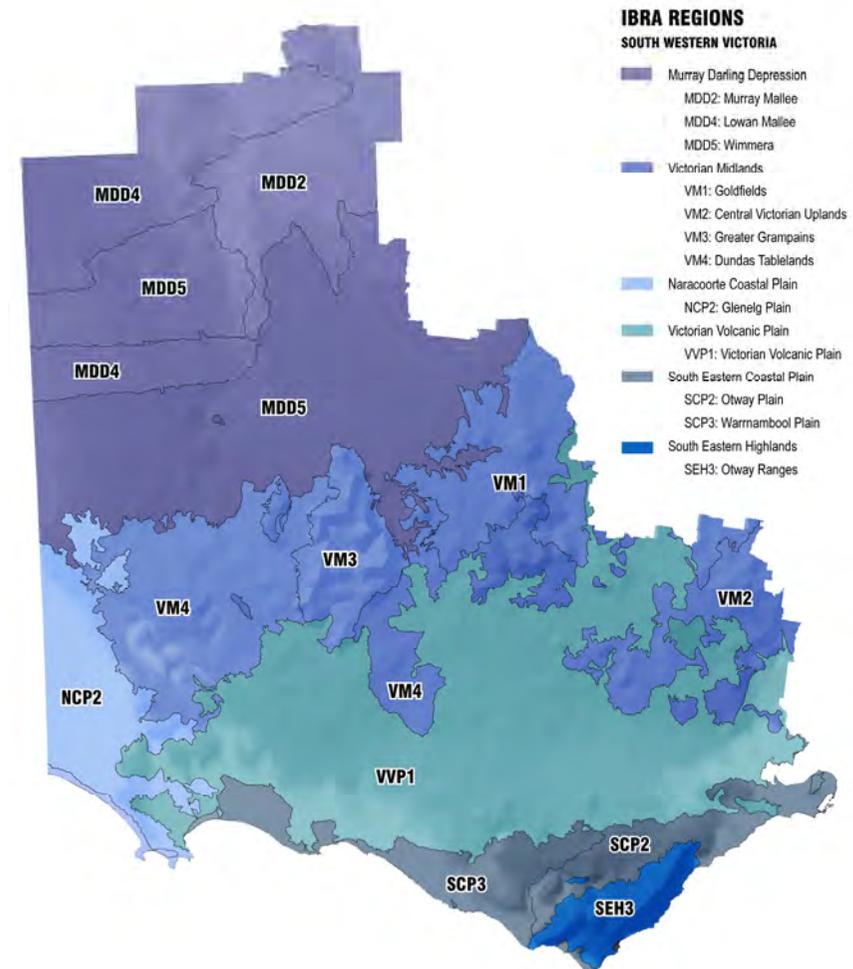
DEFINING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

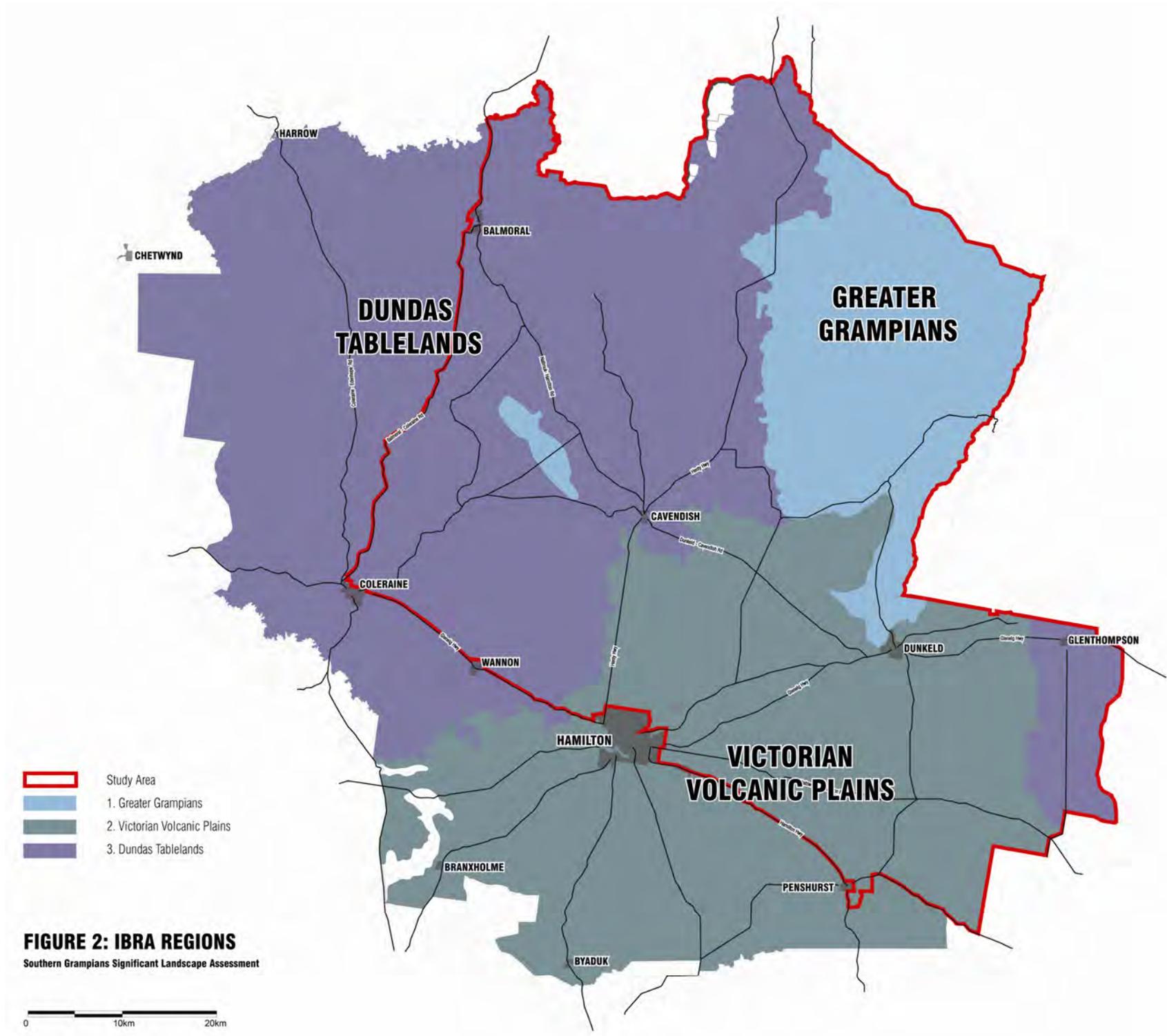
Landscape character is the interplay of geology, topography, vegetation, water bodies and other natural features, combined with the effects of land use and built development, which makes one landscape different from another. The landscape character of an area provides the basis for understanding the features, views, and combinations that are important, and how different types of development sit within the landscape.

A professional assessment of landscape character underpinned this part of the study, focussing on key physical, environmental and cultural characteristics of the landscapes that occur within the Grampians and surrounds.

The nation-wide system of bioregional classification – IBRA - was used as a reference to inform the identification of Landscape Character Areas for this study. The three broad sub-regions of the Greater Grampians, Victorian Volcanic Plains and the Dundas Tablelands fall within the study area, as illustrated in Figure 2 on the following page.

Source: (<http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/nrs/science/bioregion-framework/index.html>)





LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Key landscape character elements including landform, waterform, vegetation and land use were used to define the boundaries of the Landscape Character Areas within the study area. Local conditions were also taken into account including density of settlement, pattern of viewing, vegetation, topography and special landscape features.

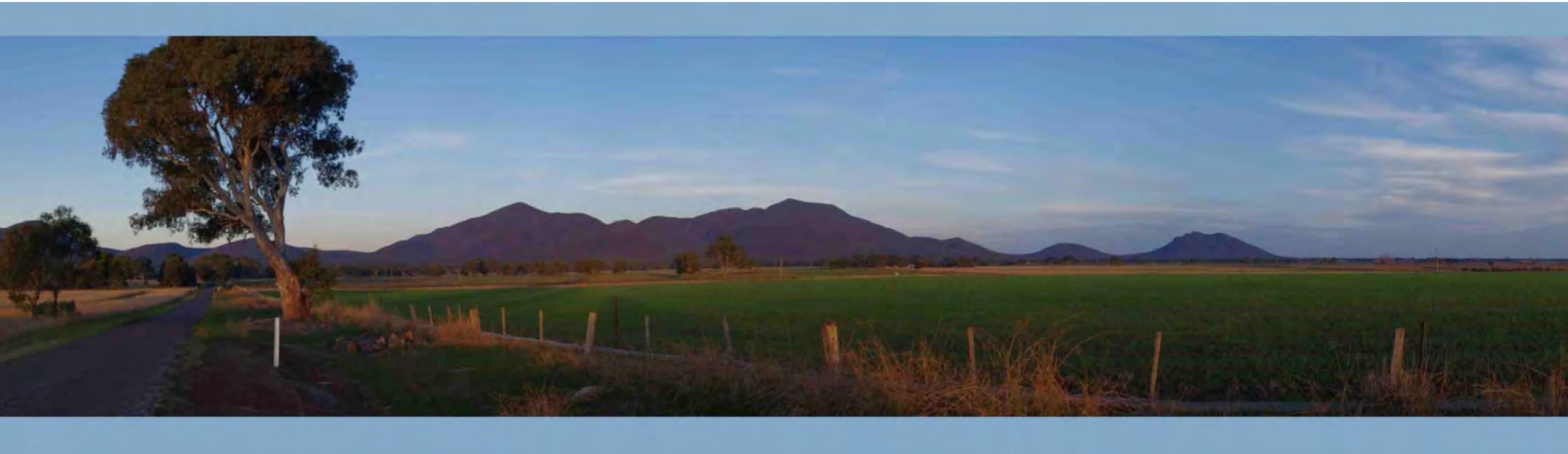
A total of three Character Areas were identified in the study area as listed below, and illustrated on the map on the following page (Figure 3).

Character Area 1: Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds

Character Area 2: Rolling Tablelands

Character Area 3: Volcanic Agricultural

The characteristics of each area are outlined in detail in the Character Area Analysis Papers that follow.



CHARACTER AREA 1
GRAMPIANS (GARIWERD) & SURROUNDS

KEY FEATURES

The Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds Character Area is defined by the visually dramatic and nationally significant Grampians Ranges that form a spectacular backdrop to the surrounding pastoral landscape. This part of the Grampians includes the Victoria and Serra Terra Ranges, which are separated by the Victoria Valley.

Surrounding the ranges is the flat topography of pastoral land, characterised by the visual presence of the rugged mountain ranges that rise sharply in the distance. This phenomenon is no more visually dramatic than deep within the Victoria Valley, where productive agricultural land is surrounded by the dominant mountain ranges. Remnant River Red Gums scattered throughout the paddocks and occasionally in large stands are a significant feature of this area, diminishing markedly further south.



When travelling from the west, the scale of the ranges is exacerbated by flat topography, 'big skies' and straight roads, where view lines allow for their presence to incrementally grow in scale upon approach. The area affords spectacular and ever-changing views of the jagged terracotta escarpments and surrounding pastoral land, with the outlook altering dramatically in different light and weather conditions.



LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Landform

The Grampians Ranges form the southern-most arm of the Great Dividing Range. They are an ancient landscape which has slowly been weathered away over time forming low, rounded foothills at the base of the ranges. The ranges are particularly present in the northern and eastern edges of the Victoria Valley. The distinctive profiles of Mt Sturgeon and Mt Abrupt are highly visible and recognisable landforms in the area.

Basalt rock and evidence of volcanic activity are present on occasional hilly rises in the Mirranatwa end of the Victoria Valley. The surrounding landform is characterised by flat to slightly undulating pastoral land.



Vegetation

Vegetation in the Grampians National Park is highly protected and valued for its diversity and uniqueness. The park contains in excess of 800 indigenous plant species. More than 40 of these, including the Grampians Gum (*Eucalyptus serraensis*) and Grampians Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia oreodoxa*), are found nowhere else in the world.

Grassy woodlands with remnant River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) scattered throughout paddocks, and occasionally in large stands, are the most striking feature within the Victoria Valley. Pastoral land is generally cleared and used for grazing, though forestry plantations also feature adjacent to roadsides and set back into paddocks.

There is significant native vegetation along roadsides including eucalypts, acacias and she-oaks with a long, grassy understory. Very little exotic vegetation is present. Where it is, it is in the form of linear cypress or pine shelterbelts along paddock lines and/or driveways.

The sheer faces of the Grampians remain heavily forested, and this extends down to the surrounding foothills. In some cases, plantation forestry creates a border between remnant bush and cleared farming land at the base of the foothills.

Fire plays a major role in the ecology of the Grampians vegetation and fauna.

Waterform

At the time of survey, low-lying marshes and shallow lakes which have been dry during years of drought had been replenished by recent rainfall. The water table is high and there is evidence of land saturation in paddocks featuring low depressions. Bryan's Swamp in the Victoria Valley is an example of a deep freshwater marsh that supports a diverse range of flora and fauna and provides habitat and summer refuge for animals. More strongly defined creek lines fed by tributaries that run down from the Grampian Ranges meander through the paddocks. The Wannon River flows to the south, while to the north the Rocklands Reservoir is a large, man-made lake that provides a water supply for the region and attracts visitors for recreational activities, such as walking, boating and water skiing.

Land Use

The Grampians National Park was set aside for conservation and protection in the 1980s, and remains highly significant, containing around one third of Victoria's remnant flora and fauna species. The dramatic rock

escarpments, panoramic views, spectacular wildflower displays and picturesque waterfalls attract visitors all year round at a local, national and international scale. The Park offers passive and active outdoor recreational activities such as bushwalking, rock-climbing, picnicking and fishing.

The region surrounding the Grampians National Park is renowned for its history and continuing production of fine wool, and this is evident in the dominance of land being used for sheep grazing. In more recent times, Blue Gum plantations have become a popular use of the land throughout this Character Area. There is a strong history of family ownership and stewardship of this land, particularly in the Victoria Valley where some properties have not changed hands for many generations.

OTHER IDENTIFIED VALUES

- The inclusion of the Grampians in the National Heritage List (December 2006) identifies them as a landscape of national significance. The high level of endemic flora; the rich variety of invertebrates; the geological features, including the sedimentary cross sections; and evidence of early human occupation found in the area, have all contributed to this inclusion.
- A prolific number of Australian artists have drawn inspiration from the dramatic landform of the ranges in a variety of media including painting, poetry, literature, photography and film.
- The Grampians are the most important area for floristic richness and endemism in eastern inland Australia, and are significant at a national scale for richness in terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates.
- The Grampians region forms part of the popular Great Southern Touring Route which takes in some of the best scenery Victoria has to offer, including the Great Ocean Road, Ballarat goldfields and the volcanic features of the Western plains. This route attracts high numbers of local, national and international visitors each year. The Grampians are also on route for tourers travelling between Adelaide and Melbourne.
- A variety of recreational opportunities are available within the park including bushwalking, mountain bike riding, rock climbing, bird and animal watching, and large number of people are attracted to the wildflower displays.
- The Grampians are an island of bushland in a largely cleared agricultural landscape, and are one of Australia's richest and most diverse flora areas, containing more than one third of Victoria's flora species.
- Aboriginal occupation of the Grampians dates back well over 20,000 years and the area contains the majority of surviving Aboriginal rock art sites in south-east Australia.
- Outside of the National Park boundaries, highly endangered flora and fauna of the grassy woodlands is retained within the roadside verges and on remnant patches within private property.
- Roadside verges also contain significant vegetation such as stands of River Red Gums, and fallen timber within these roadside verges often forms important habitats for.
- The surrounding areas of open grazing land are an important part of the area's post-settlement history and a key part of its character
- The granitic rock escarpments of the Grampians Ranges that protrude from the forested mountain sides have a reddish terracotta colour that appears to change depending on the time of day, or light conditions (often referred to as the "Uluru" effect).
- The area is part of the broader south west region that provides the primary source of timber production in Victoria.

SETTLEMENTS

Dunkeld sits nestled at the base of Mt Sturgeon, and is highly valued for the scenic qualities provided by its proximity to the Grampian Ranges. With a total population of approximately 400, the township is compact in nature and sits within well defined Township zoned boundaries, although

there is an area of Low Density Residential Zoned land to its north and west. Also located within the Character Area is the township of Cavendish on the banks of the Wannon River (also zoned Township), and the rural localities of Victoria Valley, Mirranatwa, Mooralla and Glenisla.

PATTERN OF VIEWING

The Grampians form an ever-present silhouette on the horizon in the Grampians & Surrounds Character Area.

Grampians Road provides the main tourist route between Dunkeld and Halls Gap. Victoria Valley Road dissects the floor of the Victoria Valley, offering spectacular views across open grazing land to the ranges beyond. In some locations, remnant roadside vegetation, plantation forestry and shelterbelt planting confines and frames views, which can intensify the viewing experience.

LANDSCAPE CHANGE

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- Impacts associated with major storm/weather events (landslip etc.)
- Plantation forestry will experience ongoing cycles of change, from the planting of young trees to cleared paddocks once timber has been harvested.
- There has been a long history of farming sheep for wool, though this is subject to change with fluctuations in the market.
- Rising salinity is an issue in some areas, which will have an impact on how the land is farmed.

Development trends and pressures known or likely to occur in the Character Area include:

- Increase in tourism activities

- More intensive farming practices including plantation forestry

SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE

Threats:

- Removal or loss of remnant vegetation
- Fragmentation of the land, particularly surrounding townships
- Draining of wetlands and swamps for agriculture
- Farming practices that exacerbate rising salinity
- Sheds or farming infrastructure located close to the roadside, dominating or blocking significant views to the Grampians
- Buildings or infrastructure located on ridge lines or prominent slopes
- Timber plantations, which result in unnaturally dense areas of vegetation and have a serious impact upon the landscape once harvested
- Fire

EXISTING POLICIES

The following State and Local Government policies currently control landscape change in the Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds Character Area:

- The State Planning Policy Framework discusses open space planning and management in Clause 11, Settlement, with strategies that include protecting large regional parks and significant conservation areas, and protecting sites and features of high scientific nature conservation, biodiversity, heritage, geological or landscape value.

- The Grampians are noted as an environmentally sensitive area with significant recreational value in Clause 12, Environment and Landscape Values, which also includes the objective “to protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments”.
- Clause 15, Built Environment & Heritage, contains urban design principles to achieve outcomes that contribute positively to the urban character. These state that landmarks, views and vistas should be protected and enhanced by new development, and that it should respond to the underlying landscape character and heritage values.
- The Local Planning Policy Framework of the Southern Grampians Shire Planning Scheme recognises the significance and high scenic value of the landscapes of the Grampians and surrounding areas.
- Clause 21.04-7 of Council’s MSS, The Grampians, specifically notes the cultural and environmental significance of the Grampians to the nation, reflected by the creation of the Grampians National Park in 1984. It also notes the important contribution the Grampians make to the tourism economy of the Shire. The need for a consistent, regional approach to the management of the visual or environmental impacts of land use and development around the Grampians is highlighted.
- Landscape Environment and Protection Policy (Clause 22.01-3) is a key direction for the SGSLA study and applies to the whole Shire. It aims to protect the important landscape features of the Shire, including the Red Gums, volcanic peaks and other geological features, rivers and waterfalls, the Grampians and the cultural landscape of farming. It also aims to minimise the impact of townships and buildings in the landscape or upon environmental values.
- The large portion of the Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds Character Area falls within the Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ). The PCRZ relates to land of high conservation value that is subject to public land management, such as national parks, and aims to protect and conserve these areas. The Grampians Nation Park, the Black Range State Park, Rocklands Reservoir and surrounding areas of State Forest and Bryan Swamp are all included within this Character Area.
- The Farming Zone (FZ) is also applied to an extensive part of this Character Area and provides for agricultural land uses. It also encourages sustainable land management practices and protection of the natural resources and biodiversity of the area.
- Other zonings within this Character Area apply to confined localities: the Public Park and Recreation Zone, which applies to various small open spaces within Dunkeld and Cavendish; the Low Density Residential Zone, which applies to land at the edge Dunkeld; and the Township Zone, which applies to the settled areas of Dunkeld and Cavendish.
- The Heritage Overlay has been applied to numerous sites and several precincts within the Shire, most of which were identified in the Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, 2004, and introduced via Amendment C6 in January, 2011. Several heritage sites are located within the Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds Character Area.
- The Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, 2004, also lists six broad landscape areas as having a high degree of cultural significance and recommended they be investigated for statutory protection. Within this Character Area are the Wannon River and its tributaries, the Victoria Valley, Mt Sturgeon and Mt Abrupt.
- The Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO) is extensively applied throughout this Character Area. Its fuel reduction requirements may in some instances have an impact upon landscape character.

- State government and Council policies aim to encourage timber production in suitable locations, provided it does not impact upon areas of historic, cultural or landscape significance. Clause 52.18, Timber Production, stipulates that large scale timber production activities must comply with the State Government's Code of Practice for Timber Production 2007. The Code requires all timber production operations to demonstrate that no adverse visual impacts upon sensitive landscapes will occur.
- Native vegetation management is addressed through the Planning Scheme and State Government policy. Under Clause 52.17, Native Vegetation, a permit is required for removal of native vegetation on sites greater than 0.4 hectares in most instances, unless exemptions apply such as those relating to safety or infrastructure provision.
- Council's MSS notes the significance of roadside vegetation as a part of the Shire's tourism value and includes a strategy to retain and protect roadside vegetation. Detailed assessments of roadside vegetation throughout the Shire has been undertaken in order to manage and conserve vegetation of significance.
- The siting and design of wind farms and timber plantations are also important considerations, addressed through State government policies and guidelines.

FUTURE CHARACTER DIRECTIONS

The Grampians (Gariwerd) and Surrounds Character Area should remain a productive agricultural landscape, the experience of which will remain heightened by the dramatic backdrop of the Grampians Ranges. Development will be carefully sited and well integrated within the landscape, with minimal impact on view lines towards the ranges. Indigenous and native vegetation will continue to remain a dominant characteristic of the area, with River Red Gums scattered throughout paddocks, along roadsides, and occasionally in large stands. Gradual evolution of the rural character of the area should be encouraged, including the development of new farming practices and crops where viable and appropriate. Revegetation of less productive farmlands and areas of environmental degradation will be encouraged.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

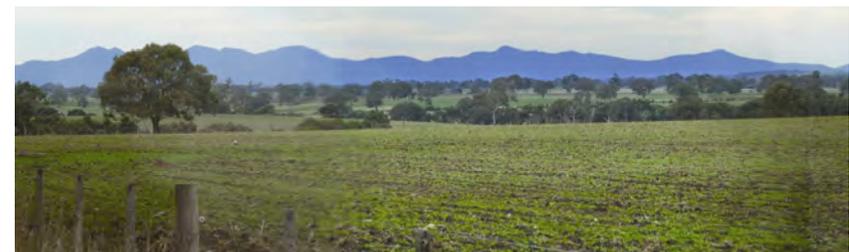
- *To protect and enhance remnant indigenous vegetation as an important character element.*
- *To protect the scenic backdrop created by the Grampians Ranges National Park, and minimise any impact on view lines towards the mountains.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of buildings and structures within the natural landscape.*
- *To maintain an overall sense of spaciousness within the landscape.*
- *To ensure buildings and structures demonstrate a high standard of design and respond to the character of the surrounding environment.*
- *To recognise the ongoing agricultural use of the land with areas of open grazing as an important character element.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of timber production and other agro-forestry industries upon the natural landscape.*
- *To encourage revegetation of less productive farmlands and areas of environmental degradation throughout the landscape.*
- *To incorporate best practice environmental sustainability principles*



CHARACTER AREA 2
ROLLING TABLELANDS

KEY FEATURES

The Rolling Tablelands Character Area is defined by green rolling hills incised by deep vegetated valleys. The Grampians Ranges form a distant jagged silhouette on the horizon, contributing to the spectacular views offered across the pastoral landscape, particularly at topographical high points. Significant stands of remnant vegetation line the valleys, creek corridors and road sides throughout, and occasional patches are found dotted throughout the paddocks. Sheep and cattle grazing and animal husbandry are the most predominant activities, particularly as the land begins to flatten out towards the north and east. Heavy clearing is evident in some paddocks and on the hilltops surrounding Coleraine, contributing to a feeling of openness and ‘big skies’. The presence of indigenous roadside vegetation thickens to the north and east, on approach to Balmoral and the Black Range State Park. Farmhouses and associated buildings are mostly inconspicuous elements in the landscape, set back from the road and screened by vegetation. A number of old homesteads and associated farm buildings provide an insight into the pastoral history of the landscape and contribute to the rural feel of the area.



LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Landform

The landform is characterised by a plateau with an elevation of around 200m. The tableland consists of rolling hills incised by steep valleys. Undulations in the land become slighter as the landscape flattens towards the north and east, on approach to Balmoral and the Black Range State Park. In some locations, there is evidence of erosion, with deep red earth exposed on the hillsides. Quarrying has left significant scarring in the landscape near the township of Coleraine, and is mostly visible along the approach to Coleraine from Harrow.



Vegetation

Paddocks within the area have generally been cleared for pastoral purposes, often with exotic shelterbelt planting along fence lines and around farming homesteads. Remnant growth remains in valleys, creek corridors and occasionally in fragmented clusters on hillsides. As the topography flattens out towards the north and east of the Character Area, native vegetation becomes more prominent in paddocks and along the roadsides.

Where the roadside vegetation becomes thicker, it consists of white barked eucalypts and River Red Gums with a grassy, cleared understory. At times

the tall roadside vegetation meets above the road, forming an arched canopy overhead.

Waterform

The tablelands are dissected by creeks and watercourses which have formed the steep slopes in the valley sides over time. At the time of survey, temporal water bodies and marshes had formed in flatter areas at the tops of ridges and in the low-lying parts of paddocks towards the east. Rising salinity is an issue in heavily cleared, low-lying areas. Occasional dams present in paddocks support existing rural uses. Spectacular waterfalls (including Wannon Falls and Nigretta Falls) have formed on the Wannon River, which flows through the southern part of the Character Area.



Land Use

Rolling and undulating land is predominantly used for sheep grazing, and occasionally cattle grazing. Crops and plantation forestry are more common on the flatter land to the north and east. Farmhouses and associated buildings are dotted throughout the Character Area, becoming less evident within the isolated areas between settlements.

OTHER IDENTIFIED VALUES

- Approximately 20km west of Hamilton, lie the two waterfalls of Nigretta and Wannon Falls. Nigretta Falls has excellent viewing areas, river walks, barbeque facilities, picnic tables and toilets. A viewing platform at the Wannon Falls offer spectacular views and a rotunda features interpretative signage for visitors.
- The region is a primary source of hardwood timber production in Victoria.
- Highly endangered flora and fauna of the grassy woodlands is retained within the roadside verges and on remnant patches within private property.

SETTLEMENTS

The townships of Wannon and Coleraine are both situated on the Glenelg Highway, which forms the southern edge of the study area. To the north, the small township of Balmoral is located in what is a relatively isolated area. The Character Area also contains a number of rural localities including Englefield, Vasey, Gatum, Gringegalga, Brit Brit, Pigeon Ponds, Konongawootong, Melville Forest and Coojar.

PATTERN OF VIEWING

The Rolling Tablelands Character Area offers a wide variety of viewing experiences, alternating between enclosed forested valleys to cleared hilltops affording long-range views to the distant Grampians Ranges on the horizon. Coleraine-Balmoral Road and Natimuk-Hamilton Road provide the main viewing corridors within this Character Area. These roads do not form part of a key touring route and have a predominantly local viewing audience. Roads that run in an easterly direction towards the Grampians Ranges offer spectacular views across productive pastoral land to the ranges silhouetted on the horizon.

LANDSCAPE CHANGE

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- Planting of indigenous vegetation to improve native ecology, waterways and soil conditions, and reduce the impact of erosion.
- Plantation forestry will experience ongoing cycles of change, from the planting of young trees to cleared paddocks once timber has been harvested.

Development trends and pressures known or likely to occur in the Character Area include:

- More intensive farming practices including plantation forestry
- Increased residential settlement, and 'lifestyle' living, including pressure for subdivision of larger lots into smaller lots and hobby farms

SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE

Threats:

- Visual clutter within the natural landscape
- Removal or loss of remnant vegetation
- Sheds and farming infrastructure located close to the roadside, dominating views to the ranges
- Buildings or infrastructure located on ridge lines or exposed hillsides
- Buildings or structures that are highly visible from the roadside or that lack vegetation screening
- Development sprawl occurring from townships
- Smaller lots, hobby farms and project housing styles
- Invasive non-indigenous flora and fauna

- Timber plantations immediately adjacent to the roadside that create a 'tunnel' effect and block long distance views to the ranges
- Dam embankments located on roadsides
- Intense quarrying activity
- Views to wind turbines that are not well located within the landscape
- Fire

EXISTING POLICIES

The following State and Local Government policies currently control landscape change in the Rolling Tablelands Character Area:

- The State Planning Policy Framework discusses open space planning and management in Clause 11, Settlement, with strategies that include protecting large regional parks and significant conservation areas, and protecting sites and features of high scientific nature conservation, biodiversity, heritage, geological or landscape value.
- The Grampians are noted as an environmentally sensitive area with significant recreational value in Clause 12, Environment and Landscape Values, which also includes the objective *“to protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments”*.
- Clause 15, Built Environment & Heritage, contains urban design principles to achieve outcomes that contribute positively to the urban character. These state that landmarks, views and vistas should be protected and enhanced by new development, and that it should respond to the underlying landscape character and heritage values.
- The Local Planning Policy Framework of the Southern Grampians Shire Planning Scheme recognises the significance and high scenic value of the landscapes of the Grampians and surrounding areas.
- Clause 21.04-7 of Council’s MSS, The Grampians, specifically notes the cultural and environmental significance of the Grampians to the nation, reflected by the creation of the Grampians National Park in 1984. It also notes the important contribution the Grampians make to the tourism economy of the Shire. The need for a consistent, regional approach to the management of the visual or environmental impacts of land use and development around the Grampians is highlighted.
- Landscape Environment and Protection Policy (Clause 22.01-3) is a key direction for the SGSLA study and applies to the whole Shire. It aims to protect the important landscape features of the Shire, including the Red Gums, volcanic peaks and other geological features, rivers and waterfalls, the Grampians and the cultural landscape of farming. It also aims to minimise the impact of townships and buildings in the landscape or upon environmental values.
- The majority of the Rolling Tablelands Character Area falls within the Farming Zone (FZ) which provides for agricultural land uses. It also encourages sustainable land management practices and protection of the natural resources and biodiversity of the area.
- The Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) relates to land of high conservation value that is subject to public land management, such as national parks, and aims to protect and conserve these areas. Within the Rolling Tablelands Character Area the PCRZ applies to the Black Swamp, the Glenelg State Forest (between Rocklands Reservoir and Balmoral), the Dundas Range Reserve, the Nigretta Falls and areas alongside the Wannon River.
- Other zonings within this Character Area apply to confined localities: the Public Park and Recreation Zone, which applies to open spaces within Balmoral; the Low Density Residential Zone, which applies to land at the edge of Balmoral; and the Township Zone, which applies to the settled areas of Balmoral and Cavendish.

- The Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) has been introduced to five discreet areas of identified landscape value within the study area, most of which are located within the Rolling Tablelands Character Area:
 - SLO1: Coleraine Landscape Area
 - SLO3: Nigretta Falls Reserve
 - SLO4: Wannon Falls Reserve
 - SLO5: Koroite Homestead, Buvelot Tree and Waterpool
- The Heritage Overlay has been applied to numerous sites and several precincts within the Shire, most of which were identified in the Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, 2004, and introduced via Amendment C6 in January, 2011. Several heritage sites are located within the Rolling Tablelands Character Area.
- The Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, 2004, also lists six broad landscape areas as having a high degree of cultural significance and recommended they be investigated for statutory protection. Within this Character Area are the Wannon River and its tributaries, and the Wannon and Nigretta Falls.
- The Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO) is applied in this Character Area to areas of heavy vegetation. This includes the land around the Dundas Range Reserve and Glenelg State Forest. The fuel reduction requirements of this overlay may in some instances have an impact upon landscape character.
- The Land Subject (LSIO) to Inundation Overlay applies to land alongside the Glenelg River. This overlay requires consideration of the impact that development may have on the health of any adjoining rivers, wetlands, environmental flows and water quality, which may serve to also protect elements of landscape character.
- State government and Council policies aim to encourage timber production in suitable locations, provided it does not impact upon areas of historic, cultural or landscape significance. Clause 52.18, Timber Production, stipulates that large scale timber production activities must comply with the State Government's *Code of Practice for Timber Production 2007*. The Code requires all timber production operations to demonstrate that no adverse visual impacts upon sensitive landscapes will occur.
- Native vegetation management is addressed through the Planning Scheme and State Government policy. Under Clause 52.17, Native Vegetation, a permit is required for removal of native vegetation on sites greater than 0.4 hectares in most instances, unless exemptions apply such as those relating to safety or infrastructure provision.
- Council's MSS notes the significance of roadside vegetation as a part of the Shire's tourism value and includes a strategy to retain and protect roadside vegetation.
- Council's MSS notes the significance of roadside vegetation as a part of the Shire's tourism value and includes a strategy to retain and protect roadside vegetation. Detailed assessments of roadside vegetation throughout the Shire has been undertaken in order to manage and conserve vegetation of significance.
- The siting and design of wind farms and timber plantations are also important considerations, addressed through State government policies and guidelines.

FUTURE CHARACTER DIRECTIONS

The Rolling Tablelands Character Area should remain a productive agricultural landscape that is predominantly rural in character. Character and diversity will be maintained by encouraging the continuation of agricultural and grazing activities, while improving vegetation linkages by encouraging the planting of indigenous and/or native shelter belts and revegetation works along watercourse and roadsides. The area will retain its scenic, rural aspect with views to distant ranges a key feature when viewed from roads and other publicly accessible vantage points. This will be achieved through the careful siting of development, and avoiding siting structures in highly visible locations such as at roadsides, on hilltops and along ridgelines. Environmental issues associated with land clearing such as erosion and rising salinity will be mitigated through further revegetation works.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- *To protect and enhance remnant indigenous vegetation as an important character element.*
- *To protect the scenic backdrop created by the Grampians Ranges National Park.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of buildings and structures within the natural landscape.*
- *To maintain an overall sense of spaciousness within the landscape.*
- *To recognise the ongoing agricultural use of the land as an important character element.*
- *To ensure buildings and structures demonstrate a high standard of design and respond to the character of the surrounding environment.*
- *To incorporate best practice environmental sustainability principles.*



CHARACTER AREA 3
VOLCANIC AGRICULTURAL

KEY FEATURES

The Volcanic Agricultural Character Area is a highly modified landscape that is used intensively for rural and agricultural practices. The area is characterised by large expanses of flat plains, ‘big skies’, cropping and grazing activity, long, straight roads and panoramic views. Another feature of the landscape is the scattered basalt rocks as a result of volcanic activity, and the use of these rocks in dry stone walls at the edges of paddocks, including adjacent to main roads. The absence of scattered River Red Gums in paddocks and along roadsides creates a distinctly different character to that of the areas to the north and north-west. Residences are generally set back from the road frontage and sited within patches of vegetation, whilst agricultural infrastructure such as sheds, water tanks and machinery, is scattered throughout the open landscape. Large linear exotic shelterbelt planting and post and wire fencing is common along property boundaries, further exacerbating the modified nature of the landscape. The Grampians Ranges form an ever-present backdrop to the north and volcanic cones are visible to the south.



LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Landform

The volcanic activity that has played a large part in the formation of this landscape means the land is quite young (at around 6,000 years) in comparison to the nearby Grampians Ranges. Topography is generally flat (such as the Doling Doling Plain) to slightly undulating. Volcanic cones to the south, including Mt Rouse, are occasionally visible in the distance and some paddocks feature scattered basalt rocks on hilly rises as a result of the volcanic activity.

Vegetation

There is very little native vegetation remaining in this character area with only occasional clumps remaining throughout predominantly cleared paddocks. Exotic pine or cypress shelterbelts are common along roadsides, lining the edges of paddocks and surrounding homesteads. Many of these appear to be aging and beginning to lose their structural integrity. Long grasses grow in the roadside verges, including phalaris which is a particular threat to native grasses. Exotic trees are present within properties and gardens, and occasionally along roadsides.

Waterform

Lake Linlithgow and Lake Kennedy are significant volcanic waterforms to the south. At the time of survey, recent rains had filled these waterbodies, with long distance views being offered across Lake Linlithgow to the Grampians Ranges beyond. In addition to these, temporal waterbodies had also formed in low-lying parts of paddocks, contributing to a series of ephemeral wetlands, dotted across the landscape. Small creeks also meander through the paddocks, with the Wannan River to the north forming a more significant watercourse. Dams set within paddocks support the rural uses of the landscape.

Land Use

This pastoral landscape is dominated by the grazing of sheep and cattle, with a high presence of cropping.

Settlements



Penshurst and Glenthompson are small rural townships with populations of only several hundred residents. Development of both sits within defined town boundaries with little fragmentation of the surrounding farming land occurring. Rural localities within this area include Croxton East and Woodhouse.

Pattern of Viewing

The Grampians Ranges form an ever-present backdrop and are visible on the horizon across the cleared, flat land from most locations within this Character Area. Slight undulations in topography and shelterbelt planting occasionally block these views. The peaks of Mt Sturgeon and Mt Abrupt appear to increase in scale dramatically when travelling from the south. To the south, the volcanic cones of Mt Rouse and Mt Napier are visible in the distance.

OTHER IDENTIFIED VALUES

- This area sits within the Victorian Volcanic Plains (VVP) as identified through the IBRA classification system. The VVP is renowned for rich soils that been used intensively for agricultural purposes. A small percentage of the indigenous grassland remains highly endangered.
- Volcanic features are evident throughout this area, including the cone of Mt Rouse and scattered basalt rocks.
- Dry stone walls are a feature of this landscape due to the availability of basalt rocks. When the land was cleared they were used to construct the walls, which has resulted in the most impressive and intact network of dry stone walling in Australia. There is evidence that dry stone walls were being constructed as early as the 1840s, though most were erected after the Gold Rush and the introduction of the rabbit.
- The Hamilton Highway / Glenelg Highway is a major tourist route that runs through the southern section of western Victoria to the rural centre of Hamilton and beyond to Adelaide. Other key tourist routes include the north-south roads from the Great Ocean Road Region i.e. Warrnambool, to the Hamilton Highway and/or Penshurst.

LANDSCAPE CHANGE

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- More intensive farming practices
- Pressure for subdivision of larger lots will result in a significant change to the overall character of the landscape
- Increased tourism

Development trends and pressures known or likely to occur in the Character Area include:

- The highly modified nature of this landscape makes it vulnerable for wind farm development. It is located close to a region identified as a high wind-resource area.
- Population growth within the Shire may see increased residential settlement, and 'lifestyle' living, including pressure for subdivision of larger lots into smaller lots and hobby farms

SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE

Threats:

- Mining edges of volcanic features
- Further fragmentation of land and ribbon development
- Loss of dry stone walls
- Other types of fencing that is not visually -permeable
- Further plantings of exotic shelterbelts
- Loss of remnant vegetation and grasslands
- Invasion of exotic plant species

EXISTING POLICIES

The following State and Local Government policies currently address landscape change in the Character Area:

- The State Planning Policy Framework discusses open space planning and management in Clause 11, Settlement, with strategies that include protecting large regional parks and significant conservation areas, and protecting sites and features of high scientific nature conservation, biodiversity, heritage, geological or landscape value.

- The Grampians are noted as an environmentally sensitive area with significant recreational value in Clause 12, Environment and Landscape Values, which also includes the objective “to protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments”.
- Clause 15, Built Environment & Heritage, contains urban design principles to achieve outcomes that contribute positively to the urban character. These state that landmarks, views and vistas should be protected and enhanced by new development, and that it should respond to the underlying landscape character and heritage values.
- The Local Planning Policy Framework of the Southern Grampians Shire Planning Scheme recognises the significance and high scenic value of the landscapes of the Grampians and surrounding areas.
- Clause 21.04-7 of Council’s MSS, The Grampians, specifically notes the cultural and environmental significance of the Grampians to the nation, reflected by the creation of the Grampians National Park in 1984. It also notes the important contribution the Grampians make to the tourism economy of the Shire. The need for a consistent, regional approach to the management of the visual or environmental impacts of land use and development around the Grampians is highlighted.
- Landscape Environment and Protection Policy (Clause 22.01-3) is a key direction for the SGSLA study and applies to the whole Shire. It aims to protect the important landscape features of the Shire, including the Red Gums, volcanic peaks and other geological features, rivers and waterfalls, the Grampians and the cultural landscape of farming. It also aims to minimise the impact of townships and buildings in the landscape or upon environmental values.
- Most of the Volcanic Agricultural Character Area falls within the Farming Zone (FZ) which allows and encourages the use of land for agricultural purposes. In addition, this zone encourages sustainable land management practices and protection of the natural resources and biodiversity of the area.
- The Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) aims to provide open space for public recreation and to protect and conserve areas of significance. The volcanic lakes of Lake Linlithgow and Lake Kennedy and Lake Bullrush are included within the PPRZ.
- Other zonings within this Character Area apply to confined localities: the Public Conservation and Resource Zone, which applies to an area northeast of Hamilton; and the Township Zone, which applies to the settled area of Glenthompson.
- The Significant Landscape Overlay has been introduced to five discreet areas of identified landscape value within the study area, of which SLO2: Mount Rouse and Crater Reserve is located within the Volcanic Agricultural Character Area.
- The Environmental Significance Overlay has been applied to several areas around Hamilton that adjoin this Character Area with the specific purpose of protecting the habitat of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot.
- The Heritage Overlay has been applied to numerous sites and several precincts within the Shire, most of which were identified in the Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, 2004, and introduced via Amendment C6 in January, 2011. Several heritage sites are located within the Volcanic Agricultural Character Area.
- The Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, 2004, also lists six broad landscape areas as having a high degree of cultural significance and recommended they be investigated for statutory protection. Within this Character Area are the Wannon River and its tributaries, Mt Rouse and Penshurst and the Doling Doling Plain.
- The Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO) is applied to a small area south of Glenthompson of heavy vegetation cover. The fuel reduction requirements of this overlay may in some instances have an impact upon landscape character.

- State government and Council policies aim to encourage timber production in suitable locations, provided it does not impact upon areas of historic, cultural or landscape significance. Clause 52.18, Timber Production, stipulates that large scale timber production activities must comply with the State Government's Code of Practice for Timber Production 2007. The Code requires all timber production operations to demonstrate that no adverse visual impacts upon sensitive landscapes will occur.
- Native vegetation management is addressed through the Planning Scheme and State Government policy. Under Clause 52.17, Native Vegetation, a permit is required for removal of native vegetation on sites greater than 0.4 hectares in most instances, unless exemptions apply such as those relating to safety or infrastructure provision.
- Council's MSS notes the significance of roadside vegetation as a part of the Shire's tourism value and includes a strategy to retain and protect roadside vegetation. Detailed assessments of roadside vegetation throughout the Shire has been undertaken in order to manage and conserve vegetation of significance.
- The siting and design of wind farms and timber plantations are also important considerations, addressed through State government policies and guidelines.

FUTURE CHARACTER DIRECTIONS

Large scale productive agricultural land will continue to dominate and make a positive contribution to the landscape of the Volcanic Agricultural Character Area. The continuation of agricultural and grazing activities will be encouraged, while improving native vegetation linkages through plantings in paddocks and along property boundaries and watercourses. The pastures will continue to be characterised by a sense of openness, maintained by siting built form back from roads or integrating with existing vegetation where it occurs. Any new buildings and structures should be carefully designed and sited to avoid intrusion of views across the open landscape towards the Grampians Ranges. Ribbon development of residences along roads and the division of lots into smaller farms or subdivisions should be avoided.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- *To protect and enhance remnant indigenous vegetation as an important character element.*
- *To protect the scenic backdrop created by the Grampians Ranges National Park.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of buildings and structures within the natural landscape.*
- *To maintain an overall sense of spaciousness within the landscape.*
- *To recognise the ongoing agricultural use of the land as an important character element.*
- *To ensure buildings and structures demonstrate a high standard of design and respond to the character of the surrounding environment.*
- *To incorporate best practice environmental sustainability principles.*

CHANGE IN THE LANDSCAPE

Landscape character is a product of, and is affected by, changes that occur within the landscape over time. Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the character areas, development trends and pressures, and the sensitivity to change (including threats) of the landscapes have all been documented in the preceding Character Area Analysis Papers.

Some types of change are detrimental to both the character and what residents and visitors expect or desire for the future of that landscape, such as a large industrial development within a significant, scenic vista, for example. Other changes contribute to the character of landscape through variations to patterns and colours in natural and agricultural landscapes across seasons. Other changes still, are the physical exhibition of community desires for a different type of landscape (e.g. revegetation of degraded sites).

As landscapes are a changing entity, the aim of this study is to manage the rate, scale and type of landscape change, and to ensure that decisions relating to landscape change are made sensitively. In summary, the change elements that are considered relevant for analysis in this study include anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape resulting from:

- Existing land use activity (e.g. evolving agricultural practices, seasonal variations in agriculture, harvesting of established forestry plantations, the development of structures associated with farming, more intensive agriculture, removal or loss of remnant vegetation, quarrying activities etc.);
- Landscape improvement (e.g. revegetation of degraded river valleys);
- Development pattern (e.g. expansion of townships, increased rural residential living);
- Infrastructure development (e.g. tourism, wind energy, telecommunications infrastructure etc.);
- Natural processes (e.g. impacts associated with major storm events such as land slip, rising salinity, unplanned wildfire etc.); and,

- Existing state / local government policies (e.g. constraints on certain types of development; policies for encouraging change, release of land for development, approval of wind turbines etc.).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS STUDY

Known development pressures and the relative sensitivity of rural landscapes to these and other changes are essential factors contributing to the identification of priority areas for additional controls. Where there are changes or pressures that negatively affect landscape character or significance, there is the expectation that there will be some control or management, either indirectly or directly, through the planning system.

Future character directions (refer to Character Area Analysis Papers 1, 2 and 3), provide a basis from which to manage the rate and scale of landscape change and, along with the landscape management objectives (and guidelines that follow), are central to the development of planning scheme provisions.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Following on from the Landscape Management Objectives that have been prepared for each Character Area (and contained in the Character Area Analysis Papers) a set of detailed design guidelines and strategies have been prepared for managing landscape change across the study area.

These Landscape Management Guidelines will form the basis of the 'decision guidelines' in any proposed planning scheme overlay schedule, and can be incorporated into local policy to help in determining planning permit applications

VEGETATION

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
<p>To protect and enhance remnant indigenous and/or native vegetation as an important character element, especially remnant River Red Gums.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where practical, protect and rehabilitate significant stands of remnant indigenous and/or native vegetation, particularly at roadsides, throughout paddocks, and along river and creek corridors, subject to considerations such as farming requirements, fire protection and safety. ▪ Encourage farmers to protect and manage River Red Gums by fencing around old trees, trimming diseased or shattered branches, leaving dead trees standing for wildlife habitat (where practical), and planting new trees, particularly in bare paddocks. ▪ Minimise indigenous and/or native vegetation removal in new development, particularly remnant River Red Gums. ▪ Where vegetation loss cannot be avoided, balance the loss of vegetation with rehabilitation on the site or nearby areas, and replace any native or indigenous trees lost with indigenous trees that will grow to a similar size. ▪ Screen buildings, structures and large areas of hard surfaces with appropriately scaled indigenous and/or native vegetation that is appropriate to the landscape character of the area. ▪ Consider the existing landscape character of the area as a guide to the selection of vegetation and the layout of private gardens. ▪ Reinforce vegetative linkages to natural features such as the Grampians Ranges National Park and existing river and creek environs. ▪ Encourage the removal of environmental weeds and their replacement with local native and indigenous species. ▪ Encourage the planting of native shelterbelts, as opposed to exotic, adjacent to identified significant viewing corridors. 	<p><i>Loss of significant stands of vegetation, particularly remnant River Red Gums</i></p> <p><i>Ad hoc clearing and removal of vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>Development which requires permanent clearing of vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>Lack of landscaping and substantial vegetation in new development.</i></p> <p><i>Landscaping that provides little connection to the surrounding natural environment and existing landscape character.</i></p> <p><i>Hard surfaces and hard edges in landscaping.</i></p> <p><i>Continuous spreading / planting of environmental weeds.</i></p> <p><i>Degradation of significant flora.</i></p> <p><i>Exotic shelterbelts adjacent to identified viewing corridors.</i></p>

PLANTATION FORESTRY

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
<p>To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantations that protects the character and viewing of the Grampians and surrounds landscape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage agro forestry (integration of forestry trees with grazing stock or other crops) as an alternative to tree plantations in areas of identified landscape significance. ▪ Strongly discourage plantations in the foreground of views to the Grampians Ranges along identified significant viewing corridors. ▪ Soften the boundaries of plantations using sympathetic boundary lines (i.e. not incongruous to the surrounding landscape), gradual changes in density or age class, or with use of a species of different form, colour and texture. ▪ Where possible, ensure that plantation design follows existing landscape lines such as gullies, spurs, ridges, other contour lines, tree lines, creek lines etc., and avoids lines that are incongruous to the surrounding landscape e.g. property or fence lines that are geometric in nature rather than free flowing. ▪ Minimise the visual impact of plantations by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Creating small, curvilinear coupes that blend with the landscape. – Avoiding geometrically shaped harvest areas that contrast with the natural forms and lines of the landscape. – Sequencing operations over time. – Avoiding harvest areas that breach the skyline in middle or background views. – Maintaining visual permeability through an open or clumped planting density, or non-uniform thinning technique. ▪ Ensure that proposed timber plantations are accurately depicted and executed through a 'Timber Management Plan' as required within the Code of Practice for Timber Production. 	<p><i>Plantation forestry that is solid at the roadside and blocks outviews, particularly those from identified significant viewing corridors.</i></p> <p><i>Plantations in prominent locations that will create visual scars with periodic harvesting.</i></p> <p><i>Loss of scenic outviews from roads and lookouts.</i></p> <p><i>Plantation design that is incongruous to the surrounding landscape.</i></p>

VIEWS & VISTAS

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
<p>To protect the scenic backdrop created by the Grampians Ranges National Park.</p> <p>To protect and enhance identified significant views.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development should be avoided in the foreground (up to 500 metres from the viewing location) of views of the Grampians Ranges, particularly identified significant views, or designed and sited to retain the character and scenic qualities of the views from that location. ▪ Buildings, structures and other development should be set back from identified viewing corridors, and designed and sited to minimise visual intrusion (e.g. low building heights, minimal building footprints, appropriate colours and materials to the setting, and integration with vegetation). ▪ Consider the cumulative impact of developments visible from identified significant viewing corridors, other roads and key viewing locations, on the character and views of the surrounding landscapes. ▪ Design vegetation planting and regeneration works to retain views towards the Grampians Ranges National Park where possible. 	<p><i>Unsympathetic / intrusive buildings and structures that obscure prominent views.</i></p> <p><i>Conspicuous or incongruous (out of place) buildings, structures or infrastructure visible in the foreground of views to the Grampians.</i></p> <p><i>Vegetation that disrupts prominent views towards the Grampians National Park.</i></p>

BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES: SITING

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
<p>To minimise the visual impact of buildings and structures on the natural landscape.</p> <p>To maintain an overall sense of spaciousness within the landscape.</p> <p>To recognise the ongoing agricultural use of the land as an important character element.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that buildings, structures and other infrastructure are sited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Within existing clusters of buildings where possible. – Away from visually prominent locations such as ridge lines and hill faces. – Away from landscape features such as river and creek corridors. – Among established vegetation and/or screened with substantial landscaping of locally appropriate species. – To follow the contours and/or natural form of the landscape. – To minimise visibility from identified significant viewing corridors and other main roads. ▪ Where development cannot be avoided on prominent hill faces or in steep locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Site development in the lower one third of the visible slope, wherever possible. – Integrate buildings and structures with existing vegetation, and/or establish settings of indigenous and/or native vegetation. – Design buildings to follow the contours or step down the slope to minimise earthworks. – Articulate buildings into separate elements, and avoid visually dominant elevations. ▪ In open rural areas, ensure that buildings and structures are set back sufficient distances from roads to ensure minimal visual intrusion. ▪ Prevent ribbon development along identified significant viewing corridors and other main roads, including the outskirts of settlements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Minimise the number and floor area of storage areas, outbuildings and ancillary structures, wherever possible. 	<p><i>Buildings and structures that are visually dominant or located in prominent locations.</i></p> <p><i>Buildings and structures that break the ridgeline silhouette.</i></p> <p><i>Development of residences and other buildings and structures at the roadside.</i></p> <p><i>Buildings and structures that impact on the character and environmental quality of watercourses.</i></p> <p><i>Buildings and structures that do not have sufficient vegetative screening.</i></p> <p><i>Buildings that do not follow the natural contours of the site, and require excessive cut and fill.</i></p> <p><i>Conspicuous or intrusive developments on prominent hill faces.</i></p> <p><i>Numerous storage areas / outbuildings on a site.</i></p> <p><i>Scattering of buildings and structures across a site.</i></p> <p><i>Visual clutter.</i></p> <p><i>Buildings and structures that protrude above the dominant tree height of the vegetated (or proposed vegetated) backdrop.</i></p>

PREFERRED



Set among vegetation, and below ridgeline and predominant tree canopy height.



Use of light coloured materials against skyline reduces distant visibility.



Typical farming structures and materials; not excessive building footprints or height.



Retention of vegetation; structure 'tucked in' to landscape and vegetation.

AVOID



Large expanses of light colours are highly visible against the dark vegetative backdrop; lack of vegetation between dwelling and the road; a lack of eaves adds to the incongruous appearance of the dwelling.



Light colours and large scale of the building are highly visible against the landscape backdrop.



Use of bold colours and a lack of vegetative screening increases the dominance of built form in the landscape.



Large 'boxy' structure on the skyline and beyond the prevailing tree canopy height is highly visible.

BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES: DESIGN

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
<p>To ensure buildings and structures demonstrate a high standard of design and respond to the character and significance of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>To incorporate best practice environmental sustainability principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that the design and external appearance of buildings and structures complement the surrounding landscape by: ▪ Using simple, pared-back building forms and design detailing, with consideration of the Australian rural architectural vernacular. ▪ Utilising colours and finishes that best immerse the building within the landscape and minimise contrast with the surrounds (such as muted colours and matte finishes, or corrugated iron or timber that will weather over time). ▪ Using a mix of contemporary and traditional rural materials, textures and finishes including timber, stone, brick and corrugated iron. ▪ Making use of building materials with minimal environmental impact and encouraging the use of recycled materials where possible. ▪ Utilising materials and finishes that reduce distant visibility (e.g. darker colours on hill slopes, and lighter colours on sky lines). ▪ Ensure that development does not visually overwhelm the landscape setting by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Designing building and structures of a scale that does not dominate the surroundings. – Achieving a minimal building footprint, and ensuring that adequate space is available on the site for the retention of existing vegetation and/or new landscaping. – Using building forms and heights that sit beneath the existing or future tree canopy height. – Utilise open style fencing that is not visually obtrusive and is traditionally used in rural areas, such as post and wire or post and rail fencing. ▪ Incorporate best practice environmental sustainability principles into the design and construction of all new buildings. 	<p><i>Buildings or structures that do not harmonise with the character of the surrounding natural / rural environment.</i></p> <p><i>Ad hoc or large scale urban development outside of settlements.</i></p> <p><i>Large, bulky building masses / footprints that are conspicuous elements within the spacious landscape setting.</i></p> <p><i>Sheer, visually dominant elevations.</i></p> <p><i>Mock historical style buildings with excessive use of 'reproduction' or decorative detailing.</i></p> <p><i>Highly colourful materials and finishes.</i></p> <p><i>Building design that has little or no regard to environmentally sustainable design practices, such as residential buildings with excessive western or southern orientation.</i></p> <p><i>High, solid or non-permeable fencing.</i></p>

SIGNAGE & INFRASTRUCTURE

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
<p>To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly when visible from identified significant viewing corridors and viewing locations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group signage, including tourism signage, at particular locations to minimise visual impact, avoid signage clutter, and to maintain scenic outlooks. ▪ Infrastructure should be sited to avoid highly scenic locations, particularly identified significant views, and in the case of powerlines and other utility services, be underground wherever possible. ▪ Locate powerlines, access tracks and other infrastructure in areas of low visibility, preferably in previously cleared locations. ▪ Strongly discourage the loss of vegetation in locations that create visual scars visible from identified key viewing corridors and key viewing locations. ▪ Use materials and colours that minimise contrast with the surrounding landscape and distant visibility, and use vegetation to screen infrastructure from identified significant viewing corridors, viewing locations and other main roads. ▪ All new infrastructure development should be accompanied by a landscape plan utilising appropriate indigenous and/or native plant species and demonstrating how the affected area will be screened and remediated after development. ▪ Strongly discourage wind farms in the foreground of views to the Grampians Ranges, particularly along identified significant viewing corridors, and near significant viewing locations. ▪ Strongly discourage wind farms within the Grampians and surrounds significant landscape, particularly adjacent to the Grampians National Park boundaries. ▪ Where possible, encourage wind farm design that respects existing landscape lines such as spurs, ridges, other contour lines, tree lines, etc., and avoids geometric lines and densities that are incongruous to the surrounding landscape. ▪ Wind farm proponents should refer to the Australian Wind Energy Association and Australian Council of National Trusts National Assessment Framework for wind farms (2007) in determining the appropriate siting, design and process for their proposal. 	<p><i>Signage clutter in the landscape.</i></p> <p><i>Visually obtrusive and/or colourful signage in natural landscape settings.</i></p> <p><i>Highly visible infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>Infrastructure that dominates views, particularly from identified significant viewing corridors or locations.</i></p> <p><i>Landscape scarring as a result of vegetation removal.</i></p> <p><i>No consideration of siting, design, vegetation or remediation in association with the development of infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>Wind farms in the foreground of views to the Grampians Ranges.</i></p> <p><i>Wind farms within the Grampians and surrounds significant landscape.</i></p>

SETTLEMENTS

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
To contain existing settlements and prevent their unchecked expansion into the surrounding landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that settlements maintain their individual character and physical distance from each other. Ensure settlements have a definite visual edge, delineating the boundary between urban development and the natural / rural landscape beyond. Carefully site buildings and structures at settlement edges to integrate with existing topography and vegetation. Ensure that views to the Grampians from the public realm within townships are not compromised by the inappropriate siting and/or design of new development. 	<p><i>Development 'clutter' at the edges to settlements.</i></p> <p><i>The expansion of rural residential development into the landscape.</i></p> <p><i>Ribbon development between settlements.</i></p> <p><i>Suburban style residential development, with large areas of hard paving, in the rural environment.</i></p> <p><i>Lack of vegetation in rural residential areas.</i></p>

CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES

OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
<p>To protect and respect the cultural heritage values of the Grampians and surrounds landscape.</p> <p>To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Grampians and surrounds landscape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations. Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value. Respect the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations to avoid impacts on places, objects or landscapes that have Aboriginal heritage value. 	<p><i>Loss of cultural heritage values associated with the landscape.</i></p> <p><i>No regard for the cultural heritage values of the landscape in new development.</i></p>

3

LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE



INTRODUCTION

Landscapes and landscape elements that were identified as having some level of significance during Stage 2 of the project were investigated in further detail in order to determine and justify their significance (and level of significance) within the context of the entire study area, identify potential threats to the valued characteristics of the landscape and to determine an appropriate level of additional control (if required).

These landscapes and landscape elements are shown on the *Significance Investigation Areas Map* (Figure 4) on the following page, and comprise of:

CHARACTER AREA 1: GRAMPIANS (GARIWERD) AND SURROUNDS

This area is a large landscape covering the whole of Character Area 1, plus a small area north of Glenthompson / the Glenelg Highway.

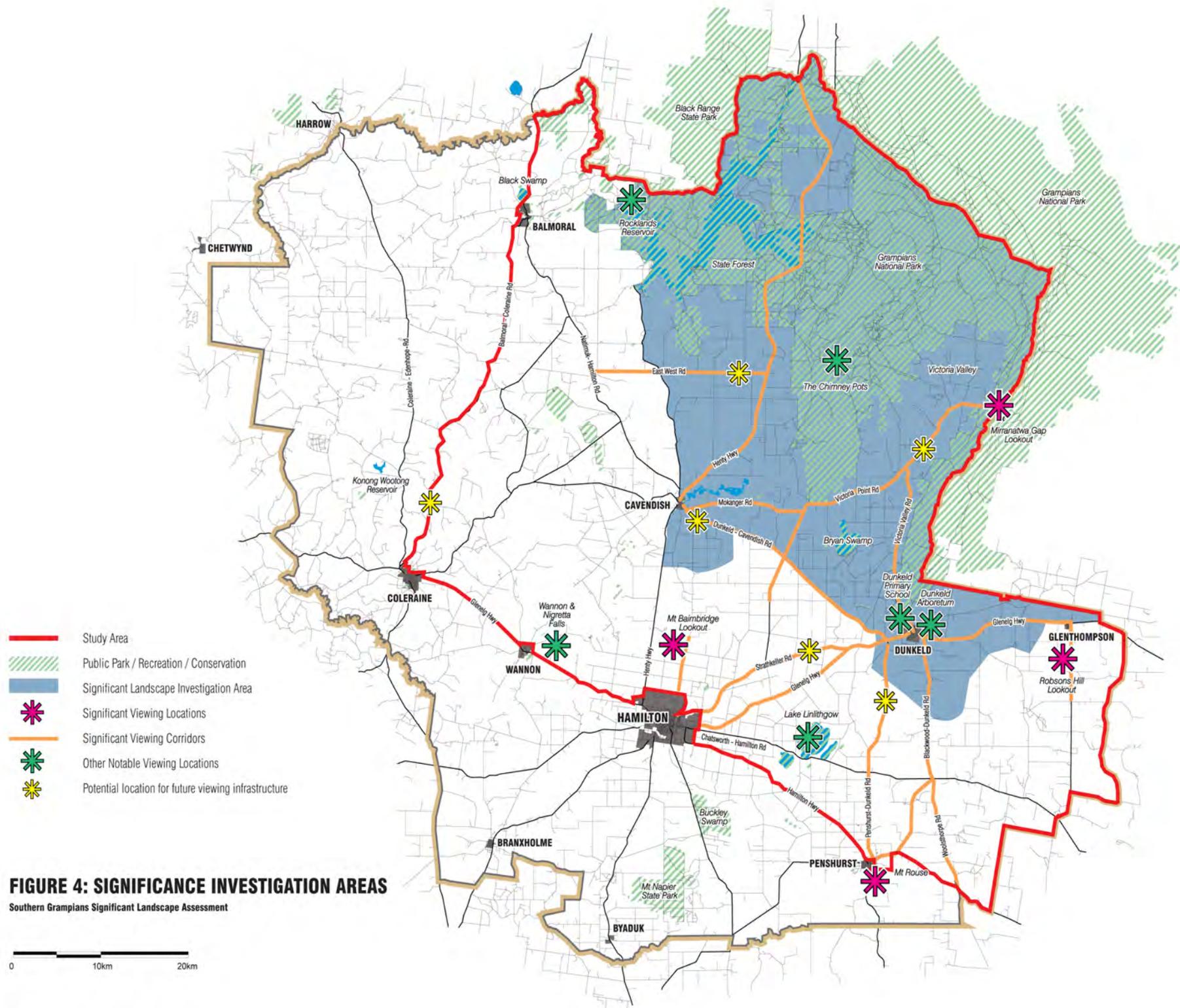
It was determined that the remnant River Red Gums are an important contributor to the significance of this area, and have therefore been separately assessed for their contribution to the significance of this landscape.

SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

Significant views within the study area that were further assessed include:

- Significant viewing locations (formalised viewing points)
- Significant viewing corridors
- Other notable views

A detailed analysis of these landscapes and landscape elements follows.



- Study Area
- ▨ Public Park / Recreation / Conservation
- Significant Landscape Investigation Area
- ✱ Significant Viewing Locations
- Significant Viewing Corridors
- ✱ Other Notable Viewing Locations
- ✱ Potential location for future viewing infrastructure

FIGURE 4: SIGNIFICANCE INVESTIGATION AREAS
Southern Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment

0 10km 20km

CHARACTER AREA 1

WHAT MAKES A LANDSCAPE VISUALLY SIGNIFICANT?

A single criterion has been used to assess whether a landscape is visually significant for the purposes of this study:

The landscape is significant for its visual qualities, including *landform features, views, edges or contrasts*, and for its predominantly *natural or undeveloped character*, in which development is absent or clearly subordinate to natural landscape characteristics.

Visual significance is determined with reference to the 'landscape components' referred to in the criterion listed above: landform features; views; edges or contrasts; and natural or undeveloped character. These are rated as having moderate, high or exceptional visual qualities.

This rating is further extrapolated to 'moderate' significance being the equivalent of local significance; 'high' equating to regional significance; and 'exceptional' being the equivalent of state significance or higher (e.g. National significance).

This is the same criterion adopted in the State Government's Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study (2006), and has underpinned the successful implementation of the Significant Landscape Overlay across numerous coastal and other municipalities since.

COMPONENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 'landscape components' referred to in the criterion are defined as follows:

Landform feature

A topographical feature or landmark such as a headland or a volcanic cone that provides contrast with the surrounding landscape.

Views

The viewpoint is open and publicly accessible; the view is a panorama, a broad prospect, or a linear view to a defined object or group of objects; and it offers a cohesive viewing experience.

Edges or Contrasts

The boundary between two landscape elements e.g. the edge of a forest or a forest clearing; the boundary between vegetation types or different landform types; the intersection between a range of hills and a plain; an incised valley.

Natural or Undeveloped Character

A landscape that is devoid of any development or a landscape in which its natural characteristics visually predominate over any development that may be present.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Landscape assessment studies should seek to find and integrate other sources for understanding landscape value, and so levels of significance are further confirmed by consideration of ‘supporting evidence’ as outlined below. Supporting evidence comprises other elements that support, but do not determine in their own right, a landscape’s visual significance. The supporting evidence categories consist of:

Exemplar landscape

How representative is the landscape of a landscape character type?

Scarce landscape

How uncommon, rare or endangered is the landscape character type or area?

Iconic landscape

Is the landscape instantly recognisable as a place that represents the valued qualities of the rural landscape? Example sources: Artworks, tourism brochures, other publications etc.

Documented cultural / heritage value

Does the landscape have documented cultural / heritage value? Example sources: Local planning scheme Heritage Overlay, AAV register, Victorian Heritage Register, Register of the National Estate, National Trust Register etc.

Documented environmental value

Does the landscape have documented environmental value? Example sources: Local planning scheme Environmental Significance Overlay, Vegetation Protection Overlay etc.

Established social / community value

Does the landscape have established social / community value?

Visitor attraction

How important is the landscape as a visitor destination?

COMMUNITY OPINION

The views of members of the local community, community groups, agencies and others are also sought by various means during the study process (e.g. Steering Committee, Reference Group, community workshops, community photographic exercise, the project blog etc.). These opinions are considered in the following ways in relation to the visual significance of the landscape:

- The extent to which they support the identification of a landscape already provisionally identified by the study team as being significant, including the geographic extent of the area
- For the attention they draw to the possible significance of another landscape or feature not already identified by the study team
- For the reasons they provide to justify the designation of a landscape as visually significant; and
- For information they provide in relation to any of the supporting evidence categories, or any other information that could assist in determining the level of significance of a landscape.



Steering Committee Meeting 02: Mirranatwa Hall

COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHIC EXERCISE

The community photographic exercise was carried out in the early stages of the study. The purpose was to gain an insight into the local community's values in relation to scenery and landscapes, to understand which landscapes the local community believes are significant, and importantly, what makes them significant.

The photos that the participants were required to take responded to the following instructions:

- One photo of a feature, place or view that you think is significant, scenic or beautiful of the Grampians and surrounds
- One photo of a 'threat' to the landscape (or a feature, place or view that has been spoiled) within the Grampians and surrounds

Steering Committee members were also encouraged to take additional photos of landscapes representing their 'likes' and 'dislikes'.

A number of photos were received from the general community and Steering Committee members, but very few responded to the community photographic exercise instructions.

A selection of the photos received is illustrated on the following pages.



View of the Grampians from the Coleraine-Harrow Rd, at Konongwootong



Photo courtesy of David McLeod



The presence of the Grampians on the horizon



Henty Highway, Glenisla Blue Gum plantations parallel with road mounding (left)
Big Red Gums and Blue Gum plantation mounding (right)



Blue Gum Plantations block views of Grampians



Henty Highway, view with large Red Gums & early plantations



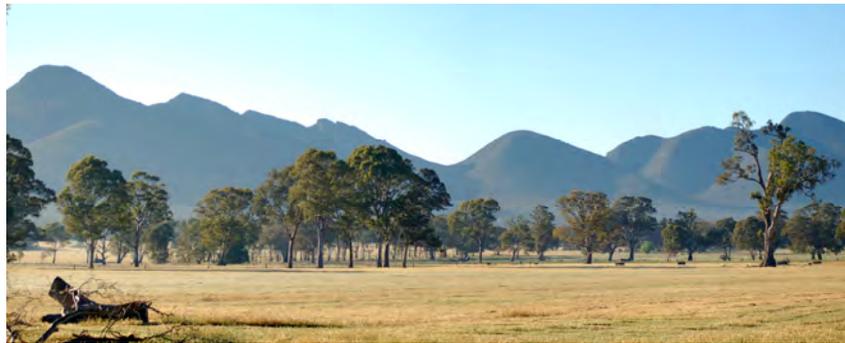
“View from Mount Rouse in fog: Timeless, peaceful, remote, reflective...”



“View from Mt Rouse shows immense shadow stretch across landscape. Unaltered views as in Von Guerard’s paintings of the area...”

SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

As previously explained, the entire landscape of Character Area 1: Grampians (Gariwerd) and Surrounds (plus a relatively small area north of the Glenelg Highway, north of Glenthompson) were identified as having some level of significance. In order to test and confirm this, a detailed analysis of the landscape against the criterion and supporting evidence categories follows.



COMPONENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT
<p>Landform feature</p> <p>A topographical feature or landmark such as a headland or a volcanic cone that provides contrast with the surrounding landscape.</p>	<p>The Grampians are a visually dramatic landform feature that comprises the southern-most arm of the Great Dividing Range. The jagged escarpments provide an extreme visual contrast with the surrounding pastoral landscape. The existence of a mountainous landscape that rises sharply from a relatively flat pastoral plain is an uncommon landform feature in Victoria.</p> <p>Rating: Exceptional visual qualities</p> <p>Threshold: State significance or higher</p>
<p>Views</p> <p>The viewpoint is open and publicly accessible; the view is a panorama, a broad prospect, or a linear view to a defined object or group of objects; and it offers a cohesive viewing experience.</p>	<p>Numerous views and viewing experiences are available both towards the Grampians, and from within the Grampians National Park. Numerous lookouts within the National Park provide stunning panoramic views, and the Grampians themselves provide a dramatic termination to numerous views and vistas from the surrounding landscape, including dramatic lookout points and scenic drives.</p> <p>Rating: Exceptional visual qualities</p> <p>Threshold: State significance or higher</p>

Edges or Contrasts

The boundary between two landscape elements e.g. the edge of a forest or a forest clearing; the boundary between vegetation types or different landform types; the intersection between a range of hills and a plain; an incised valley.

The flat topography of the pastoral land exacerbates the visual presence of Grampians Ranges that rise sharply from it, with the contrast between the two landscape elements not able to be more marked.

Also notable is the contrast between the landscape elements that make up the Grampians ranges themselves e.g. sweeping western slopes, craggy eastern peaks, massive sandstone cliffs, forests, water bodies, rocky outcrops and weather-sculptured rocks.

The existence of remnant stands of vegetation, particularly the River Red Gums, also provides a contrast with the pastoral landscape.

Rating: Exceptional visual qualities

Threshold: State significance or higher

Natural or Undeveloped Character

A landscape that is devoid of any development or a landscape in which its natural characteristics visually predominate over any development that may be present.

The Grampians National Park is largely devoid of development, with the exception of roads, tracks and tourism, or other, infrastructure. While there is a general absence of built form, the landscape surrounding the Grampians has been modified for use as pastoral land. However, the existence of remnant vegetation, particularly the River Red Gums, strengthens the natural character of the pastoral landscape.

Rating: Exceptional visual qualities

Threshold: State significance or higher

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE CRITERIA

ASSESSMENT

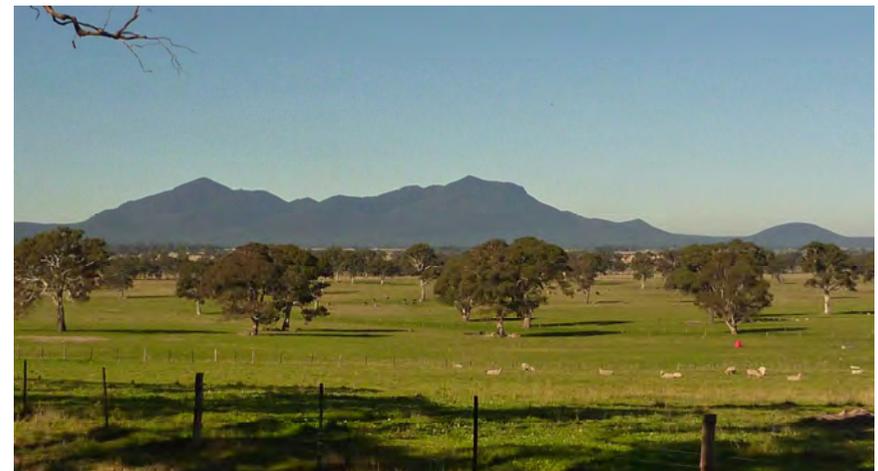
Exemplar landscape

How representative is the landscape of a landscape character type?

For the purposes of this study, the character areas that have been defined reflect their landscape character types. (In other studies covering whole municipalities, broad landscape character types are defined, and then ‘sub areas’ or character areas are determined within them.)

In this case, the Grampians (Gariwerd) and surrounds landscape is, by definition, wholly representative of its landscape character type.

Supporting threshold: State significance or higher



<p>Scarce landscape</p> <p>How uncommon, rare or endangered is the landscape character type or area?</p>	<p>In the context of Victoria, a mountainous landscape such as the Grampians that rises sharply from the relatively flat plains around it is a rare and uncommon feature. It is this stark contrast between the pastoral land and the Grampians themselves that results in the landscape being so often termed ‘dramatic’, and it is this and other aesthetic characteristics that evoke such strong emotional responses.</p> <p>Supporting threshold: State significance or higher</p>
<p>Iconic landscape</p> <p>Is the landscape instantly recognisable as a place that represents the valued qualities of the landscape character area? Example sources: Artworks, tourism brochures, other publications etc.</p>	<p>The Grampians are instantly recognisable and feature in numerous tourism websites and publications.</p> <p>A large number of artists have drawn inspiration from the Grampians and surrounds in a variety of media including painting, poetry, literature, photography and film e.g. Arthur Streeton, Arthur Boyd, Eugene von Guerard, Nicholas Chevalier, and Louis Buvelot, some of Australia’s most important and notable landscape painters.</p> <p>Supporting threshold: State significance or higher</p>

<p>Documented cultural / heritage value</p> <p>Does the landscape have documented cultural / heritage value? Example sources: Local planning scheme Heritage Overlay, AAV register, Victorian Heritage Register, National Heritage List (formerly the Register of the National Estate), National Trust Register etc.</p>	<p>Aboriginal occupation of the Grampians dates back over 20,000 years, and the area contains the majority of surviving Aboriginal rock art sites in south-east Australia, including Billimina (Glenisla shelter), Jananginj Njani (Camp of the Emu’s Foot), Manja (Cave of Hands), Larngibunja (Cave of Fishes), Ngamadjidj (Cave of Ghosts), and Gulgurn Manja (Flat Rock).</p> <p>Billimina Shelter has exceptionally high significance, with the single largest assemblage of Aboriginal art motifs in Victoria, and a total of some 2,000 motifs on a single panel. (Source: National Heritage List Schedule).</p> <p>Included in the National Heritage List.</p> <p>Included in the National Trust Register (Level: Regional).</p> <p>Included in the Victorian Heritage Register, along with numerous individual separate sites and places within the Grampians region.</p> <p>The Grampians are covered by the Heritage Overlay in adjacent municipalities.</p> <p>A number of landscapes in the Grampians region are identified in The Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study 2004, as ‘landscape areas of state significance’</p> <p>Supporting threshold: State significance or higher</p>
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Documented environmental value

Does the landscape have documented environmental value?

Example sources:

- Local planning scheme
- Environmental Significance Overlay, Vegetation Protection Overlay etc.

Established environmental values are well documented and contributed to the inclusion of the Grampians on the National Heritage List. The Grampians are noted as “an island of bushland in a largely cleared agricultural landscape.” (Source: National Heritage List).

The Grampians support over 975 native plant species, representing over one third of the total Victorian flora. This biodiversity is due to the wide variety of rock and soil types and environmental niches.

The variety of habitats available also supports at least 230 bird species, and a wide range of animals, reptiles, amphibians, native fish, spiders and butterflies.

Many threatened flora species (e.g. pincushion lily, southern pipewort) and threatened or vulnerable animals (e.g. red-tailed black cockatoo, smoky mouse etc.) are found in the Grampians.

The Grampians also display outstanding geological qualities, such as strata, igneous intrusions, faulting, and sedimentary structures such as cross-bedding of all scales, desiccation cracks and ripple marks.

Supporting threshold: State significance or higher

Established social / community value

Does the landscape have established social / community value?

The Grampians and surrounds are important to the local, state and national communities for their scenic landscape qualities, and established environmental and cultural heritage values. This is supported by their inclusion on the National Heritage List where it is noted that the landscape meets criterion (a) “the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia’s natural or cultural history.”

The surrounding landscape is also important to the local and Victorian communities as productive pastoral land.

Supporting threshold: State significance or higher



Visitor attraction

How important is the landscape as a visitor destination?

The Grampians are one of 11 tourism regions or attractions promoted by Tourism Victoria and Tourism Australia. Regional tourism bodies also exist to promote the area e.g. Grampians Tourism.

The Grampians and surrounding area forms part of the Great Southern Touring Route which also takes in the Great Ocean Road, Ballarat goldfields etc. and attracts high numbers of local, national and international visitors each year.

According to research provided to Grampians Tourism by Data Insights, there were 1.5 million visitors to the Grampians during the 09/10 financial year. (Source: IVS & NVS YE Jun 10, Tourism Research Australia.)

Supporting threshold: State significance or higher

POTENTIAL THREATS

- Loss of remnant vegetation, including ageing River Red Gums
- Invasive weeds and grasses such as phalaris
- Fragmentation of land, particularly surrounding townships
- Ribbon development
- Smaller lots, inappropriately located hobby farms
- Inappropriately designed buildings and structures, including dwellings that are poorly sited with no regard for the 'character' of the landscape, and non-permeable fencing (with the exception of dry stone walls)
- Built form located close to the roadsides, blocking outviews to the Grampians
- Built form and infrastructure located on ridge lines or prominent slopes (including communications towers in the Grampians themselves)
- Inappropriately sited timber plantations, particularly the 'scar' on the landscape when harvested
- Rising salinity and practices that exacerbate it
- Draining of wetlands and other waterbodies for agriculture
- 'Inappropriate' fire and landslip occurrences
- The issuing of exploratory licenses
- Transmission lines and telecommunications infrastructure
- Water harvesting and drainage



SCOPE FOR ADDITIONAL MANAGEMENT & PROTECTION

The protection of this landscape (or part thereof) with the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) is necessary and justifiable, given its exceptional visual qualities and classification as a landscape of State significance or higher. The visual landscape assessment, including consideration of supporting evidence would indicate that the Grampians Ranges themselves are in fact of National significance, with the surrounding pastoral land (when considered as a separate, but related, landscape element) of State significance.

The SLO would act as a ‘permit trigger’, and does not place a ban on development. Rather, it would include decision guidelines that would help the Council to make appropriate determinations on development that is proposed within this visually sensitive landscape.

The schedule (or ‘addendum’) to the SLO can also exempt some development from requiring a planning permit (e.g. farm buildings under a certain size etc.).

The SLO can also be used to recognise the remnant River Red Gums that are integral to the significance of this landscape, though it should be noted that the removal of native vegetation already requires a permit under Clause 52.17 of the planning scheme.

When the amendment documentation is drafted for the proposed SLO, the schedule would include a ‘statement of nature and key elements of landscape’, based on the assessment of its significance against the criterion and supporting evidence. The ‘decision guidelines’ in the SLO schedule would be based on the landscape management guidelines that have been prepared to cover the above ‘potential threats’ to the landscape.

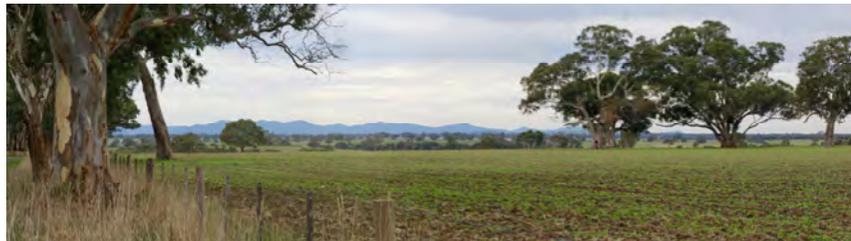
Adjacent municipalities have the SLO in place in the equivalent location, adjacent to the National Park. This provides further justification for its implementation through the Southern Grampians Planning Scheme.

REMNANT RIVER RED GUMS

HOW DO THE RIVER RED GUMS CONTRIBUTE TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LANDSCAPE?

Composition of Views

River Red Gums play a large role in ‘framing’ views, particularly as seen from the roadside. They are commonly found as foreground elements in photographs that feature the backdrop of the Grampian Ranges, and when present in enough numbers the cumulative effect of their density terminates middle ground views.



Visual Interest

Many specimens are over 450 year old and have developed gnarly, sculptural forms that offer aesthetic interest in the landscape.

Rarity

River Red Gums are one of the most widely distributed eucalypt species on the Australian continent. They are an iconic feature and create a marked character in the landscape that is dramatically different from areas where they are absent. Clearing of land since European settlement and a lack of regeneration has seen populations decline in many Victorian pastoral landscapes.



Tourism Value

River Red Gums play an integral role in supporting ecosystems that attract a large number of visitors to the region. Hollows and fallen branches provide valuable habitat for wildlife and leaf litter and other debris breaks down to form rich soils that in turn support a large variety of understory plants. Many visitors are drawn to the stunning beauty of the wildflower displays when these bloom in spring. The spreading canopies provide shelter at camp grounds and remnant stands in roadside reserves contribute to the aesthetic qualities of driving along tourist routes.

Community Support

These trees are highly significant to the community and contribute to the identity of the region, parts of which are often referred to as ‘Red Gum

Country'. Remnant specimens are indicative of the history of pastoral activity since European settlement, and they are valued for their aesthetic contributions to the landscape. Many landowners have a vested interest in maintaining and protecting remnants.

Environmental Value

The decline of woodland forests has left many stands of Red Gums in isolation scattered throughout paddocks. These provide important habitat links that allow for the migration of fauna across the agricultural landscape. This assists in encouraging gene flow between populations and increasing genetic diversity.

The root systems of the River Red Gums reach deep down to groundwater reserves and play a role in mitigating the effects of dry land salinity. They play a role in stabilising river banks, preventing erosion and excessive sediment run off which in turn maintains water quality in rivers and streams.

Native vegetation is protected in the Planning Scheme under Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation). This is in place to 'protect and conserve native vegetation to reduce the impact of land and water degradation and provide habitat for plants and animals'. A permit is already required under this clause to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead vegetation.

Cultural Heritage Value

Aboriginal cultural heritage is preserved in the large numbers of scar trees found within the region, where the bark has been stripped from the trees to make tools and implements. The trees provided shelter and food sources, and of greater significance is the practice of interring deceased family members into the hollows of the trees.

Remnant stands are a signifier of the pastoral history of the landscape, when the land was "improved" or cleared for grazing. Trees that remain scattered through paddocks survived clearing because they had irregular

forms that weren't suitable for timber, and were left to provide shade for livestock.



Image courtesy of Film Victoria

POTENTIAL THREATS:

- Continual decline of aging tree health / quantity of trees in senescence and lack of juvenile propagation.
- Compaction of root systems at base of tree from stock seeking shelter.
- Ringbarking of trees from stock rubbing on them.
- Loss of understory foliage and debris due to land clearing.
- Lopping of lower branches to allow cropping to base of tree.
- Lack of time and economic incentive for landowners to invest in planting and seeding of new trees.

SCOPE FOR ADDITIONAL MANAGEMENT & PROTECTION:

Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation currently provides protection for River Red Gums, as a permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation

(with some exceptions) on land of 0.4 hectare or greater not within a road reservation. This requirement includes the removal of dead vegetation.

In 2011 all the roadside vegetation within the Shire was surveyed, mapped and assessed (*Southern Grampians Roadside Vegetation Assessment, 2011*). Each roadside received a conservation score based on the RCAC (Roadside Conservation Advisory Committee) method, and a RCAC rating of very high, high, medium or low.

While outside the scope of this study, when considering the protection of River Red Gums on sites under 0.4 hectare, the Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) or the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) are the two most appropriate overlays. The *Decline of Our Veteran Red Gums* (2008) study recommends the ESO for their protection, and it is worth noting that while the VPO can require a permit to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation, the ESO can require a permit to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation, *including dead vegetation*.

(Additional source: Kelly, Tom. (2008) *Decline of Our Veteran Red Gums*, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority).

FARMING AND THE PROTECTION OF RIVER RED GUMS

While the contribution of the River Red Gums to the character and significance of the landscape is indisputable, the mandatory protection of these trees is not always possible or practical when farming the land. Some of the issues that farmers face in managing the River Red Gums include:

Dropped branches that interfere with farming equipment such as ploughs and seed drills, or puncture tyres. Farmers need to be able to clean these up, or they pose a safety risk.

Hollow logs that create lamb traps i.e. lambs go in and can't get out.

Fallen or sagging limbs on fences that need to be trimmed.

The collection of firewood from fallen limbs is a fairly widespread practice, with some farmers profiting from this as a small side business. Most would argue that this practice should continue.

Storm damaged limbs that pose a safety risk need to be trimmed, or may need to be trimmed to maintain tree health.

Small branches at eye level that may need pruning for safety reasons.

The CFA may assess some vegetation that is close to buildings as a fire hazard, and branches on burning trees (live or dead) may need to be cut to extinguish fire.

Any additional protection mechanisms that are considered for the River Red Gums should be introduced with the understanding that they should be balanced with the practical requirements of farming operations.

SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

SIGNIFICANT VIEWING LOCATIONS & SIGNIFICANT VIEWING CORRIDORS

What Makes a View Visually Significant?

Views occur over distance and through ‘view planes’, and comprise a foreground, middle-ground and background. The qualities or components of the foreground, middle-ground and background help to define what is significant about a view, and changes within those ‘planes’ will alter the qualities and characteristics of a view. Views are sensitive to changes within the natural and built environment of a landscape and are affected by weather variations that contribute to the changing ‘moods’ of the mountains and skiescapes.

Viewing distance is important in determining how change is perceived across a landscape. However, assigning specific distances to the ‘view planes’ that occur within a view is difficult, as the various planes are also defined according to the character of the viewed landscape i.e. the foreground of a view may terminate at a particular landform, as opposed to being defined by a distance in metres. Generally speaking however, the following view plane distances have been applied to this study:

Foreground: This zone begins at the viewer and extends to approximately 800m of the observer. Generally, the detail of the landscape is more pronounced within this view plane.

Middleground: Alterations in landscape within this zone (800m to 6.5km) are less distinctive.

Background: This view plane extends from the middleground (6.5km minimum between the observer and the area being viewed) to infinity. Shape may remain evident beyond 16km, especially if it is consistent with the surrounding landform. Beyond 16km, alterations in landscape character become obscure.

(Source: [http://brekenridgepeak6.com/document/DEIS/Chapter 3D Scenery/](http://brekenridgepeak6.com/document/DEIS/Chapter%203D%20Scenery/))

As part of the study, important viewpoints and viewsheds that occur within the study area have been identified. The study includes an assessment of which viewing locations (or viewing corridors) within the study area are the most significant and why, and what would detract from the significance of the views available at these locations.

There are many locations within the study area where stunning views are available, and while many viewing locations and corridors were identified, a view was only considered to be significant if it was considered to have a high number of viewers (publicly accessible 24 hours a day i.e. viewing location on public land), provided a variety of noteworthy viewing experiences (namely capturing the Grampians Ranges, given the focus of the brief for this study), and substantially met the significance criteria outlined on the table on the following page.

Views considered to be of some level of significance are shown on the *Significance Investigation Areas Map* (Figure 4) and a detailed analysis of these areas follows.

COMPONENTS OF SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

For the purposes of this study, it is considered that any or all of the following elements contribute to a view being significant.

Composition

The view is 'balanced', both horizontally and vertically – a 'picture postcard' view. The focal point of the view is centred, and elements in the foreground, middle-ground and background are 'equally weighted'. The view may be framed by elements to the viewer's left and right, and technically, such a view is defined as a 'vista'.

Visual Interest

The view contains a variety of contrasting elements that provide interest for the viewer. The view may also contain, or terminate at, a landmark or visual feature.

Rarity

The view is a 'one-off' or rare view and it, or a similar view, is not available nearby or elsewhere in the Study Area. The view itself may also contain a rare element that is not prevalent in other views from within the area.

Tourism Value

The view is popular with tourists and visitors to the area, and is a 'well known' or popular view of note within the area. The view may also be available from a key tourism location or iconic place.

Community Support

The view has been identified by the local community as significant, and is publicly accessible.

* These criteria were first developed in a project by Planisphere for Parks Victoria (Williamstown Foreshore Landscape and Visual Assessment, 2008).

SIGNIFICANT VIEWING LOCATION 01: MT ROUSE LOOKOUT

DESCRIPTION

The Mt Rouse Lookout is situated at the top of Mt Rouse; an extinct volcano that rises above the small township of Peshurst. At approximately 100m in elevation, it stands as a visually dominant element within the surrounding plains. Clear 360° views are available from the top, providing panoramic views across Peshurst and the adjoining ‘stony rises’ lava flows, to the surrounding peaks of Mount Napier and the Grampians Ranges. The top of Mt Rouse can be reached by vehicle, with a short walk up some stairs to the summit. Alternatively, pedestrian access is available from the township to the northern and western sides.



View from the top of Mt Rouse, looking north towards the Grampians Ranges

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT
<p>Composition</p> <p>The view is ‘balanced’, both horizontally and vertically – a ‘picture postcard’ view. The focal point of the view is centred, and elements in the foreground, middle-ground and background are ‘equally weighted’. The view may be framed by elements to the viewer’s left and right, and technically, such a view is defined as a ‘vista’.</p>	<p>360° views provide ‘picture postcard’ panoramic views across the lava plain and surrounding district. The Grampians Ranges rise up from the horizon, providing a visual balance between foreground and background.</p>
<p>Visual Interest</p> <p>The view contains a variety of contrasting elements that provide interest for the viewer. The view may also contain, or terminate at, a landmark or visual feature.</p>	<p>Views terminate at the jagged peaks of the Grampians Ranges on the horizon which provide a strong visual contrast with the surrounding flat pastoral landscape.</p>
<p>Rarity</p> <p>The view is a ‘one-off’ or rare view and it, or a similar view, is not available nearby or elsewhere in the Study Area. The view itself may also contain a rare element that is not prevalent in other views from within the area.</p>	<p>Mt Rouse provides wide open 360° views across the Shire at high elevation (100m), which is a rare occurrence within the study area. Outside of the study area, similar views are available from the top of nearby Mount Napier (150m), which forms the highest point on the Western District Plains of Victoria. The summit of Mount Napier however, can only be</p>

	accessed by foot or 4WD.
<p>Tourism Value</p> <p>The view is popular with tourists and visitors to the area, and is a 'well known' or popular view of note within the area. The view may also be available from a key tourism location or iconic place.</p>	<p>Mt Rouse is referred to within official touring maps and brochures for the Southern Grampians. Peshurst is located along the Great Southern Touring Route and the Melbourne to Adelaide Touring Route, thus has a high exposure to visitors. Situated at the base Mt Rouse in Peshurst is the Volcanoes Discovery Centre which provides an educational insight into the geology and history of volcanoes in Western Victoria. Views from the top of Mt Rouse provide the first clear views of the Grampians for tourists travelling from the south.</p>

<p>Community Support</p> <p>The view has been identified by the local community as significant, and is publicly accessible.</p>	<p>As part of consultation undertaken during the study process, Mt Rouse was unanimously identified by members of the local community as a significant viewing location within the study area. Local residents identified the Mt Rouse Lookout as a key location in which they would take visitors, given the stunning views and ease-of-access.</p>
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RATING: Exceptional visual qualities

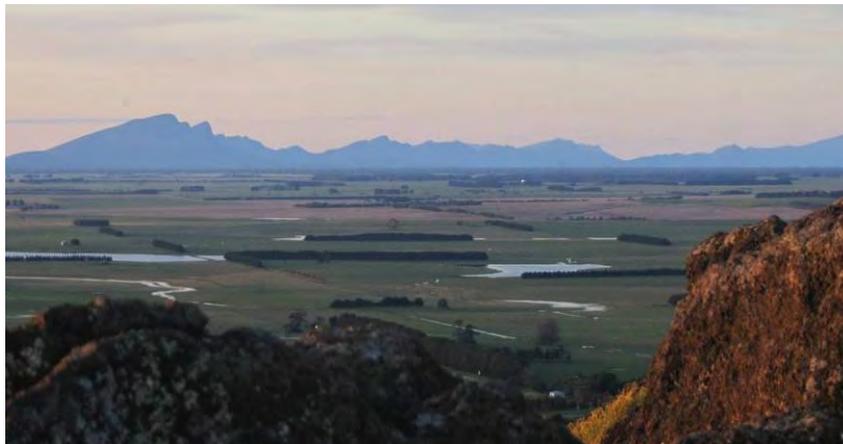
THRESHOLD: State significance or higher



Mt Rouse as viewed from Hamilton Road



Eugene von Guérard, one of Australia's great colonial landscape painters, drew much inspiration from the view from Mt Rouse. The painting above was completed in 1861 and was recently on display at the National Gallery of Victoria.



Current view from the top of Mt Rouse. Image courtesy of David McLeod. The photo depicts the extent of change to the landscape since the 1800s.

POTENTIAL THREATS

Potential threats to the significance of views to and from Mt Rouse include:

- Insensitive land uses/ buildings or infrastructure located at the immediate base and top of Mt Rouse
- Vegetation that conceals or impedes on available views out towards the Grampians Ranges
- Further telecommunications infrastructure sited in key viewsheds

SCOPE FOR ADDITIONAL CONTROL

Mt Rouse is zoned Public Conservation and Resource (PCRZ), the purpose of which is to protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values.

Mt Rouse and Crater Reserve is also covered by the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) in order to protect its *“appearance and presentation.”*

It is considered that the existing zoning and overlay provisions provide good protection of the landscape feature of Mt Rouse, and that additional overlay controls and policy inclusions for the landscape between Mt Rouse and the Grampians themselves would aid in the protection and management of the significant views.

The scoria quarry located on the north-east side of Mt Rouse is likely to remain in use in the immediate future.

SIGNIFICANT VIEWING LOCATION 02: MT BAIMBRIDGE LOOKOUT

DESCRIPTION

The Mt Baimbridge Lookout is a designated lookout point situated just north of Hamilton along Mt Baimbridge Road. The topographical high-point offers long range views across the surrounding pastoral landscape towards the Grampians Ranges, which rise up from the horizon.



Looking north-east from the Mt Baimbridge Lookout towards the Grampians Ranges



Looking west from the Mt Baimbridge Lookout towards Coleraine

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT
<p>Composition</p> <p>The view is ‘balanced’, both horizontally and vertically – a ‘picture postcard’ view. The focal point of the view is centred, and elements in the foreground, middle-ground and background are ‘equally weighted’. The view may be framed by elements to the viewer’s left and right, and technically, such a view is defined as a ‘vista’.</p>	<p>The Mt Baimbridge Lookout provides sweeping views across the flat pastoral landscape towards the Grampians Ranges. Various ‘tiers’ of colours are evident, afforded by cleared pastoral land in the foreground, a green ‘sea’ of vegetation in the middle-ground, and the distant blue hues of the Grampians Ranges on the horizon.</p>
<p>Visual Interest</p> <p>The view contains a variety of contrasting elements that provide interest for the viewer. The view may also contain, or terminate at, a landmark or visual feature.</p>	<p>Views terminate at the jagged peaks of the Grampians Ranges on the horizon which provide a strong visual contrast with the surrounding flat pastoral landscape.</p>
<p>Rarity</p> <p>The view is a ‘one-off’ or rare view and it, or a similar view, is not available nearby or elsewhere in the Study Area. The view itself may also contain a rare element that is not prevalent in other views from within the area.</p>	<p>Similar views are available from many points along roads within the study area; however the Mt Baimbridge Lookout is a <i>designated</i> lookout point: making it a safe location for stopping, parking the car and viewing the landscape.</p>

<p>Tourism Value</p> <p>The view is popular with tourists and visitors to the area, and is a ‘well known’ or popular view of note within the area. The view may also be available from a key tourism location or iconic place.</p>	<p>The Mt Baimbridge Lookout is situated in close proximity to the regional city of Hamilton. The lookout is not specifically referred to in official brochures for the Southern Grampians area, however is referenced in small print on thumbnail maps of Hamilton.</p>
<p>Community Support</p> <p>The view has been identified by the local community as significant, and is publicly accessible.</p>	<p>As part of the consultation undertaken during the study process, the Mt Baimbridge Lookout was identified as a key viewing location within the study area.</p>

RATING: High visual qualities

THRESHOLD: Regional significance



Lookout and car parking area situated on the east side of Mt Baimbridge Road

POTENTIAL THREATS

Potential threats to the significance of views from the Mt Baimbridge Lookout include:

- Buildings or structures located close to the roadside that dominate or conceal views to the Grampians Ranges
- Exotic vegetation/ shelterbelt planting that conceals or impedes on available views
- Further telecommunications infrastructure sited in key viewsheds

SCOPE FOR ADDITIONAL CONTROL

The area of land surrounding the Mt Baimbridge Lookout is zoned Farming (FZ). Recent windbreak planting (pines) has begun to impede on key views available from the lookout, presumably simply due to a lack of understanding and awareness. Communication with landowners in the immediate area about the importance of maintaining and protecting key views towards the Grampians Ranges should be undertaken. This is particularly important on properties where the topography rises up and future shelterbelt planting has the potential to block/impede key views.

Policy inclusions (for the rural landscape surrounding the lookout) and additional overlay protections (adjacent to the Grampians themselves) would aid in the protection and management of these views.

SIGNIFICANT VIEWING LOCATION 03: ROBSONS HILL LOOKOUT

DESCRIPTION

The Robsons Hill Lookout is a designated lookout point located 3km south of the small township of Glenthompson, along Menzies Lane. From here, panoramic views are available across cleared grazing land towards the Grampians Ranges on the horizon. To the south, views capture the nearby Oaklands Hill Wind Farm.



Views from Robsons Lookout, looking north-west towards the Grampians Ranges

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT
<p>Composition</p> <p>The view is ‘balanced’, both horizontally and vertically – a ‘picture postcard’ view. The focal point of the view is centred, and elements in the foreground, middle-ground and background are ‘equally weighted’. The view may be framed by elements to the viewer’s left and right, and technically, such a view is defined as a ‘vista’.</p>	<p>Views from the Robsons Hill Lookout are well balanced, with the presence of the nearby Grampians Ranges forming a dramatic visual feature on the horizon.</p>
<p>Visual Interest</p> <p>The view contains a variety of contrasting elements that provide interest for the viewer. The view may also contain, or terminate at, a landmark or visual feature.</p>	<p>To the north, views terminate at the jagged peaks of the Grampians Ranges on the horizon, which provide a strong visual contrast with the surrounding cleared grazing land. The nearby Oaklands Hill Wind Farm provides a visual feature in views to the south.</p>

<p>Rarity</p> <p>The view is a ‘one-off’ or rare view and it, or a similar view, is not available nearby or elsewhere in the Study Area. The view itself may also contain a rare element that is not prevalent in other views from within the area.</p>	<p>Similar views of the Grampians Ranges are available from many points along roads within the study area; however Robsons Hill Lookout is a <i>designated</i> lookout point: making it a safe location for stopping, parking the car and viewing the landscape.</p>
<p>Tourism Value</p> <p>The view is popular with tourists and visitors to the area, and is a ‘well known’ or popular view of note within the area. The view may also be available from a key tourism location or iconic place.</p>	<p>The Robsons Hill Lookout is situated in close proximity to the small township of Glenthompson. A reference to the lookout is made in the official touring map/ brochure for the Southern Grampians area.</p>
<p>Community Support</p> <p>The view has been identified by the local community as significant, and is publicly accessible.</p>	<p>As part of the consultation undertaken during the study process, the Robsons Hill Lookout was identified by members of the local community as a key viewing location within the study area.</p>

RATING: High visual qualities

THRESHOLD: Regional significance

POTENTIAL THREATS

Potential threats to the significance of views from the Robsons Hill Lookout include:

- Insensitive land uses/ buildings located in key viewsheds
- Ongoing shelterbelt planting in key viewsheds
- Further telecommunications infrastructure in key viewsheds
- Proliferation of wind farm developments within the local region



The nearby Oaklands Hill Wind Farm, located to the south of Menzies Lane

SCOPE FOR ADDITIONAL CONTROL

The area of land surrounding the Robsons Hill Lookout is zoned Farming (FZ) and again, communicating with landowners in the immediate area about the importance of maintaining and protecting key views towards the Grampians Ranges would be beneficial.

Policy inclusions (for the rural landscape surrounding the lookout) and additional overlay protections (adjacent to the Grampians themselves) would aid in the protection and management of these views.

It is considered that the potential for additional wind farm developments within key viewsheds of the Grampians National Park (to the north of Menzies Lane) is highly unlikely. Interactive wind mapping developed by Sustainability Victoria indicates that average annual wind speeds in this area are significantly low in comparison to other areas to the south.

SIGNIFICANT VIEWING LOCATION 04: MIRRANATWA GAP LOOKOUT

DESCRIPTION

The Mirranatwa Gap Lookout is located towards the northern end of the Victoria Valley, along Victoria Valley Road. The lookout provides close up and long-range views of the Serra Range, Victoria Ranges, Victoria Valley and the surrounding Grampians Ranges National Park. Mirranatwa Gap gets its name from the local Aboriginal language- Marrin being the word for the Gang-gang Cockatoo.



Views from the Mirranatwa Gap Lookout, Victoria Valley Road. Image courtesy of Film Victoria



Views from the Mirranatwa Gap Lookout

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT
<p>Composition</p> <p>The view is ‘balanced’, both horizontally and vertically – a ‘picture postcard’ view. The focal point of the view is centred, and elements in the foreground, middle-ground and background are ‘equally weighted’. The view may be framed by elements to the viewer’s left and right, and technically, such a view is defined as a ‘vista’.</p>	<p>The Mirranatwa Gap Lookout provides close up and long-range views of the Serra Range, Victoria Ranges, Victoria Valley and the surrounding Grampians Ranges National Park. Views are often framed by vegetation.</p>
<p>Visual Interest</p> <p>The view contains a variety of contrasting elements that provide interest for the viewer. The view may also contain, or terminate at, a landmark or visual feature.</p>	<p>The foreground and middle-ground of views is dominated by the vegetation of the Grampians Ranges National Park. Views terminate at the jagged peaks of the Serra Range. Nearby, the green pastoral landscapes of the Victoria Valley provide a strong contrast to the natural characteristics of the National Park.</p>
<p>Rarity</p> <p>The view is a ‘one-off’ or rare view and it, or a similar view, is not available nearby or elsewhere in the Study Area. The view itself may also contain a rare element that is not</p>	<p>Views from the lookout are short-range in comparison to other designated lookout points within the study area. Similar views are available nearby (outside of the study area), from the other lookout points located within the National Park.</p>

prevalent in other views from within the area.	
<p>Tourism Value</p> <p>The view is popular with tourists and visitors to the area, and is a ‘well known’ or popular view of note within the area. The view may also be available from a key tourism location or iconic place.</p>	<p>The Mirranatwa Gap Lookout is not specifically referred to in official touring maps and brochures for the Southern Grampians area, or the Grampians National Park. The Victoria Valley however, forms part of the Grampians Scenic Loop; which focuses on the route linking Hamilton, Dunkeld, Victoria Valley and Cavendish.</p>
<p>Community Support</p> <p>The view has been identified by the local community as significant, and is publicly accessible.</p>	<p>As part of the consultation undertaken during the study process, the Mirranatwa Gap Lookout was identified by members of the local community as a significant viewing location within the study area.</p> <p>Access to the lookout is limited, due to its isolated nature.</p>

RATING: Exceptional visual qualities

THRESHOLD: State significance or higher

POTENTIAL THREATS

Potential threats to the significance of views from Mirranatwa Gap Lookout include:

- Loss of native flora and fauna
- Invasive non-indigenous plants
- Bushfire

Development is not a major threat given much of the area is contained in National Park.

SCOPE FOR ADDITIONAL CONTROL

Potential threats to the significance of views from Mirranatwa Gap Lookout are limited given that the views capture mostly National Park land, which has well established management practices and planning controls. The Grampians National Park is managed by Parks Victoria and zoned Public Conservation and Resource (PCRZ). The purpose of the zone is to protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values.

It is considered that the existing zoning provisions provide good protection of views from Mirranatwa Gap Lookout, but that additional overlay controls adjacent to the Grampians Ranges themselves would strengthen the protection and management of views available.

SIGNIFICANT VIEWING CORRIDORS

DESCRIPTION

Several important scenic routes within the study area were defined as *significant viewing corridors*. The identified road corridors ranged from highly travelled routes (such as the Melbourne to Adelaide touring route), to minor country lanes. In the assessment, a view corridor was noted as significant if it was considered to have a high number of viewers, provided a variety of noteworthy viewing experiences (namely capturing the Grampians Ranges), and substantially met the significance criteria.

Significant viewing corridors are identified *Significance Investigation Areas Map*, and include:

- Glenelg Highway between Glenthompson and Hamilton (B160)
- Victoria Valley Road (C217)
- Dunkeld-Cavendish Road (C188)
- Henty Highway north of Cavendish (A200)
- Penshurst-Dunkeld Road (C178)
- Blackwood-Dunkeld Road
- Strathkeller Road
- Other minor roads including East West Road, Mokanger Road, Victoria Point Road and Caramut-Glenthompson Road
- Hensley Park Road between Hamilton Airport & Hamilton



The following photos illustrate the stunning views available from significant viewing corridors surrounding the Grampians Ranges





Images above courtesy of Film Victoria

POTENTIAL THREATS

Potential threats to the significance of views available from viewing corridors include:

- Buildings or structures located close to the roadside that dominate or conceal views to the Grampians Ranges
- Long stretches of exotic vegetation / shelterbelts / plantation planting that conceals or impedes on available views to the Grampians Ranges
- Loss of indigenous roadside vegetation (namely stands of River Red Gums)
- Proliferation of signage
- Spread of development at the edges of townships, particularly low density residential development
- Invasive non-indigenous plants
- Bushfire

SCOPE FOR ADDITIONAL MANAGEMENT & PROTECTION

Within the current planning scheme, the schedule to the Farming Zone (FZ) states that a permit is required to construct a building within any of the following setbacks:

- 100 metres from a waterway, wetlands or designated flood plain
- 100m from a Road Zone Category 1 or land in a Public Acquisition Overlay to be acquired for a Category 1 road
- 40m from a Road Zone Category 2 or land in a Public Acquisition Overlay to be acquired for a Category 2 road
- 20m from any other road
- 5m from any other boundary

In most cases, the identified significant viewing corridors fall under a Road Zone Category 1, which requires a permit for a building within 100m of the roadside. Given the significance of the views available to the Grampians and the relatively flat topography of the landscape (rendering any proposed development highly visible), this distance is considered inadequate, and a greater distance should be considered in order to mitigate any potential threats to views towards the Grampians Ranges.

Where a significant viewing corridor is not zoned Road Zone Category 1, there may be scope to increase the setback distance on specific roads, in order to protect key view lines. This could be achieved through an amendment to the Farming Zone schedule. In addition, a local policy may be warranted to provide guidance in the assessment and determination of planning permit applications for development that is proposed within the specified road setbacks.

Opportunities also exist to provide formal viewing infrastructure at strategic locations along the road side in the future. Potential locations have been identified on the *Significance Investigation Areas Map*.

OTHER NOTABLE VIEWS

Several other ‘notable’ viewing locations were identified across the study area. These viewing locations provide unique viewing opportunities within the overall landscape of the region, but do not substantially meet all of the ‘significance criteria’ outlined in chapter 3. These viewing locations are outlined below and highlighted on the *Significance Investigation Areas Map*.

WANNON FALLS AND NIGRETТА FALLS

Approximately 20km west of Hamilton, lie the two waterfalls of Wannon and Nigretta Falls. A viewing platform at the Wannon Falls offer spectacular views and a rotunda features interpretative signage for visitors. Nigretta Falls has excellent viewing areas, river walks, barbeque facilities, picnic tables and toilets. The Significant Landscape Overlay applies to areas of PPRZ zoned land within both reserves (SLO3 and SLO4).



ROCKLANDS RESERVOIR

Situated approximately 15km east of Balmoral, the Rocklands Reservoir provides a drinking water supply for the Wimmera and Mallee regions. With a total shoreline of over 400km, it is a popular location for camping, boating, fishing, picnicking and bushwalking. Long range views of the Grampians Ranges can be enjoyed from the reservoir.



DUNKELD ARBORETUM

The Dunkeld Arboretum is located 500m east of the Grampians Road (C216), at the gateway to the Grampians National Park. Breathtaking views of the nearby Mt Sturgeon and Mt Abrupt are available across the picturesque ponds.



Image courtesy of Film Victoria

DUNKELD PRIMARY SCHOOL/ DUNKELD CEMETERY/ DUNKELD RACECOURSE

Views from the Dunkeld Primary School oval, Dunkeld Cemetery and Dunkeld Racecourse are arguably the best vantage points to view nearby Mt Sturgeon and Mt Abrupt. The primary school, cemetery and racecourse are all located to the north of Dunkeld, within close proximity to each other.



LAKE LINLITHGOW

Located 10km north-west of Penshurst is the large (880 hectare) inland lake of Lake Linlithgow. The lake is a popular location for water sports, fishing, picnicking and bird-watching. Long distance views are offered across Lake Linlithgow to the Grampians Ranges beyond, and from Chatsworth-Hamilton Road towards Lakes Linlithgow, Bullrush and Kennedy. The lake has recently filled after being dry through many years of drought



SCENIC LOOKOUT POINTS WITHIN THE GRAMPIANS RANGES

The Grampians Ranges National Park has a number of spectacular scenic lookout points, some of which capture views to across the Study Area. Most notably, Reed Lookout/ The Balconies (located in the Central Grampians) provides exceptional views over the Victoria Valley to the south, and Lake Wartook and the Mount Difficult Range to the north (outside of the Study Area). The lookout is accessible by car and involves a 2km return walk.

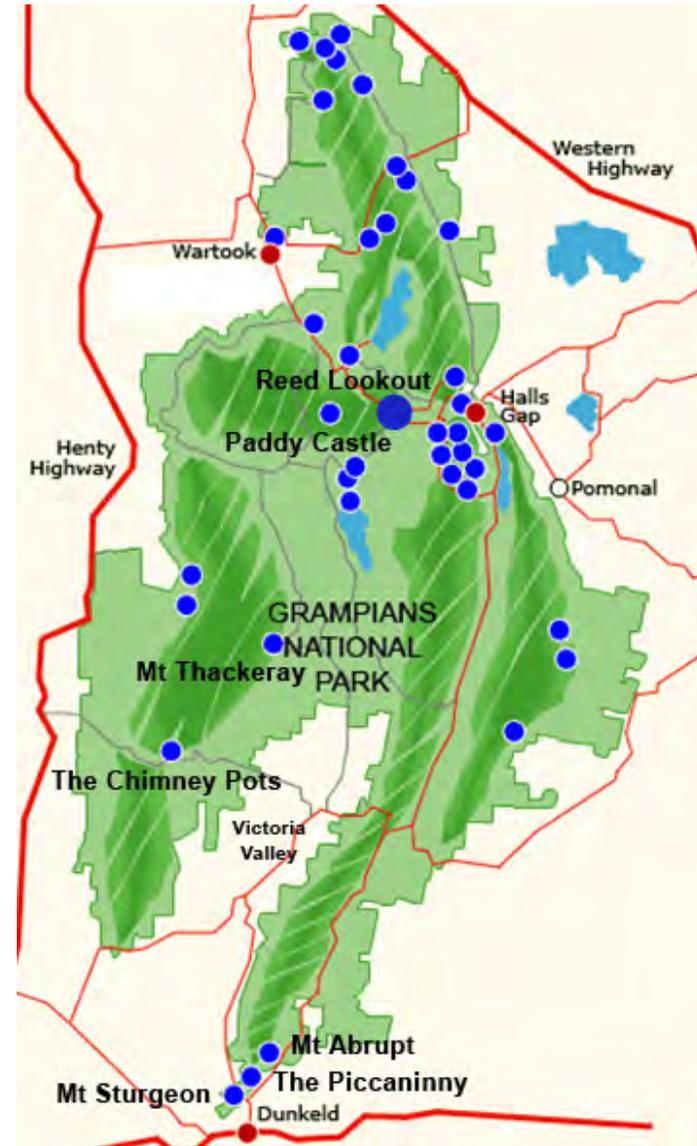
There are also many walking trails to other well-known lookouts within the Grampians National Park. Walks that offer panoramic views across the Southern Grampians and Study Area include The Chimney Pots, The Piccaninny, Mt Sturgeon, Paddy Castle and Mt Thackeray. The walks range from short gradual climbs (25 minutes return) to more steep strenuous hikes (3 hours return).

While not within the shire, other designated lookout points within the Grampians Ranges National Park include Boroka Lookout, Mt William (1,167m) and The Bluff at Mt Arapiles. These viewing points offer diverse views across the Grampians landscape and surrounding valleys and townships to the north and east, outside of the study area.



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Scenic lookout points located within the Grampians Ranges National Park



SCOPE FOR ADDITIONAL MANAGEMENT & PROTECTION

The lookout points themselves and their immediate surrounds are zoned Public Use (PUZ), Public Park and Recreation (PPRZ), or Public Conservation and Resource (PCRZ), and as such the foreground of out-views are well protected. Beyond the National Park boundaries, the middleground of views will be protected and managed under the provisions of the proposed SLO.

Potential locations for viewing infrastructure

Most of the locations discussed above are *not* designated lookout points and are not well referenced in existing tourism brochures, yet all offer picturesque panoramic views of the Grampians Ranges. Opportunities exist to provide more formal viewing infrastructure at these notable viewing locations in the future.

4

IMPLEMENTATION



APPLYING THE LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The identification and management of landscape character and significant landscapes is achieved by applying the formula (as discussed in Chapter 1 of this report):



The previous sections of this report have identified and discussed:

- landscape character within the study area;
- significant landscapes, landscape elements and views;
- community values of landscapes; and
- potential changes and threats to landscape values.

The next step is to identify policy gaps, by examining current Planning Scheme controls and policies in detail and determining how effective they would be in landscape management.

This policy gap analysis will form the basis of recommended future actions for the protection and management of the Grampians landscape.

AMENDMENT C25: NEW LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Throughout the course of this project, Council re-drafted its Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) to introduce significant changes arising from the adoption of the 2010 Planning Scheme Review. This review and

Local Planning Policy re-write was recently implemented through Amendment C25.

The project to re-write the LPPF recommended the amalgamation of all Clause 22 Local Policies within the MSS. Other changes to the LPPF include a revised structure for the MSS to achieve greater consistency with the SPPF, making use of ‘policy guidelines’ in the MSS to reposition elements of Clause 22 and incorporating additional strategic work that has been undertaken by Council and the State government.

Overall, most of the descriptions of the SGSLA study area and directions for future development in regard to landscape significance contained within the former LPPF remained unchanged. However, a number of revised provisions are important to note:

Clause 21.01 Southern Grampians Shire provides a brief overview of the Shire’s key characteristics. It makes reference to the Shire’s environmental and cultural heritage, and notes conservation as a major land use, including the Grampians National Park. It does not make specific reference to landscape significance.

Strategies and actions include: *“Continuing to support and grow a quality tourist and recreation product based on strategic regional positioning of product linking to other regional products, the built and cultural heritage, the natural features and the quality of experience which the Shire offers.”*

Clause 21.03 Environment and Landscape Values combines the content of the previous Clause 21.04-5 Natural Environment, Clause 21.04-7 The Grampians and Clause 22.01-3 Landscape environment and protection. It comprises two subsections of **Clause 21.03-1 Environment** and **Clause 21.03-2 Landscape**.

A note about views to the Grampians has been included: *“The most dominating visual aspect of the Grampians is the topography with sheer cliffs rising sharply over 1000m above the relatively flat surrounding land. This impressive landform can be sighted from a distance of over 60km.”*

Also, a new key issue has been added: “*Protecting the landscape character of rural areas, including those associated with Red Gum plains, volcanic peaks and the Grampians.*”

Clause 21.03 includes strategies on various design requirements to protect landscape (adapted from previous Clauses 22.01-3 and 21.08-2), however, these have been revised to remove specific reference to the landforms of Mt Sturgeon and Mt Abrupt and the Red Gums around Dunkeld. The Grampians Surround Strategy is still listed as a policy guideline.

Clause 21.04 Natural Resource Management includes new key issue: “*Protecting landscapes and natural features from the impacts of timber production*”.

A new **Clause 21.10 Local Areas** has been included. This adapts much of the information from Clause 21.04-3 Other Townships and applies the location-specific aspects of Clause 22.02 under headings for each town and settlement. It updates the MSS with the recommendations of strategies that have been completed for these places. It includes direction on how towns and settlements relate to local environmental features and in some instances the surrounding landscape.

Clause 21.11 Implementation makes reference to the application of the SLO only to the area in Coleraine. It nominates significant landscape assessments for the Grampians and the Victorian Volcanic Plains as required strategic work. This has now been undertaken as part of the *South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study June 2013*.

IDENTIFIED GAPS IN STATUTORY PROVISIONS

An examination of current Planning Scheme controls and policies that relate to landscape management has involved a detailed analysis of the State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks and all relevant zone and overlay provisions. The findings of this analysis are included as Appendix 3.

In summary, gaps in the planning policy and control framework are identified as:

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Grampians and other significant landscape features are referenced throughout the Southern Grampians Municipal Strategic Statement. Relevant clauses include:

- Clause 21.02 Settlement, which provides local content to support Clause 11 (Settlement) of the State Planning Policy Framework. This Clause does not specifically provide discretion on the growth of settlements in relation to individual character. Specific objectives are listed under Clause 21.10 Local Areas. This Clause could be enhanced by incorporating relevant parts from the Landscape Management Guidelines contained in this report, bearing in mind that the ‘urban’ zoned areas of townships are excluded from this study.
- Clause 21.03 Environmental and Landscape Values, which provides local content to support Clause 12 (Environmental and Landscape Values) and 13 (Environmental Risks) of the State Planning Policy Framework. This Clause lists key issues to be addressed throughout Southern Grampians Shire under:

Clause 21.03-1 Environment, including:

- Protection of key environmental assets.
- Urban/rural pressures on the natural environment.
- Preventing impacts on the Shire’s natural resource base resulting from land management practices, pest plants and animals, and loss of native vegetation.

Clause 21.03-2 Landscapes, including:

- Protecting the landscape character of rural areas, including those associated with red gum plains, volcanic peaks and the Grampians.
- Managing development of towns to minimise impacts on landscape character.

Both these clauses include relevant strategies, implementation measures and policy guidelines to be considered in the assessment of applications for

use and development, which may impact on the Shire's landscapes and environs. Clause 21.03 Environment and Landscape Values includes reference to the environmental values of the Grampians (21.03-1 Environment), as well as the landscape values of the Victorian volcanic plains, Dundas tablelands and the Grampians themselves (21.03-2). This introductory content is considered more than ample for identifying the landscape character and significance, and value to the shire, of the landscape. No change is therefore recommended to this section.

Key issues, strategies, implementation measures and policy guidelines could be updated to incorporate relevant parts of the Landscape Management Guidelines contained in this report. These sections emphasise the significance of the Shire's environment and landscapes values and the contributions they make to the Shire's social, cultural and economic base.

- Clause 21.04 Natural Resource Management, which provides local content to support Clause 13 (Natural Resource Management) of the State Planning Policy Framework. This Clause lists key issues to be addressed in relation to Agriculture and rural land use (21.04-1) and Timber production, processing and agro-forestry (21.04-2). These sections are particularly relevant to this study, as agriculture is dependent on and influenced by the condition of the natural resource base, which itself is a major contributor to landscape character. The protection of landscapes and natural features are listed within these sub-clauses as 'key issues'. Of particular relevance are the following strategies and policy guidelines in relation to timber production, processing and agro-forestry (21.04-2):

Ensure timber production, processing and agro-forestry do not impact detrimentally on existing uses and development, or the character and appearance of the area.

The responsible authority will have particular regard to applications for timber production:

- In landscapes of high visual quality (as nominated in the landscape policy or Significance Landscape Overlay);

- In areas of environmental significance (including any Environmental Significance Overlay);
- Around national and state parks, particularly around the Grampians National Park; and
- On sites affected by the Heritage Overlay.

Both these Clauses adequately detail the relationship between rural land uses and landscape character. This Clause could be enhanced by incorporating additional issues to be considered when considering applications for use and development of complex rural land uses, such as timber production, wind farms and quarries.

- Clause 21.06 Housing, which provides local content to support Clause 16 (Housing) of the State Planning Policy Framework. Sub-clause 21.06-1 lists 'protecting the character of rural and farming areas' as a key issue to be considered for applications for small lot subdivisions, house lot excisions and dwellings in the Farming Zone. For the purposes of this study, this Clause sufficiently addresses the potential issues caused by fragmentation of farming land in rural landscapes.
- Clause 21.07 Economic Development, which provides local content to support Clause 17 (Economic Development) in the State Planning Policy Framework. Sub-clause 21.07-1 Industry includes the objective *'To protect residential amenity and landscape character'* and lists a number of strategies which provide guidance on the design and siting of industrial development throughout the Shire. Sub-clause 21.07-2 Tourism references the Shire's natural assets, including the Wannon and Nigretta Falls, Rockland's Reservoir and the Grampians National Park as key assets to be protected. This clause also contains specific strategies which support the protection of the Shire's natural tourism resources.

- Clause 21.09 Infrastructure, which provides local content to support Clause 18 (Infrastructure) of the State Planning Policy Framework. This Clause does not contain any reference to landscape character issues in relation to the impacts of signage and infrastructure on key viewing corridors and viewing locations. This Clause could be enhanced by incorporating relevant parts from the Landscape Management Guidelines contained in this report.
- Specific objectives are listed for each town under Clause 21.10 Local Areas. The content for each of these sub-sections varies depending on the level of strategic planning work completed for each settlement. Detailed guidance around landscape protection is provided under the sub-section relating to the city of Hamilton. Limited references to landscape character protection are contained within the sub-sections relating to the settlements of Coleraine, Dunkeld and Penshurst and Wannon, where relevant content from urban design frameworks and the Grampians Surrounds Strategy have been incorporated into these sections. The settlements of Balmoral, Glenthompson, Braxholme, Cavendish, Tarrington and Byaduk contain no references to landscape or environmental values. For towns within the study area, there may be scope to include specific references to landscape character protection, especially where these towns are placed along key viewing corridors, or where key views have been identified. (However, it should be noted that the urban zoned areas of townships were excluded from this study.)
- No Clauses are contained under Local Policy (Clause 22).

Overall, the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) provides direction about landscape character and emphasises the need to protect and preserve landscape character. Enhancements could be made to the MSS in order to update relevant Clauses with the findings of this study including, where relevant, parts of the Landscape Management Guidelines.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

There are currently no local planning policies at Clause 22 of the Southern Grampians Planning Scheme. There may be scope to implement local policy, as per *Practice Note 8: Writing a Local Planning Policy (November 2012)*, where guidance on how discretion in a zone or overlay is required for clarity. However, careful assessment is required to ensure that any proposed local policy is consistent with the practice note, as well as the *Strategic Assessment Guidelines for preparing and evaluating planning scheme amendments*.

OTHER PROVISIONS

- The schedule to the Farming Zone currently allows the development of up to 40 hectares of land covered by an SLO for timber production without a planning permit. As an identified threat to the significance of the landscape, the development of land for timber plantations in the immediate surrounds of the Grampians should be available for scrutiny through the planning permit process, regardless of size.
- The schedule to the Farming Zone also allows a building to be constructed without a planning permit beyond 100 metres of a Road Zone Category 1, 40 metres of a Road Zone Category 2, and 20 metres of any other road. In most cases, the significant viewing corridors that have been identified as part of this study fall within a Road Zone Category 1, however the 100 metre trigger is considered inadequate, given the significance of the views available and the relatively flat landscape. Other significant viewing corridors that have been identified by this study should be afforded the same level of planning control as the Category 1 roads, and this should be greater than 100 metres.
- There is currently no protection of the Grampians landscape in the planning scheme, in the form of an overlay. Specifically, there is no protection of landscape values directly adjacent to and surrounding the mountain ranges, or views to and from the landscape.

- Advertising sign requirements are at Clause 52.05 of the planning scheme, and the Farming Zone is in Category 4 – Sensitive areas. These fairly restrictive requirements are considered appropriate, given the character and level of sensitivity of the landscape. It is signage within towns, and on the fringes of townships, however, that has the potential to block long range out-views, and cause visual clutter. While the residential zoned areas of townships are excluded from this study, a landscape management guideline has been drafted to cover signage generally, and this has the potential to be applied through the Local Planning Policy Framework.
- There is very little reference to the significance to the landscape of the River Red Gums, however general protection is afforded to native vegetation through Clause 52.17.

RURAL ZONES REVIEW

The Minister for Planning is currently considering a report submitted by the Reformed Zones Advisory Committee with its recommendations on proposed reforms to the Rural Zones. The proposed amendments to the rural zones are particularly relevant to the Southern Grampians Landscape Assessment, as the intention of the review is to:

- Remove permit requirements for farming related development such as netting and crop support structures and increasing the farm building threshold exemptions.
- Facilitate tourism uses by reducing or removing permit limitations relating to tourism uses.
- Make prohibited uses discretionary in all the rural zones.
- Increase the permit exemption threshold for altering or extending an existing dwelling.

The Farming Zone is the most prevalent zone in the Southern Grampians Planning Scheme, with the Rural Living and Rural Activity applied in some areas of Hamilton and the Rural Living, Rural Activity and Rural

Conservation zones proposed within the vicinity of the Dunkeld Township (Amendment C29).

The changes to the rural zones generally seek to introduce broader and more varied uses to these zones, which have the effect of increasing the Responsible Authority's (Council) ability to exercise discretion for some of these uses. While some of these changes may complement the objectives of this study, the proposed increases to permit exemption thresholds for farm buildings and dwellings in areas of landscape significance may lead to adverse planning outcomes. Recognition of the Shire's significant landscapes is also required in anticipation of the expanded discretionary uses which, by their nature, may cause conflicts with the landscape (i.e. intensive industry).

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

Policy gaps can be addressed through a package of statutory and non-statutory implementation techniques. The planning scheme is perhaps the most important part of implementation as it legally binds the Council, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and applicants to consider the landscape management objectives identified through a study such as this.

Implementation options include:

- Including the Character Area Papers as a Council Guideline (non-statutory).
- Implementing the recommendations of the study through the MSS or Local Policy.
- Including the study and Character Area Papers as Incorporated or Reference Documents.
- Amending the schedules to the Rural Zones.
- Introducing or reviewing existing overlays, such as the Significant Landscape Overlay, Design and Development Overlay or Vegetation Protection Overlay.

Detailed analysis of these statutory implementation options is included in Appendix 5.

RECOMMENDED STATUTORY ACTIONS

In view of the identified gaps in planning provisions and the options for statutory implementation, the following recommendations are made.

MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) provides clear direction about landscape character and emphasises the need to protect and preserve landscape significance. However, as outlined in the recommendations of the *South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study (June 2013)*, the MSS provides no detailed guidance on the protection and management of landscapes, with the exception of one objective and six strategies at Clause 21.03-2 'Landscapes'. This Clause should be reviewed to reflect the findings of the study. A list of the identified significant landscapes and views should also be provided, and would include those significant_ landscapes that are named in the existing clause.

A new objective should be inserted: *'To protect and manage the landscape character and significance of the municipality.'*

Additional strategies to be inserted should be:

- To ensure that any proposal contributes to the area's future landscape character directions.
- To protect and enhance the valued qualities of significant landscapes.
- Apply the Significant Landscape Overlay to the significant landscapes identified in *Southern Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment (August 2013)* and the *South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study (2013)*.

The *Southern Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment (August 2013)* and the *South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study (2013)* should be included as a Reference Documents under the heading 'Policy Guidelines'.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

There has been an increasing focus from the Department of Planning and from Local Government to revise content from Clause 22 (Local Policy) into Clause 21 (MSS), in order to provide a comprehensive and clear Local Planning Policy Framework. However, a difficulty arises as to where to include more detailed policy guidance for proposed development that requires a permit as a result of zoning provisions, but to which no overlay schedule applies. Many of the landscape management guidelines that have been produced as part of this study for instance, warrant a broader application than just the proposed SLO area, and the most logical place for these definitive 'policy statements' is at Clause 22.

Council may therefore consider, as outlined in the recommendations of the *South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study (June 2013)*, implementing the key findings of this study through local planning policy. Policy could be drafted to address particular issues in the management and protection of landscapes across the Shire. It may also be an opportunity to provide additional information and decision making guidance about landscape character and significance if this is deemed necessary. An option, for example, may be the provision of a local policy to guide decision making on built form in areas within 500 metres of identified significant viewing corridors, as outlined in the following section.

ZONING PROVISIONS

Schedule to the Farming Zone

It is proposed to amend the schedule to the Farming Zone so that a building within 500 metres of the identified significant viewing corridors requires a planning permit.

The proposed distance of 500 metres is based on the following considerations and conclusions:

The views available to the Grampians Ranges from these roads are highly significant, and have the potential to be blocked or negatively affected by

proposed development near the road, particularly if located in the foreground of views.

The relatively flat topography renders any development highly visible in the landscape for great distances, and obviously more visible the closer to the roadside it is sited.

The most important aspect of the views afforded from these roads is the foreground. The 'foreground' of a view is generally accepted as the first 800 metres, when measured from the viewer (refer to p. 83 of this report). As such, 500 metres is considered an appropriate and ample distance as it represents the majority of the foreground.

The fact that the viewer will generally be travelling in a vehicle, and will be observing the view at an ever changing angle, rather than observing the view from a point in the landscape have also informed the decision to set the permit trigger distance at 500 metres.

Examples of how the 500 metre distance trigger sits within the context of the broader landscape are shown below:



Road to tree line



Road to tree line



Road to base of hill

This permit trigger will only be required adjacent to those roads, or parts of roads, that are outside the proposed SLO area. The road corridors to which this permit trigger will apply are:

East West Road, between Natimuk-Hamilton Road and the proposed SLO boundary.

Strathkeller Road between Doling Road and the Glenelg Highway.

Glenelg Highway between Chatsworth-Hamilton Road and Strathkeller Road.

Penshurst-Dunkeld Road between the Hamilton Highway and the proposed SLO boundary.

Blackwood-Dunkeld Road between the Hamilton Highway and the proposed SLO boundary.

Woolsthorpe Road, between the Hamilton Highway and Chatsworth-Hamilton Road.

Caramut-Glenhompson Road between the Glenelg Highway and Cherrymount Lane.

Hensley Park Road between Hamilton and Hamilton Airport.

Victoria Point Road from Dunkeld-Cavendish Road to Brewis Road.

(Refer to Significance Investigation Areas map on p.56 for location of roads.)

It is also proposed to amend the schedule to the Farming Zone so that a permit is required for timber production, regardless of size, within any SLO area and within 500 metres of the identified significant viewing corridors.

It should be noted that the permit trigger through the schedule to the Farming Zone is considered more appropriate than the application of the Significant Landscape Overlay to these 'strips' of landscape, due to the lesser significance of the *landscape itself* in these areas.

OVERLAYS

Significant Landscape Overlay

One landscape area has been identified as having exceptional visual qualities of National significance, and part of this landscape is recommended for a higher degree of statutory protection through the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO). The landscape recommended for further protection comprises Character Area 1, Grampians (Gariwerd) and Surrounds, plus a small area north of the Glenelg Highway, *excluding* the Grampians National Park.

The exact boundaries of the proposed SLO will be determined at the time of drafting the planning scheme amendment. It will need to follow easily discernable and clear boundaries, such as property boundaries, roads or other landmarks, and is therefore likely to be extended to include all land

north of Dunkeld-Cavendish Road that is not currently within Character Area 1. A map showing the *draft* likely location of the SLO as well as the 500 metre permit trigger areas adjacent to scenic roads is included as Figure 5.

The exclusion of public land from overlay provisions has been debated and tested in past landscape assessment studies, and advice has been sought previously from DPCD as to their position on the matter. In this and other cases, it is considered that the Public Conservation and Resource Zone provides enough protection through its provisions, where a permit is required for subdivision and for all buildings and works that are not conducted by or on behalf of a public land manager, or are not specified in an Incorporated Plan, with the exception of planting or landscaping.

In the case of National Parks, it is considered appropriate that the public land manager (in this case Parks Victoria) has responsibility for the management and protection of the land, and that detailed Incorporated Plan governs any proposed development. In the case of a proposed development not complying with these conditions and a permit being required, decision guidance should be provided through the LPPF.

Grampians (Gariwerd) Surrounds

The proposed SLO area should be called ‘Grampians (Gariwerd) Surrounds’, and will generally reflect the location of the Significant Landscape Investigation Area, which predominantly falls in Character Area 1 as defined by this study, excluding the National Park. Detailed mapping of the SLO area for the planning scheme will take into consideration the location of roads, property boundaries and contour levels. The exact boundaries of the SLO should also take into consideration the recommendations of the recently completed *Dunkeld Structure Plan (May 2013)*.

A separate schedule (SLO6) will be prepared to define the nature and key elements of the landscape and list specific objectives and decision guidelines.

Details of SLO6 ‘Grampians (Gariwerd) Surrounds’ will include:

Statement of nature and key elements of landscape

The first part of the overlay schedule will read as a ‘statement of significance’ for the landscape area. It will describe the character and significance of the landscape, based on the contents of the relevant character area paper and significance assessment undertaken as part of the study.

Landscape character objectives to be achieved

The objectives in the overlay schedule will reflect the principles contained in the ‘future character directions’ statement and the objectives contained in the character area analysis paper, as follows:

- To protect and enhance remnant indigenous vegetation as an important character element.

- To protect the scenic backdrop created by the Grampians Ranges National Park, and minimise any impact on view lines towards the mountains.

- To minimise the visual impact of buildings and structures within the natural landscape.

- To maintain an overall sense of spaciousness within the landscape.

- To ensure buildings and structures demonstrate a high standard of design and respond to the character of the surrounding environment.

- To recognise the ongoing agricultural use of the land with areas of open grazing as an important character element.

- To minimise the visual impact of timber production and other agro-forestry industries upon the natural landscape.

- To encourage revegetation of less productive farmlands and areas of environmental degradation throughout the landscape.

- To incorporate best practice environmental sustainability principles.

Permit requirement

The permit requirements specified in the schedule to the SLO will be based on the sensitivity to change of the landscape, and the threats to landscape that have been identified as part of the study.

A permit will be required for buildings and works within the SLO area (with some exemptions), as well as fencing other than traditional ‘open style’ rural fencing such as post and wire or post and rail fencing.

A permit will also be required for timber production (overriding the 40 hectare maximum area that is currently in the schedule to the Farming Zone). A permit will also be required for the planting of exotic shelterbelts adjacent to identified significant viewing corridors within the SLO.

Exemptions from permit requirements *may* include the following, and will be finalised after further community consultation:

Agricultural activities such as ploughing, certain fencing and the planting of native shelterbelts.

Works undertaken by a public authority relating to watercourse management, environmental improvements or infrastructure services.

The layout of underground infrastructure.

Construction of a small building, up to a certain floor area, that is ancillary to a dwelling e.g. up to 3 metres in height and 20 square metres in floor area.

Construction of a structure associated with farming, such as a shed, up to 3 metres in height and 50 square metres in floor area.

Decision guidelines

Decision guidelines will be based on the Landscape Management Guidelines that have been prepared for the landscape (refer to p.43 for the full set of guidelines), covering:

Vegetation

Plantation forestry

Views and vistas

Siting of buildings and structures

Design of buildings and structures

Infrastructure and signage

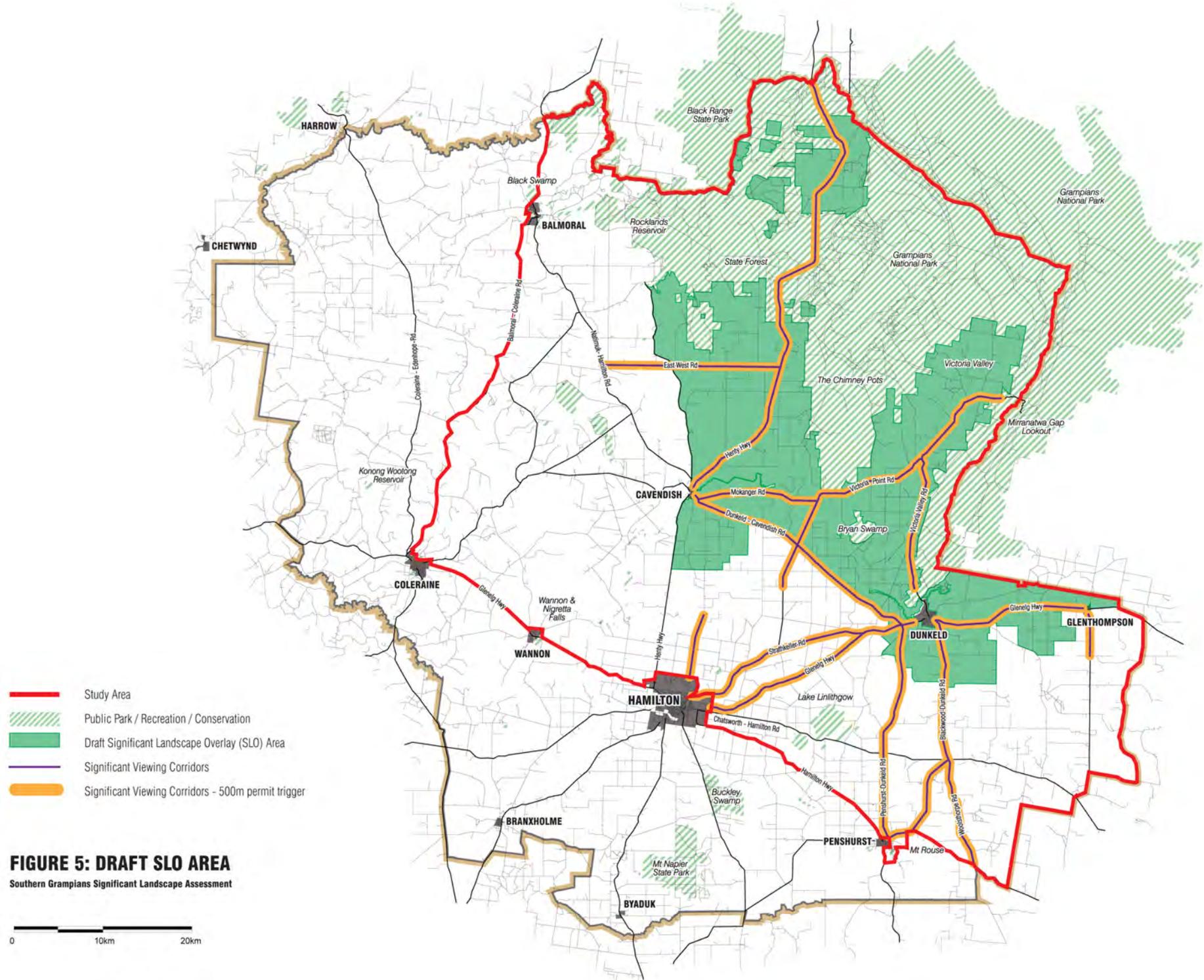
Settlements

Cultural heritage

The *Southern Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment 2012* should also be included as a reference document to the overlay schedule.

It should be noted that the proposed Grampians (Gariwerd) Surrounds Significant Landscape Overlay is consistent with the recommendations of the *South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study (June 2013)*. Additional and/or revised SLOs are also proposed for the Shire as part of the South West Victoria study. The proposed SLOs are:

- Wannon & Nigretta Falls Reserves, based upon the existing SLO3: Nigretta Falls Reserve and SLO4: Wannon Falls Reserve.
- Volcanic Cones & Lava Flows, a new SLO, which includes a broad area around the existing SLO2: Mt Rouse & Crater Reserve and a new area for the Mount Napier Complex.
- Merino Tablelands, a new SLO.



OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

CHARACTER AREA ANALYSIS PAPERS

The Character Area Papers form the basis for understanding the key elements related to the character and significance of the landscape within the study area. They also detail best practice guidelines for siting development within the landscape, and strategies to encourage appropriate landscape management outside the planning scheme.

It is recommended that Council make them available at the planning counter and on Council's website for interested community members, and as a reference document for applicants and Council decision-making.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community support and engagement is an essential part of landscape management. Some of the responses which have been detailed for each Character Area provide guidance for the community to appropriately enhance and protect landscapes of their area with initiatives that are outside the planning system.

It is recommended that Council consider developing a community education program to disseminate information about the Landscape Character Areas defined in this study, and appropriate approaches to landscape sensitive development which respond to landscape character. This could include a marketing campaign to inform the community of the study and its recommendations.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Private landowners potentially play an important role in enhancing the landscape character and/or environmental quality of land that has suffered environmental degradation or is less productive for farming. Financial incentives could be offered to landowners to assist with initiatives such as

additional planting i.e. a rate reduction for each significant River Red Gum that has been protected, or for good grazing management. Council may consider establishing a funding program for smaller scale projects that would have wider community benefit, and could also assist landowners in applying for State or Federal government grants through funding streams such as the Land Care program.

PROMOTION OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The tourism opportunities of the study area's high scenic value could be promoted in various ways. Public 'viewing areas' for the local community and visitors to photograph and enjoy particular landscapes could be developed, or existing viewing areas upgraded as required. These could include interpretive information that describes the pre- and post-contact history of the place, links to artworks and education about the significance of the landscape and how it is being protected.

A tourist trail or map could be produced to promote viewing points and scenic driving routes.

PLANTATION FORESTRY

Agro forestry (integration of forestry trees with grazing stock or other crops) should be encouraged as an alternative to traditional plantations. Council could consider waiving permit application fees for landowners using agro forestry methods.

Plantations are a suitable crop for land that is susceptible to salinity and water-logging. Where plantation forestry is proposed, the condition of land should be assessed to justify whether plantations are the only alternative, or can be used in conjunction with other farming practices. Being able to combine farming practices may assist in justifying loss of economic return if plantations are prohibited from being planted to the fence line in areas where they will block significant views or intrude on the foreground of significant views.

A 'good neighbour strategy' could be implemented, particularly for plantations that adjoin sensitive sites, including for example, providing buffers to contain impacts within the subject land.

COUNCIL STAFF SKILLING

It will take time to become familiar with the findings of this study and its implementation through the planning system, and Council planners will need support and skilling to get the most out of the recommendations. Correct approaches to site analysis, knowledge about acceptable design solutions for particular landscape character areas and consistency are all important.

Above all, the Council must send out the right message to the development community through consistent decision-making as well as communication about the value of the landscape character to the image and economy of the Southern Grampians.

Council may consider providing training sessions to assist staff in assessing applications within the proposed SLO area, or where the revised Landscape and Environment Protection policy applies.

COUNCIL STATUTORY SUPPORT

Other measures that will assist in the implementation of landscape management practices include:

- Enforcement of permit conditions.
- Active monitoring of illegal works, and increased publicity regarding penalties.
- Advocate where possible with public land managers to ensure that the desired landscape character outcomes are achieved (see below).

PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT

Although they have not been surveyed in detail in this study, many public lands make a significant contribution to the landscape values of the shire, not the least of which is the Grampians National Park itself.

It is recommended that Council liaise with public land managers, including the Department of Sustainability and Environment (for forestry activities in State Forest), Parks Victoria (for activities within National Parks and State Reserves) and VicRoads (e.g. for roadside management approaches) to ensure consistency of landscape management across jurisdictions and to encourage consideration of the value that public lands make to the landscapes of the shire.

5

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: PROJECT BRIEF



Southern Grampians Shire Council

GRAMPIANS SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

QUOTATION NO. Q1141/11

SPECIFICATION

1. SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL PLAN AND PLANNING SCHEME REVIEW

'The Southern Grampians Shire's Vision is to be Australia's Most Liveable Provincial Community' (Council Plan' SGSC 2009: 8).

Two of the Council's five fundamental objectives are to:

- Pursue environmental sustainability in our Shire and
- Plan for and foster economic growth and prosperity' (Ibid: 9).

The Council Plan also recognises the need to protect and enhance the essential features of the Shire that attract tourists, including the agricultural vistas and pastoral heritage (ibid: 13)

In addition, the Southern Grampians Shire Planning Scheme Review, completed in 2010, identified the development of a Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment as an urgent priority needed to ameliorate strategic gaps and address future strategic issues. (SGSC 2010: 6)

To this end, Southern Grampians Shire Council seeks to engage appropriate expert consultants to prepare a Significant Landscape Assessment for the Grampians. The Assessment will identify key sites, including view lines, for protection and make recommendations to help achieve the Council's environmental, economic and social objectives.

2. GRAMPIANS SURROUNDS STRATEGY, 1991

In 1991, prior to shire amalgamation, a Grampians Surround Strategy was developed with a goal to 'encourage and facilitate the sustainable development of the Grampians Surround Area' (Trevor Budge & Associates 1991: 2). Seven of the eight municipalities within the Surround Area adopted the Goals, Objectives and Policies Statement, and incorporated development controls into their Planning Schemes.

The Dundas Shire, now the Southern Grampians Shire, did not adopt the strategy at the time and remains the only Grampians municipality not to include a Significant Landscape Overlay to manage development in proximity to the National Park.

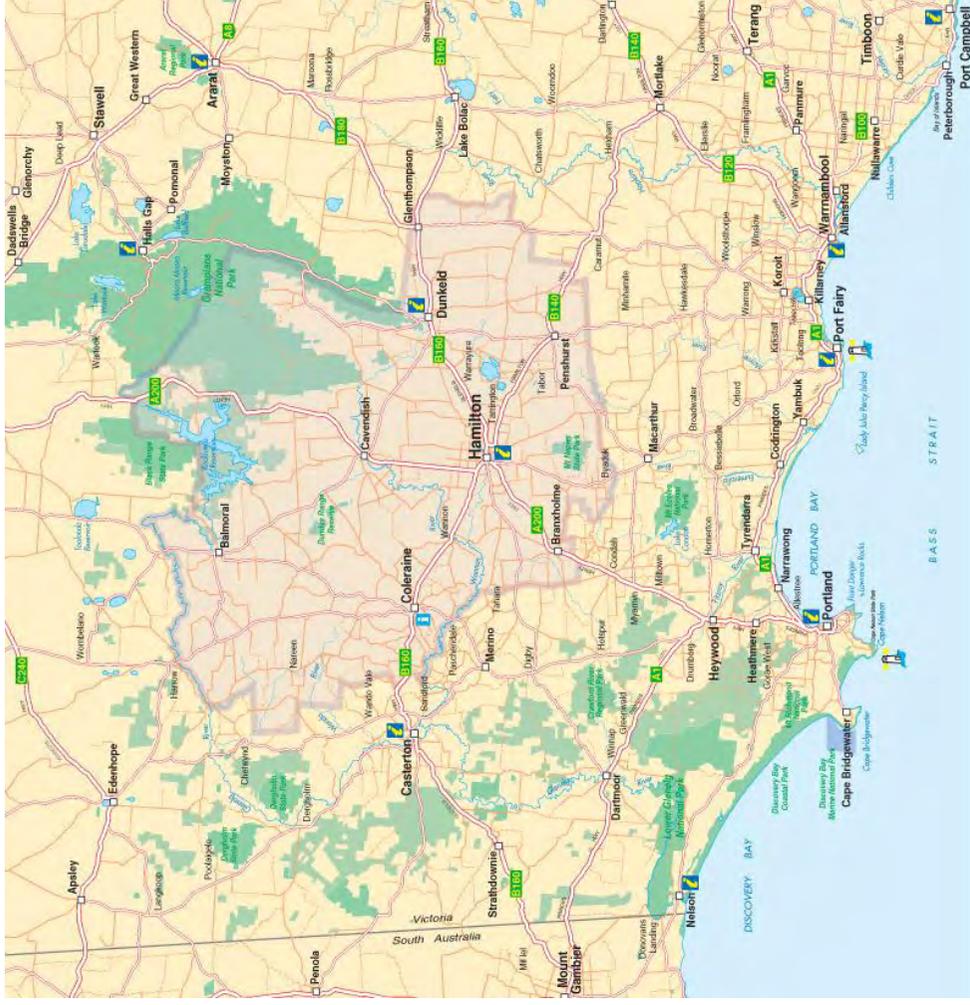
3. SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY, 2010

Southern Grampians Shire is committed to involving the members of the community in issues that are important to them and has developed a Community Engagement Policy with Guidelines to support the Policy's implementation. All Councillors, staff and external persons, firms and agencies employed by Southern Grampians Shire Council are required to make themselves aware of the Policy and strive to meet commitment to strong and effective community engagement activities in order to improve decision-making processes for planning, service delivery and major projects.

The Community Engagement Policy is provided for the information of tenderers, at Appendix 1.

4. MUNICIPAL PROFILE

With a landscape dominated by the spectacular Grampians mountain range, ancient volcanoes, tranquil rivers and waterfalls and undulating pastoral land dotted with majestic red gums, the Southern Grampians forms the heart of Victoria's renowned Western District. It is located 290 kilometres west of Melbourne and 500 kilometres south east of Adelaide (refer map below).



With a population of over 17,000, Southern Grampians covers an area of 6,650 square kilometres. Hamilton is the main retail and service centre supported by the towns of Balmoral, Branxholme, Byaduk, Cavendish, Coleraine, Dunkeld, Glenthompson, Penshurst and Tarrington.

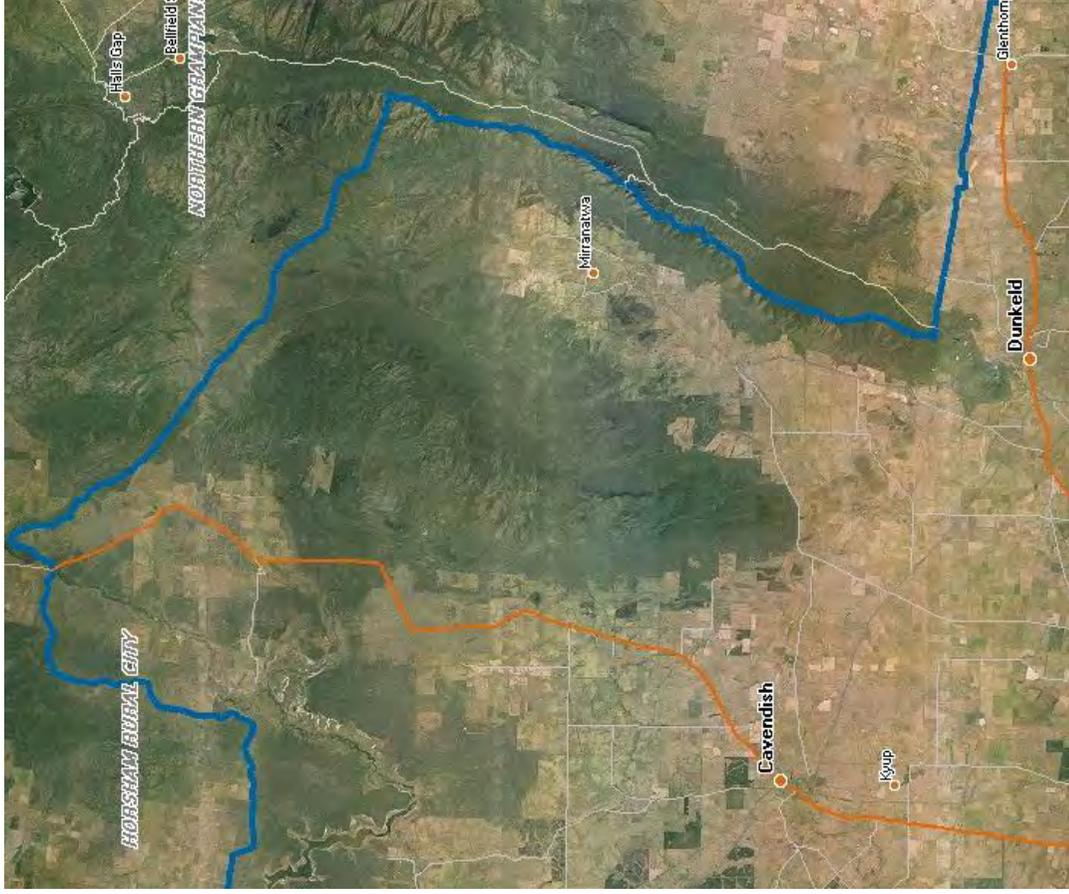
Southern Grampians Shire prospers from primary production. Agriculture, with its associated industries, is traditionally the largest employment sector and has contributed significantly to the Victorian and Australian economies. The Region is currently in the midst of a period of economic diversification and expansion as a variety of new enterprises have become established, including plantation timber, mineral sands processing and renewable energy production. Development of these new industries has the potential to profoundly impact the Shire's landscape.

As a result of this economic vibrancy, echoing strong National and State growth generally, the Shire has experienced a period of sustained population growth in the past 5-10 years, particularly in Hamilton. Hamilton's population is projected to continue growing steadily over

the next 20 years as these enterprises mature and approach peak productivity, and the local economy continues to strengthen and diversify.

5. GRAMPAINS LANDSCAPE PROFILE

The Grampians are a mountainous landscape of national significance consisting of rugged landscape ridges and escarpments on the southern tip of the Great Dividing Range. The surrounding plains are predominantly utilised as productive agricultural grazing land. Areas in the Grampians surrounds contain scattered Red Gum woodlands and stands of other native and exotic trees along roads, fence lines, streams and around settlements. The farmland and small townships are enhanced by the spectacular mountain backdrop.



Aboriginal occupation of the Grampians dates back some 20,000 years (Parks Victoria 2010) with many landscape features being formed through traditional land management practices. European occupation began after the exploration of Major Thomas Mitchell in the 1830's, whereby the settlement pattern and land use has contributed to the landscape of the region at present.

Over time, the economic function of the area has evolved to incorporate new industries, such as mining and tourism, to supplement the traditional agricultural base.

The landscape is valued by different users for a variety of reasons including aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquility, cultural heritage, environment, biodiversity and geomorphological significance and other interests such as artistic inspiration and recreation.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1 STUDY AREA

The Southern Grampians Shire Council has identified the need to undertake a Significant Landscape Assessment for the surrounds of the Grampians National Park affected by the Shire Planning Scheme.

Note: Due to the prominent nature of the Grampians in the surrounding area, it is expected that the extent of the study area boundary may vary due to topography and view lines towards the Grampians. An indicative area of 20km radius from the Grampians National Park boundary is considered a preliminary study area which will be further defined as a result of the project.

6.2 PURPOSE

The visual amenity offered by the Grampians is a considerable contributory element to the regions attraction for both residents and visitors alike. The purpose of this assessment is to construct a sophisticated understanding of landscape within the subject region, and prepare contemporary planning controls and guidelines to ensure appropriate development of the region proceeds, in a way that fosters economic growth and investment, and protects and enhances the Grampians landscape.

It is understood that the Grampians landscape may contain elements of archaeological, environmental, historical, or social significance. While these elements will, in part, influence the assessment, the primary focus is to identify and protect the significant aesthetic qualities of the area.

6.3 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The following key considerations have been identified which will be accounted for as part of the Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment. These include, but are not limited to:

Visual landscape

- Vistas to and from the Grampians at key locations
- Views from scenic approaches to the Grampians, particularly along major tourist entrance routes
- Identifying and managing urban growth areas and its impact on the Grampians landscape.
- The importance of the pastoral landscape in the creation of the area's scenic quality
- The significance of the Grampians in the local context and as a national environmental tourist attraction

Social, Environmental and Economic

- Different associations and meanings of landscapes for a diverse local community
- The role which the landscape plays in maintaining connections with community heritage (past), establishing community identity (present), and providing for community aspirations (future)

- The area surrounding the Grampians as an important biological component of the Grampians National Park
- Noting that the landscape represents an economic driver directly for the tourism and agriculture industries, but also indirectly as a lifestyle and environmental attractor for residents and business. Its protection, management and planning can contribute to job creation and vitality of communities.

7 CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS

The requirements of the Contractor are as follows:

- 7.1** Prepare a Project Plan including a Community Engagement Strategy (refer Attachment 1: List of potential stakeholders and engagement possibilities), Project Methodology and Project Program for approval by the Project Control Group (PCG).
- 7.2** Review all relevant Background Information related to the Project, including the reference documents outlined in Attachment 2: Reference Documents,
- 7.3** Prepare a Background Report (to form the basis of the final Landscape Assessment Report) including:
 - Policy Gap Analysis identifying strengths and weaknesses within the current legislative and planning policy framework in relation to development within the study area, including any relevant advice in relation to matters beyond the scope of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, such as the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, Heritage Act 1995 and the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.
 - Key Issues and Context Paper outlining the major opportunities and threats requiring consideration as part of the project, with input from the technical working group,
 - A Statement of Vision and Objectives including input from the Project Team, PCG, local resident and business community and the technical working group,

7.4 Prepare a Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment Report including:

- Landscape Character assessment- definition of landscape features or character areas, using a methodology based on analysis of particular landscape, environmental, topographic, scientific, visual, social and other relevant attributes. This assessment will necessarily require 'ground-truthing' through fieldwork in addition to being informed by a 'desktop' review of data including topographical, biodiversity, built infrastructure, land ownership, planning scheme, heritage significance, geological, wind mapping and other relevant details.
- Landscape Significance assessment- quantifying the significance of each landscape feature or character area, using criteria such as prominence, beauty, scarcity, condition, visitation and other relevant values. This assessment will be underpinned by community feedback, and will be used to geographically correlate new Planning Scheme controls to areas of high significance, in the interests of achieving appropriate levels of intervention and 'best value'.
- Grampians Landscape Strategy to link the results from the Landscape Assessments, with the Statement of Vision and Objectives Statement to deliver the agreed objectives. It is anticipated this will comprise a series of recommended

strategic interventions, including Development Guidelines and other Planning Scheme Controls, and any recommendations in relation to other initiatives beyond the capability of Council's Planning Department, including those that may be the responsibility of partner organisations, business and the community.

7.5 Develop an Implementation Plan, including:

- An Implementation Program articulating the timing and sequence in which strategic actions should be implemented,
- Preparation of Development and Management Guidelines to provide detailed guidance and context in relation to complex development issues such as:
 - development on significant roadsides,
 - fringe development near settlements,
 - development within significant rural view sheds, and
 - development in 'at risk' landscapes
- And preparation of associated Planning Scheme Amendment Documentation, including any required zone, overlay or LPPF controls and associated explanatory reports, etc necessary for public exhibition, to DPCD standard,

7.6 Liaise and attend meetings with members of the Project Control Group, Shire of Southern Grampians Council and Project Steering Committee, and others as necessary to carry out the day-to-day development and management of the Project, assist with community consultation and stakeholder meetings, and prepare the Planning Scheme Amendment to incorporate the Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment.

8 DELIVERABLES

The deliverables for the Project are:

- 8.1** Project Plan including:
 - Community Engagement Strategy,
 - Project Methodology, and
 - Project Program,
- 8.2** Background Report including
 - Policy Gap Analysis
 - Key Issues and Context Paper
 - Statement of Vision and Objectives
- 8.2** Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment Report, including:
 - Landscape Character and Significance Assessments,
 - Landscape Strategy
- 8.4** Landscape Strategy Implementation Plan, including:
 - Implementation Program,
 - Development and Management Guidelines,
 - Planning Scheme Amendment Documentation

9 RESPONSIBILITY

9.1 PROGRAM AND KEY MILESTONES

The Project will commence on 14 March 2010 and must be completed by 14 October 2011.

The following table identifies the Project's Key Milestones and provides indicative completion dates that shall be confirmed with the Contractor by way of the Project Plan:

Key Milestone	Completion Date	Responsibility
Appoint Successful Tenderer (the Contractor)	Month 1	SGSC
Confirm agreed Project Plan	Month 1	Contractor
Begin Background Review Phase of Project and complete Key Issues and Context Paper	Month 1	Contractor
Complete Background Review Phase including Statement of Vision and Objectives and associated community and technical working group consultation	Month 2	Contractor
Begin detailed Landscape Assessments	Month 3	Contractor
Complete Draft Grampians Significant Landscape Report and Draft Implementation Plan (excluding Planning Scheme Amendment Documentation)	Month 4	Contractor
Public consultation of Draft Report	Month 5	Contractor / SGSC
Complete Final Report including Planning Scheme Amendment Documentation	Month 6	Contractor
Present Final Report to Council and Community	Month 6	Contractor / SGSC
Forward Final Planning Scheme Amendment Documentation to DPCD	Month 7	Contractor

Consultation with the Community and the Technical Working Group will be undertaken at various points throughout the process. Consultation requirements will be confirmed as part of the Community Consultation Strategy within the Project Plan.

9.2 Quality

The work is to be of excellent quality and final reports may be individually or collectively submitted as the basis for any award application. The work will be incorporated into the Southern Grampians Shire Council Planning Scheme, and as such plans and reports shall be of a high standard, clearly communicating information to potential audiences ranging from the local community and investors to the State Government.

10 TENDER PRICE

An itemised lump sum fee proposal is to be provided for the tasks and deliverables as outlined above, inclusive of all expenses, including but not limited to travelling expenses, disbursements and sub consultancy costs. The proposal should be accompanied by a nomination of the person who will be the sole contact for any matters relating to the Project. This person is expected to attend meetings when required. Payments will be made progressively at satisfactory completion of the Project's Key Milestones (by negotiation prior to commencement of contract) as outlined in Section 9.a

11 MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

11.1 MANAGEMENT

Council's Project Control Group consists of Michael McCarthy, Director Shire Futures, Lucinda Peterson, Manager Planning Systems, Hugh Koch, Manager Economic Development, Jenny Hulse, Natural Resource Management Officer and Tom Scholfield, Strategic Planner. Tom Scholfield is the day-to-day business contact for the Project.

A Project Steering Committee will convene regularly to provide information to and seek input from the community, as part of a broader Community Engagement Strategy. The Committee is likely to involve a mix of Council and Community members including representatives from the following groups:

- The Project Control Group,
- SGSC Integrated Planning and Design Team,
- Southern Grampians Shire Council,
- Department of Primary Industries;
- Heritage Victoria – Landscape Advisory Committee;
- The Martang or Gunditj Mirring RAP,
- The local agricultural industry,
- The local tourism industry,
- A relevant Community Advisory Group,
- The Contractor's nominated representative/s.

11.2 REPORTING

The following reports are required as part of the Project:

- A Project Plan (including Project Methodology, Community Engagement Strategy and Project Program) to be endorsed by the Project Management Team prior to appointment of the Contractor,
- Monthly written progress reports to the Project Management Team,
- 3 x bound hard copies and 1 x CD containing all electronic files in Microsoft format (e.g. Word and Excel) of each final report, plan and technical assessment outlined in Section 8.

12 TENDER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Tender submissions must address each of the deliverables noted in Section 8 of this Specification, and are expected to include:

- An interpretation of the consultants understanding of the requirements of the Project,
- A Project Plan including Project Methodology, Community Engagement Strategy and Project Program,
- Details of fees and the time and cost of consultants involved in accordance with Sections 9 and 10,
- Details of the proposed project team members, including sub-consultants,
- Details of the Contractor's relevant experience with similar projects, and
- A list of 3 appropriate referees including contact information.

Whilst proposals should be in accordance with the provisions of the Specification, prospective consultants should not be discouraged from making alternative suggestions in their proposals, either in terms of the technical content of the work, or in terms of arrangements for consultancy. Any such variations from the Specification must be clearly presented.

13 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Tenders will be assessed to identify the tendered offer that represents overall best value for Council. Tenders will be evaluated according to the following criteria, listed in order of importance:

- Specification Conformance
- Tendered Price
- Demonstrated Performance
- Project Methodology, including Community Engagement Strategy (within Project Plan)
- Contextual understanding of the Project

Non-conforming tenders may be accepted solely at the discretion of the SGSC.

14 TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

The Project as described above is to be undertaken in accordance with the 'Services - General Conditions' contained herein.

15 ENQUIRIES

For further information regarding the project, please contact Lucinda Peterson, Manager Planning and Environment on (03) 5573 0274 or lpeterson@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au or Tom Schofield, Strategic Planner on (03) 5573 0218 or tschofield@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au during business hours.

APPENDIX 2: MEETINGS & COMMUNITY CONSULTATION



Southern Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment

The Southern Grampians Shire Council has commenced preparation of the Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment. The study will evaluate the visual character and significance of the Grampian's landscape, and prepare up to date planning policy and guidance to ensure the landscape's protection, while encouraging appropriate development, economic growth and investment.

THE SOUTHERN GRAMPIONS SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT WILL:

- Define and describe (with photos and maps) the visual landscape character of the Grampians region
- Determine which areas of the Grampians, and which views and vistas, are the most significant and why
- Seek and include the community's values on the character and significance of the Grampians landscape
- Assess and evaluate various forms of development that have occurred in the landscape; some of which will be positive, and others which may have detracted from the significance of the area
- Consider using policies and guidance in the planning scheme (such as the Significant Landscape Overlay) to protect and manage the Grampians landscape into the future

The above tasks will be approached with an understanding that the landscape is an important economic driver for tourism and agriculture, and that its protection and management should contribute to a vibrant local economy.



YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS IMPORTANT!

As part of the project, we want to gain a better understanding of the community's perceptions and values about the Grampians landscape.

As a starting point, consider the following:

- Where would you take a visitor to show them the best view of the Grampians landscape?
- Which feature, place or view is most significant, and why?
- Which area of the Grampians is most scenic or beautiful, and why?
- Is there a feature, place or view that is unattractive, or has been spoiled, and why?

Bring your photos and ideas along to the Community Workshop for discussion or email: grampianslandscape@gmail.com at any time to share your ideas.

INVITATION TO A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Contribute Your Ideas to the Landscape Assessment

Date: Thursday 16 June 2011

Time: 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Location: Cavendish Town Hall, Barker Street, Cavendish

Please **RSVP:** by Friday 10 June to Melanie Williams,
Ph:5573 0204 or email:
mwilliams@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au

PROJECT BLOG

A blog has been created to tell the story of the project as it evolves. This is a space to share photos or make a comment, even if you can't attend the community workshop. You may also check it to receive updates on the progress of the project. Find it at:

<http://grampianslandscape.blogspot.com>



STUDY PROCESS

The Southern Grampians Landscape Assessment will be prepared in four stages over the coming months, with a draft document available for community comment in December 2011.

Stage 1	Background & initial community input	May - June 2011
Stage 2	Landscape character assessment	July - September 2011
Stage 3	Landscape significance assessment	September - November 2011
Stage 4	Final recommendations	December - January 2010 (Formal exhibition will be later in 2012)

HOW TO BE INVOLVED

There will be different ways in which you can contribute throughout the course of the project:

Attend the **Community Workshop** in Cavendish on 16 June 2011

Post comments or photos on our **blog**:
<http://grampianslandscape.blogspot.com>

Email or send in photos and comments at any time
grampianslandscape@gmail.com

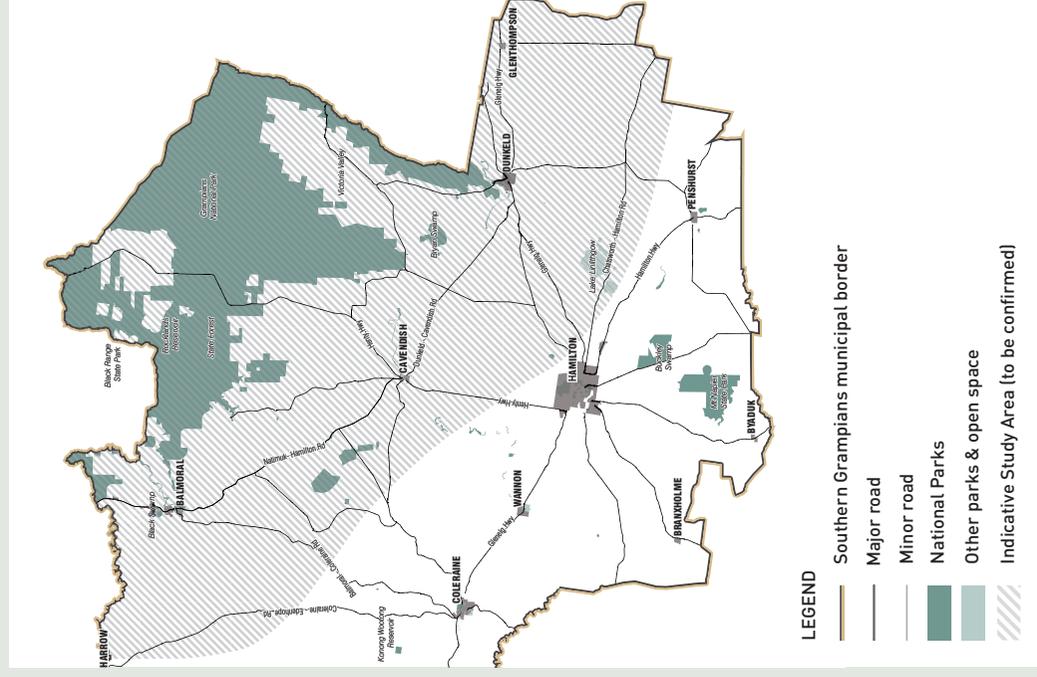
Keep in touch with the progress of the project via Council's website :

www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au/grampianslandscape

Provide your feedback to the draft Landscape Assessment when it is released in December 2011



THE STUDY AREA



The Study Area is the surrounds of the Grampians National Park, but is expected to vary due to topography, landscape features and views, and will therefore be clearly defined at the beginning of Stage 2 of the project. At this stage, an indicative study area of 20km radius from the national park boundary has been defined as the preliminary study area.

MORE INFORMATION

To register your interest in receiving regular updates on the progress of the project, or if you have any queries, please contact Tom Scholfield by phone 03 5573 0218 or email tscholfield@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au.

Community Workshop

16 June 2011

Cavendish Memorial Hall

6:00pm to 8:00pm

Objectives:

To inform the local community about the Significant Landscape Assessment and how they can be involved.

To engage the local community in the process, and to gather information from them about the landscape.

6:00pm **Welcome & Introductions** (Council)

May include background to the study; why Council is undertaking the study; and what the Council hopes to achieve.

Allow questions.

6:05pm **Overview of Agenda & Purpose of Meeting** (Claire)

Allow questions.

6:15pm **Tell us about the Landscape** (Facilitated discussion)

Begin with a warm up exercise, asking participants to write down one place where they would take an overseas visitor to experience the landscape. Invite people to share their word and explain why.

Use this as a lead in to the following questions (either facilitated as one group or separate tables of 8 to 10 people):

What is most significant (scenic, beautiful etc.) about the landscape? What / where are the most significant views (to and from)?

Has there been any development occur that has detracted from the landscape and its significance? (i.e. 'bad' development) What makes it bad? Can you think of any 'good' development that has occurred? What makes it good?

What do you hope this study achieves? Do you have any concerns about the study?

7:30pm **Wrap Up / Feed Back Opportunity**

(Format will depend on numbers. If separate groups, participants will have a chance to feed back.)

7:40pm **Next Steps**

Steering Committee (call for nominations, if not complete)

Community Photographic Exercise (2 photos)

Blog & website – refer Community Bulletin no. 1

7:55pm **Thankyou** (Council)

8:00pm **Meeting Close**

QUESTION 1: Where would you take an international visitor to appreciate the landscape?

Halls Gap, through Mirranatwa Gap to Bryan Swamp

American visitors have never seen trees like Red Gums before, and couldn't believe they were used as firewood

Railway bridge over Wannon River

Dunkeld (looking up to Mt. Abruapt)

Victoria Valley (x2)

Grampians Road to Halls Gap (through the National Park)

Wannon Falls/Nigretta Falls (x2)

Mt. Eccles

Fishing at the Moora Moora Reservoir

Jimmy's Creek (been destroyed)

Strachan's Hut

Mt Rouse (x2)

Sites with a variety of flora & fauna

Arboretums

Rocklands Reservoir

To see the volcanic features, natural springs, caves, wetlands

QUESTION 2: What words best describe the character of the landscape?

Majestic	Rugged	Ever-changing	Fragile
Grandeur	Rolling	Paradise	Stones
Unique	Open	Wonderland	Redgums
Picturesque	Blue hues	Naturally rich	Chimney Pots
Fertile	Variable colours	Ancient	Healthy
Diverse	Variety (agricultural activity, flora & fauna)	Iconic landscapes of Australian & aboriginal heritage	Architecture (homesteads)
Movement & views	Time & colour relationships	Dramatic	Atmospheric
Bucolic	High recreation values	Cultural diversity	

QUESTION 3: What are the key threats to the landscape?

People

Fire (kills microbiological activity in the soil)

Litter/rubbish

Plantations/Blue Gums/Wall-to-wall plantations and plantations to boundaries (it is important to achieve a balance)

- Big factories
- Scrub that is protected (?)
- Inappropriate industrial development
- Unplanned development
- Population growth, pressures of infrastructure and subdivision
- Lack of protection for wildlife & vegetation
- Plantations of the wrong species
- Powerlines
- Loss of agricultural land
- Lack of an SLO on significant features

QUESTION 4: What areas/aspects of the landscape are the most significant?

- Mahoneys Swamp, adjacent to Bryans Swamp
- Victoria Valley
- How the mountains jump out of the plains
- Strachan’s Hut. land on the north side of the Glenelg River (South of Victoria Range) has its own ecosystem, there is no sun after midday and it is like a stringy bark rainforest
- Wetlands/swamps, proximity to the water table
- Rocklands Reservoir
- Mt Sturgeon & Mt Abrupt
- Mitchells Gully
- Points Arboretum (Coleraine)
- National/State Parks
- The Red Gums and other trees, their sculptural qualities
- Seeing the agricultural landscape in action (eg. Working dogs on farms, feeding of livestock)
- Drama, scale and impact on approach to the mountains
- Climatic differences, how the Grampians seem to create their own climatic conditions
- Lifestyle amenity
- Fragility of the landscape, it is irreplaceable

QUESTION 5: What would you like the study to achieve?

- Leave us alone/like it the way it is
- Freshwater Lake should have been cleaned out while it was dry, used to have 12ft of water in it
- “Not to ruin/devastate the natural landscape”
- “A freedom to do what we want to do”
- “We want the same rules for the whole Shire”
- “Study should be done of the whole Shire, not just the Grampains!”
- “Roadsides to be kept clear (unkempt vegetation, scrub, rubbish)”

Create awareness of the landscape to both locals and tourists, ensure that it is not taken for granted
Education about the Study, ensure that the message is clear that it is not going to restrict development and that it will identify the places that are the most suitable for development
“Preservation of the landscape for future generations”

QUESTION 6: Do you have any concerns about the study?

- Things change and there is a need to be able to change with it, don't want restrictions
- Government interference
- Restrictions on farming/business activities
- Restrictions on building a shed/location of shed
- “To not listen to community values”
- “Don't want to lose the history of the area”
- Getting the community aware and involved
- Transparency in the process, ensuring that it is clear how conclusions have been reached
- Impacts on hydrology

Other key points and statements:

- “The landscape is uniquely majestic”
- “It is a productive, working landscape that is important to people's livelihood”
- “Don't want too many restrictions on what we can and can't do”
- “We love the landscape to death” (it is important to achieve a balance)
- “Should be a whole of Shire study, there are other landscapes of equal importance in the Shire”

Other comments:

- Original names / original parish plans
- Henham Township – Historic township subdivision that was never developed (talk to Iris Field, did a history of the area with photos etc.)
- About three months of dead calm conditions last year (Further you go west, the deeper the water)

COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHIC EXERCISE

Instruction sheet

Thank you for taking photos to contribute in the preparation of this important study into the significant landscapes of the Southern Grampians Shire.

Please take 2 photographs:

- One of a feature, place or view you think is significant, scenic or beautiful of the Grampians and surrounds
- One photo of a 'threat' to the landscape (or a feature, place or view that has been spoiled) within the Grampians and surrounds

These photos will be used to gain a better understanding of the community's perceptions and values about what the significant landscapes of the Southern Grampians Shire are, and what sorts of issues, challenges and threats exist in managing those landscapes. We may also use the photos to display in meetings and in the final report we prepare for the project.

**Please return photographs by
Friday 2 September 2011**

Here are some of the basic instructions:

- Please limit yourself to only a couple of photos
- As you are taking the photographs, please fill in the Photographic Survey Form on the reverse of this sheet to give each photo a caption. If submitting via email, please include this information in your email. These captions will accompany the photos and used by the Study Team to understand why you took them
- When you have taken your photographs, please return them by Friday 2 September to:

Tom Scholfield

email: grampianslandscape@gmail.com

Or you may print them out and mail to:

Southern Grampians Shire Council

Re: Landscape Assessment Community Photograph Exercise

1 Market Place

Locked Bag 685

Hamilton Vic 3300

COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHIC EXERCISE

Photographic Survey Form

Name:

Contact No:

Area you live (or have
taken your photos):

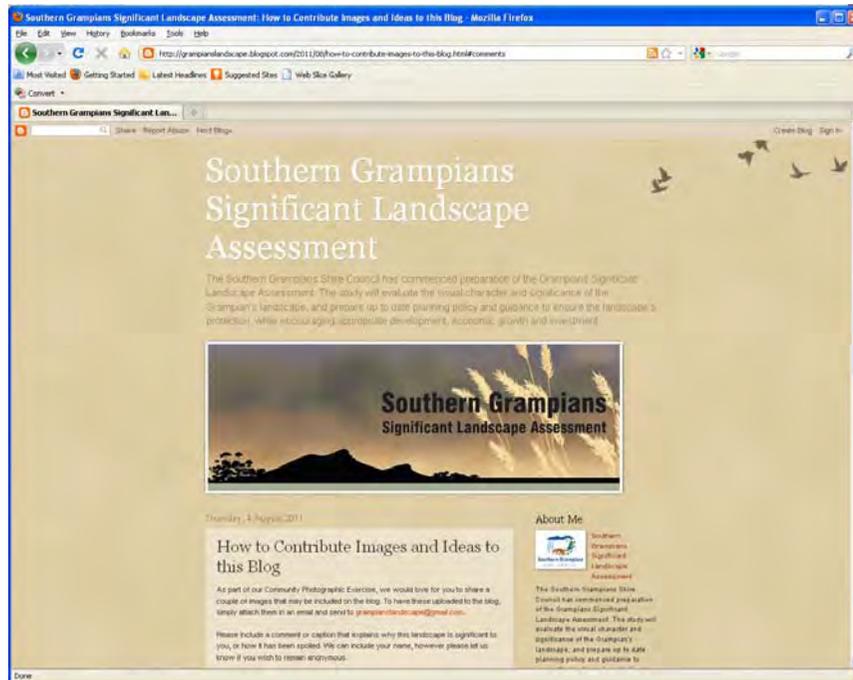
Please include a photo to demonstrate:

- A feature, place or view you think is significant in your landscape, and a comment about why you think it is significant
- One photo of a feature, place or view you think is unattractive or spoiled, and a caption explaining why you think this is the case.

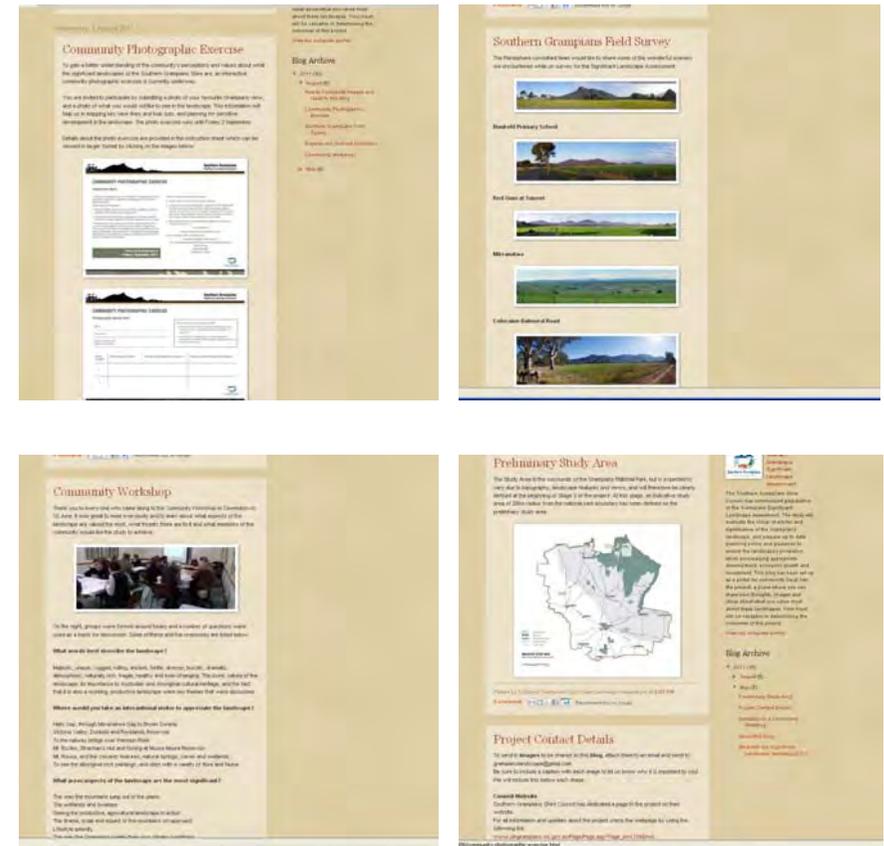
Photo Number	Photo subject / location	What do you like about this landscape?	What do you dislike about this landscape?
1.			
2.			

PROJECT BLOG

Due to the scale of the Study Area it was acknowledged that not everybody who would like to contribute to the project would be able to attend the Community Workshop. The Southern Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment Blog was set up at the beginning of the project as means of sharing information about the process being undertaken, to advertise how contributions could be made and to encourage community input where thoughts, images and ideas related to the project could be shared.



The Blog remains active and can be found at: <http://grampianslandscape.blogspot.com/>



Grampians Landscape Assessment - Steering Committee Meeting #1: Agenda

Date : Thursday, 21 July 2011	Time : 12.30pm – 2.30pm	Venue : Conference Room, 111 Brown St, Hamilton
Chairperson : Cr Katrina Rainsford		Minutes : Claire / Tom
Meeting Objective: Commencement Meeting		

No.	Item	Details	Who	Notes
1	Welcome and Introductions		KR	
2	Project Update		CS / TS	
3	Community Workshop Findings		CS	
4	Character Assessment and Documentation		CS	
	4.1 Timeframe for feedback			
	4.2 Circulation to Reference Group			
5	Consultation & marketing		CS	
	5.1 Community photo exercise (and other competitions)			
	5.2 Blog			
	5.3 Website			
6	General discussions / ideas		All	
7	Next Steps		KR	

Next Meeting	Date: TBC – proposed for week of 12 th September, 2011
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Ground rules for our Meeting	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We start on time and finish on time 2. We all participate and contribute – everyone is given opportunity to voice their opinions 3. We use improvement tools that enhance meeting efficiency and effectiveness 4. We actively listen to what others have to say, seeking first to understand, then to be understood 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. We follow-up on the actions for which we are assigned responsibility and complete them on time 6. We give and receive open and honest feedback in a constructive manner 7. We use data to make decisions (whenever possible) 8. We strive to continually improve our meeting process and build time into each agenda for reflection

Meeting – Minutes

Date : Thursday, 21 July 2011	Time : 12.30pm – 2.30pm	Venue : Conference Room, 111 Brown St, Hamilton
Chairperson : Cr Katrina Rainsford		Minutes : Claire / Tom
Meeting Objective: Commencement Meeting		

Present:	• Cr Katrina Rainsford (SGSC)	• Michael McCarthy (SGSC)	• Tom Scholfield (SGSC)	• Jenny Hurse (SGSC)
	• Claire Scott (Planisphere)	• Peter Dark	• Matt Berry (DPCD)	• Sonia Rappell (Heritage Vic)
	• David Roberts (Parks Victoria)	• Mary Johnson	• Chris Burchett (Grampians Tourism)	• John Lovett (Gunditj Miring Traditional Owners)
	• Judy Van Renan	• David McLeod	• Heinz de Chelard	
Apologies:	• Lucinda Peterson (SGSC)	• Steve Myers (DPCD)		

No	Actions and Agreements	Who	When	Completed
1.	<u>Welcome and Introductions</u> Cr Rainsford welcomed the group, and extensive individual introductions were made.	Note		
2.	<u>Project Update</u> Claire introduced the project program, and outlined the fieldwork that Planisphere have completed to date. The findings from the community workshop in Cavendish were also discussed, and the draft Character Areas Map and Assessments presented. Proposed Character Areas are Grampians (Gariwerd) and Surrounds, Rolling Tablelands and Volcanic Agricultural.	Note		
3	<u>Key issues and observations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • customer/ratepayer anger over “Line on Maps” with Grampians Surrounds Strategy. • missed opportunity not to do whole shire? • State Government intends to fund a regional landscape assessment for the whole State which could pick up the rest of the Shire, including the Volcanic Plains in more detail. • landscape changes with weather, season, time. • key challenge – losing / changing property rights • should be an incentive based system for landscape protection / enhancement, not just rules • recognition of native title, indigenous history • Bushfire Royal Commission – consider impact of fire on landscape • potholes on roads stop you looking at landscape • acknowledge view lines from park as well • don't exclude public park areas – they are still subject to development like communications towers • lots of 'dead spots' in Grampians – likely development of more communications towers in future 	Note		

Grampians Landscape Assessment - Steering Committee Meeting #2: Agenda

Date : Thursday, 22 September 2011	Time : 11.30pm – 12.30pm	Venue : Mirranatwa Hall, Mirranatwa School Road, Mirranatwa
Chairperson : Cr Katrina Rainsford		Minutes : Tom
Meeting Objective: Discuss Draft Landscape 'Significance' Assessment		

No.	Item	Details	Who	Notes
1	Welcome and Introductions		KR	
2	Project Update		CS / TS	
3	Feedback to landscape character assessment and documentation		CS	
4	Overview of visual significance assessment and documentation		CS	
5	Other business:			
	5.1 Involvement of Reference Group		TS	
	5.2 Last call for community photo exercise responses		CS / TS	
	5.3 Next steps		CS / TS	

Next Meeting	Date: TBC – proposed for week of 23 January, 2012
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Ground rules for our Meeting

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. We start on time and finish on time | 5. We follow-up on the actions for which we are assigned responsibility and complete them on time |
| 2. We all participate and contribute – everyone is given opportunity to voice their opinions | 6. We give and receive open and honest feedback in a constructive manner |
| 3. We use improvement tools that enhance meeting efficiency and effectiveness | 7. We use data to make decisions (whenever possible) |
| 4. We actively listen to what others have to say, seeking first to understand, then to be understood | 8. We strive to continually improve our meeting process and build time into each agenda for reflection |

Meeting – Minutes

Date : Thursday, 22 September 2011	Time : 11.30pm – 12.30pm	Venue : Mirranatwa Hall, Mirranatwa
Chairperson : Cr Katrina Rainsford		Minutes : Tom
Meeting Objective: Commencement Meeting		

Present:	• <i>Cr Katrina Rainsford (SGSC)</i>	• <i>Michael McCarthy (SGSC)</i>	• <i>Lucinda Peterson (SGSC)</i>	• <i>Tom Scholfield (SGSC)</i>
	• <i>David McLeod</i>	• <i>Peter Dark</i>	• <i>Matt Berry (DPCD)</i>	• <i>Chris Burchett (Grampians Tourism)</i>
	• <i>Mary Johnson</i>			

Apologies:	• <i>Jenny Hurse (SGSC)</i>	• <i>Steve Myers (DPCD)</i>	• <i>Judy Van Renan</i>	• <i>Heinz de Chelard</i>
	• <i>David Roberts (Parks Victoria)</i>	• <i>Claire Scott (Planisphere)</i>	• <i>Sonia Rappell (Heritage Vic)</i>	• <i>John Lovett (Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners)</i>

No	Actions and Agreements	Who	When	Completed
1.	<u>Welcome and Introductions</u> Katrina welcomed the group, and noted apologies. The Committee thanked Peter for opening up the hall and preparing it for the meeting.	Note		
2.	<u>Project update</u> Tom discussed the work undertaken by Planisphere since the first Steering Committee Meeting in July, and thanked the group for their input to date. Lucinda noted the State Government are considering commissioning a landscape assessment in southwest Victoria, and this is likely to address the remainder of the Shire, including the Volcanic Plains and the Dundas Tablelands landscapes. Chris noted that the Grampians Way project funding application was successful, and would now proceed to preparing a scoping study.	Note Note Note		
3.	<u>Feedback on Landscape Character Assessment Papers</u> Tom circulated copies of the feedback response table and the committee discussed how feedback had been interpreted by Planisphere. Discussion included: • the tourism appeal of 'country lanes' • other painters with Grampians pieces in NGV (Chevellier?) and Hamilton art gallery (Thomas Clarke?). <i>Tom / Claire to source copies where possible.</i> • concept that 'windows look both ways' – need to recognise views from Grampians too • David suggested looking at the wind atlas – that most high, windy areas are already taken by current wind farm developers. • Lucinda acknowledged the wind atlas is important in understanding where wind farms may be developed, but outside the scope of the landscape assessment. • Mary suggested there are some inaccuracies in heritage study. <i>Mary to identify any relevant outstanding info.</i>	Note TS/CS MJ	 7/10/11 ASAP	

No	Actions and Agreements	Who	When	Completed
4.	<p><u>Introduction – Landscape Significance Assessment documents</u> Copies of the draft assessment were circulated, and the structure and key themes were introduced.</p> <p>Discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of lookouts – do they need to be elevated? • Provision for lookouts on roadsides etc • Mount sturgeon lookout • Truck stops – many more developed west of Hamilton and in SA – development opportunity? • Mirranatwa Gap lookout on the border of Ararat Shire – need to consult with surrounding Shires • Cavendish – Wannon River Crossing • Peshurst – road axis along French St • Dunkeld – Vic Valley rd, vista behind Royal Mail Hotel, Fairburn St reserve • Hamilton – from Safeway, and along Gray St • Balmoral – views from school • Glen Isla – heath land, views <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grampians – hasn't changed in a million years, pre-European, feeling wells up inside you as you approach • concept of panoramic vs 'broken' landscape e.g. with plantations – both have something to offer, but how to strike a balance? • reflective quality of water bodies in the landscape – this region represents 30% of Victoria's ephemeral wetlands • wildflowers – important tourism attraction, changes landscape seasonally • Grampians – the largest area of native forest in western Victoria? • roadside vegetation protection can be a threat if not maintained – orchids can be pushed out by sucker trees, etc. African daisy is a major issue in roadsides near Balmoral. • DSE are interested in input about native vegetation management • Wind farm landscape assessments – significance often 'in the eye of the beholder' • Regional interest in mining and recent granting of exploration licenses was noted. • Suggestion that further info / comparison with landscape protection measures in other areas was required. • The level of detail around implementation in the assessment was queried -> will this be in the draft report? • Suggestion was made to consider tourism/promotion strategy around Major Mitchell Strategy <p><i>Committee to respond with any further comments to Tom by next Friday, 30 September.</i> <i>Planisphere to complete revised draft report by mid October for distribution.</i></p>	<p>Note</p> <p>Note</p> <p>All CS</p>	<p>30/9/11 17/10/11</p>	
5.	<p><u>Project Reference Group</u> Tom outlined the Reference Group is intended to consist of key stakeholders, relevant agencies, industry associations, interest groups and others, and will be directly approached when the draft report is prepared, to ensure they are given every opportunity to contribute before the reports are finalised.</p> <p>Suggestions from Committee included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Naturalists, Field and Game Assoc., Anglers groups, Bird watching groups, etc • Forestry Stewardship Council • Artist groups, photographers, • National Parks – Director Peter Taylor? • Local Progress Associations, School groups, etc • surrounding Shires <p><i>Committee to submit any further Reference Group contacts / suggestions to Tom.</i></p>	<p>Note</p> <p>Note</p> <p>All</p>	<p>7-10-11</p>	

No	Actions and Agreements	Who	When	Completed
6	<p><u>Photo exercise – LAST CALL</u> Tom noted that there have been some photos submitted but not the numbers hoped for, and that <u>completing the accompanying form</u> is very important to enable Planisphere to assess significance.</p> <p><i>Committee to submit any outstanding photos with completed forms by Friday 7 October.</i> <i>Council to draft media release with accompanying photos to generate more submissions.</i></p>	<p>Note</p> <p>All TS/LP</p>	<p>7/10/11 ASAP</p>	
7	<p><u>General discussion</u> <i>Lucinda to check Moyne Planning Scheme re: Significant Landscape Overlay covering volcanic lava flow areas</i> <i>Tom to send copy of Grampians Surround Strategy to Chris</i></p> <p>Committee requested an opportunity to review the final draft report and any development controls before public exhibition and suggested that this should involve another steering committee meeting.</p> <p>Suggestion of 'travelling road show' type display for public exhibition stage was made. This could involve spending a day in each town, preferably pre-advertised and timed on the day of an existing event, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dunkeld mosaic event - 22 Oct - Penshurst – contact Catherine Loria? - Cavendish flower show - Balmoral show? - Farmers markets - Glen market – 9 Oct 	<p>LP TS</p> <p>Note</p> <p>Note</p>	<p>7/10/11 7/10/11</p>	
8	<p><u>Next steps / Next meeting</u> <i>Tom to discuss additional Steering Committee meeting timed with release of revised report with Planisphere and confirm details.</i> <i>Tom to prepare and issue minutes.</i></p>	<p>TS</p> <p>TS</p>	<p>3/10/11</p> <p>ASAP</p>	

No	Actions and Agreements	Who	When	Completed
.	<p><u>Key issues / observations (continued)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there has been a nomination of the Grampians on National Heritage Register – this project may assist • wind towers not likely to be high yielding from tourism perspective – maybe some limited ‘green’ tourism • towers can be designed to be visually acceptable • wind atlas should be considered re: likely locations of wind towers • don’t want to rule out option of wind energy with carbon constrained future. • opportunity for carbon sinking with Mallee eucalyptus up North, but significant landscape impact • Grampians Tourism are working towards the ‘Grampians Way’ ring road around the Grampians • can have ‘right of view’ – implement via SLO • touring, scenic route important but lower order roads also carry large numbers of tourists • should seek advice from Rod Bird about boundaries of landscape areas • importance of ‘looking over the fence’ – sheep, etc to city tourists – also part of landscape • Gariwerd history – “6 seasons” • the colour of the Grampians change – ‘that’s how we know it will rain’ • Eugene Von Guerard landscape paintings – use as a reference point for ‘change over time’ in last 160 years • lack of lookout stops for tourists to take photos – project could identify list of sites for development • exploratory licenses coal seam, gas etc – possible future threat • importance of land care groups – records of tree cover • opportunity for funding for Landcare groups from future energy development - Landcare initiatives should be included under ‘landscape change’ • transmission lines, telecommunications infrastructure – possible future landscape threat • concept of farmers as custodians of the land and the landscape • protecting the landscape is about long term economic prosperity • aging of River Red Gums is a significant threat to the landscape • water harvesting and drainage is a pressure / threat issue, as is the granting of exploration licenses, and the devt of infrastructure such as high tension wires • other natural threats include landslide and inappropriate fire 	Note		
	<p><u>Community Engagement Plan</u></p> <p>Claire noted project information will be directly sent to a broader reference group, linking into key stakeholders not represented on the Steering Committee.</p> <p>Initiatives to engage with the community include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo exercise (closes 2 September) • Community bulletin updates • Project website (www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au/grampianslandscape) • Interactive project blog (linked to website above) <p>Committee suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use committee email networks to circulate information • display at football / netball clubs • use community newsletters and notice boards 			

No	Actions and Agreements	Who	When	Completed
.	<p><u>Photo Exercise</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Committee invited to submit up to 8 photos (e.g. 4 landscape views, 4 landscape threats), • General community up to 2 each (one view, one threat) by 2 September. • The photos will be used to capture hidden or little known views and to gauge landscape 'significance'. • Photos to be displayed and discussed on the project blog, and as part of exhibition of draft reports • Information should be submitted via grampianslandscape@gmail.com – Tom and Claire to upload to blog. 	Note		
	<p><u>Actions / Next Steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>provide feedback / comments on Project Program and Community Workshop notes to Tom</i> • <i>provide feedback / comments on Character Areas Map and Assessments to Tom</i> • <i>forward tourism road use data to Tom</i> • <i>forward information about Gariwerd history of '6 seasons' to Tom</i> • <i>forward images for display on project blog via grampianslandscape@gmail.com, commentary welcome!</i> 	<p>All All CB DR All</p>	<p>4/8/11 4/8/11 ASAP ASAP 2/9/11</p>	
	<p><u>Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Tom suggested there is an opportunity to hold the remaining Committee meetings in different locations around the Grampians for the group to explore the landscape, and experience it differently.</p> <p>Judy offered to hold the next meeting at her farm – 'Wiltshire' , 99 Vanrenan's Lane, Glenthompson. Any other suggestions from the Committee are welcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Confirm Steering Committee Meeting (proposed Thursday, 15 September) asap.</i> 	<p>Note Note TS</p>	<p> 18/8/11</p>	



Southern Grampians
SHIRE COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

31 May 2011

UNDERSTANDING THE GRAMPIANS LANDSCAPE

Community participation is vital for the success of the Southern Grampians Shire Council's first landscape planning project, with community members invited to have their say on the Grampians Landscape Assessment at a key meeting in June.

SGSC strategic planner, Tom Scholfield, said the initiative was all about understanding the features of the Grampians landscape within the Shire (from Balmoral to Glenthompson) that are treasured by locals and visitors alike, so that future development can be managed to respect important view lines.

Council has paired with specialised and award winning strategic planning firm, Planisphere who developed the Coastal Spaces landscape assessment for Victoria, to oversee the project.

"Results from this project will help us better protect the iconic Grampians landscape, while encouraging appropriate development, economic growth and investment. We hope to have the draft landscape assessment ready for public release by November," said Mr Scholfield.

An innovative community engagement feature of the project will be the use of an online blog, linked to the Council website. "The blog will tell the story of the project as it evolves, and is a space to share photos or make a comment, even if you can't attend the community workshop. You may also check it to receive updates on the progress of the project." The blog is available from the project website which can be accessed by clicking on the icon on Council's homepage.

Council is currently seeking nominations until the tenth of June from community members to help guide the study by sitting on the Project Steering Committee.

Steering Committee nominations should be directed to Mr Scholfield by 5pm, Friday 10 June. Terms of Reference and Selection Criteria for the Steering Committee are available for download from the Shire's website.

All interested residents are encouraged to attend a community workshop at Cavendish on June 16, to share their thoughts about the values of the Grampians landscape and potential landscape threats.

The June 16 community workshop will be held 6-8pm at the Cavendish Memorial Hall in Barker Street.

For more information on the project, or to RSVP for the events, please contact Mr

Scholfield on 5573 0218, or visit www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au/grampianslandscape.

< ENDS >

For further information regarding this media release, please contact Karen Foster
on 0407 312 836 or email karen@o2media.com.au



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14 June 2011

COMMUNITY REMINDER ABOUT GRAMPIANS LANDSCAPE

Local residents are reminded about a key meeting on Thursday night (16 June) where they are invited to have their say on the most important and valued Grampians landscape features.

The community workshop, run by specialised strategic planning firm Planisphere, will be held from 6-8pm at the Cavendish Town Hall and is part of the Southern Grampians Shire Council's Grampians Landscape Assessment.

Council Senior Strategic Planner, Tom Scholfield, said it was important for as many people as possible to attend the meeting to provide their thoughts on the visual character and significance of the Grampian's landscape and potential threats to this landscape, so that future development can be managed to respect important view lines.

"Results from this project will help us better protect the iconic Grampians landscape, while encouraging appropriate development, economic growth and investment," said Mr Scholfield.

Along with this workshop, Council has set up an online blog linked to the Council website.

"The blog is a contemporary and innovative way of updating people with the latest project news, as well as being an interactive space where you can share photos of the Grampians or make comments about the project," said Mr Scholfield.

"By going down this path, we hope to make the project more accessible to the community, and ensure we get a balanced and comprehensive understanding of the community's views to inform the project."

Mr Scholfield said Council was aiming to have the draft landscape assessment ready for public release by November.

For more information on the project, or to RSVP for the event, please contact Mr Scholfield on 5573 0218, or visit www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au/grampianslandscape.

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For further information regarding this media release, please contact Karen Foster on 0407 312 836 or email karen@o2media.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL

FILE NO: D/11/8056	ACCOUNT CODE: 6540
ADVERTISING MEDIUM:	Hamilton Spectator
DATE OF PUBLICATION:	Saturday 4 June 2011
CLASSIFICATION:	Public Notice
Authorised:	Recommended:
.....
MICHAEL MCCARTHY	TOM SCHOLFIELD
DIRECTOR SHIRE FUTURES	SENIOR STRATEGIC PLANNER

GRAMPIANS SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

INVITATION TO NOMINATE FOR PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

The Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment will evaluate the visual character and significance of the Grampians Landscape, and prepare planning controls to protect the landscape, while encouraging appropriate development, economic growth and investment.

Further Information

For details, please download the Terms of Reference from Council's website www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au/grampianslandscape, or contact Tom Scholfield, Council's Senior Strategic Planner on 5573 0218 or tscholfield@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au

Please note - Expressions of Interest will now close on Friday 10 June at 5pm.

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL

FILE NO: D/11/17424	ACCOUNT CODE: 6540
ADVERTISING MEDIUM:	Hamilton Spectator
DATE OF PUBLICATION:	Saturday 20 August 2011
CLASSIFICATION:	Public Notice
Authorised:	Recommended:
..... MICHAEL MCCARTHY DIRECTOR SHIRE FUTURES TOM SCHOLFIELD SENIOR STRATEGIC PLANNER

GRAMPIANS LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

The Grampians Landscape Assessment Project seeks to understand the Grampians landscape, including where the most important views are, and to explore how this landscape can be protected and developed in Southern Grampians Shire.

An **interactive blog** is linked to the project webpage www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au/grampianslandscape. Please feel free to post anything you feel may help us to understand the landscape, and how it should be managed into the future.

Community Photo Exercise

You are invited to submit a photo of your favourite Grampians view, and a photo of what you would not like to see in the landscape. The photo exercise runs until **Friday 2 September**.

Further Information

Please contact Tom Scholfield, Council's Senior Strategic Planner on 5573 0256 or tscholfield@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au to discuss the project. Further information is also available from the website above.

APPENDIX 3: BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

GRAMPIANS SURROUND STRATEGY

Trevor Budge and Associates and Context Pty Ltd, 1991

The Grampians Surround Strategy investigated land use, development and asset management practices surrounding the Grampians National Park. Eight municipalities (pre-amalgamation) that bordered the National Park participated in the Strategy.

The Grampians Surround Area Development Code was an outcome of the Grampians Surround Strategy, the purpose being to *'ensure that new development and land use contributes to the achievement of the overall goal of the Grampians Surround Strategy'* which is *'to encourage and facilitate the sustainable development of the Grampians surround area'*.

The Discussion Paper that supports the Strategy defines the major characteristics of the Grampians Surround Area including details on the environment, water resources, agriculture, minerals, communities, tourism and recreations and infrastructure services. It also details the land use structures that were in place at the time, including Local Government Structure, the Planning Schemes and their weaknesses, planning appeals and referrals authorities and the conflicts that existed between private and public land.

The Discussion Paper also notes the speculation and controversy that the Strategy raised within surrounding communities. Issues include the possible extension of the National Park, extension of agency control over private land (particularly regarding the State Government's native vegetation controls) and the promotion and extension of tourist resorts and rural residential development that may compromise existing farming and agricultural land. The Discussion Paper nominates the maintenance of existing land uses as a priority of the Strategy.

The Strategy includes visual appraisals or references to landscape values within the SGSLA study area:

- The high scenic quality of the Victoria Valley is dependent on the remnant Red Gums in paddocks; tree decline is identified as a threat. A lack of regeneration in the Victoria Valley and on the Dundas Tablelands is identified an issue that may result in the degradation of the values placed on these landscapes by residents and visitors.
- The Black Range is described as *'a lower, but still dramatic landform that rises from the Wimmera Plains'*. Visual qualities of the Black Range are defined by the contrasts in land form, and remnant trees on road sides and within property boundaries.
- The landscape between Cavendish and Balmoral is described as being *'visually degraded'* due to rising salt, extensive land clearing and soil erosion.
- The visual qualities of Dunkeld and Balmoral are noted as being enhanced by their respective proximity to the southern ranges and the Glenelg River.
- Permanent swamps, such as Bryan, Marney and Brady, are noted as habitats for a range of birdlife.

The strategic directions for environmental management contained in the Discussion Paper suggest that guidelines or performance criteria for new development may be introduced to protect areas of visual sensitivity, such as the foreground viewed from main tourist routes, and prominent landforms.

The Strategy was not adopted by the Southern Grampians Shire Council due to lack of community support. However, **Clause 22.01-3 Landscape Environment and Protection** requires that the Strategy's recommendations are taken into consideration in the assessment of proposals for changes to land use or development.

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE HERITAGE STUDY: VOLUME 1 REPORT & THEMATIC HISTORY

Timothy Hubbard Pty Ltd and Annabel Neylon, 2004

The Southern Grampians Heritage Study comprises a thematic history of the Shire and the identification of places of post-contact cultural heritage significance. Places of significance include individual buildings, sites or precincts. Each place has been documented and its level of significance assessed, and recommendations on the appropriate level of statutory protection are made.

While the Study focuses on built heritage, it also discusses the issue of landscape significance. This includes landscapes surrounding heritage precincts, for which the application of an SLO is recommended, which has since been implemented by Amendment C6.

The Study also identifies six broad landscapes outside of settled areas as having potential State or local cultural significance, and this finding is of particular relevance to the SGSLA Study. While it is recommended that these broad landscapes be further investigated for statutory protection, no conclusion is reached on the most appropriate means of recognising them in the Planning Scheme. These six broad landscapes and the key points of their cultural significance to the SGSLA study area are:

Valley of Wannon River & tributaries

The Wannon River passes through all Character Areas identified in the SGSLA study and is a significant element of the landscape.

The Wannon River and its tributaries are noted in the Heritage Study as significant sites of early post-contact settlement. As inland waterways were not navigable, they were primarily used for water supply, washing sheep and irrigation at a local level. The Wannon River Road Bridge on Victoria Valley Road is a historically significant structure and included in the Heritage Overlay.

Mt Rouse and Penshurst

The volcanic cone of the now extinct Mt Rouse and the small township of Penshurst at its base are located within Character Area 3 identified in the SGSLA study.

Mt Rouse is noted in the Heritage Study as exemplifying recent volcanic activity, relevant to the geomorphology of Victoria. From its peak, expansive views can be obtained in all directions. It was also the location of an Aboriginal reserve established as an attempt to 'civilise' them.

Penshurst is cited in the Heritage Study as an example of early planning methodology, with regular street dimensions and grid layouts, as opposed to the 'organic' towns that grew in the gold fields.

The Heritage Study notes that scoria extracted from the Mt Rouse Quarry, which is given the status of local significance, was used for building railways. A number of notable historic buildings and sites within these locations were identified and are now included in the Heritage Overlay.

Mt Abrupt, Mt Sturgeon and environs

Mt Abrupt, Mt Sturgeon and environs are located within Character Area 1 identified in the SGSLA study. These places were appreciated for their picturesque aesthetic by the early explorer Major Mitchell in 1836.

They were the subject of artworks by that helped to popularise the Western District Landscape. Artists include Nicholas Chevalier, Eugene von Guérard, Louis Buvelot and Thomas Clarke. In the 1890s there was a growing interest in Australian Flora and the diversity of flora in the Grampian Ranges made them a popular tourist destination from the early 20th Century.

The Doling Doling Plain

The Doling Doling Plain is located within Character Area 3 identified in the SGSLA study. The key feature of this area mentioned in the Study is Lake Doling Doling, a volcanic lake northeast of Hamilton. Explorer Major Mitchell camped beside the lake and admired picturesque views of

the Southern Grampians. It is also the site of a historical homestead which has not survived.

The Victoria Valley

The Victoria Valley is located within Character Area 1 identified in the SGSLA study. The Study includes little description of the Victoria Valley; however, it mentions the locality of Mirranatwa, within the Victoria Valley, which benefitted from the Goldfields at Mafeking. The Victoria Valley also has a number of notable historic buildings and sites which are included in the Heritage Overlay, such as the Brooksdale Homestead Complex.

Mount Napier and Harman's Valley

These two landscapes exemplify recent volcanic activity and indicate the geomorphology of Victoria. They are both located outside of the SGSLA study area.

Nigretta Falls and Wannon Falls

The Nigretta Falls and Wannon Falls are located at the boundary of Character Area 2 identified in the SGSLA study. The Heritage Study notes the Falls as areas of natural beauty, popular for picnicking and painting, to be set aside for conservation purposes. Both are now included within the SLO introduced through Amendment C6.

A number of these landscapes were the subject of artworks that helped to popularise the Western District Landscape. Artists include Nicholas Chevalier, Eugene von Guerard, Louis Buvelot (Wannon Falls, above right) and Thomas Clarke.



DECLINE OF OUR VETERANS

A STUDY INTO THE DECLINE OF REMNANT RED GUMS WITHIN THE GLENELG HOPKINS REGION

Tom Kelly, Glenelg Hopkins CMA, 2008

This paper presents a study on the River Red Gum populations in the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Area. It discusses the value of the River Red Gum as a highly significant aspect of landscape, forming part of the natural and cultural heritage in the region, and options for future protection of these trees. The paper provides useful background information on River Red Gums as a specific element of significance within the SGSLA study area.

The paper notes that Red Gum specimens remain scattered and in stands throughout paddocks are remnants that reflect the history of clearing woodland forests that occurred the time of European settlement. They

provide valuable habitat for native fauna and create habitat links through the landscapes fragmented by agricultural production, provide shelter for grazing livestock and have deep root systems that can assist in mitigating the effects of dry land salinity.

There are two main contributors to the decline in River Red Gum populations: land clearance and dieback. Native Vegetation Retention controls were introduced by the Victorian Government in 1989 that require a permit for the destruction, removal or lopping of native vegetation. Community perceptions towards the trees has changed since the time when clearing was a popular practice, now landholders value them for aesthetic and historical reasons and have vested interest in maintaining and protecting remnants.

Many of these ‘veteran’ Red Gums may be over 450 years old and dieback is an issue due to the age of many specimens. This is evidenced more in those isolated in paddocks than found in roadside communities. Agricultural activity has left little opportunity for the regeneration of new specimens. Landholders have cited economic and time constraints as limitations to actively participating in this. As a result, as veteran trees enter senescence and experience a general decline in health, there are no younger trees to replace them. Soil compaction from stock and removal of the litter layer at the base of the tree are also contributing factors.

The paper recommends that remnant River Red Gums be protected through the application of an ESO. Suggestions for management of existing trees and methods for recruiting new ones are included in the recommendations. These include retention and protection of fallen debris, establishment of personal woodlots to relieve pressures of firewood collection, development of grazing guidelines for landholders while seeding trees, and increasing community awareness of the benefits of retaining remnant trees.

ESTABLISHED LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION

INTERIM BIOGEOGRAPHIC REGIONALISATION FOR AUSTRALIA (IBRA)

A system to classify all bioregions of Australia has been developed by the Federal Government as basis of the Natural Reserve System – Australia’s network of protected areas. The *Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia* (IBRA) has been achieved through the collation and mapping of data on vegetation and land systems from the collective work of State government and agencies. This information is used to identify regional ecosystems across Australia and to assess and measure levels of protection. Across Australia 85 bioregions and 403 subregions have been identified. Three bioregions are represented in the Southern Grampians Shire; the Greater Grampians, the Dundas Tablelands, and the Victorian Volcanic Plain.

The boundaries set by these classifications are useful as a starting point for landscape assessment in this project and defining the character areas. IBRA is a means by which the landscapes of the study area can be compared with other landscape types of the region, and beyond, and their significance better understood at a broader level.

Greater Grampians

The Grampians are the southern arm of the Great Dividing Range and feature steep rocky ridges and escarpments. Deposits from the erosion of these over time has formed sandy foothills at the base of the ranges

Much of the original vegetation within this bioregion has been retained and is in good condition. Biodiversity is high, with around one third of the states flora represented. Fire management remains an issue.

Dundas Tablelands

The Dundas Tablelands is a plateau bounded by the Grampian Ranges and the Victorian Volcanic Plains. It features a gently to moderately undulating

granite surface that has been deeply weathered and dissected by watercourses. The valleys that have formed are deep with steep sides.

Degradation of biodiversity has occurred due to extensive logging and clearing for grazing, which has led to the fragmentation of remnant vegetation. Salinity is an issue in this region and although it has been exacerbated by vegetation and land use changes, this landscape was susceptible to salinity prior to European settlement.

Victorian Volcanic Plain

The Victorian volcanic plain is an extensive flat to undulating basalt plain featuring stony rises, old lava flows, volcanic cones and eruption points and shallow lakes. In places weathering has eroded the basalt capping and exposed the sediments below which has caused the formation of U shaped valleys.

(Vegetation communities found within this region include the Stony Knoll Shrubland, Plains Grassy Woodland, the Plains Grassy Wetland, Stony Rises Herb-rich Woodland, Basalt Shrubby Woodland, Herb-rich Foothill Forest).

Agricultural land use has resulted in the depletion and fragmentation of native ecosystems and the conservation of remnant vegetation is a priority in land management.

Wetlands are another feature of this bioregion with 28 listed as being of national significance and 1054 that are regionally significant. Features of these include inland salt marshes, permanent and ephemeral freshwater and saline or brackish lakes and inland subterranean karst wetlands. The Western Districts Lakes area is a classified Ramsar site.

Processes that impact on the health of ecosystems within the Volcanic Plains include the fragmentation of land and clearing for agriculture and firewood collection, the introduction of exotic weeds and feral animals, changes to the hydrology including rising salinity and the draining of wetlands for agriculture and the build up of fertilisers and pesticides.

PLANNING SCHEME POLICY AND PROVISIONS

STATE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) provides a number of high-level strategic directions for the protection of landscape character.

In **Clause 10.02 Goals**, it lists one of the objectives of planning in Victoria to be *“To conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value”*.

Open space planning and management are addressed in **Clause 11 Settlement**, with strategies of planning for regional open space networks for recreation and conservation of natural and cultural environments, and protecting sites and features of high scientific nature conservation, biodiversity, heritage, geological or landscape value. *“Preserving and protecting features of rural land and natural resources and features to enhance their contribution to settlements and landscapes”* is a strategy that applies to the promotion and support of regional development.

Clause 12 Environment and Landscape Values states: *“Planning should help to protect the health of ecosystems and the biodiversity they support... and conserve areas with identified environmental and landscape values.”* Strategies address the protection of significant environments and landscapes. The Grampians are specifically noted as an environmentally sensitive area with significant recreational value.

Clause 12.04 Significant Environments and Landscapes contains the objective *“to protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments”*. Strategies to achieve this include recognising the natural landscape for its aesthetic value and as a fully functioning system, and ensuring that natural key features are protected and enhanced.

Clause 14 Natural Resource Management relates primarily to environmental quality and sustainable development; however it also

includes several references to the protection of areas of landscape significance.

Clause 15 Built Environment & Heritage contains urban design principles that include the objective of protecting sensitive landscape areas. These state that landmarks, views and vistas should be protected and enhanced by new development, and that it responds to the underlying landscape character and heritage values.

Clause 16 Housing requires that planning for rural living protects existing landscape values of the area.

The provision of renewable energy in a manner that ensures appropriate siting and design considerations are met is a key objective in **Clause 19 Infrastructure**.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

In 2010 Council conducted a Planning Scheme Review, the outcomes of which included re-writing the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF). An Amendment to the Planning Scheme is presently under preparation to include the revised LPPF in the Planning Scheme. Reviews of both the existing LPPF, as the current statutory context, and revised LPPF have been undertaken to inform the SGSLA study.

EXISTING LPPF

Municipal Strategic Statement

Clause 21.04 Key Characteristics & Issues of the Southern Grampians Shire provides a snapshot of the Shire including population and settlement patterns and descriptions of the towns and surrounding regions. Of particular relevance to the SGSLA study are details on the heritage, natural environment, employment and economy and tourism industry of the Shire.

It is highlighted that a number of townships are located within prominent and significant natural landscapes that are fundamental to their character

and amenity. These include Coleraine and Dunkeld, which feature a dramatic backdrop of the Serra Ranges, the Wannon River and Wannon Falls, the Rocklands Reservoir near Balmoral, and the Glenelg River which is the second longest river in Victoria and forms the northern border of the Shire. The protection and enhancement of the character and settings of these towns is a priority as their amenity is a key attractor for residents and visitors to the region.

Clause 21.04-5 Natural Environment describes the many significant landforms and natural features of the Shire that need to be protected and managed. These include Mt Napier, Mt Rouse, Mt Pierpont, Lake Linlithgow, Mt Baimbridge, the Byaduk Lava Flow and caves, the Victoria Valley, Lake Swallow and Lake Kennedy, Wannon River and Wannon Falls many of which are significant landscape elements within the study area.

The significance of the vegetative character of the Shire is described in detail in this Clause. The Grampians National Park retains considerable native vegetation and ecosystems characterised by dry eucalypt forests and woodlands with a healthy understorey. The ecology of the surrounding plains has suffered with the clearing of land and the draining of swamps and wetlands for agriculture resulting in a dramatic loss of vegetation and biodiversity. Perennial native grasslands, Red Gum swamp communities and the Basalt Plains grasslands are listed as threatened and remanent vegetation has predominantly been reduced to the roadsides.

Clause 24.04-7 The Grampians, specifically notes the cultural and environmental significance of the Grampians to the nation, reflected by the creation of the Grampians National Park in 1984. It also notes the important contribution the Grampians make to the tourism economy of the Shire. The need for a consistent, regional approach to the management of the visual or environmental impacts of land use and development around the Grampians is highlighted.

The role importance of tourism as a major contributor to the local economy is highlighted in **Clause 21.04-8 Tourism**. The preservation of the significant landscapes and natural features of the Shire is noted as essential to the continual growth of this industry.

Clause 21.04-9 Agriculture notes agriculture as being the most significant economical generator in the Shire, with the production of wool, meat (beef and lamb), dairy farming and broad acre cropping the predominant ventures. On a smaller scale, viticulture, olives and agroforestry are becoming increasingly present. Plantation timber has been recognised as a potentially substantial industry for the Shire. Agricultural activity forms a large part of the broader landscape character of the Shire.

Clause 21.04-10 Plantation Timber details that the Shire in a good position to expand timber production as a viable agricultural activity, with suitable soils, climate and access to international shipping facilities in Portland. Environmentally, plantation forestry can assist with ameliorating dry land salinity, soil erosion and improvement of water quality. It is also recognized that timber plantations need to be managed in a manner that reduces any detrimental impact that they may have on the landscape and natural feature of the Shire, which include visual impacts that may compromise opportunities for tourism.

Clause 21.07 Integrated Objectives for Land Use and Development summarises strategic directions adopted by Council and includes the role of the natural features of the Shire as a tourist and recreation destination. Specific mention is made of the Grampians, the landscape features near Coleraine, the Red Gum landscape on approach routes to Dunkeld, the Wannon and Nigretta Falls and the general features of the area with its Red Gum plains and volcanic peaks.

Clause 21.08 Objectives, Strategies and Implementation provides direction on Planning Scheme implementation for on a number of key policy areas under three broad headings: Settlement (including land use and development within and around Hamilton and other townships and the protection of heritage); Environment; and Economic Development (specifically addressing Agriculture and Rural Land Use, Tourism and Industrial Development).

Protection of landscapes is mentioned in relation to selected aspects of these policy areas. While Clause 21.08-3 refers to the significance of the Grampians to the tourism offer of the Shire, there is no direction for implementation of measures to protect this landscape.

Specifically, the Clause provides for the following:

21.08-1 Settlement (Hamilton) includes a strategy to improve the town entrances, boulevards and tourist-heritage routes. It includes application of the SLO as an implementation mechanism.

21.08-1 Settlement (Other Townships) includes the strategy of providing facilities for visitors and interpretation of the heritage and natural assets. Strategies are to be implemented via the Landscape and Environment Protection Policy and the application of the HO.

21.08-1 Settlement (Heritage) includes strategies to protect heritage buildings and precincts and their contribution to the ‘cultural landscape’ of the Shire, and the retention of trees in the landscape where they are associated with cultural heritage. Strategies are to be implemented via the Landscape and Environment Protection Policy and the application of the HO.

Clause 21.08-2 Environment includes protection of native vegetation, such as roadside vegetation, stands of native vegetation and remnant grass areas. Strategies are to be implemented via the Landscape and Environment Protection Policy and the application of the SLO to the Coleraine Landscape Area.

21.08-3 Economic Development (Tourism) specifically notes the importance of the Grampians to the Shire’s tourism industry. It includes as strategies *“protect and promote the natural and cultural assets of the Shire”* and specifically notes the Grampians National Park, and the strategic position of Dunkeld and Balmoral in relation to the Grampians. Strategies are to be implemented via the Landscape and Environment Protection Policy and the application of the SLO to the Coleraine Landscape Area.

The Heritage Study 2004 is included as a Reference Document to Clause 21.08.

Local Planning Policies

Clause 22.01-2 Townships applies to Coleraine, Balmoral, Dunkeld, Peshurst, Cavendish, Branxholme, Tarrington and Glenthompson. It includes policy direction on the landscape features of town entrances and the enhancement of the edges of towns with landscaping.

Clause 22.01-3 Landscape environment and protection is a key policy direction for the SGSLA study. The policy applies to the whole Shire. It reiterates the descriptions of landscape significance within the MSS and aims to protect the important landscape features of the Shire, including the Red Gums, volcanic peaks and other geological features, rivers and waterfalls, the Grampians and the cultural landscape of farming. It also aims to minimise the impact of townships and buildings in the landscape or upon environmental values.

Policies relate to general requirements for design within and protection of the landscape. There are also specific references to the landscape significance of the Wannon River, the area around Coleraine and the Dunkeld setting of Mt Sturgeon and Mt Abrupt. As previously noted, the Grampians Surround Strategy is listed in this policy as a consideration in determining planning applications.

Clause 22.01-4 Heritage applies to sites within the Heritage Overlay. It relates primarily to built heritage within the Shire and the protection of sites of Aboriginal cultural significance. However, it also makes brief reference to the preservation of landscapes.

Clause 22.03-2 Timber production, processing and agro-forestry is an important policy area, applying to land with the Farming Zone. It addresses management of these land uses so that they do not compromise the character and appearance of the Shire, which has “*a landscape of outstanding significance*”, and associated tourism opportunities. The policy applies to land within the Farming Zone. It requires timber production to be given careful consideration around landscapes of high visual quality, i.e. those included in the SLO, referred to in the Landscape Environment and Protection Policy or around the Grampians National Park.

Revised LPPF

The project to re-write the LPPF has recommended the amalgamation of all Clause 22 Local Policies within the MSS. Other changes to the LPPF include a revised structure for the MSS to achieve greater consistency with the SPPF, making use of ‘Policy guidelines’ in the MSS to reposition elements of Clause 22 and incorporating additional strategic work that has been undertaken by Council and the State government.

Overall, most of the descriptions of the SGSLA study area and directions for future development in regard to landscape significance contained within the current LPPF remain unchanged. However, a few revised provisions of the new LPPF are important to note:

Clause 21.01 Southern Grampians Shire provides a brief overview of the Shire’s key characteristics. It makes reference to the Shire’s environmental and cultural heritage, and notes conservation as a major land use, including the Grampians National Park. It doesn’t make specific reference to landscape significance.

Strategies and actions include: “*Continuing to support and grow a quality tourist and recreation product based on strategic regional positioning of product linking to other regional products, the built and cultural heritage, the natural features and the quality of experience which the Shire offers*”.

Clause 21.03 Environment and Landscape Values combines the content of the previous Clause 21.04-5 Natural Environment, Clause 21.04-7 The Grampians and Clause 22.01-3 Landscape environment and protection. It comprises two subsections of **Clause 21.03-1 Environment** and **Clause 21.03-2 Landscape**.

A note about views to the Grampians has been included: *The most dominating visual aspect of the Grampians is the topography with sheer cliffs rising sharply over 1000m above the relatively flat surrounding land. This impressive landform can be sighted from a distance of over 60km.*

Also, a new key issue has been added: *Protecting the landscape character of rural areas, including those associated with Red Gum plains, volcanic peaks and the Grampians.*

Clause 21.03 includes strategies on various design requirements to protect landscape (adapted from previous Clauses 22.01-3 and 21.08-2), however, these have been revised to remove specific reference to the landforms of Mt Sturgeon and Mt Abrupt and the Red Gums around Dunkeld. The Grampians Surround Strategy is still listed as a policy guideline.

Clause 21.04 Natural Resource Management includes new key issue: *“Protecting landscapes and natural features from the impacts of timber production”.*

A new **Clause 21.10 Local Areas** has been included. This adapts much of the information from Clause 21.04-3 Other Townships and applies the location-specific aspects of Clause 22.02 under headings for each town and settlement. It updates the MSS with the recommendations of strategies that have been completed for these places. It includes direction on how towns and settlements relate to local environmental features and in some instances the surrounding landscape.

Clause 21.11 Implementation makes reference to the application of the SLO only to the area in Coleraine. It nominates significant landscape assessments for the Grampians and the Victorian Volcanic Plains as required strategic work.

ZONES

The majority of the study area is contained within the Public Conservation and Resource Zone or the Farming Zone. The Public Park and Recreation Zone applies to small areas of public open space. Generally, the Low Density Residential Zone and/or Township Zone apply to the small towns and settlements within the study area. These are illustrated on the Zones Map on the following page. (It should be noted however, that ‘urban’ zoned land (e.g. land covered by any of the Residential Zones) is excluded from any detailed analysis as part of this study.

Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)

The PCRZ (Clause 36.03) is applied to land of high conservation value that is subject to public land management. Within the SGSLA study area this includes the Grampians National Park, the Black Range State Park, Black Swamp, Bryans Swamp, the Dundas Range Reserve and areas of State Forest.

The purpose of this zone includes *“to protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values”.* The zone provides for facilities for education and interpretation of these environments.

A permit is required for any buildings or works, with the exemption of planting or landscaping or those carried out through public land management. A permit is also required for subdivision. Permit applications must identify sites of flora or fauna significance or places of cultural heritage or scientific value.

Farming Zone (FZ)

A large majority of the study area falls within the Farming Zone (Clause 35.07) which provides for the use of land for agricultural purposes. In addition, the purpose of the zone includes ensuring sustainable land management practices and protecting the natural resources and biodiversity of the area.

A permit is required to subdivide land with a minimum lot size requirement of 40 hectares for most parts of the Shire. The Schedule to the zone specifies that the maximum area that is allowed to be used for timber production without a permit if it is covered by a Significant Landscape Overlay or the Environmental Significance Overlay is also 40 hectares (elsewhere there is no maximum area specified requiring a permit). A permit is also required for buildings within 100m of a Road Zone category 1, 20m from a Road Zone category 2 and within 100m of a dwelling that is not in the same ownership.

Of particular relevance to the project study area are the decision guidelines that relate to visual amenity and landscape character. Consideration must be given to the design, siting, height, bulk, colours and materials of buildings and their impact upon on the natural environment, landscape features and vistas, scenic quality and heritage values. Environmental issues that must be considered include the degree of impact on the flora and fauna of the site, the need to enhance and protect the biodiversity of the area and the need to revegetate land and riparian buffers along waterways, gullies and ridgelines.

Public Park & Recreation Zone (PPRZ)

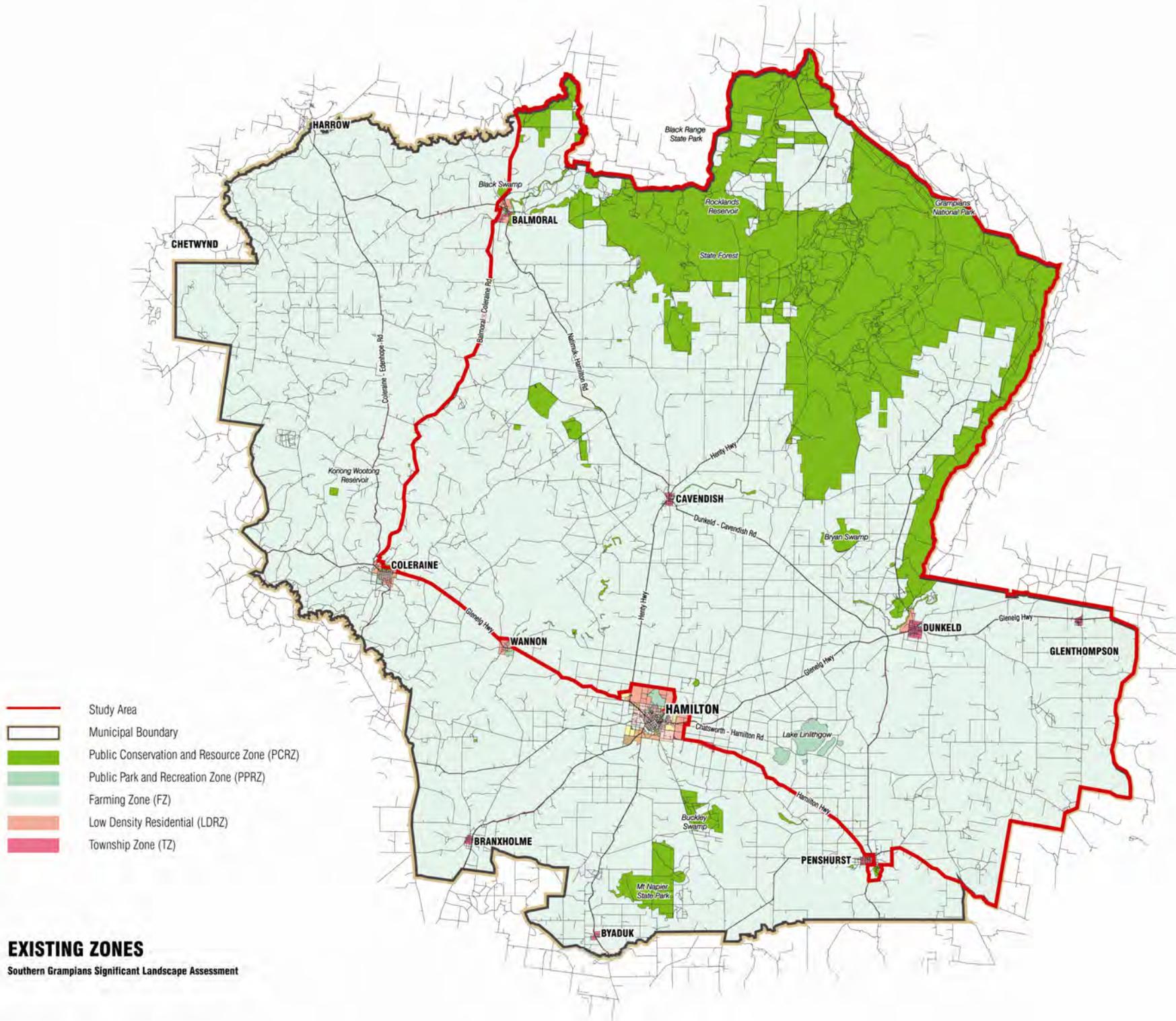
The PPRZ (Clause 36.02) aims to provide open space for public recreation and to protect and conserve areas of significance. This zone applies to confined locations within the study area of Lake Linlithgow, Lake Kennedy and Lake Bullrush east of Hamilton, and to a number of open spaces within the townships. A permit is required to construct a building or carry out works, however amenity and recreation structures associated with public parks such as picnic tables, barbeques, playgrounds navigational aids, planting, landscaping and rubbish bins are exempt. Any permit application must identify sites of flora or fauna significance or places of cultural heritage or scientific value.

Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ)

The Low Density Residential Zone (Clause 32.03) applies to small areas of land between Dunkeld and the Wannon River, adjoining Hamilton and within Wannon. The purpose of the zone is to provide for low density residential development on lots which are able to treat all wastewater. A minimum lot size of 0.4 hectare applies. For use or development requiring a permit (such as two or more dwellings, or development on sites not connected to reticulated services) decision guidelines include protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Township Zone (TZ)

The Township Zone (Clause 32.05) is applied to the small towns of Shire - Cavendish, Glenthompson, Dunkeld, Balmoral, Tarrington, Peshurst, Bayaduk and Branxholme. The purpose of the zone is to provide for residential development as well as a range of other commercial or industrial uses. For use or development requiring a permit, decision guidelines include consideration of *“the projection and enhancement of the character of the town and surrounding areas including the retention of vegetation”*.



- Study Area
- Municipal Boundary
- Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)
- Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)
- Farming Zone (FZ)
- Low Density Residential (LDRZ)
- Township Zone (TZ)

EXISTING ZONES
Southern Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment

OVERLAYS

Overlay controls relating directly to landscape protection have been applied in specific locations. Otherwise, there are currently no overlay controls that address, at the broader level, landscape, vegetation or ecological significance across the Shire, or within the SGSLA study area. Several overlay controls relating to other aspects of land management apply to the study area and these may have an indirect impact upon landscape character.

Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)

The SLO (Clause 42.03) is used to identify significant landscapes, and to conserve and enhance the character of significant landscapes. A permit is required to construct a building or carry out works, construct a fence and to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation that is specified in the schedule. As part of the decision guidelines the responsible authority must consider the conservation and enhancement of the landscape values of the area, the impact of the proposed buildings or works on significant views, and the extent to which they meet the landscape character objectives.

Five SLOs exist within the study area (SLOs 2-5 were recently introduced via Amendment C6):

SLO1: Coleraine Landscape Area

SLO2: Mount Rouse and Crater Reserve

SLO3: Nigretta Falls Reserve

SLO4: Wannon Falls Reserve

SLO5: Koroite Homestead, Buvelot Tree and Waterpool

SLO5 includes the Landscape Character Objective: *“To protect the appearance and presentation of the scene depicted in Louis Buvelot’s ‘Waterpool at Coleraine’ including the waterpool and two River Red Gums”*, shown in the image below.



Heritage Overlay (HO)

There are numerous HOs applying to the study area, most of which were introduced in January 2011 with the gazettal of Amendment C6. The HO (Clause 43.01) has been applied to many individual buildings and sites, significant trees and other places such as gravesites. While the HO is only applied to particular sites rather than across a broad area, it is effective in preserving specific elements that may contribute to the landscape character or significance of different parts of the study area.

Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)

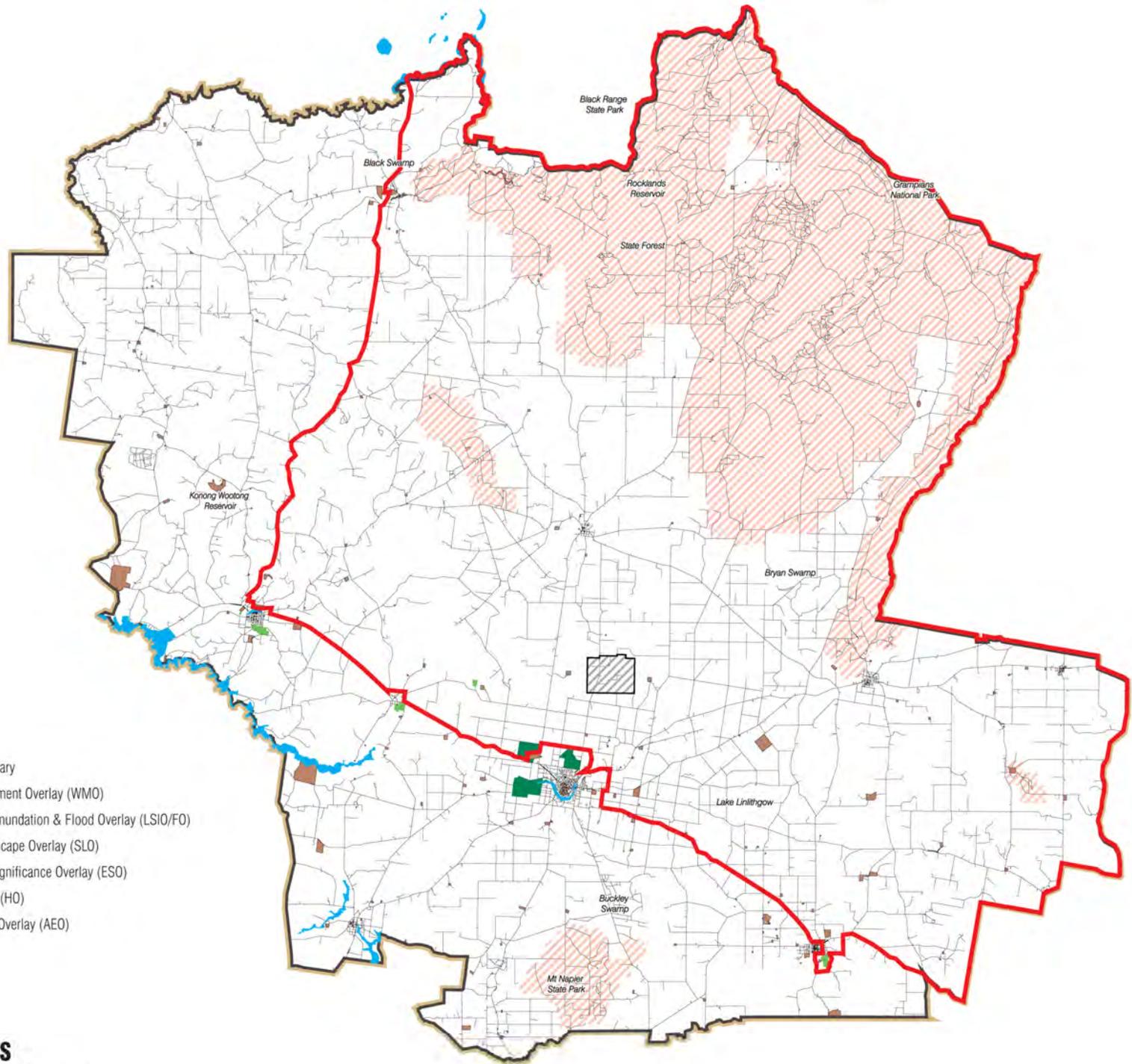
The ESO has been applied to several areas adjoining Hamilton (Clause 42.01) with the specific purpose of protecting the habitat of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot.

Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO), Flood Overlay (RFO) & Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO)

These Overlays are in place to provide for various aspects of land management. Permits are required within these areas for most buildings (over a specified size), works and subdivision.

The Wildfire Management Overlay is extensively applied throughout the study area. Its fuel reduction requirements may in some instances have an impact upon landscape character.

The Floodway Overlay and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay apply to land alongside the major water courses and lakes of the study area. Their decision guidelines require consideration of the impact that development may have on the health of any adjoining rivers, wetlands, environmental flows and water quality, which may serve to also protect elements of landscape character.



- Study Area
- Municipal Boundary
- Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO)
- Land Subject to Inundation & Flood Overlay (LSIO/FD)
- Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)
- Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)
- Heritage Overlay (HO)
- Airport Environs Overlay (AEO)

EXISTING OVERLAYS

Southern Grampians Significant Landscape Assessment

OVERLAYS OF ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES

Overlay controls within adjoining municipalities that relate to the protection of landscape character have also been reviewed, in order to understand the approach to management of significant landscapes across municipal boundaries.

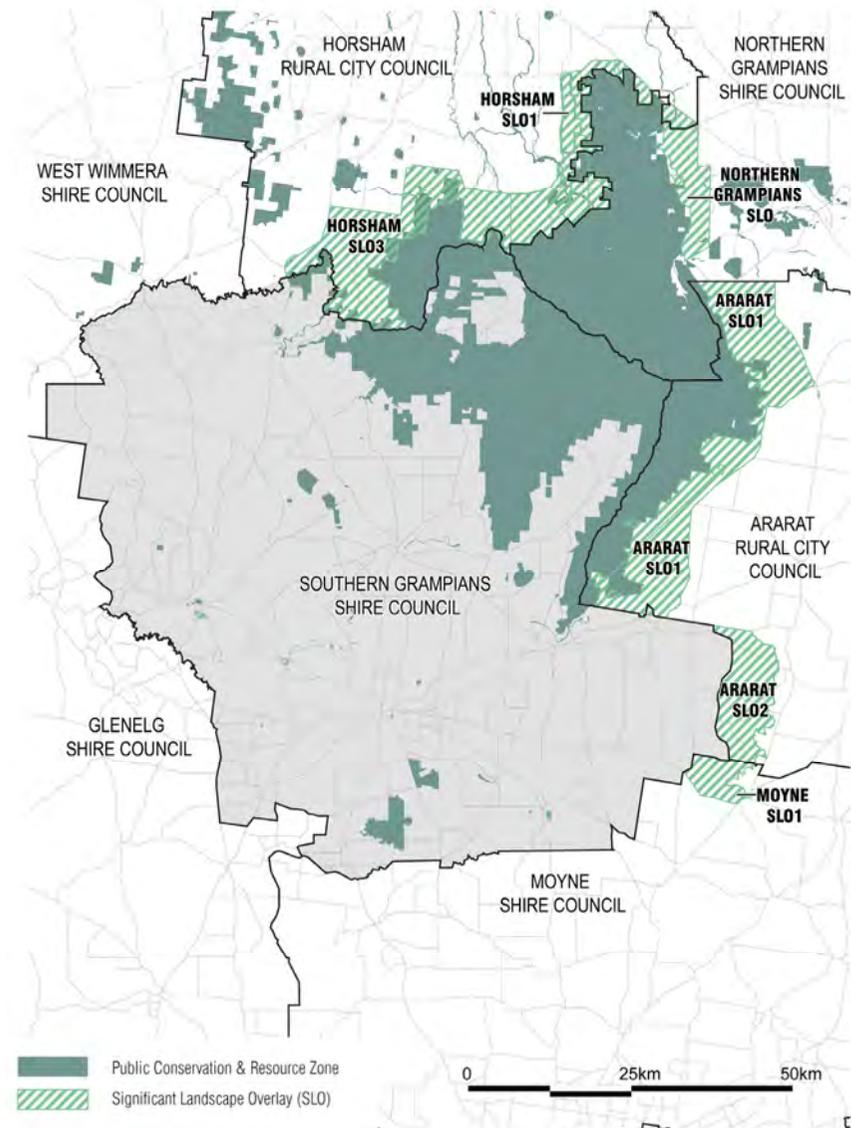
Within the Shire of Horsham, SLO1 Grampians National Park applies to land adjacent to the National Park (and some PCRZ land) and is in place to recognise the significance of the landscape values of the Ranges, and to minimise the intrusion of development upon these values, particularly on views to and from the park, and the access roads leading to it. SLO3 Grampians & Black Range Environs applies to land adjacent to the Black Range State Park (and some PCRZ land) to the west of the National Park. It recognises the contribution that the Black Ranges give to the values associated with the National Park. The landscape character objectives are similar to SLO1, with the addition of considering farm buildings as an integral element of the rural landscape. Land identified by this overlay has a National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Regional Classification.

Within the Ararat Rural City, SLO1 Grampians Surrounds and Black Range, and SLO2 Mt Rouse, apply to an extensive area. The controls aim to conserve and enhance the environmental and landscape values of these two areas.

Within the Northern Grampians Shire, SLO1 Grampians Environs, applies to land adjoining the National Park and has similar landscape management objectives to the SLO schedules of adjacent shires.

The Shire of Moyne has implemented SLO1 Mount Rouse Area of Natural Beauty, to protect the environs of, and views to and from, Mt Rouse.

Environmental and vegetation protection controls also apply to areas on or near municipal boundaries that relate to elements of the natural environment and hence may also serve to protect landscape character.



PARTICULAR ISSUES

SIGNAGE

Advertising sign requirements are at Clause 52.05 of the planning scheme, and the Farming Zone is in Category 4 – Sensitive areas. A permit is not required for a bed and breakfast or home occupation signage, provided there is only one to each premises, and it does not exceed 0.2 sq m. A direction sign (a non-business sign of up to 0.3 sq m) is also allowed without a planning permit. A permit is required for a business identification sign (the advertising area must not exceed 3 sq m), and a floodlit sign. All other signs are prohibited.

NATIVE VEGETATION

In all parts of the study area, the retention or careful management of native vegetation is an important aspect of protecting landscape character. The issue of native vegetation management across Victoria is addressed through the Planning Scheme and State Government policy.

At the State level, **Clause 12.01 Biodiversity** includes a number of policy directions on the management of native vegetation for the protection of habitat, and to maintain the quality of soil and waterways.

Clause 12.01-2 Native vegetation management has as its objective: “To achieve a net gain in the extent and quality of native vegetation”. This policy requires the application of the three step process which is set out in *Victoria’s Native Vegetation Management: A Framework for Action (Department of Natural Resources and Environment, 2002)*. This process includes minimising adverse impacts upon native vegetation, particularly through clearance, and appropriate consideration of native vegetation issues in the planning process.

Consideration of native vegetation is included in various local policies as well as the SLO and ESO provisions.

Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation, includes the permit requirements for removal of native vegetation. A permit is required for removal of native vegetation on sites greater than 0.4 hectares in most instances, unless exemptions apply such as those relating to safety or infrastructure provision. A precinct plan for native vegetation management may be incorporated into the Planning Scheme, in which case **Clause 52.16 Native Vegetation Precinct Plan** comes into effect.

ROADSIDE VEGETATION

Throughout the Shire are significant stands of native roadside vegetation. Several studies of roadside vegetation within the Shire have been undertaken that are relevant to the project.

Roadside Management Plan

Southern Grampians Shire, 1999

The *Roadside Management Plan* was prepared to assess the conservation value of roadside vegetation. Guidelines and strategies were developed to address objectives of infrastructure provision, fire prevention, conservation, land care and culture and recreation.

Southern Grampians Shire Roadsides Vegetation Assessment

Biodiversity Services, 2011

The *Southern Grampians Shire Roadsides Vegetation Assessment* project was undertaken to survey, map and assess all the roadside vegetation within the Shire. Each roadside received a conservation score based on the RCAC (Roadside Conservation Advisory Committee) method, and a RCAC rating of very high, high, medium or low. A comprehensive database of the vegetation of all roadsides in the Shire has been assembled. A manual has been prepared to manage weed control, soil disturbance and other aspects of vegetation protection.

Within Council's MSS, **Clause 21.08-2 Environment** includes a strategy to “*retain the existing remnant native vegetation including roadside vegetation and support revegetation programs, landcare initiatives and whole catchment management*”.

Roadside vegetation is noted as a part of the Shire's tourism value at **Clause 21.08-3 Economic development-tourism**.

TIMBER PRODUCTION

Timber production has significant potential to impact upon the landscape quality of the study area. The use and development of land for timber production is managed through State Government legislation, as well the planning system.

It is recognized in the LPPF at **Clause 21.04-10 Plantation Timber** that the Shire is in a good position to expand timber production as a viable agricultural activity, with suitable soils, climate and access to international shipping facilities in Portland. Environmentally, plantation forestry can assist with ameliorating dry land salinity, soil erosion and improvement of water quality. It is also recognized that timber plantations need to be managed in a manner that reduces any detrimental impact that they may have on the landscape and natural feature of the Shire, which include visual impacts that may compromise opportunities for tourism.

State policy requirements in relation to timber production at **Clause 14.01-3 Forestry and timber production** aim to facilitate the harvesting of timber from plantations and native forests. This clause requires the identification of suitable areas for timber harvesting and requires that it is conducted in accordance with the State Government's *Code of Practice for Timber Production* (Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2007). The Code of Practice embodies the requirements of the Conservation Forests and Lands Act 1987 and the Sustainable Forest (Timber) Act 2004, and is incorporated into the Victoria Planning Provisions.

The Code relates to all timber production operations on private and public land, and contains the aim to “*ensure that social and cultural values (Aboriginal cultural heritage places, historic places and landscapes) are maintained, protected and*

respected”. A Timber Management Plan is required that must demonstrate how adverse visual impacts can be minimised, and that the effect on sensitive landscapes has been considered. Sensitive landscapes have been defined in the Code as areas identified as having a high scenic quality and visual sensitivity, usually areas that are readily visible from high-usage recreational facilities such as lookouts, walking tracts, tourist roads or campsites.

Within the Farming Zone a permit is not required for timber production where it meets the requirements of the Code of Practice or, where land is also subject to the SLO or ESO, is less than 40 hectares in size. Within the Public Conservation and Resource Zone, timber production is only allowed where it is carried out by or for the public land manager under the provisions of the relevant Acts relating to the land.

Council's Local Policy at **Clause 22.03-2 Timber production, processing and agro-forestry** requires consideration of landscapes of high visual value, namely those included in the SLO, ESO, around national and state parks (particularly the Grampians) and sites within the HO.

Clause 52.18 Timber Production stipulates that all timber production activities (with the exception of commercial plantations under 5 hectares, windbreaks or practices involving agroforestry), must comply with the Code. The decision guidelines require that the responsible authority must consider the preservation of and impact on the natural environment, cultural heritage and visual amenity.

Design Principles for Farm Forestry

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 1997

This document was prepared by various Federal government agencies and forestry industry bodies, led by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation in Canberra. The purpose of the document is to assist with the siting, design and management of tree plantations on farms. The chapter *Trees for scenic quality management* contains practical information on the landscape design of agroforestry systems so that they

do not impact upon areas of high scenic quality, which is of great relevance to the SGSLA study.

Key considerations for the design of plantations include the location, scale, and species of timber, the shape of the boundary definition in response to natural landforms or features, harvesting programs and scale of gaps in plantations relative to nearby open spaces. As a first step, it recommends classification of plantation areas into 'scenic importance zones' whether they are in the foreground, middle ground or background of a view. Guidelines for each type of zone are provided.

Background Guidelines include:

- The scale of the plantation should reflect the scale of the surrounding landscape. Minimise scale impacts by separating with existing vegetation or creating cells of varying age classes.
- Plantation design should, where possible, follow existing landscape lines such as contour lines, tree lines, road lines, fence lines, creek lines etc. Avoid reinforcing lines if they are incongruous to the surrounding landscape. For example, avoid breaking skylines, and reinforcing property or fence lines that are geometric in nature rather than free flowing.
- In visually sensitive areas, plantation impacts can be reduced by enhancing and extending existing plantation areas with similar species plantings.

Middleground Guidelines include:

- The outline of the plantation should be defined by natural features such as gullies, spurs, ridges, and should borrow lines from the surrounding landscape.
- Areas of visual contrast such as tree lines, skylines and vegetation changes should not be reinforced in the plantation layout.

- Plantation boundaries can be visually softened using boundary lines of a sympathetic form to the landscape, gradual changes in plantation density or age class, or with use of a species of different form, colour and texture.
- For skyline edges, ridges can be maintained with species typically dominant within the surrounding landscape, for example, avoiding pines in a hardwood forest setting. Harvesting on skyline areas should be sequenced to reduce the extent of area cleared at any one time.

Foreground Guidelines include:

- When foreground areas dominate the landscape, all perception of middle and back ground are lost; the observer is within the plantation.
- In 'natural' non-uniform settings, encourage diversity through separation of plantation sections or compartments. These may differ with age, species mix, planting density or thinning regime.
- Visual penetration through the plantation can enhance the quality of the landscape. This can be achieved through an open or clumped planting density or thinning of trees. Thinning regimes should be non-uniform to achieve a more 'natural' look.

Other Reference Documents

Other useful references in the consideration of timber plantations are:

- *A Manual for Forest Landscape Management* (Forest Practice Board, Tasmania, 2006)
- *Good Neighbour Charter for Commercial Forestry in Tasmania* (signed by various forestry industry representatives and practitioners, 2008)

WIND FARMS

The location of wind farms is also a significant issue within the study area.

Within the SPPF, **Clause 19.01 Renewable energy** aims to provide renewable energy *'in a manner that ensures appropriate siting and design considerations are met'*. Two background documents must be consulted in considering proposals for renewable energy (although not incorporated in the Planning Scheme):

Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria (Department of Planning and Community Development, August 2011)

Renewable Energy Action Plan (Department of Sustainability and Environment, July 2006).

Clause 52.32 Wind Energy Facility aims to encourage wind farms in appropriate locations, with *"minimal impact upon the amenity of the area"*. A permit is required for all proposals. Detailed site context analysis must be undertaken and a design response provided to demonstrate impact assessments upon the landscape, nearby areas of environmental sensitivity, protected flora and fauna species and cultural heritage. Wind farms are prohibited within National Parks.

Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria

Department of Planning and Community Development, August 2011

This document provides an overarching framework for the siting and design of wind farms and guidelines on assessment of applications. It recognises the value placed on significant landscapes by the community and refers to the requirements of the SPPF to protect these landscapes (Clause 12.04). In addition, it refers to the outcomes of strategic landscape studies undertaken by municipalities across Victoria which have identified visually significant landscapes, as well as the associated statutory mechanisms for landscape protection of Local Policies and overlays, which must also be taken into consideration.

Other Reference Documents

Other useful references in the consideration of wind farms are:

- *Wind Farms and Landscape Values* (Australian Council of National Trusts and the Australian Wind Energy Association, 2007)
- *National Wind Farm Development Guidelines* DRAFT (Environment Protection and Heritage Council, 2010).

Wind Farms within or near the Southern Grampians Shire

Wind farms that have been approved within the Southern Grampians Shire:

Oaklands Hill

- AGL Energy Limited
- 32 Turbines
- Construction commenced mid 2010, completion scheduled for early 2012

Morton's Lane (North Gums) (Border Moyne Shire)

- Acciona Energy
- 15 Turbines
- Southern Grampians approved, May 2007

Proposed wind farms within the Southern Grampians Shire:

Penshurst

- RES Australia Pty Ltd
- 223 Turbines
- Planning application being prepared

Wind farms in operation near to the Southern Grampians Shire:

Challicum Hills

- Pacific Hydro
- 35 Turbines
- Located between Ararat & Beaufort (Buangor)
- Operating since August 2003

Wind farms approved near to the Southern Grampians Shire:

Macarthur Hawkesdale (Moyne)

- AGL Energy
- 140 Turbines
- Near Hamilton
- Expected completion 2013

Crowlands

- Pacific Hydro
- 72 Turbines

Salt Creek (Woorndoo)

- NewEn Australia
- 15 Turbines
- Approved June 2007

Proposed wind farms near to the Southern Grampians Shire:

Tarrone (Moyne)

- Union Fenosa
- 20 Turbines

APPENDIX 4: STATUTORY IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

STATUTORY IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

There are several options for the implementation of landscape management objectives within the development control system. These are outlined as follows.

COUNCIL GUIDELINE

Council may resolve to adopt the findings of the study and the Character Area Analysis Papers (or specifically, the Landscape Management Guidelines) for use in the assessment of planning applications, but not to proceed further with amending the planning scheme. The advantages of this option are that Council could commence using the guidelines immediately as no planning scheme amendment would be required to implement, and that the guidelines could be changed at any time.

The significant disadvantage is that the study will not have any statutory weight and could not be of assistance at VCAT as the guidelines will not be considered to be of relevance to the consideration of applications without some reference in the scheme. The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) actively discourages stand-alone Council policies. Other than as a temporary measure, while an amendment was being prepared and exhibited, this option would not be recommended.

MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

The MSS is the Council's primary statutory tool, and it must provide the strategic rationale and context for all statutory controls introduced into the planning scheme. A number of changes to the aspects that address landscape and landscape management are warranted.

At the very least, reference to this study, and its findings should be included in the MSS and any further changes to the planning scheme (e.g. overlays) the study recommends listed as strategies. There are only advantages in ensuring that the MSS contains the correct strategy to provide an umbrella to all other related provisions.

Current advice from the DPCD indicates that the MSS is the preferred means by which to include more detailed guidance for new development, outside the provisions of zone schedules or overlay controls.

INCORPORATED DOCUMENTS

In this option the whole or part of the study (e.g. the Final Report and Character Area Analysis Papers) are incorporated into the planning scheme and become a statutory document. The whole incorporated document therefore has statutory weight, and this may be considered an advantage in some situations.

The disadvantage of this approach is that a planning scheme amendment process is required to change any part of the incorporated document. This is cumbersome and time consuming, therefore the contents of the incorporated document must be relatively 'timeless' and not contain information that might become irrelevant or out-of-date readily. Some parts of the study may fail to satisfy this criterion.

In addition it is unclear whether incorporation of the study report would be supported by the Department DPCD, as the Practice Note on incorporated and reference documents discourages the incorporation of documents that contain criteria, performance measures or decision guidelines. In addition, should the key elements of the Character Area Analysis Papers and Guidelines be included in Local Policy or overlay schedules (see below), there would be unnecessary duplication if the study was also incorporated.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The study outputs (the Final Report and Character Area Papers) could be included as reference documents in the planning scheme. The advantage of this option is that it provides some statutory weight to the study at VCAT. However, the DPCD has advised in the past that reference documents are to be considered as 'background' only, and should not contain policies or guidelines that assist in determining upon planning applications. However, referencing of the study and outputs is a sound

and proper approach in conjunction with other statutory implementation mechanisms.

LOCAL POLICY

Inclusion of a policy in the scheme provides the highest level of strategic direction, next to the MSS itself, and therefore the Council's objectives and the measures against which all applications will be assessed are clear. It is noted that a Local Policy forms part of the planning scheme, and therefore an amendment is required to insert it into the scheme, and to alter it if necessary in future.

The principal purpose of inclusion of a Local Policy within the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) is to provide policy guidance for the assessment of planning applications. In the implementation of similar studies, Councils have previously included detailed design guidance within the local policy. However, current advice from the DPCD is for the Local Policy to provide high level and general guidance only. More detailed and specific guidelines that apply to each Landscape Character Area may be recommended by the DPCD for inclusion in the MSS and schedules for zones or overlay controls.

SCHEDULES TO THE RURAL ZONES

The planning provisions which relate to the rural zones include the ability for Councils to alter certain use and development provisions, however, these would relate to all land included within that zone. These vary between zones but typically include such things as:

- Minimum subdivision area
- Minimum area for which a permit is required for a dwelling
- Maximum area for which no permit is required for timber production
- Outbuilding dimension (requiring a permit)
- Minimum setbacks from roads and other dwellings (requiring a permit)

- Minimum road setback (requiring a permit – Farming Zone only).

Presently, minimum areas for subdivision and for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling are specified in the Farming Zone, Rural Conservation Zone and Rural Living Zone.

As previously noted, in most instances, typical buildings and works relating to agricultural land uses will be consistent with the character of landscapes within the zone. For landscapes of high sensitivity to change, whereby the siting or design of a single dwelling may have an impact, the DPCD have previously recommended that the application an overlay control is the most appropriate approach.

OVERLAYS

Planning scheme overlays provide Council with an opportunity for additional control of certain types of development, in locations where particular significance or value has been identified.

SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY

The Significant Landscape Overlay can be used to control buildings and works as well as the removal, lopping or destruction of vegetation, although it cannot require a permit for subdivision. Through an SLO schedule, Council can require a permit for removal of trees; and it can apply to all trees, trees over a certain trunk diameter or height or to any native, indigenous or exotic vegetation. The DPCD has also indicated that detailed decision guidelines and performance standards can be included in an SLO Schedule.

In order for an SLO to be applied, the landscape must be demonstrated to be of significance to the character of the area. As this study has applied a tested method of landscape assessment, the application of this overlay is justifiable. The only limitation to the content of the overlay controls is the ease of use and enforcement of the provisions.

A consideration in the application of an additional overlay control is that the number of planning applications may increase and that some community members may consider these controls to be over-regulation of their rights as property owners.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY

A Design and Development Overlay (DDO) is generally applied to promote a specific urban design outcome for a particular site or area. It can control elements such as building height and setback, site coverage, fences and development within certain distance of tree trunks. It is noted, however, that a DDO does not control the removal or destruction of vegetation.

The DPCD has advised that the use of DDOs for the purpose of protecting landscape character is not recommended, in preference of other overlay controls that have a broader scope and application to include control over vegetation and works. However, it may be applicable in areas at the edges of townships where control over urban fringe development is necessary to ensure a desired outcome for adjacent rural areas.

VEGETATION PROTECTION OVERLAY

The Vegetation Protection Overlay is specifically used to control the removal or destruction of vegetation and therefore only requires a permit for these purposes. The VPO is principally applied where the vegetation itself is of significance and in this instance, would need to be confirmed by a parallel study that identifies the environmental significance of vegetation.



