
Mansfield Planning Strategy



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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Country

The Traditional Owners of the land now described as the Shire of Mansfield are the Taungurung people. The Taungurung Land and Waters Council (Aboriginal Corporation) are the Registered Aboriginal Party, formally recognised by the Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) 2018 made under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*.

The settlement agreement is composed of:

- Recognition and Settlement Agreement: Formally recognises the Taungurung people as the Traditional Owners of parts of central Victoria (Figure 1).
- Traditional Owner Land Management Agreement: Establishes a Traditional Owner Land Management Board and includes other measures to support the state and Taungurung Traditional Owner group's joint management of Aboriginal Title lands.
- Natural Resource Agreement and Traditional Owner Land Natural Resource Agreement: The agreement provides for Taungurung people to access public land within the agreement area to hunt, fish, camp, and gather natural resources.
- Land Use Activity Agreement: Establishes processes for Traditional Owner corporations to be intrinsically involved in and – in some cases – consent to or refuse future uses of public land
- Indigenous Land Use Agreement: Binds all native title holders to the settlement agreements and confirms that Taungurung Traditional Owners agree to forgo other Native Title Act 1993 processes,

Taungurung Country encompasses all of the Mansfield Shire and extends from east of Heathcote, towards Rushworth and Euroa in the north, down to near Mount Buller and as far south as Marysville and Kilmore.

Taungurung Nation is a diverse group of people who live throughout Victoria and elsewhere. Taungurung People are strongly connected to Country through the mountains, rivers, and lakes.

The landscape contains many places that represent the past and present lives of the Taungurung; places for ceremonies and cultural events, story places, an old greenstone axe quarry, and food gathering and harvesting places.

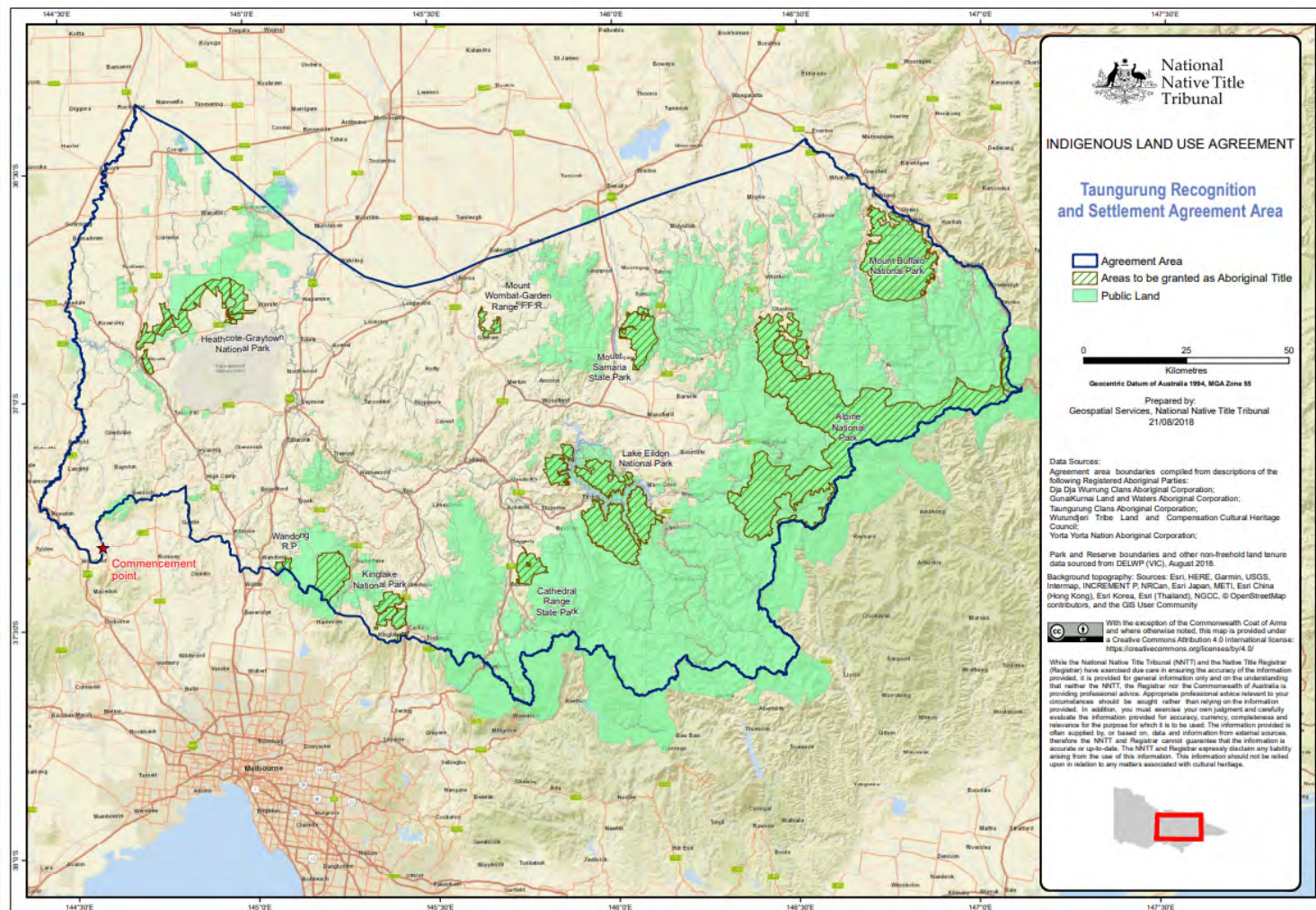
There are many significant cultural sites throughout the region including scarred trees on Mount Buller and Mount Stirling. The lower parts of Country were for food and higher Country was for food and traditional ceremonies. The mountains housed small marsupials, alpine plants and Bogong moths that were important sources of food for people.

Taungurung Land and Waters Council developed the Taungurung Country Plan which communicates Taungurung vision and aspirations for Country, Culture and People and outlines key priorities for action relating to:

- Identity, Recognition and Rights
- Health and Wellbeing
- Cultural Heritage
- Taungurung Traditional Knowledge
- Caring for Our Country
- Economic Independence

The Country Plan also provides a foundation for developing strong partnerships and relationships with land and water management agencies and community organisations that care for Country and seeks to establish protocols and Memorandums of Understanding (or Agreements as needed) with all agencies doing business on Taungurung lands.

FIGURE 1: TAUNGURUNG RECOGNITION AND SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AREA



Source: Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement, available: https://files.justice.vic.gov.au/2021-06/Map%20Taungurung_agreement_area_31%20July%202020.pdf



Executive Summary

MANSFIELD PLANNING STRATEGY | APRIL 2022

Executive summary

The Mansfield Planning Strategy sets out land use and development priorities for the Mansfield Shire to 2040. It provides a framework for responding to population growth and change. It also considers how to protect and enhance valued economic, environmental, local character and landscape features associated with the Shire's towns and settlements.

The Shire's population is growing, and its demographic profile is shifting. The broader economy is moving towards services-based and knowledge-intensive sectors and the impacts of climate change are increasingly being felt.

While change is inevitable, it is important that it is managed in a way that ensures the ongoing health and prosperity of existing communities and preserves the Shire's valued historic, cultural, and natural living landscape for future generations. This includes having a clear plan for where people will live, where they will access services, how the local economy will prosper and how the environment can be sustainably managed to mitigate and minimise the impacts of climate change, protect landscapes and sites of significance to the Taungurung people and promote biodiversity, alongside other immediate concerns.

Project purpose

The Mansfield Planning Strategy sets out a framework for Council to prioritise planning actions and deliver infrastructure over the longer-term. Its purpose is to:

- Facilitate orderly development of urban land uses that makes effective use of existing infrastructure and responds to environmental constraints.
- Protect areas of agricultural productivity, environmental significance and sensitivity and areas subject to significant natural hazards.
- Identify the need for additional infrastructure to service evolving communities.
- Enable change that appropriately responds to the valued character and qualities that distinguish each of the municipality's townships and settlements.

The Strategy contains principles for managing potential or proposed major changes to land use, infrastructure and built form, by identifying preferred directions for growth and considering the possible changes in the municipality between 2021 and 2040.

Strategy implementation

The policy directions of the Mansfield Planning Strategy will be incorporated into the *Mansfield Planning Scheme* via the planning scheme amendment process.

Current situation

The Shire has experienced a relatively steady rate of population growth in the past. However, more recently and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Shire has become a more popular place for people to live. Residents and visitors alike are drawn to the **attractive alpine and rural setting** and the proximity to iconic landscape, outdoor recreation and tourism destinations at Mount Buller and Mount Stirling, Lake Eildon, Howqua River and across the Shire's numerous popular camping sites.

The Shire's town and settlement network offers a diverse range of housing and lifestyle opportunities for residents, from rural living lots, lakeside and alpine townships, small historic settlements, to conventional suburban style living.

Population growth and change

In 2016, the Shire had a **population** of 8,400. While the population is small, it is growing. Driven by its access to Melbourne and its attractive lifestyle offering, the population of the Shire is expected to further increase to almost 11,359 residents by 2040 according to the most recent official State Government population projections. **Recent population growth** (2017-2021) had an average annual growth rate of around 1.4 to 1.5 percent, however the ABS estimates that the Shire's growth rate over the 2019-20 financial year was closer to 3.3 percent, with an additional 299 people moving into the municipality.¹ Whether the growth rate continues at this high rate post-pandemic or returns to a rate closer to 1.5 percent average annual growth, this will remain above the regional average.

Mansfield Shire's **population is concentrated in Mansfield** but is also dispersed among several rural towns and settlements and across the rural area. This settlement pattern means it is very difficult to undertake infrastructure upgrades and that many locations are in competition for Council's resources. Planning policy for the Shire already highlights that the most appropriate location for future housing growth is Mansfield Township, while some growth around Bonnie Doon may also be expected over the medium-longer term, to support the vision from the Lake Eildon Masterplan, while in other towns and settlements, there are more constraints to growth.

There is an issue with **housing affordability** in Mansfield Shire, reflected by historically low rates of dwelling growth, low density stock, low rates of occupancy and higher than average property prices. There is also a high degree of variability in housing stock, with some areas (like Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon, and Goughs Bay) driving out residents to other locations due to housing prices. The provision of high quality and affordable housing is critical to resident and workforce attraction, which have flow-on effects to the efficiency of the local economy. Increases in the cost of, or a lack of available, rental, and dwelling stock places a significant financial burden on key workers, who have difficulty finding accommodation and are more vulnerable to housing stress. The risk to the local economy is substantial, as key workers are typically engaged in jobs that support the tourism and visitor economy and provide vital local services.

Housing local population

There are currently approximately 5,919 dwellings in the municipality. **Forecast population growth** in the Shire would generate demand for an additional 1,348 to 3,172 dwellings by 2040 with this range

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Regional population 2019-20 change*, Available from URL: <https://absstats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=c5ceb84b6e34459a8b2baa397f3624ea>

based on whether a low, medium, or high growth scenario is applied (refer to table below). The **low scenario or base case** is the dwelling growth is based on the Victorian Government’s Victoria in Future forecasts from 2020.

The exact share of houses being used as investment properties for short term accommodation and holiday homes and therefore not permanently occupied is difficult to calculate though it is estimated to be around 40 percent of the current stock. Assuming this share holds in future there would be demand for a further 539 not permanently occupied dwellings to 2040 in addition to the base scenario for permanently occupied dwellings shown in the table (and higher if the share holds for higher growth scenarios).

FIGURE A: DWELLING DEMAND SCENARIOS

Scenario	Data Source	Annual Average Growth Rate	Demand for Additional Dwellings 2040
Base	Victoria in Future 2020 (population projections converted to housing demand)	1.2%	1,348
Medium	Mansfield Shire, Building permit activity, 2010 to 2021	2.0%	2,602
High*	Australian Bureau of Statistics Regional population 2019-2020: Population change ²	3.3% to 2025 2.5% to 2031 2.0% to 2040	3,172

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021). *The High Growth Scenario is adopted for determining need for future residential land supply.

A **medium growth scenario** is based on rates of growth shown by recent building activity, and these would imply demand for around 2,602 additional dwellings by 2040. Recent building activity likely includes a proportion of dwellings that were built for holiday homes or short-term accommodation though it is difficult to determine this accurately.

The **high growth** scenario assumes short term future growth rates like those observed in recent years, tapering to the medium scenario rate over time. **This high growth scenario projects an additional 3,172 dwellings to 2040 and is suitable for planning purposes, as it provides an envelope for more sustained higher growth rates, consistent with those recently observed while capturing latent demand potential currently constrained by zoned land unavailable for development and allows for a subset of dwellings which might not be permanently occupied (for the holiday/short term accommodation market).**

Rural lifestyle opportunities are a significant drawcard of the Shire. The rural areas and the land around the Shire’s settlements are very popular for hobby farms and residential use and some of this activity

² The high growth scenario is based on findings by the Federal Government’s Centre for Population Projection’s central estimates that the population growth rate in regional areas will rise in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, before returning to pre-COVID forecast growth rates.

has spilled into the Farming Zone (FZ) areas. It is important to note that Farming Zone (FZ) land is not considered part of the rural residential land supply; the primary purpose of that Zone is to support agricultural activities. This raises challenges for avoiding land fragmentation and encroachment issues which affect the ongoing viability of farming – a vital sector for Mansfield Shire’s economy.

Local character and heritage values

The **character** of Mansfield Shire’s built environment is varied. Across Victoria, ‘neighbourhood character’ means the cumulative impact of every property, public place, or piece of infrastructure, whether great or small, resulting in a definable character area.³ The look, feel and ‘sense of place’ offered by the Shire’s local towns and settlements is a key reason why people choose to live in the municipality. Preserving and enhancing what makes Mansfield Shire’s towns unique in the face of population growth and change, is a key area of focus for the planning strategy. Therefore, the ongoing identification and protection of significant **built and cultural heritage sites** is also important.

Infrastructure and servicing

Mansfield township supports 35 per cent of the Shire’s population and will continue to accommodate the largest share of future residential growth and economic activity. The Shire’s smaller towns and settlements, including some in remote locations, may support modest growth in the future. As in many regional areas, this distribution of residentially zoned land and development activity poses a challenge for Council to support **sustainable patterns of growth**, provide **accessible community services** and meet **infrastructure expectations** of community members across dispersed settlements.

Additional and upgraded infrastructure will be required to support projected population growth and economic activity into the future.

The local economy and employment lands

The Shire’s economy is one of the Hume Region’s strongest performers. The average annual growth rate since 2010 of 1.95% per annum of economic output and 0.9% per annum of employment growth demonstrate that the Shire’s economy is continuing to grow.

While the composition of employment has been relatively stable, there is evidence of underlying change in the focus of the local economy in line with macroeconomic trends. Specifically, the number of people employed in the delivery of services has been growing, which is evident in the ongoing job numbers in education, training, and professional service employment sectors. There are several factors which present challenges for continued economic growth and development:

- The Shire’s tourism-focused economy is highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and other major events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A growing population is resulting in ongoing demand for new housing in the Shire, creating land use conflict with neighbouring employment precincts at Mount Buller Road, Monkey Gully Road and Dead Horse Lane / Lakins Road Precincts.

³ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), *Planning Practice Note 43 – Understanding Neighbourhood Character*, 2018.

- The Shire’s popularity as a holiday and recreation destination results in large, seasonal fluctuations in the population, in part driven by the high number of non-resident ratepayers.
- There is limited appropriately zoned and serviced industrial land, and sites where the zoning of employment land does not align with its current use or employment capability.

Environment considerations and landscape values

60 percent of Mansfield Shire is public land, in places identified as State and National Parks, State Forests and Nature Reserves. The Shire has a diverse environment due to its topographic variation and microclimates.

Taungurung people have lived on this country for more than a thousand generations. They enjoy close spiritual connections with their country and have developed sustainable economic practices. They had, and continue to maintain, a special relationship with all their lands, mountains, and waters. The Goulburn River holds particularly important meanings for them.

Mansfield Shire sits within a stunning landscape setting, where many townships within the Central Victorian Uplands are green and gently undulating. Merton, Woodfield, and Bonnie Doon are surrounded by the Puzzle Range to the south-west and the Strathbogie Range to the north.

The effects of climate change are already impacting Mansfield Shire. In the coming decades, increased temperatures, less rainfall, and longer fire seasons are predicted. Water resources will be increasingly stretched, meaning more restrictions and pressure on vegetation. Economic and population growth will also put added pressure on the environment. Growth requires more resources, produces more waste, and uses more land.

Much of the freehold land in the Shire surrounds areas of native bush and can incorporate large tracts of privately owned remnant vegetation. As a result, a large proportion of the municipality is subject to possible bush fires, which is recognised in the application of the Bushfire Management Overlay and Bushfire Prone Area mapping. Mansfield Shire sits in the upper Goulburn Broken catchment, which collects rainfall from Woods Point to Mount Skene and the western end of the Alpine National Park. Mansfield Shire can experience both riverine and flash flooding.

A range of challenges and opportunities have been considered to inform the Planning Strategy

Based on the discussion above as well as broader macrotrends (like Australia’s ageing demographic, climate change and structural shifts in the national economy) affecting the Mansfield Shire, the Planning Strategy has been prepared to address key challenges as they relate to land use and development management. The Strategy has also been informed by the Community Vision, set out below.

Community vision

In 2020-21, the Mansfield Shire community provided significant feedback to Council about its vision for 2040. The vision covers five key themes: community and people, health and wellbeing, environment and place, infrastructure and services and prosperity and economy. The vision for 2040 is summarised in the table below.

Mansfield Shire Community Vision 2040 Summary

 Community and people	 Health and wellbeing	 Environment and place	 Infrastructure and services	 Prosperity and economy
Mansfield Shire's community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is engaged and active. • Is collaborative and works towards common goals. • Is welcoming and richly diverse. • Is empathetic and caring. 	People of Mansfield Shire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are physically and mentally healthy. • Are happy and comfortable. • Are safe and secure. • Are connected to each other. 	Mansfield Shire's environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is rich in flora and fauna. • Has a unique character connected to its roots. • Has open spaces for all of community. • Has clean air, water, and land. 	Mansfield Shire's infrastructure and services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are robust and responsive to need. • Are sustainable and environmentally friendly. • Are equitable and accessible for all. • Are holistic and human-centred. 	Mansfield Shire's prosperity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is contributed to by all. • Is resilient and diversified. • Enables opportunity and choice throughout whole-of-life. • Equitably benefits all.

Source: Mansfield Shire Council, *Mansfield Vision on a Page*, 2021. Available from URL: <https://engage.mansfield.vic.gov.au/vision>.

Contents of the Mansfield Planning Strategy

The key components of the Mansfield Planning Strategy are:

- **Planning framework:** Presents the key objectives for land use and development across the Shire.
- **Settlement and housing:** A framework for accommodating future population and housing growth in a way that supports the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the Shire.
- **Neighbourhood character and heritage:** The character of Mansfield Shire's built environment varies across the municipality. Across Victoria, the term 'neighbourhood character' means the cumulative impact of every property, public place, or piece of infrastructure, whether great or small
- **Infrastructure provision and funding:** Sets the strategic framework for planning future infrastructure provision and funding.
- **Employment lands:** Sets out the policy context, challenges, opportunities, and recommended policy directions to manage economic growth and development across Mansfield Shire, including policy directions to protect and enhance opportunities for agriculture across the LGA.
- **Environment and landscape:** This section identifies key environment and landscape features for protection in the Shire, as well as highlighting key natural hazards and climate change challenges that need to be managed to limit loss of life and property damage, as well as the longer-term liveability and productivity of the Shire.
- **Implementation plan:** Presents a long-term action plan to implement this Strategy and provides further detail on proposed changes to the Mansfield Planning Scheme.

Strategic Framework Plan

The maps below illustrate the key directions set out in this Strategy, as they apply spatially to the Shire and to Mansfield Township.

Land use framework plan for the Mansfield Shire

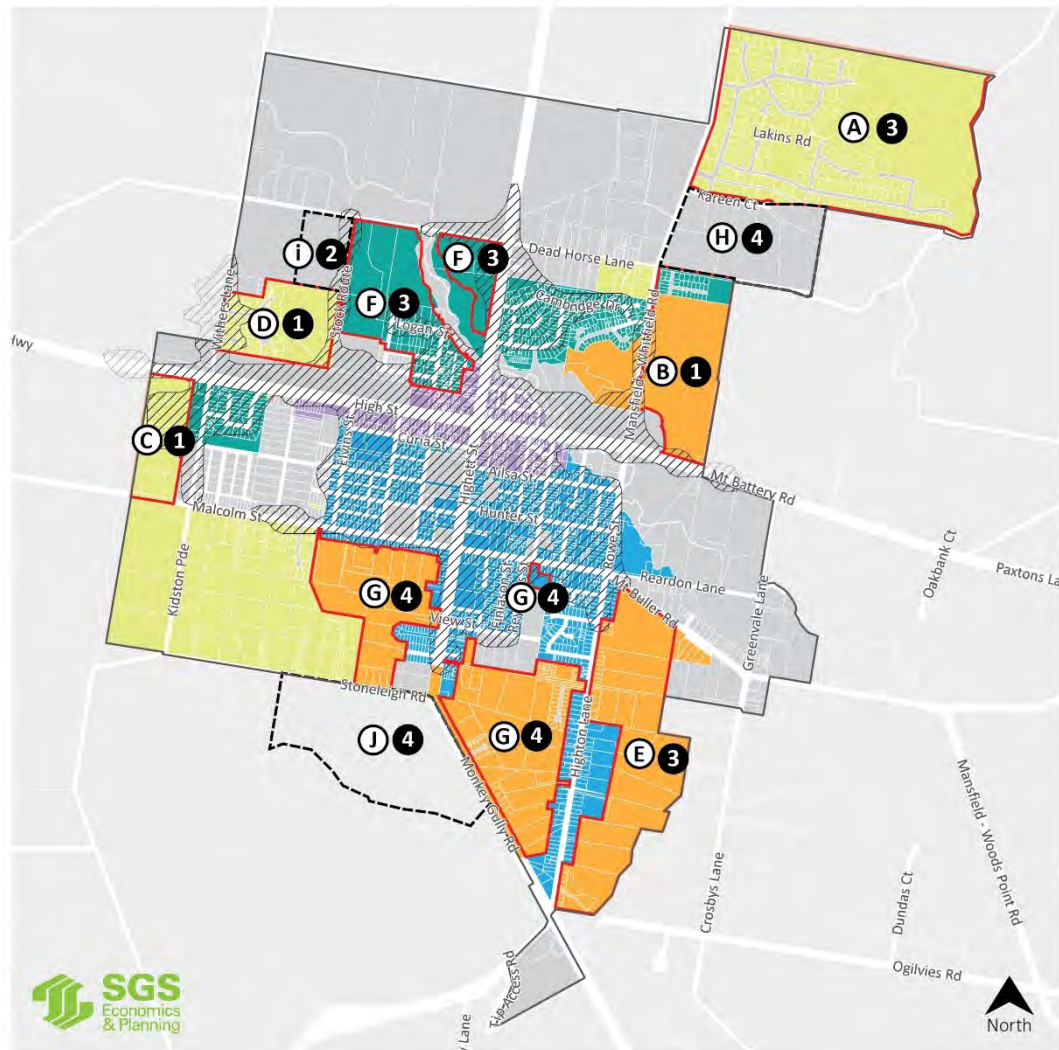


Legend

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Municipal boundaries | Residential areas in town- subject to town character recommendations |
| National and State parks/reserves | Rural Living Zone (RLZ) areas- potential to increase housing capacity in safe and suitable locations |
| Main roads | Farming Zone (FZ) land- protect from residential encroachment |
| Settlement hierarchy | |
| Main Service Centre | Protect significant landscapes |
| Town | |
| Township | |
| Settlement | |
| Rural Settlement | |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022.

Strategic Framework Plan for Mansfield Township



Legend

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Town boundary | Future residential development areas | Township character areas |
| Property boundaries | Mansfield-Whitfield Road | Commercial core (residential areas) |
| Existing residential development areas | Dead Horse Lane | Township residential |
| Kareen Hills and the Grange Estates | Monkey Gully Road | Garden contemporary |
| Loyola Run Estate | Staging of residential development areas | Township fringe |
| Beolite Retirement Village | First | Town surrounds |
| Stockmans Rise Estate | Second | Other considerations |
| Highton Lane Development Plan Area | Third | Locations up to 1200 metres (15-minute walk) from town centre where, diverse social/affordable options are encouraged |
| GRZ1 south of Dead Horse Lane | Fourth | |
| GRZ1 south Malcolm Street, GRZ1 east of Monkey Gully Road | | |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022.

Implementation plan

SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING			
OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
ESTABLISHING A HIERARCHY OF TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS			
To support sustainable patterns of population growth and residential development across the Shire	Direct future population growth in accordance with an established settlement hierarchy to support the efficient use of land and infrastructure and support convenient access to jobs and services.	Update clause 16.01-2L	Short Term (0-5 years)
ACCOMMODATING FUTURE POPULATION GROWTH			
To ensure sufficient residential land is available to meet future dwelling demand	Identify land suitable for residential rezoning to ensure sufficient land supply over the long term	Update clause 16.01-2L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Stage future greenfield residential development in Mansfield to consolidate growth and maximise investment in development and community infrastructure	Update clause 16.01-2L	Short Term (0-5 years)
		Rezone land at Mansfield-Whitfield Road to Low Density Residential Zone	
	Implement measures to accelerate release of suitable 'in-sequence' areas	Update clause 74.02 to include review of Highton Lane Development Plan	Short Term (0-5 years)
		Undertake consultation to resolve barriers to land release	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Review appropriate incentives or punitive financial measures	Short Term (0-5 years)	

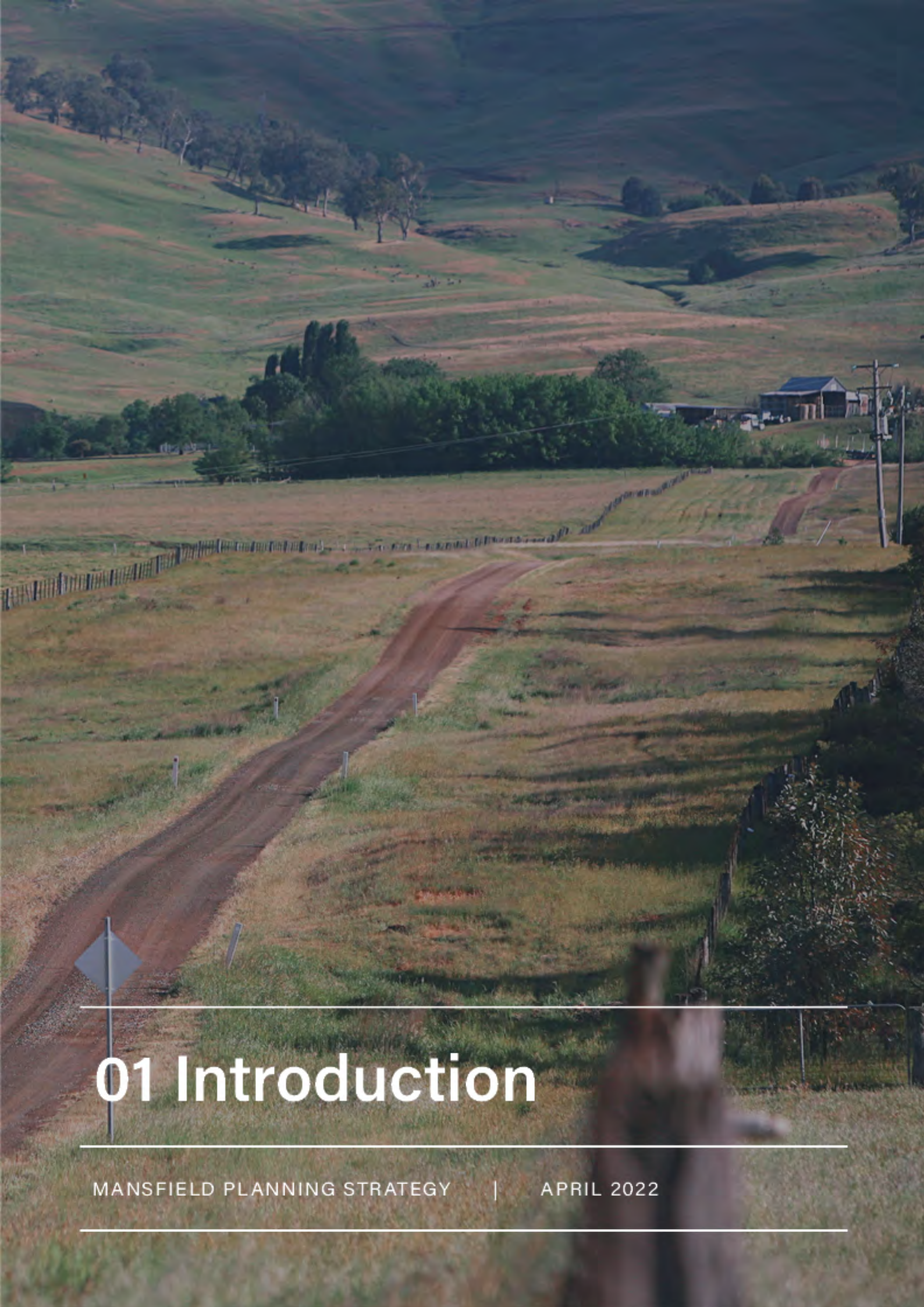
	Undertake ongoing monitoring of dwelling demand and housing capacity	Update Clause 74.02 to include program of monitoring and review.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Ensure the orderly development of greenfield areas proposed for residential rezoning or intensification	Update Clause 74.02 to include consultation and preparation of development plans as further strategic work.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Support housing development and intensification in established areas, particularly areas with good access to shops and services	Introduce relevant objectives and strategies at 16.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Revise land use zoning and infrastructure requirements in Gough's Bay and Bonnie Doon in response to implementation/ expansion of reticulated sewerage services as outlined in the Lake Eildon Master Plan	No further action required	N/A
	Prepare local area/structure plans for towns, townships, and settlements across the Shire	Update Clause 74.02 to include consultation and preparation of structure plans as further strategic work.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Progress a planning scheme amendment to correct zoning errors and other minor planning scheme anomalies	Progress anomalies amendment	Medium Term (5-10 years)
MEETING NEEDS FOR DIVERSE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING			
To increase supply of social and affordable housing	Strengthen policy statements about the need for affordable housing in Mansfield	Objectives and strategies at 16.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Develop processes for Council to support or advocate for affordable housing contributions	Advocacy through DELWP, who may provide advice about how Council can best collect contributions towards affordable housing stock	Ongoing

		(for example, through the use of voluntary agreements or other mechanisms)	
	Engage with and educate the community on social and affordable housing as important local infrastructure	Develop an approach to educating the community on the need for and benefits of social and affordable housing.	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Adopt a relationship building, information sharing and brokerage role between the development and affordable housing sectors	Publish information on the Community Housing Sector for developers and provide a single point of contact at Council for enquiries	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Assist marginalised households to transition into the private rental market	Establish liaison service to foster partnerships between real estate agents and marginalised rental households.	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Advocate for State Government investment in Mansfield	Advocacy through DELWP	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Provide in-principal support for the State Government's secondary dwelling pilot program	Advocate to DELWP for improved planning tools (for example secondary dwelling codes).	Ongoing
To encourage increased diversity in housing supply to meet the needs of people of all ages and lifestyles.	Encourage shop top housing in town centres and consider the potential to further incentivise the provision of this form of housing	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Encourage and facilitate development of retirement and aged care living options.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Encourage development of a crisis accommodation centre in Mansfield Shire.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Encourage lot size diversity when planning for greenfield residential areas.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)

	Support diverse, social, and affordable housing, especially in areas with walking access to a range of services and commercial activities.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT			
To support rural residential housing opportunities that provide housing choice	Support rural residential development that does not compromise sustainable land use outcomes, including farming.	Include objectives and strategies at 16.01-3L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Support discretionary uses in the Rural Living Zone only where these are consistent with the rural- residential character and do not compromise farming on adjacent land.	Include objectives and strategies at 16.01-3L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Undertake assessment to determine potential to increase capacity within the Rural Living Zone	Undertake land suitability assessment	Short Term (0-5 years)
To prevent further ad-hoc residential development in the Farming Zone that creates dispersed settlements and threatens productive farming uses.	Strongly discourage dwellings in the Farming Zone except where required in support of farming or other agricultural activities.	Objective and strategy at 14.01-1L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Ensure that the development of existing small rural allotments does not prejudice any existing surrounding agricultural activities.	Objective and strategy at 14.01-1L	Short Term (0-5 years)

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER			
To preserve and enhance the township and alpine character of Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon, and the Shire's smaller settlements.	Update local policy to include the preferred character statements and proposed design guidelines for Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon, and the Shire's smaller settlements.	<p>Include character statements at Clause 15.01-5L.</p> <p>Review the schedule to the General Residential Zone (GRZ) at Clause 32.08. Consider introducing additional schedules that modify the requirements of Clause 54 and 55 to achieve preferred built form, design and siting outcomes based on preferred character statements.</p>	Short Term (0-5 years)
HERITAGE			
To protect and enhance sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance across Mansfield Shire.	Work with the Taungurung Land and Waters Council to identify the most appropriate ways the planning system can protect places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance across Mansfield Shire.	If appropriate following further engagement with TLaWC, update 15.03-2L and Clause 43.01.	Ongoing
To identify sites of heritage significance in the Shire.	Ensure new development preserves and respects the heritage features and places.	Following further investigation, update Clause 15.03-2L and Clause 43.01 as appropriate.	Ongoing
	Identify and document buildings, places and sites that have important cultural significance and set out policies to enhance and protect those places.	Following further investigation, update Clause 15.03-2L and Clause 43.01 as appropriate.	Ongoing



01 Introduction

MANSFIELD PLANNING STRATEGY | APRIL 2022

1. Introduction

The Mansfield Planning Strategy sets out land use and development priorities for the Shire to 2040. It provides a framework for responding to population growth and change, while protecting the valued economic, environmental, local character and landscape features associated with the Shire's towns and settlements.

Mansfield Shire's population is growing, and its demographic profile is shifting. The broader economy is moving towards services-based and knowledge-intensive sectors and the impacts of climate change are increasingly being felt. While change is inevitable, it is important that it is managed in a way that ensures the ongoing health and prosperity of existing communities and preserves Mansfield Shire's valued historic, cultural, and natural living landscape for future generations. This includes having a clear plan for where people will live, where they will access services, how the local economy will prosper and how the environment can be sustainably managed to mitigate and minimise the impacts of climate change, protect landscapes and promote biodiversity, alongside other immediate concerns.

1.1 Project purpose

This Strategy will allow Council to plan more effectively, prioritise planning actions and deliver infrastructure over the longer-term.

The purpose of the Mansfield Planning Strategy is to:

- Facilitate orderly development of urban land uses that makes effective use of existing infrastructure and responds to environmental constraints.
- Protect areas of agricultural productivity, environmental significance and sensitivity and areas subject to significant natural hazards.
- Identify the need for additional infrastructure to service evolving communities.
- Enable change that appropriately responds to the valued character and qualities that distinguish each of the municipality's townships and settlements.

The Mansfield Planning Strategy provides a land use planning framework for the Shire, so that it can:

- Respond to the changing needs of residents and businesses.
- Ensure land is developed in an orderly manner, making effective use of existing infrastructure.
- Adapt to any challenges brought about by growth and environmental pressures such as flooding and bushfire.

The Strategy has been refined in consultation with the community and has been informed by the directions of the Community Vision and Council Plan and the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan. It provides overarching policy guidance, setting the big picture and long-term direction for the municipality.

The Strategy operates as an ‘umbrella’ document that brings together findings from other parallel studies like the *Mansfield Environment Strategy*, *Mansfield Economic Development Strategy*, *Mansfield Waste Strategy* and *Mansfield Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy*, as well as the upcoming *Open Space Strategy*. The policy directions of the Mansfield Planning Strategy will be implemented into the *Mansfield Planning Scheme* via the planning scheme amendment process, including local policies with regard, but not limited to commercial land, housing, local town character, the environment, and significant landscapes.

The Strategy sets principles for managing potential or proposed major changes to land use, infrastructure and built form by identifying preferred directions for growth and considering the possible changes in the municipality between 2021 and 2040. The Strategy directs the anticipated provision of residential, retail, and industrial development to meet the long-term needs of the Mansfield Shire community.

1.2 Study area

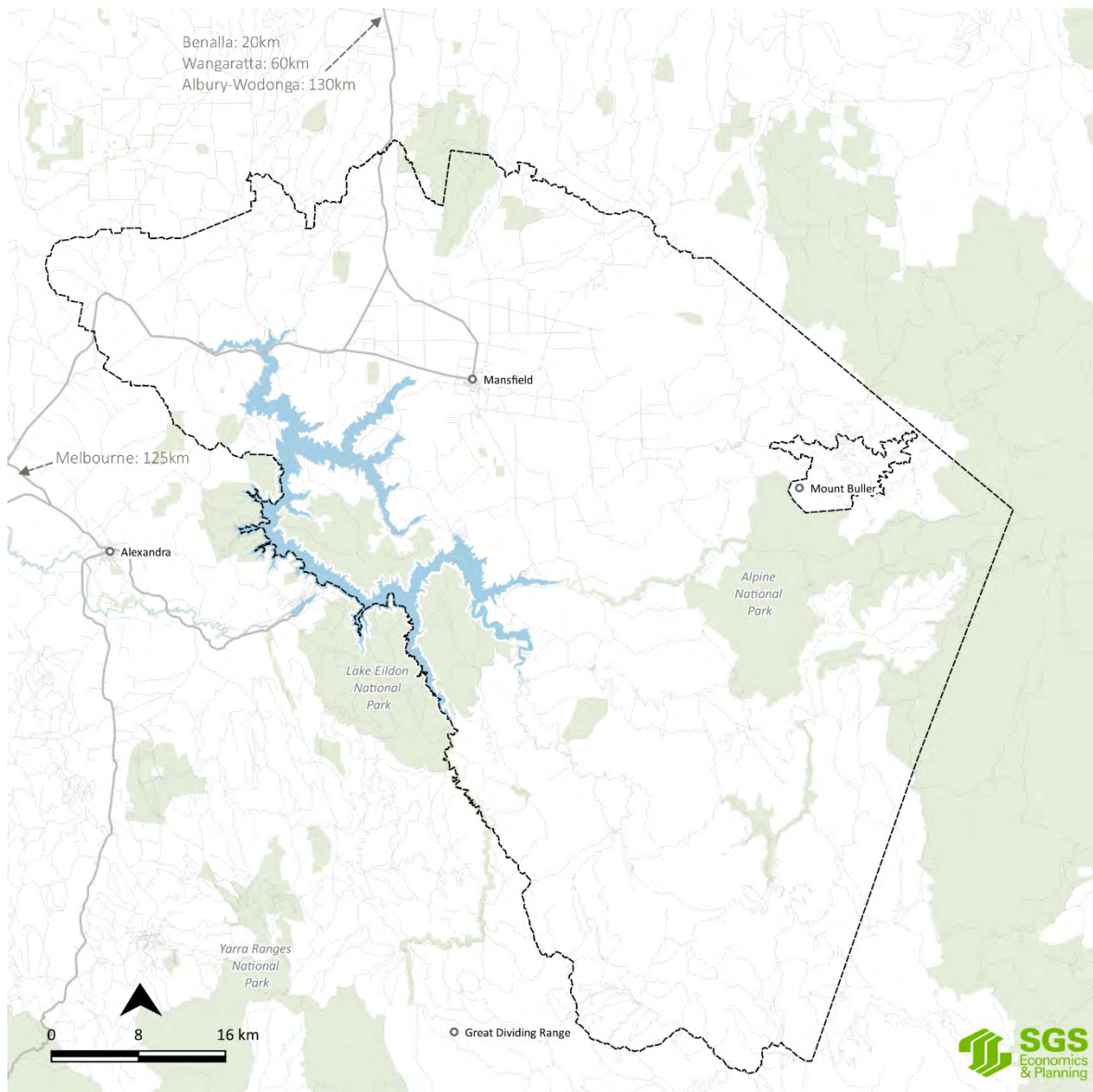
The Mansfield Shire is located 200 kilometres north-east of Melbourne, Victoria in a wide valley surrounded by mountain ranges. To the west lie the Strathbogie Ranges and The Paps; north-west, Mount Samaria; north, the Tolmie Plateau; east the Great Divide with Mounts Buller, Stirling, and Timbertop (*Warrambat*); and to the south, the low hills of the Blue Range.

Natural environment features within Mansfield Shire are the Alpine National Park and Australia’s second largest inland waterway – Lake Eildon. Mansfield Shire boasts major river systems, lakes, mountains, vast tracts of what is referred to as ‘High Country’ and broad, productive valleys where agriculture and rural living integrate.

The major urban centre of Mansfield Shire is Mansfield town, with several smaller settlements throughout the municipality. These include Tolmie, Sawmill, Kevington, Jamieson, Woods Point, Merrijig, Maindample, Ancona, Merton, Barjarg, Goughs Bay, Bonnie Doon, Macs Cove and Howqua. Each of the municipality’s towns, settlements and townships has its own unique history and identity.

The study area incorporates all urban (residential, commercial, and industrial) land, focused on Mansfield Shire’s townships and settlements. It also considers some aspects of rural land management such as the proliferation of dwellings in productive farming areas that are not associated with the agricultural use of the land.

FIGURE 2: THE SHIRE OF MANSFIELD, IN CONTEXT



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2020)

1.3 Developing the Strategy

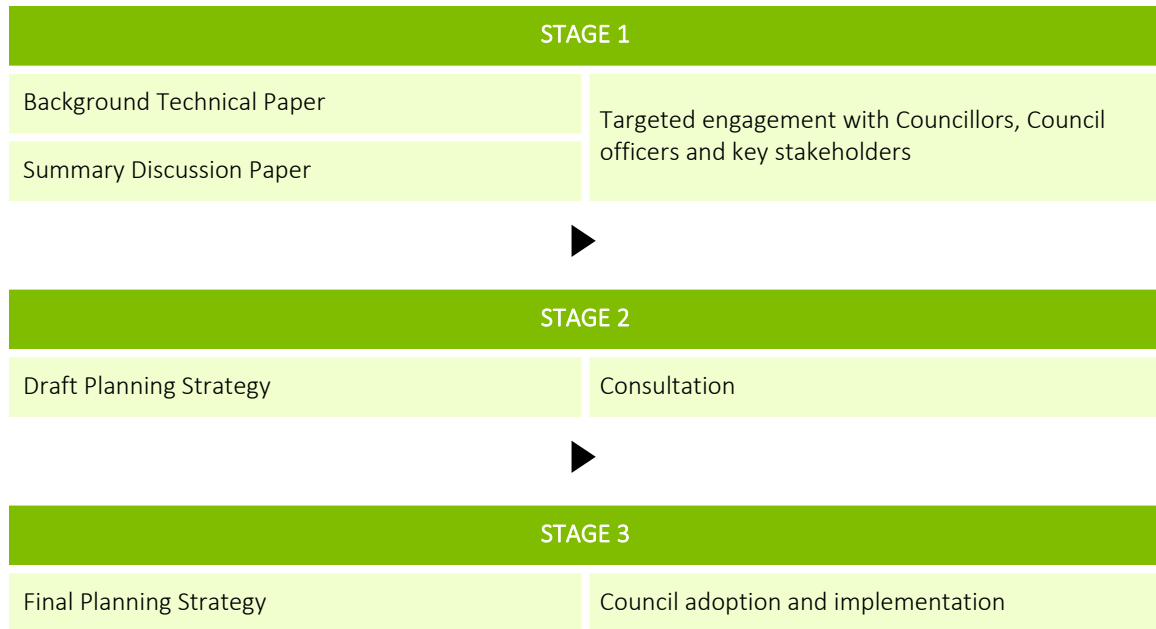
The Mansfield Planning Strategy has been prepared over three stages. Stage 1, which was completed in March 2021, involved a comprehensive review of background materials, data analysis and targeted stakeholder engagement with key Council staff, councillors, relevant State Government departments and local real estate agents and developers. This culminated in the preparation of a detailed Background Technical Report and Summary Discussion Paper.

Stage 2 involved preparation of a draft Strategy, setting out policy directions and recommendations to be reviewed by Mansfield Shire Councillors, the resident, non-resident, and business communities.

Following consultation on the draft Strategy, feedback was reviewed, and the findings used to prepare a final Mansfield Planning Strategy as part of Stage 3.

The following diagram outlines the relationship between the reports issued at each stage of the project.

FIGURE 3: PROJECT STAGES



1.4 How to read this document

The Strategy is set out in thematic chapters which relate to the sections of the Mansfield Planning Scheme that may be updated as part of the implementation process (explained further in Section 9).

Section 2 explains the context for strategic planning in Mansfield Shire, followed by **Section 3** which presents the key objectives for land use and development across the Shire. **Sections 4 to 8** (explained below) contain the key components of the Mansfield Planning Strategy:

1. **Settlement and housing:** A framework for accommodating future population and housing growth in a way that supports the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the Shire. This section includes consideration of the role of each of the Shire’s towns and settlements in accommodating growth as part of a settlement hierarchy; the availability of existing residentially zoned land to meet future demand for housing; staging of land release and development to support efficient and sustainable use of land and infrastructure and opportunities to increase of diverse, social, and affordable housing.
2. **Neighbourhood character and heritage:** The character of Mansfield Shire’s built environment varies across the municipality. Across Victoria, the term ‘neighbourhood character’ means the cumulative impact of every property, public place, or piece of infrastructure, whether great or small. This section sets out a preferred framework for interpreting and responding to the valued aspects of Mansfield Shire’s built environment. It identifies gaps and opportunities to strengthen policy around local character as well as opportunities to enhance heritage protections across the Shire.

3. **Infrastructure provision and funding:** Sets the strategic framework for planning future infrastructure provision and funding. This section includes consideration of infrastructure required to support development and economic productivity in the Shire (such as roads, intersections, shared paths, bridges, drains) and infrastructure to support community health and wellbeing (such as schools, public childcare, Maternal Child Health facilities, community halls and parks and gardens).
4. **Employment lands:** Sets out the policy context, challenges, opportunities, and recommended policy directions to manage economic growth and development across Mansfield Shire. This section includes policy directions to protect and enhance opportunities for agriculture across the LGA.
5. **Environment and landscape:** This section identifies key environment and landscape features for protection in the Shire, as well as highlighting key natural hazards and climate change challenges that need to be managed to limit loss of life and property damage, as well as the longer-term liveability and productivity of the Shire.
6. **Implementation plan:** Presents a long-term action plan to implement this Strategy and provides further detail on proposed changes to the Mansfield Planning Scheme.

Each thematic section is arranged in the following format:

Context	Strategic directions	Objectives	Strategies	Implementation Actions
Summary of context and considerations (such as trends, challenges, or opportunities).	Strategic directions for each theme (what will be addressed by the planning recommendations).	Objectives which specify the outcomes that are being sought.	Strategies which set out how the objective will be achieved.	A table containing implementation actions and timing for each action.

The information in the context and strategic directions sections for each theme forms the policy basis or justification upon which a planning scheme amendment would be based in future.

The Township of
AGRICULTURAL RESERVE OF
MANSFIELD.

SITUATED AT
Mount Battery.

IN THE PARISH OF MANSFIELD

L.3355

M
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SCALE OF CHAINS
Lithographed at the Surveyors General's Office, April 1866
BY A. S. S. S.

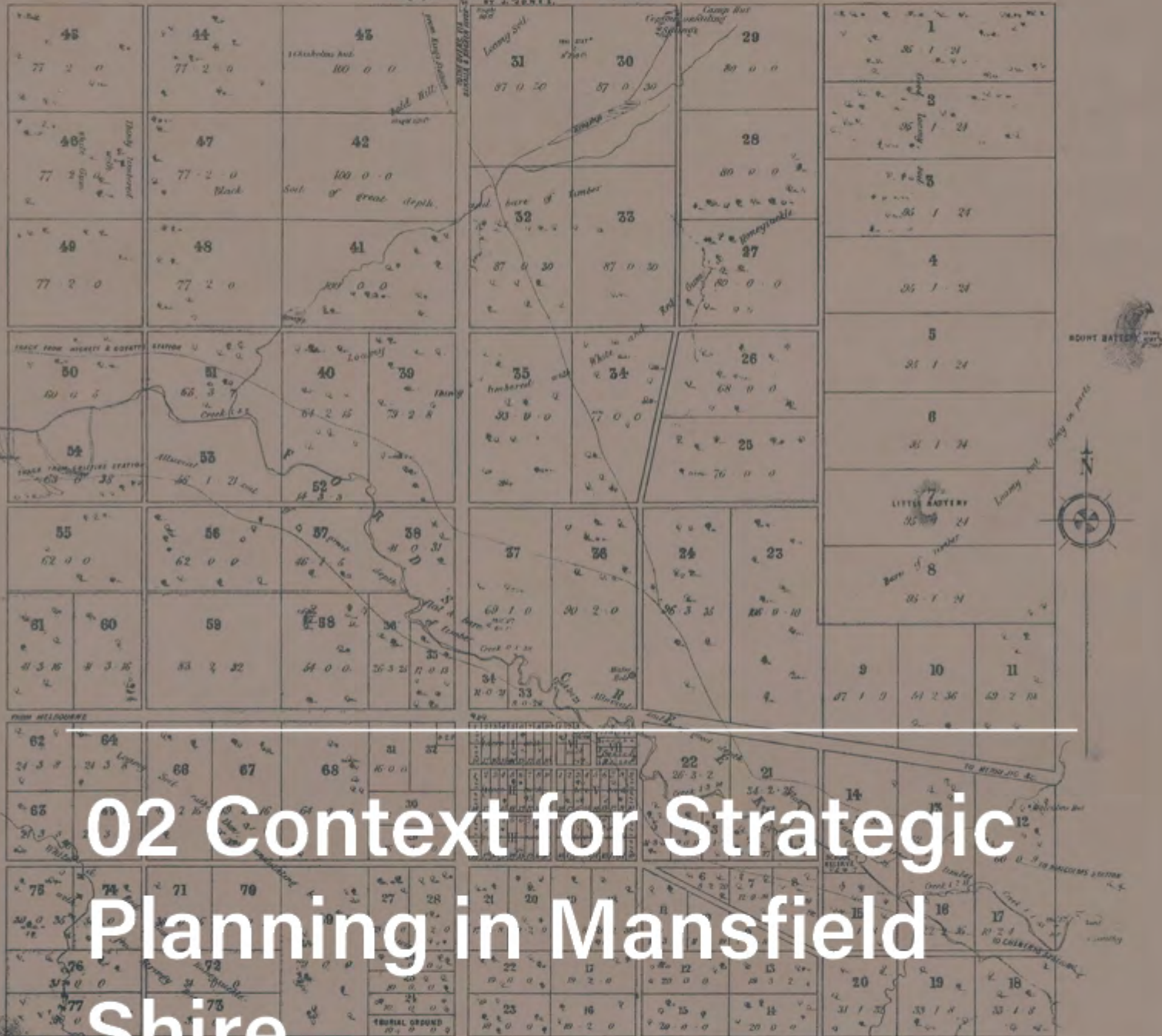


Photo-lithographed at the Department of Lands & Survey, Melbourne, by J. Noone. Price 1/-
29th June, 1866

2. Context for strategic planning in Mansfield Shire

Mansfield Shire's planning and development are influenced by a range of external drivers, or macro trends. Land use and development in the Shire is also managed by several policies at the State and local government levels. This chapter provides a summary of the strategic context for land use planning in Mansfield Shire, which forms the basis for key issues or opportunities to be addressed with recommendations later in the document.

2.1 Macro trends affecting Mansfield

The Shire's planning and development are influenced by external drivers including population trends, climate variability, technology change, patterns in living choice and shifts in agriculture and trade. Mansfield's development will also be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly through its impacts on the tourism industry.

In recent years, there has been (anecdotally) a **trend towards telecommuting**, with some non-resident landowners moving permanently to Mansfield and working remotely, either part- or full-time. The COVID-19 pandemic has effectively intervened to stall Australia's population growth (due to border closures) and disrupt its economy, including accelerating working from home trends, particularly for professionals and those in some service sectors. In Mansfield Shire, there may be a permanent increase in the number of people seeking to telecommute from lifestyle locations, leading to a (perhaps small) increase in holiday homes becoming people's permanent residence as workplaces entrench flexible practices, provided this is supported by appropriate telecommunications infrastructure.

Australia's **population is ageing**, and the proportion of people aged over 65 is increasing, with 31 percent of the population anticipated to be of retirement age by 2040 (compared to 23 percent in 2016).⁴ A key infrastructure challenge for Victoria's ageing population will be to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation that meets the diverse needs of each community. This will include growing demand for smaller dwellings (units and apartments), aged care facilities and assisted living communities. In the right locations, housing diversity helps to facilitate better allocation of housing, by providing people with more choice around downsizing homes within their communities.

Climate change will result in increased fire danger, increased number of extreme heat days, long term drought, increased energy access variability and increased incidence of flooding. The climate variability may also impact tourist destinations such as Mansfield due to longer or shorter periods for both winter and summer recreation.

⁴ Victorian Government (2019), Victoria in Future; SGS Economics and Planning (2021), Population forecasts.

Victoria's economy has become increasingly integrated into the **global economy**. As such, it is increasingly impacted by global and local trends, including technological innovations, environmental pressures, geopolitical developments, and the emergence of Asia as the centre of the global economy.⁵ These global trends are driving **shifts in the structure of the national and state economies**. In particular, the economy is continuing to shift towards creative and population-led sectors and away from traditional industries, such as manufacturing. These growing sectors are consolidating in and around central business areas and major economic nodes and transport corridors. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors suggest the effects of globalisation may be slowing.⁶

These factors include:

- The cost of moving goods has stopped falling.
- Multinational firms have found the cost of global sprawl (including fragmented and 'just in time' supply chains) untenable, including when competing against local rival firms.
- Activity is shifting towards services, which are harder to sell across borders.

In the **agricultural sector**, output for sheep and cattle meat remain high, driven by continuing export demand. Across the industry, there is a trend towards larger farm size and concentration of agricultural output on larger livestock businesses. This trend is consistent with restructure across most agricultural industries resulting in production concentrated among a smaller number of producers.⁷

An increasing trend in **tourism** towards 'experiential' travel (away from more sedentary or 'resort-based' approaches) offers potential for rural and regional areas. This trend is driving products that are adventurous, personalised and attuned to local culture. The tourist accommodation industry has also been impacted by transformation in the short-stay market through websites such as Airbnb.

The **COVID-19 pandemic** has impacted tourism in the Shire. Social distancing and stay-at-home orders mean many people in sectors such as hospitality and short-stay accommodation have lost their main source of income. Tourism investment also contributes to conservation efforts, through investment in nature- and adventure-based tourism. The consequences of a lack of tourism funding may include a reduction in conservation investment.

2.2 Key findings from the Background Technical Report

The *Background Technical Report* (prepared by SGS Economics and Planning, RMCG and RCI Planning) identified several issues faced within Mansfield Shire, based around how the land is currently being used and the future implications this may have upon residents, industries, and the environment. There is a need to ensure the Shire's land has the capacity to meet housing demand, while protecting natural heritage and land that is agriculturally productive or environmentally significant.

⁵ Mansfield Shire Council (2020), Mansfield Planning Strategy: Background and Technical Report

⁶ Nistha Shrestha, Muhammad Yousaf Shad, Osman Ulvi, Modasser Hossain Khan, Ajlina Karamelic-Muratovic, Uyen-Sa D.T. Nguyen, Mahdi Baghbanzadeh, Robert Wardrup, Nasrin Aghamohammadi, Diana Cervantes, Kh. Md Nahiduzzaman, Rafdzah Ahmad Zaki, Ubydul Haque (2020), The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on globalization, One Health, Volume 11.

⁷ Mansfield Shire Council (2020), Mansfield Planning Strategy: Background and Technical Report

As the Shire is comprised of a relatively small population dispersed across a large geographical area, the Report has identified the establishment of a clear town hierarchy as a priority. This will ensure that resources can be effectively distributed to match the needs of the community and will help direct commercial, industrial and residential growth appropriately. Demographic trends, such as a growing population, bring significant demand for local infrastructure provision. Demand for infrastructure is at its peak during holiday seasons, due to the prominence of nature-based tourism and lifestyle living opportunities across the Shire.

The *Background Technical Report* focused on the current planning conditions within the Shire and proposes directions within the framework of seven key areas: settlement and housing, environment, and landscape, built environment and heritage, economic development, agriculture, transport, and infrastructure.

Settlement and Housing

- To support projected housing demand in a sustainable way, sufficient residentially zoned land must be provided.
- There must be clearer policy directions and controls to provide housing choice to meet future needs, to:
 - Consolidate development in existing urban areas.
 - Prevent housing growth in areas of environmental sensitivity or at increased risk of natural disaster.
- In line with the mandate of State and Federal government, Council has a role in facilitating the supply of affordable housing to meet current and projected need.⁸
- To serve a growing population, the report proposes an infrastructure servicing and funding framework that will identify options for development contributions to reduce the cost of disorderly development to Council and guide development to preferred locations.
- Sensitive interfaces between residential and other uses must be identified and protected.

Environment and Landscape

- There is a need to identify areas for further work to be undertaken to enhance biodiversity corridors.
- As highlighted in the Mansfield Planning Scheme, development should be directed away from places of significant ecological, vegetation and landscape status.
- Identification and documentation of places of cultural heritage significance should be undertaken in consultation with the Taungurung Land and Waters Council, to ensure their recognition and protection in planning policy.

⁸ Victorian Government (2021), Planning mechanisms for affordable housing: <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/affordable-housing>

Built Environment and Heritage

- The Report recommends that new development should preserve and respect places of both cultural and built heritage, according to the community's commentary of unique neighbourhood character.
- A preferred future character for the Shire's towns and settlements should also be identified and demonstrate where and how changes in character may be sought to be in line with the preferred future character.
- The Community Vision expresses how passionate people in Mansfield Shire are about their built environment and heritage and highlights that protecting character is important.

Economic Development

- The Report recommends the identification of where commercial, industrial, and retail land is most needed and to increase this supply through rezoning.
- Investment in areas of economic activity should be prioritised based on a hierarchy of centres. These areas should be supported by key infrastructure investments, such as transport links and streetscape improvements.
- Local incentives to create and expand businesses are recommended, including enhancing the evidence base for Council to attract funding to provide local business grants.

Agriculture

- Mansfield's agricultural strengths and areas of productive agricultural land should be identified.
- There is a need to investigate areas where land fragmentation is likely to impact the ongoing viability of agriculture.

Transport

- A hierarchy of transport connections should be identified based on their movement and place function and supported through an action plan.
- There is a recommendation for patterns of land use that support sustainable transport modes.
- Potential funding methods and items of advocacy to higher levels of government should be identified for the delivery and maintenance of transport infrastructure.

Infrastructure

- Gaps in the community and development infrastructure network should be identified and preferred locations for provision should be nominated in line an identified settlement hierarchy.
- Infrastructure funding mechanisms, such as development contribution plans and special rates schemes should be established.
- Appropriate project delivery timing for Council investment can be decided upon following the identification of planning pathways.

- The co-location of community services and facilities should be supported through land use zoning to ensure a high level of accessibility.
- Important community service infrastructure assets should be recognised and protected in local planning policy and relevant controls.

2.3 Policy context

State and local plans summarised in this section establish a policy framework under which the Mansfield Planning Strategy will sit. Key issues identified include the need to ensure sufficient housing supply (quantity and type of housing) for current and future residents across the Shire, to adapt to the effects of climate change and to diversify the local economic base.

State policy

- *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* emphasises that the state government will continue to invest in regional Victoria to support housing and economic growth, enhance social and economic participation and support healthy communities. It emphasises that growth in rural townships should be in keeping with the character of those places and balanced with the protection of productive land, economic resources, and biodiversity assets.
- The *Hume Regional Growth Plan* identifies Mansfield as a place where moderate population growth is expected to occur. The Plan highlights that most growth in the region will be directed into Wangaratta and Benalla, as larger service centres. The Plan identifies regional issues, many of which affect the Mansfield Shire: climate change, the need for residential, commercial, and industrial land, protection of agricultural industries, transport and community connectivity, environmental protection, natural hazard management and economic diversification.
- Following *Plan Melbourne*, the planning policy framework (PPF) section of the *Mansfield Planning Scheme* contains broad strategies to manage rural lands and townships, such as directing growth into existing urban areas, while fostering the sustainability of smaller rural settlements. It also highlights that new forms of industry, agriculture, tourism, and alternative energy production may be encouraged. For new tourism and industrial uses, the policy is to locate these away from productive agricultural areas (that is, into existing urban places, or where land capability for agriculture is low). The policy supports tourism activities that add value to agriculture, such as cellar door and farm-gate sales.

Local policy

The *Mansfield Planning Scheme* identifies several issues for the Shire:

- Maintaining the role of Mansfield as the main township, supplying most housing, attracting commercial/retail and industrial growth and ensuring enough land supply to meet demand.
- Providing a diversity of housing choices including medium density housing and 'lifestyle' opportunities on rural living land, while balancing the pressure this latter form creates for improved services and infrastructure in rural areas.
- Protecting productive agricultural land and addressing the pressure to use it for purposes other than farming.

- Supporting the continued growth of the agricultural sector, including supporting the diversification of the agricultural base.
- Protecting cultural heritage.
- Protecting the Alpine approaches as major transport and tourism routes.
- Adapting to a changing climate and protecting sensitive and environmentally valuable landscapes.
- Protecting and where possible improving water quality.
- Maintaining the natural resource base and amenity for long-term sustainability.
- Managing flooding and bushfire risks to development.
- Managing pest plants and animals on private and public land.
- Diversifying the economic base, particularly tourism, to provide for year-round opportunities.
- Supporting traditional and emerging forms of agriculture and 'clean and green' industries as alternatives to the traditional forms of industry.
- Maximising eco-tourism opportunities.
- Planning for reticulated infrastructure (water, sewer) in urban areas and assessing this in smaller towns.

2.4 Current planning controls

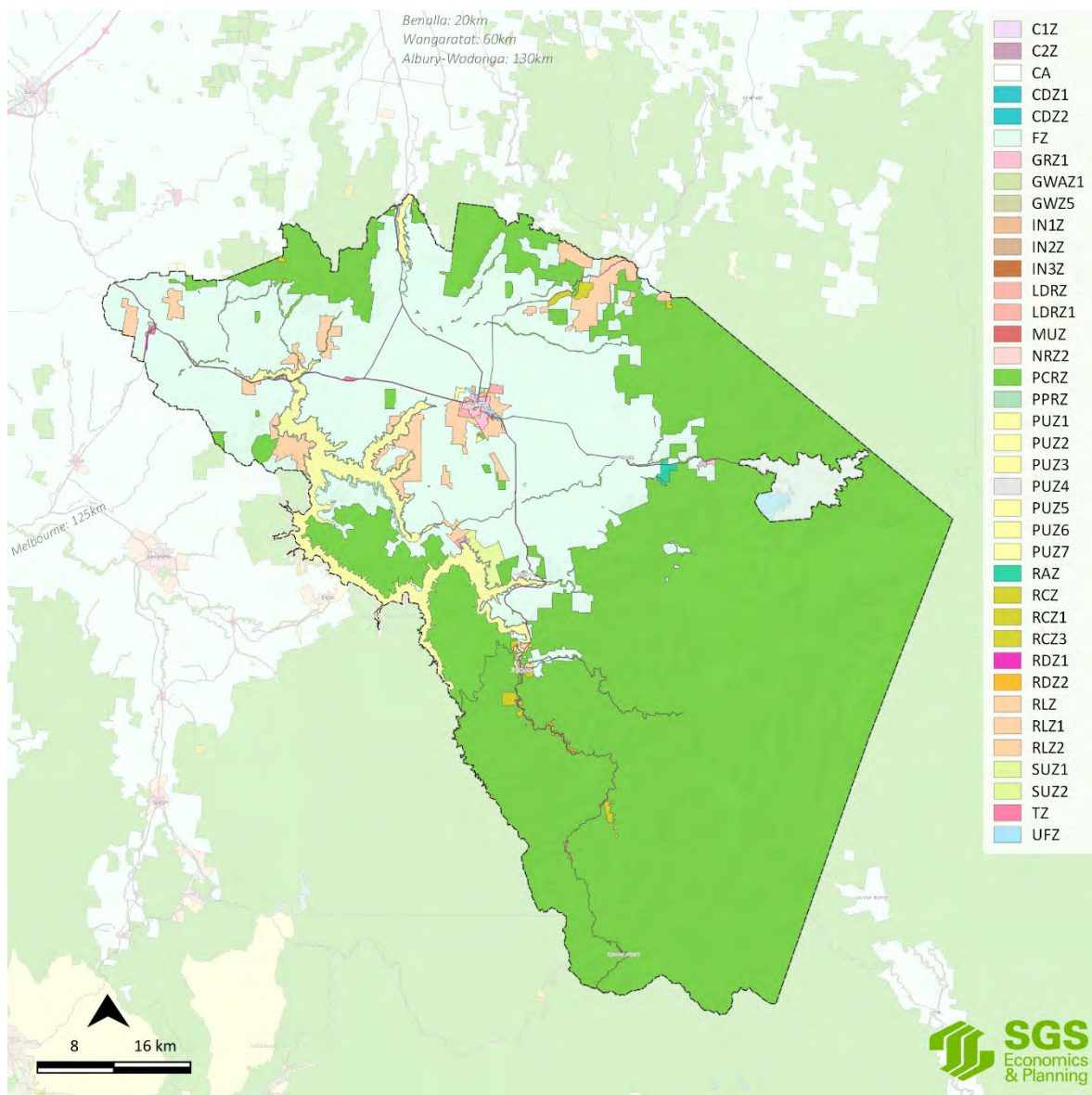
Planning zones

A range of planning zones apply across the Shire (see Figure 4 on page 36), identifying where land can be used (primarily) for residential, commercial, industrial, and farming purposes, or where there is public land (for example, in a state or national park).

- **Farming Zone (FZ):** This applies to large areas in the Shire. The FZ provides for the use of land for agriculture and encourages the retention of land for the purpose of productive agriculture. This zone is intended to ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture. The Schedule to the zone sets the minimum subdivision area for lots and as-of-right use of the land for a dwelling at 40 hectares.
- **Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ):** This zone applies to parts of Mansfield Township, in the new residential areas in the south, west, and north. The LDRZ also applies to some parts of Goughs Bay and Jamieson. The purpose of this zone is to provide for low-density residential development. In areas of LDRZ where development can be serviced by reticulated sewerage a minimum subdivision size of 2,000sqm applies. In areas that are not serviced, a condition of the zone is that wastewater is to be treated onsite (that is, reticulated sewerage cannot be provided) a minimum subdivision area of 4,000sqm applies.
- **Mixed Use Zone (MUZ):** The MUZ provides for a range of commercial, industrial, and higher density housing. It is applied to selected sites in Mansfield Township, either side of Mount Buller Road where some urban services land uses are clustered (All Seasons Mansfield, a Veterinary Clinic, Mansfield Hire and Repco Car Service). It also applies to land on Chenery Street currently used for car dealerships and to land off Walker Street.

- **Township Zone (TZ):** This zone is used to identify small settlements where a mixture of small commercial activities and residential uses are appropriate within a rural setting. In the Shire, this applies to Merton, Maindample, Gaffney’s Creek, and Merrijig. The zone allows some community uses to serve local community needs in appropriate locations. There are locations where the TZ has been inappropriately applied, such as to single lots in agricultural areas where further residential development and commercial activity are not supported.
- **General Residential Zone (GRZ):** The GRZ applies to the suburban parts of Mansfield, Jamieson, Bonnie Doon, and Goughs Bay. The zone also applies to small areas of Macs Cove, Howqua, Merrijig, and Sawmill Settlement. The purpose of the GRZ is to encourage development that is sensitive to neighbourhood character (the look and feel of a place) and to encourage diverse housing types that suit the needs of the community where there is good access to transport and community services.
- **Industrial 1 Zone (IN1Z):** This zone applies to parts of Mansfield Township, with parcels to the north, east and south. The IN1Z allows for a select range of industrial, storage and distribution uses. Key precincts include the Dead Horse Lane/Lakins Road Precinct and the Mount Buller Road Precinct which includes light industrial uses along Crosbys Lane.
- **Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z):** This zone is applied along Maroondah Highway in Mansfield. The precinct extends from the golf course in the east to Fords Creek in the west. C1Z is also in place within the towns of Bonnie Doon, Goughs Bay, Macs Cove, and Jamieson. The purpose of this zone is to create lively centres with a mix of retail, office, business, entertainment, and community uses. The mix can feature some residential dwellings at specified densities.
- **Commercial 2 Zone (C2Z):** This zone is in place within Mansfield and is currently applied along Mount Buller Road between Greenvale Lane and Reardon Lane. C2Z provides space for commercial uses such as offices, appropriate manufacturing, light industry, bulky goods retailers as well as other complementary business and retail services.
- **Rural Living Zone (RLZ):** This zone provides for some residential use in a rural environment, where people may also conduct some small-scale hobby farming activities. It has typically been applied around the fringe of Mansfield Township, however there are also some areas of RLZ across the Shire where smaller settlements are found, for example, at Tolmie and Merton. This zone enables rural lifestyle opportunities on smaller blocks and is usually applied in places where mains or reticulated water and wastewater systems are unavailable. The RLZ is used as a buffer between farming and urban places, to limit interface issues between agricultural activities in the FZ and other more sensitive township or urban areas.
- **Rural Activity Zone (RAZ):** This zone provides for increased flexibility to accommodate non-agricultural uses in rural areas compared to the Farming Zone. While agriculture retains primacy, it allows greater scope for tourism uses. It can be used alongside the Farming Zone to direct such uses towards locations of high economic value as tourist locations, or away from areas of that need to be protected due to their agricultural values.
- **Public Conservation and Resources Zone (PCRZ):** This zone seeks to protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat, or cultural values. It also allows for facilities which assist in public education and interpretation of the natural environment and appropriate resource-based uses. The PCRZ covers large areas of the Shire, applying to National Parks and State Forests.

FIGURE 4: PLANNING ZONES IN MANSFIELD SHIRE



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, based on the Mansfield Planning Scheme, 2020. Full details about the zones can be viewed on the Mansfield Planning Scheme: <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/schemes-and-amendments/browse-planning-scheme/planning-scheme?f.Scheme%7CplanningSchemeName=Mansfield> and VicPlan: <https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan/>.

Planning overlays

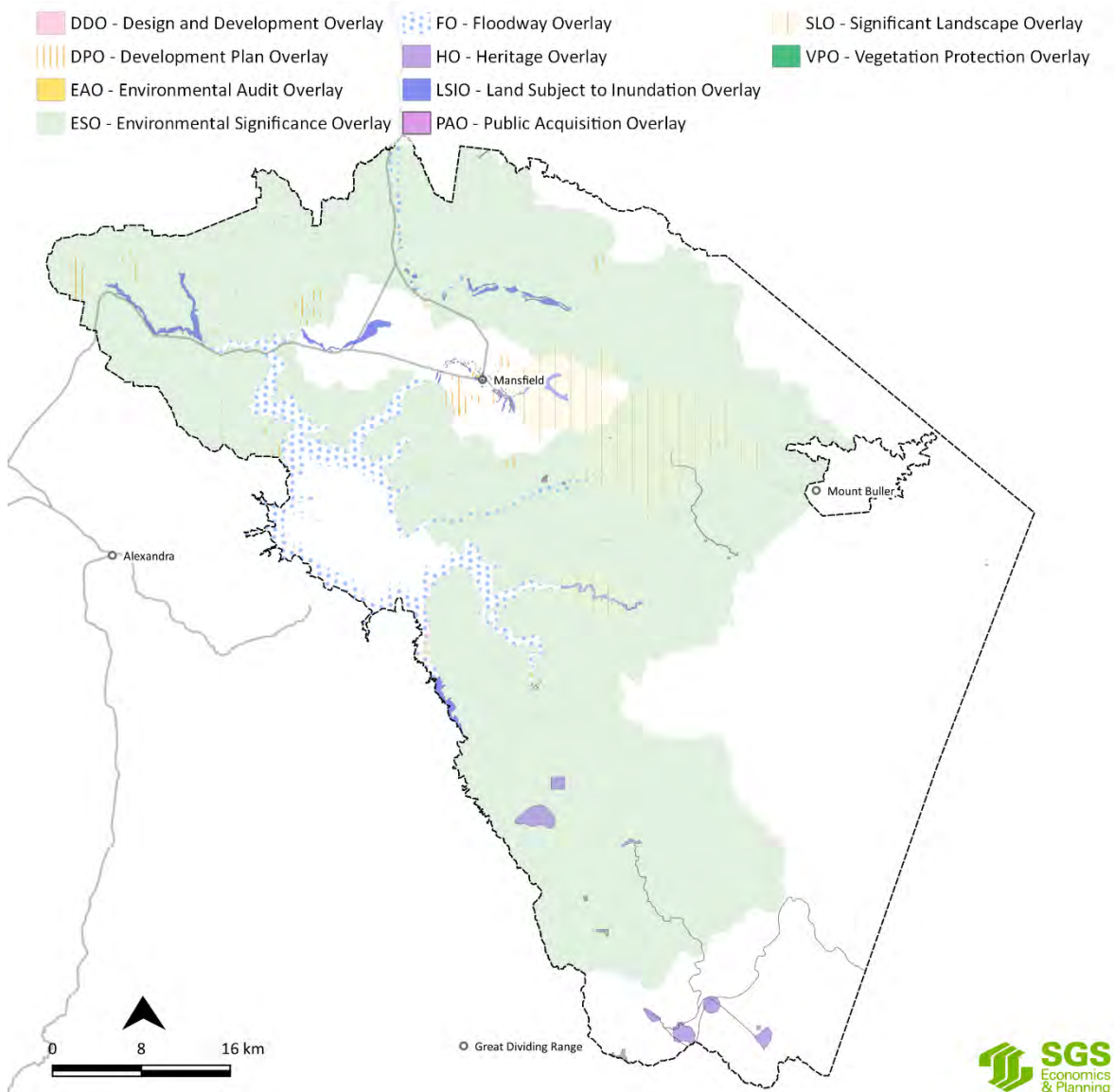
A range of planning overlays apply across the Shire (see Figure 5, Figure 6 and Figure 7). These show the location and extent of special features, as well as areas where special controls are in place. Overlays are grouped into Environmental and Landscape Overlays, Heritage and Built Form Overlays, Land Management Overlays and Other Overlays – currently Mansfield Shire has twelve Overlays in place, some with schedules which set out site- or precinct-specific planning controls to manage a particular development issue including environmental conservation values or environmental hazard, design requirement or heritage values.

Unlike zones which can only be applied to one piece of land at a time, multiple overlays can cover the same piece of land, this is illustrated in the figures below (Figure 5 to Figure 7). Each overlay has a unique purpose and requirements or guidelines to be met.

- **Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO):** This overlay identifies areas where development of land may be affected by environmental constraints and ensure development is compatible with identified environmental values. Schedule 1 and 2 to the ESO apply to the Upper Goulburn, Lake Eildon Environs, Upper Goulburn (Upper Delatite) and Lake Nillahcootie catchments and aim to protect these areas to ensure it remains attractive to residents and visitors and that land use and development are not detrimental to the quality of water on the catchment.
- **Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO):** This overlay protects areas of significant vegetation and encourage regeneration of native vegetation. Schedule 1 to the VPO protects vegetation that is of significance for historical, botanical, and environmental reasons or because it is valued by the local community in specific locations across the Shire.
- **Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO):** This overlay aims to identify and protect the visual values of the state significant landscape on the approaches to the surrounding hills as well as the Lower Howqua River Area. In particular, it seeks to protect the short and long-distance views of Mount Buller from Mount Buller Road approach roads and public viewpoints.
- **Heritage Overlay (HO):** This overlay identifies elements of natural or cultural significance, to preserve and enhance the elements which contribute to places of heritage significance. This includes Victorian Heritage Registered elements and ones of local significance.
- **Design and Development Overlay (DDO):** This overlay identifies places with specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development. Schedule 1 to the DDO covers the Alpine Approaches and Township Gateways to ensure that new developments have a visual appearance compatible with the local features identified for protection.
- **Development Plan Overlay (DPO):** This overlay identifies areas which require the form and conditions of future use and development to be shown on a development plan before a permit can be granted to use or develop the land. Schedules to the DPO apply to several specific areas across the municipality.
- **Floodway Overlay (FO):** This overlay identifies waterways and major flood paths and high hazard areas which have the greatest risk and frequency of being affected by flooding. It also ensures that development maintains or improves river and wetland health, waterway protection and flood plain health. It applies to areas within Barjarg, Bonnie Doon, Howqua, Jamieson, Macs Cove, Merrijig, and Sawmill Settlement.
- **Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO):** This overlay identifies land areas affected by the 1 in 100-year flood and ensures that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters. It applies to areas in Barjarg, Jamieson, Merton, and Maindample.
- **Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO):** This overlay seeks to ensure that the development of land prioritises the protection of human life and strengthens community resilience to bushfire. It ensures that development is only permitted where the risk to life and property from bushfire can be reduced to an acceptable level. The BMO covers a significant extent of Mansfield Shire except for Mansfield and areas around the Maroondah Highway including Maindample, Bonnie Doon, and Merton (Figure 7).

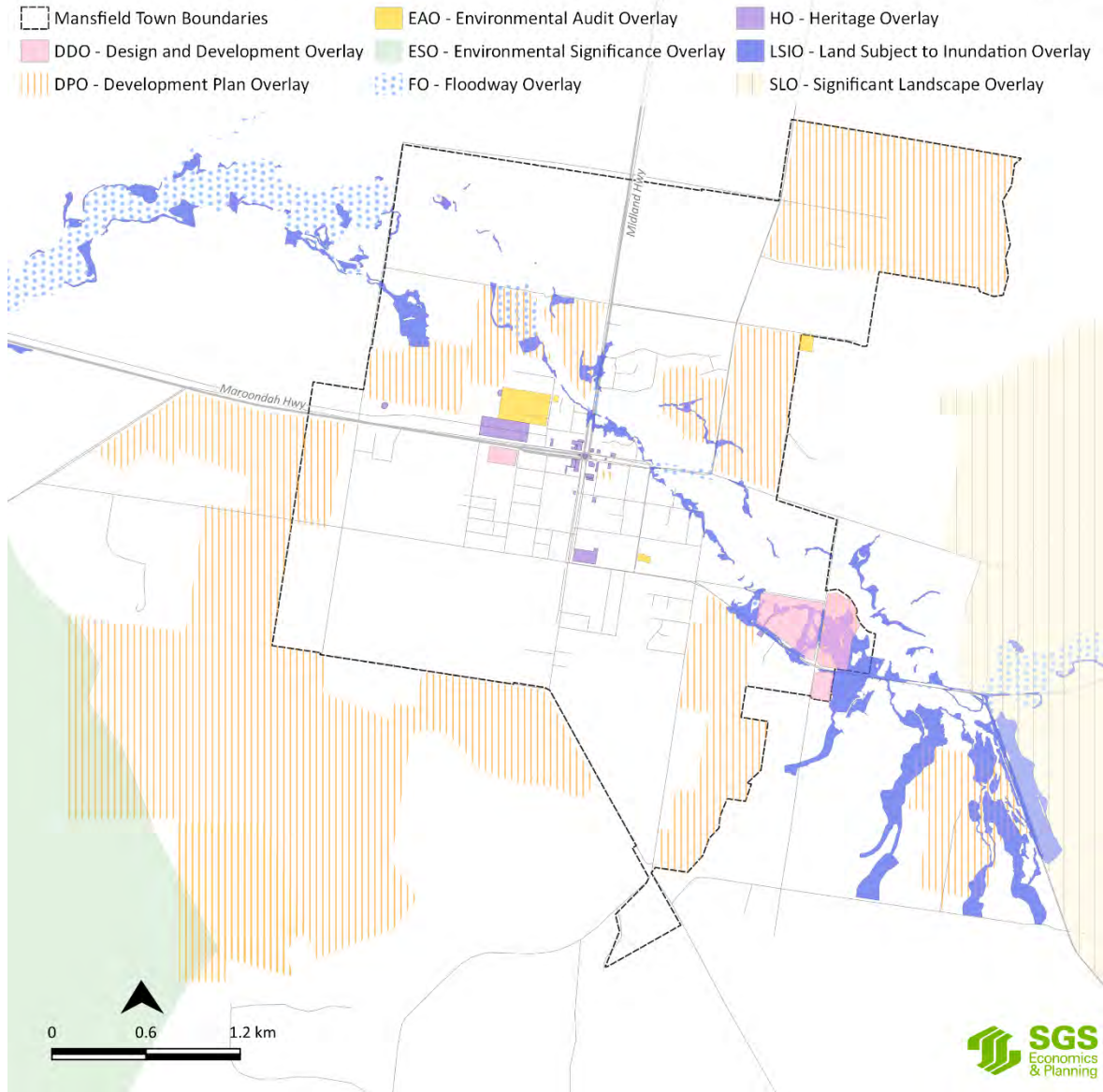
- **Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO):** This overlay identified land which is proposed to be acquired by a Minister, public authority, or municipal council as well as to reserve it for a public purpose and designate the authority. A Schedule to this overlay applies to Delatite Lane for the purpose of a raw water storage reservoir and associated physical infrastructure.
- **Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO):** This overlay ensures potentially contaminated that requires an environmental audit before being determined as suitable for certain uses. For example, areas once used for industry or waste would have this overlay applied before being used for housing. This overlay is applied in some parts of Mansfield and Jamieson.
- **Specific Control Overlay (SCO):** This Overlay applies specific controls designed to achieve a particular land use and development outcome in extraordinary circumstances. The SCO applies to the Mountain Bay area.

FIGURE 5: OVERLAYS IN MANSFIELD SHIRE (EXCLUDING BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT OVERLAY)



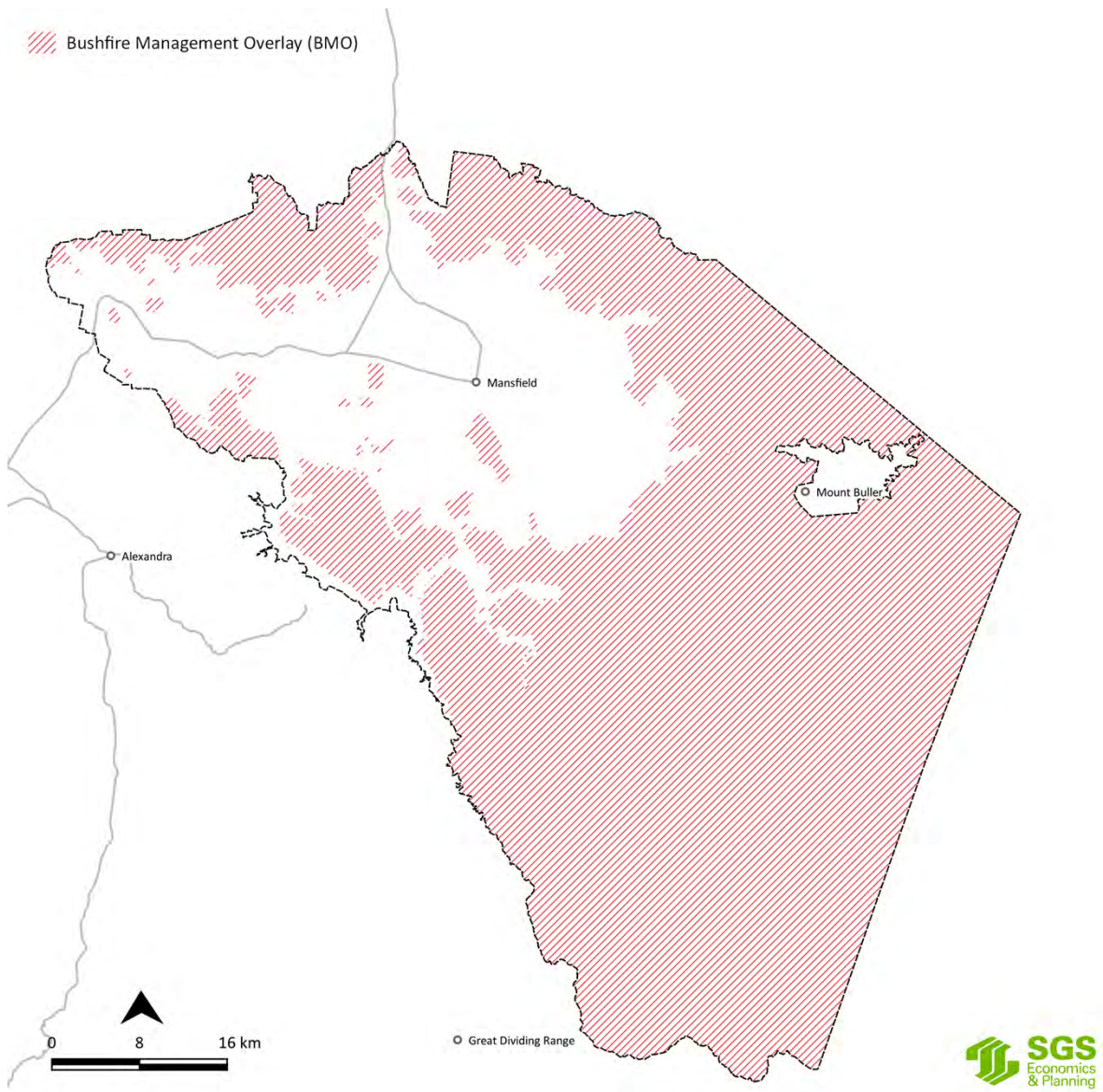
Source: SGS Economics and Planning, based on the Mansfield Planning Scheme, 2020.

FIGURE 6: SELECTED OVERLAYS IN MANSFIELD



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, based on the Mansfield Planning Scheme, 2020.

FIGURE 7: BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT OVERLAY IN THE MANSFIELD SHIRE



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, based on the Mansfield Planning Scheme, 2020.

03 Draft Planning Framework

MANSFIELD PLANNING STRATEGY

| APRIL 2022

3. Planning framework

Based on the background analysis and context set out in Section 2, this section sets out the vision, objectives and strategies for future land use and development across the Mansfield Shire. Planning objectives identify outcomes that should be achieved under the Strategy, while Sections 4 to 8 provide greater detail about the actions and implementation pathways to achieve those outcomes.

3.1 Vision

The vision currently at cl 02.02 of the planning scheme is taken from the Council Plan 2021-2025 and is as follows:

To live, work and play in an inclusive, dynamic, and prosperous place where community spirit is strong, and people are empowered to engage in issues that affect their lives.

The Practitioner’s Guide to Victorian Planning Schemes recommends that vision statements derived from wider-purpose documents such as Council Plans should be “distilled into a vision for the MPS that focuses on land use and development.”⁹

The land use- and development-focussed form of the Vision is:

To plan for an inclusive, dynamic, and prosperous place where community spirit is strong, and people are empowered to engage in issues that affect their lives.

3.2 Summary of Strategy Objectives

Objectives outlined in this Strategy are summarised below and shown spatially in Figure 8 and Figure 9. As explained above, a *planning objective* describes an outcome to be achieved in response to a land use or development issue or opportunity. Further information about how each objective will be achieved, and what Council and its partners roles and responsibilities for implementation will be, are presented in Section 9.

Figures 7 and 8 can be the basis of the planning scheme’s Strategic Framework Plan.

Settlement and housing objectives

7. To support sustainable patterns of population growth and residential development across the Shire.
8. To ensure sufficient residential land is available to meet future dwelling demand.
9. To increase supply of social and affordable housing.

⁹ DELWP (2020), *A Practitioner’s Guide to Victorian Planning Schemes*, Version 1.4, page 72.

10. To encourage increased diversity in housing supply to meet community needs.
11. To support a range of housing for people of all ages and life stages.
12. To support rural residential housing opportunities that provide social, economic, and environmentally sustainable land use outcomes.
13. To prevent further ad-hoc residential development in the Farming Zone that creates dispersed settlements and threatens productive farming uses.

Neighbourhood character objectives

14. To preserve and enhance the township and alpine character of Mansfield, Bonnie Doon, and the Shire's smaller settlements.
15. To protect and enhance sites of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance across Mansfield Shire.
16. To identify sites of heritage significance in the Shire.

Infrastructure provision and funding objectives

17. To provide development infrastructure to support preferred patterns of development.
18. To provide community infrastructure to meet community needs.

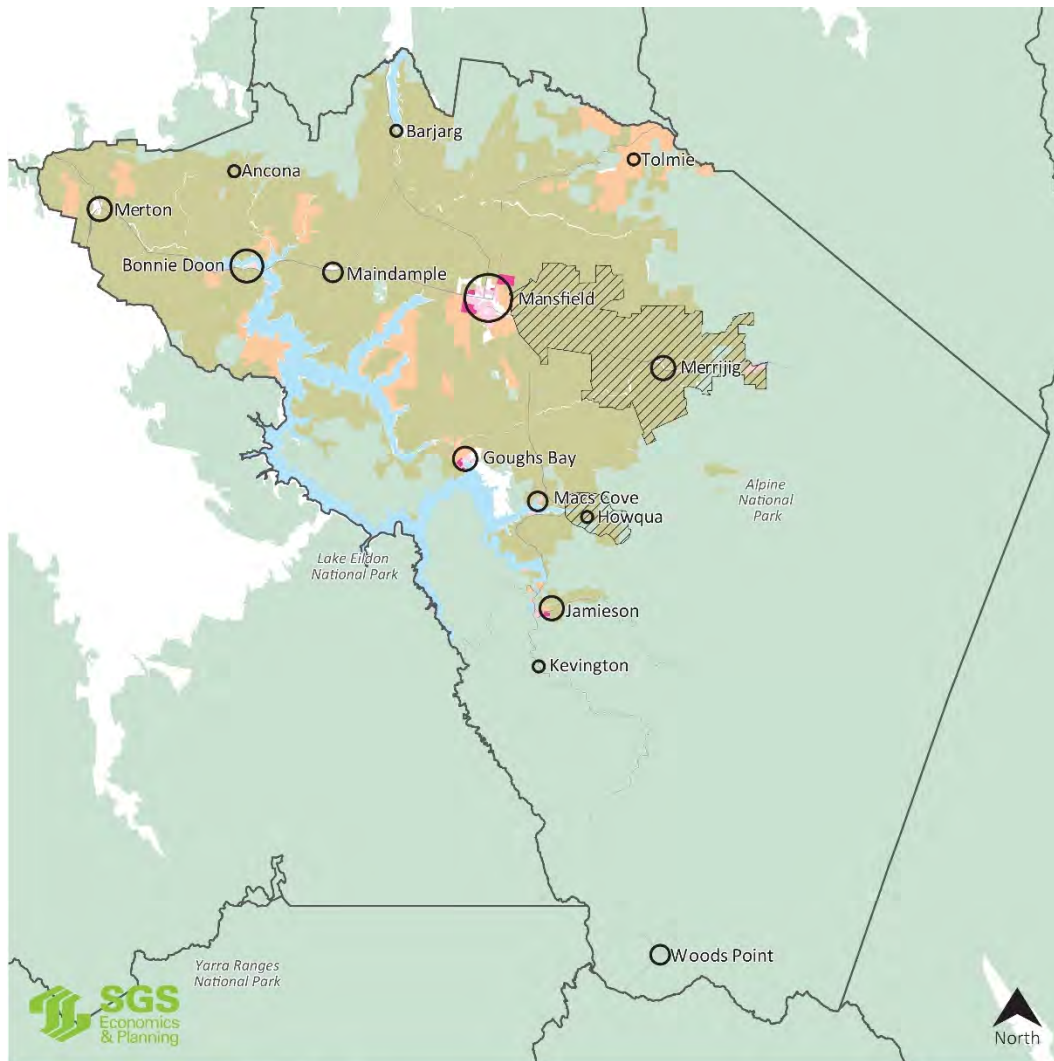
Employment lands objectives

19. To consolidate commercial and industrial activity.
20. To ensure there is sufficient land to support future needs.
21. To strengthen and diversify the visitor economy.
22. To protect rural lands for productive agricultural purposes.
23. To limit further fragmentation of agricultural areas.

Environment and landscape objectives

24. To protect and enhance significant landscapes in Mansfield Shire for their cultural, environmental, and historic values.
25. To protect and enhance waterways, wetlands and lake environments and enable access to safe, secure, and affordable water supplies.
26. To ensure land management supports diverse and self-sustaining landscapes that support health ecosystems now and into the future.
27. To ensure natural resources and environmental values are not compromised by ongoing development.
28. To mitigate the effects of climate change and encourage new land use and development that uses climate adaptation techniques.

FIGURE 8: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PLAN FOR MANSFIELD SHIRE

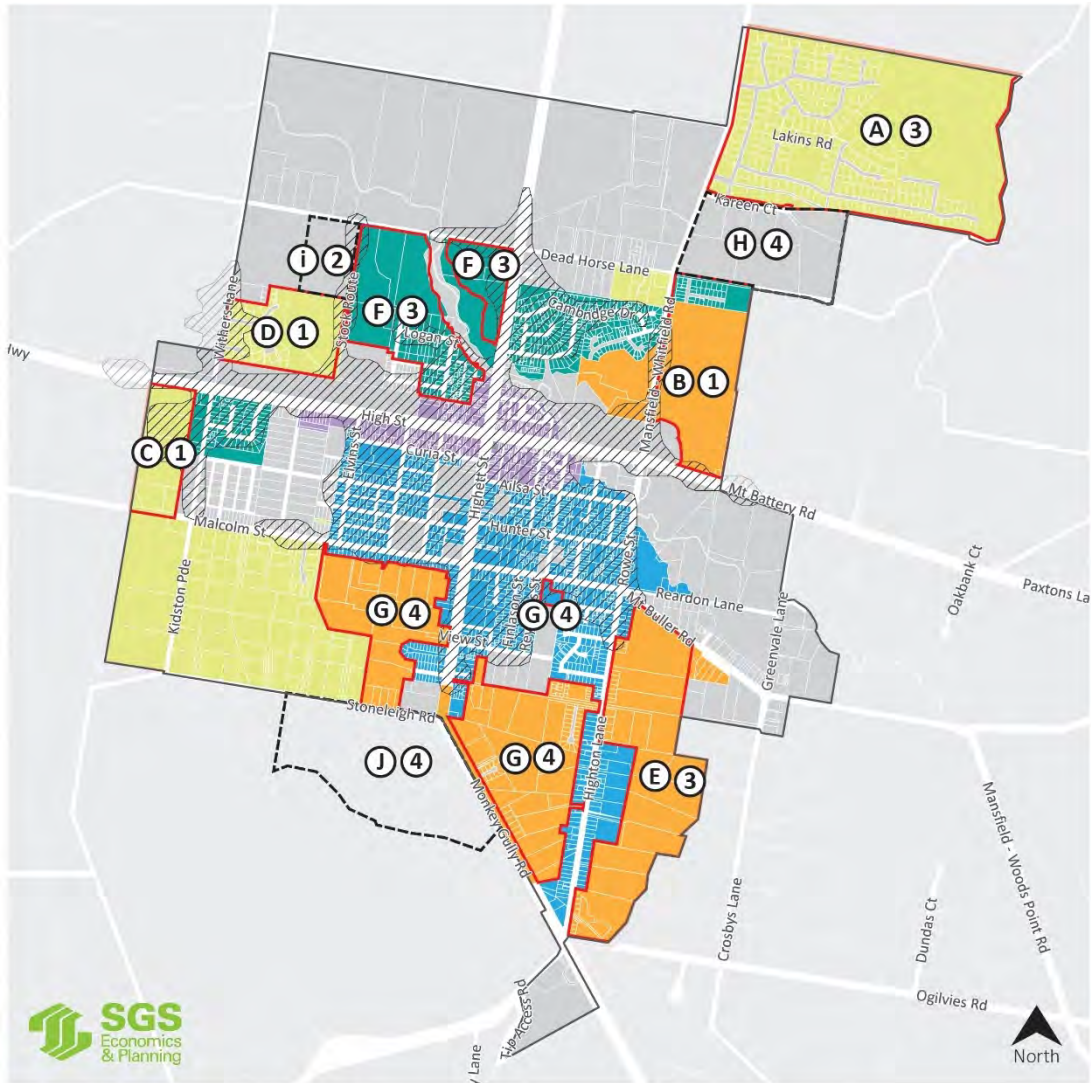


Legend - Mansfield Shire Framework Plan

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Municipal boundaries | Key elements from the Planning Strategy |
| National and State parks/reserves | Residential areas in town- subject to town character recommendations |
| Main roads | Rural Living Zone (RLZ) areas- potential further investigation for capacity in safe and appropriate locations |
| Settlement hierarchy | Farming Zone (FZ) land- protect from residential encroachment |
| Main Service Centre | Protect significant landscapes |
| Town | |
| Township | |
| Settlement | |
| Rural Settlement | |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2021.

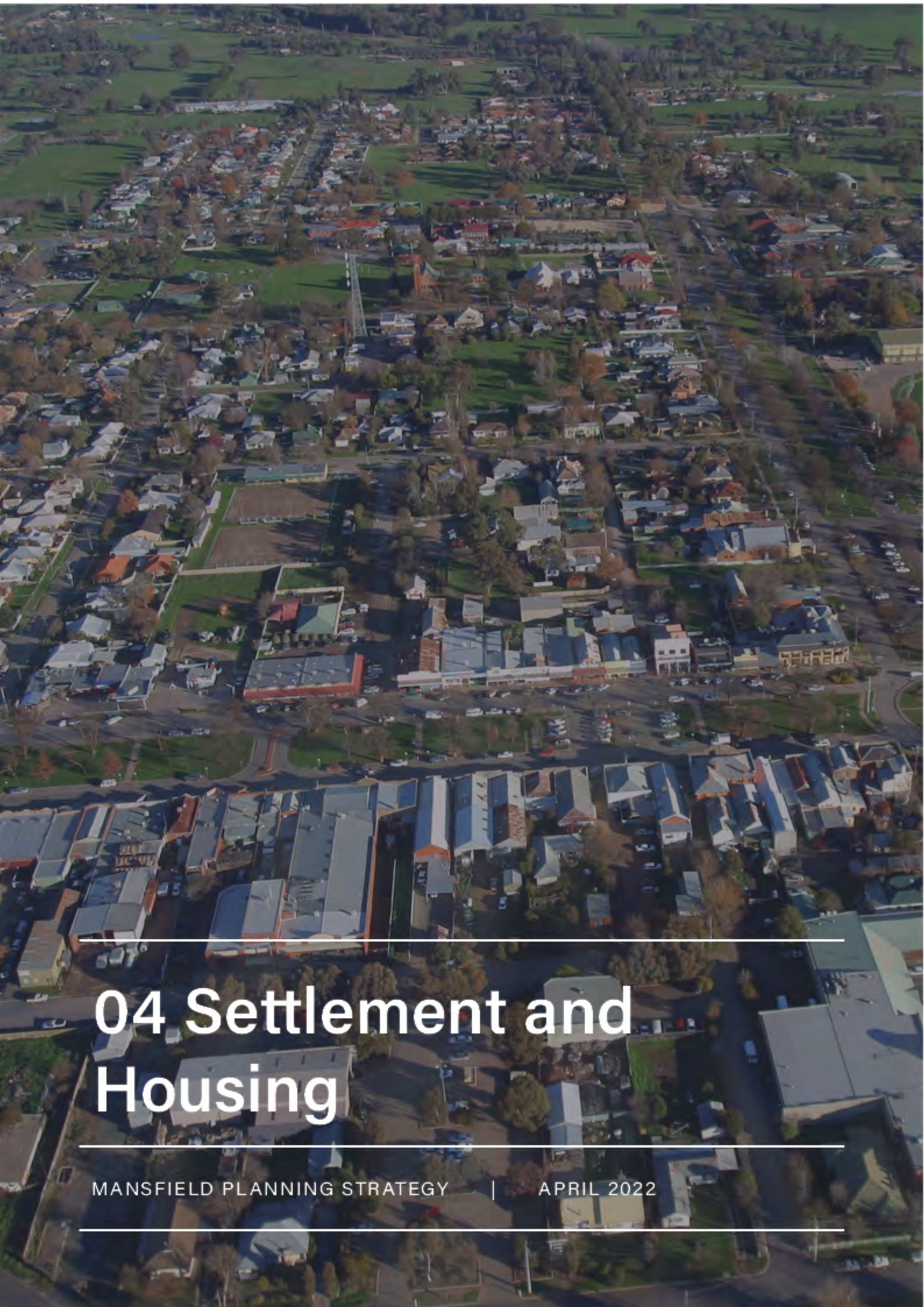
FIGURE 9: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PLAN FOR MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP



Legend - Mansfield Township Framework Plan

Town boundary	Future residential areas	Township character areas
Property boundaries	Mansfield-Whitfield Road	Commercial core (residential areas)
Development staging	Dead Horse Lane	Township residential
Kareen Hills and the Grange Estates	Monkey Gully Road	Garden contemporary
Loyola Run Estate	Residential development prioritisation/staging	Township fringe
Beolite Retirement Village	First	Town surrounds
Stockmans Rise Estate	Second	Other considerations
Highton Lane Development Plan Area	Third	Locations up to 1200 metres (15-minute walk) from town centre where, diverse social/affordable options are encouraged
GRZ1 south of Dead Horse Lane	Fourth	
GRZ1 south Malcolm Street, GRZ1 east of Monkey Gully Road		

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2021.



04 Settlement and Housing

MANSFIELD PLANNING STRATEGY | APRIL 2022

4. Settlement and housing

This section sets out the policy context, challenges, opportunities, and recommended policy directions to manage settlement and housing across Mansfield Shire.

4.1 The context for planning for housing in Mansfield Shire

Mansfield Shire's town and settlement network offers a diverse range of housing and lifestyle opportunities for residents, from rural living lots, lakeside and alpine townships, small historic settlements, to conventional suburban style living.

Data released in 2020 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported a 3.3 per cent population growth rate in the 2019-2020 financial year.¹⁰ Local building permit data has also been analysed to examine recent trends in dwelling constructions, suggesting a growth rate of approximate 2 per cent per annum between 2011 and 2021. Given the unique circumstances and uncertainty surrounding the long-term impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and the local growth it appeared to stimulate higher growth rates than the official State government forecasts, which are based on 2016 data from the ABS Census, have been incorporated into alternative growth scenarios (at least for the short term).¹¹

In 2016, the Shire had a population of 8,400.¹² While the population is small, it is growing. Driven by its access to Melbourne and its attractive lifestyle offering, the population of the Shire is expected to further increase to almost 11,359 residents by 2040 according to the most recent official State Government population projections.¹³ While these forecasts represent only modest growth in terms of the total number, this increase in population represents a considerable pace of growth (1.2 per cent per annum), higher than the average for regional Victoria.¹⁴

Further detail regarding these growth projections and the implications for housing demand and residential land supply is provided in Section 4.4 below.

Not only is the population growing, but the demographic profile of residents is changing. In line with broader demographic trends (and amplified by the attractiveness of the Shire for retirees seeking a 'tree change' lifestyle), the population of the Shire is ageing. The median age the median age of people in Mansfield Shire in 2016 was 48 years (compared with 43 in regional Victoria), having risen from 44 years in 2006.¹⁵ Changing family and household dynamics are also resulting in shifting household structures over time. While couple families with children will continue to represent the greatest share

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics Regional population 2019-2020: Population change

¹¹ At the time of writing, DELWP were currently preparing updated VIF projections which consider the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), Census.

¹³ Victorian Government (2019), Victoria in Future: Population Projections

¹⁴ Victorian Government (2019), Victoria in Future: Population Projections

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), Census.

of total households, smaller households (including lone person households) are expected to increase their share over time.¹⁶

An additional factor influencing settlement and housing outcomes in the Shire is the high number of non-resident ratepayers. Almost half (47 percent) properties in Mansfield Shire are owned by people who live outside of the municipality.¹⁷ This is a trend that is commonly seen in coastal towns and inland areas that attract many tourists. People may purchase second (or subsequent) dwellings in the Shire for a variety of reasons. It is also difficult to distinguish between homes primarily used by their owners (and their relatives and families), those that form part of the supply (either intermittently or permanently) of tourism accommodation (such as short-term holiday lettings), or those that were made available for permanent rental housing.

The high number of unoccupied dwellings (40 percent) recorded at the 2016 Census and the relatively low proportion of visitor households¹⁸ (3 percent), suggests that many are kept as private holiday homes and not made available for short or long term lease.¹⁹ Interestingly, a 2007 survey of non-resident ratepayers found that many (36 percent) intended to live permanently in the Shire at some point in coming years, a trend accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Projected population growth (based on official State Government projections) combined with these broader demographic trends will result in a base level demand for 1,348 additional private houses in Mansfield Shire over the life of this Strategy.²⁰ Two alternative, higher growth scenarios are also included in the demand and supply analysis below, taking into consideration the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent trends in dwelling construction activity across the Shire.

The following section outlines Objectives and Strategies to ensure the housing needs of Mansfield Shire's future population are met.

4.2 Strategic directions for settlement and housing

It is important that future population and housing growth are accommodated in a way that supports the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the Shire.

The following strategic directions underpin the recommended approach to managing growth and development across the Shire. They have informed the suite of objectives and strategies which follow and will be used to guide future Council decision-making.

The strategic directions are:

- Support housing development that creates compact towns and settlements and enables the efficient and sustainable use of land and infrastructure.

¹⁶ Mansfield Shire Council (2020), Mansfield Planning Strategy: Background and Technical Report

¹⁷ Mansfield Shire Council (2020), Mansfield Planning Strategy: Background and Technical Report

¹⁸ Visitor households are defined in the ABS Census of Population and Housing, available here: <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2901.0Chapter58702016>.

¹⁹ Mansfield Shire Council (2020), Mansfield Planning Strategy: Background and Technical Report

²⁰ SGS Economics and Planning (2021), Housing Demand Model

- Support infill development and new subdivision that accords with the council’s settlement hierarchy.
- Support initiatives that deliver improved affordability, diversity, and innovation in the delivery of housing to provide greater choice for residents.
- Limit development in areas prone to natural hazards to reduce the risk to human life.
- Ensure all future strategic work determines whether locations are appropriate to encourage growth and development from a bushfire perspective
- Identify and implement appropriate bushfire protection measures.
- Minimise conflicts between residential and agricultural uses to ensure the ongoing productivity of the Shire’s farming areas.
- Strongly discourage the discretionary approval for new housing in agricultural areas except where there is an appropriate demonstrated need to live on the land to conduct an effective agricultural use.

4.3 Establishing a hierarchy of towns and settlements

The *Hume Regional Growth Plan* (2014, p.37) identifies an “existing urban settlement network” that classifies urban locations across the region based on their existing population and potential to accommodate future population growth. This network includes recognition of Mansfield as a “key sub-regional settlement,” which is likely to accommodate some population growth in future. Further guidance is not provided in the Regional Growth Plan as to the expected future role of the Shire’s other towns and settlements.

The classification of towns and settlements within a ‘settlement hierarchy’ based on the existing and expected future role is important for:

- Providing clarity regarding preferred locations for future population growth to investors, developers, and the community.
- Identifying areas where some change is most suitable and supporting efforts to maintain and enhance the unique local character of different places across the Shire.
- Prioritising locations for future infrastructure investment by Council and other government agencies, to address existing backlogs or support locations where some growth is deemed suitable.

Objective 1. To support sustainable patterns of population growth and residential development across the Shire.

Strategy 1. Direct future population growth in accordance with the settlement hierarchy to support the efficient use of land and infrastructure and convenient access to jobs and services.

The settlement hierarchy shown in Table 1 classifies each of Mansfield Shire’s towns and settlements as either a Main Service Centre, Town, Township, Settlement or Rural Settlement. These classifications have been established taking into consideration:

- Existing population size and number of dwellings
- Extent of commercial activity and presence of defined commercial areas
- Infrastructure servicing including the provision of reticulated services and community services
- Land use zoning patterns

Table 1 also provides description of the preferred future role of each place based on:

- Guidance provided by state and regional planning policy direction
- Potential and desirability of each place to accommodate future population growth
- Planned investment in infrastructure and services by Council and other government agencies.

The location and category of each place is shown in Figure 10.

TABLE 1: SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

CATEGORY	SETTLEMENTS	DESCRIPTION	FUTURE ROLE
Main Service Centre	Mansfield town	<p>Mansfield accommodates the largest number of residents in the Shire and provides for a range of commercial activities servicing the resident population as well as the smaller towns and settlements across the Shire.</p> <p>Mansfield is location of a diverse range of community services and infrastructure, including health, education and sporting and recreation facilities.</p> <p>Mansfield is serviced by a range of reticulated services (excluding gas).</p>	<p>Future growth: Mansfield is the preferred location for future population growth and residential development in the Shire.</p> <p>Future residential development will be supported in accordance with the development staging (refer to Strategy 3).</p> <p>Development and community infrastructure: Mansfield will be prioritised for future infrastructure provision, including infrastructure to support housing growth (roads and public transport, stormwater drainage, pedestrian and cycling connections) and community infrastructure (kindergartens, maternal child health).</p> <p>Council will advocate and support the provision of reticulated services in Mansfield to facilitate expected population growth.</p> <p>Zoning for residential development: Further rezoning for residential purposes is supported within Mansfield to accommodate forecast dwelling demand in accordance with the development staging shown in Strategies 2 and 3.</p>
Town	Bonnie Doon	<p>Bonnie Doon has the second largest residential population in Shire and provides for a limited range of commercial activities and community services.</p> <p>Bonnie Doon is serviced by a range of reticulated services (excluding gas).</p>	<p>Future growth: Modest population growth and residential development is supported within Bonnie Doon.</p> <p>Development and community infrastructure: Growth in Bonnie Doon will be supported by the provision of required development and community infrastructure.</p> <p>Council will advocate and support the provision of reticulated services in Bonnie Doon to facilitate expected population growth.</p>

			<p>Zoning for residential development: Residential zoning will be revised at Bonnie Doon, following confirmation of the implementation of the Lake Eildon Master Plan (refer to Breakout Box 1 below).</p>
Township	Jamieson Gough’s Bay Merton Merrijig	<p>Townships have some urban zoned land and accommodate a small population. Commercial activity and community facilities are limited.</p> <p>Townships (other than Merrijig) are not serviced by reticulated water and sewerage infrastructure.</p>	<p>Future growth: Only incremental population growth and housing development is supported within Townships, within existing residentially zoned areas.</p> <p>Development and community infrastructure: Council will provide basic community infrastructure in Townships, such as community meeting spaces and basic recreational facilities (refer to Strategy 3).</p> <p>Community Plans for townships will be revised and updated to inform infrastructure planning and funding (refer to Strategy 30) and advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Zoning for residential development: No further rezoning for residential purposes is supported within Townships.</p> <p>Residential zoning will be revised in Gough’s Bay following confirmation of the implementation of the Lake Eildon Master Plan (refer to Breakout Box 1).</p>
Settlement	Macs Cove Howqua Maindample Woods Point	<p>Settlements have some urban zoned land and accommodate very small populations. Settlements generally do not have commercial activity/centres or community facilities.</p> <p>Settlements are generally not reticulated, except for Merrijig.</p>	<p>Future growth: Only incremental population growth and housing development is supported in Settlements within existing residentially zoned areas.</p> <p>Development and community infrastructure: Council will provide limited investment in community facilities in Settlement locations.</p> <p>Community Plans for settlements will be revised and updated to inform infrastructure planning and funding (refer to Strategy 9) and advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Zoning for residential development: No further rezoning for residential purposes is supported within Settlements.</p>
Rural Settlements	Ancona Barjarg Howqua Kevington Tolmie (RLZ)	<p>Rural settlements represent areas of dispersed dwellings primarily within the Farming Zone.</p> <p>Settlements do not include any urban zoning, commercial activity, community facilities or reticulated services.</p>	<p>Future growth: Dwelling development that is not associated with the productive agricultural use of Farming Zone land is not supported in these locations.</p> <p>Development and community infrastructure: Community Plans for rural settlements will be revised and updated to inform infrastructure planning and funding (refer to Strategy 9) and advocacy efforts.</p>

BREAKOUT BOX 1: LAKE EILDON MASTER PLAN - DIRECTIONS FOR BONNIE DOON AND GOUGH'S BAY

Prepared on behalf of Development Victoria and Goulbourn Regional Partnerships, the *Activating Lake Eildon: Lake Eildon Master Plan* seeks to establish a shared vision for Lake Eildon, identifying priority tourism and recreation developments to optimise economic outcomes for the region.

Mansfield Shire's lakeside settlements of Bonnie Doon, Jamieson and Gough's Bay are identified in the plan as supporting existing tourism functions, with potential for further enhancement of their strategic tourism role.

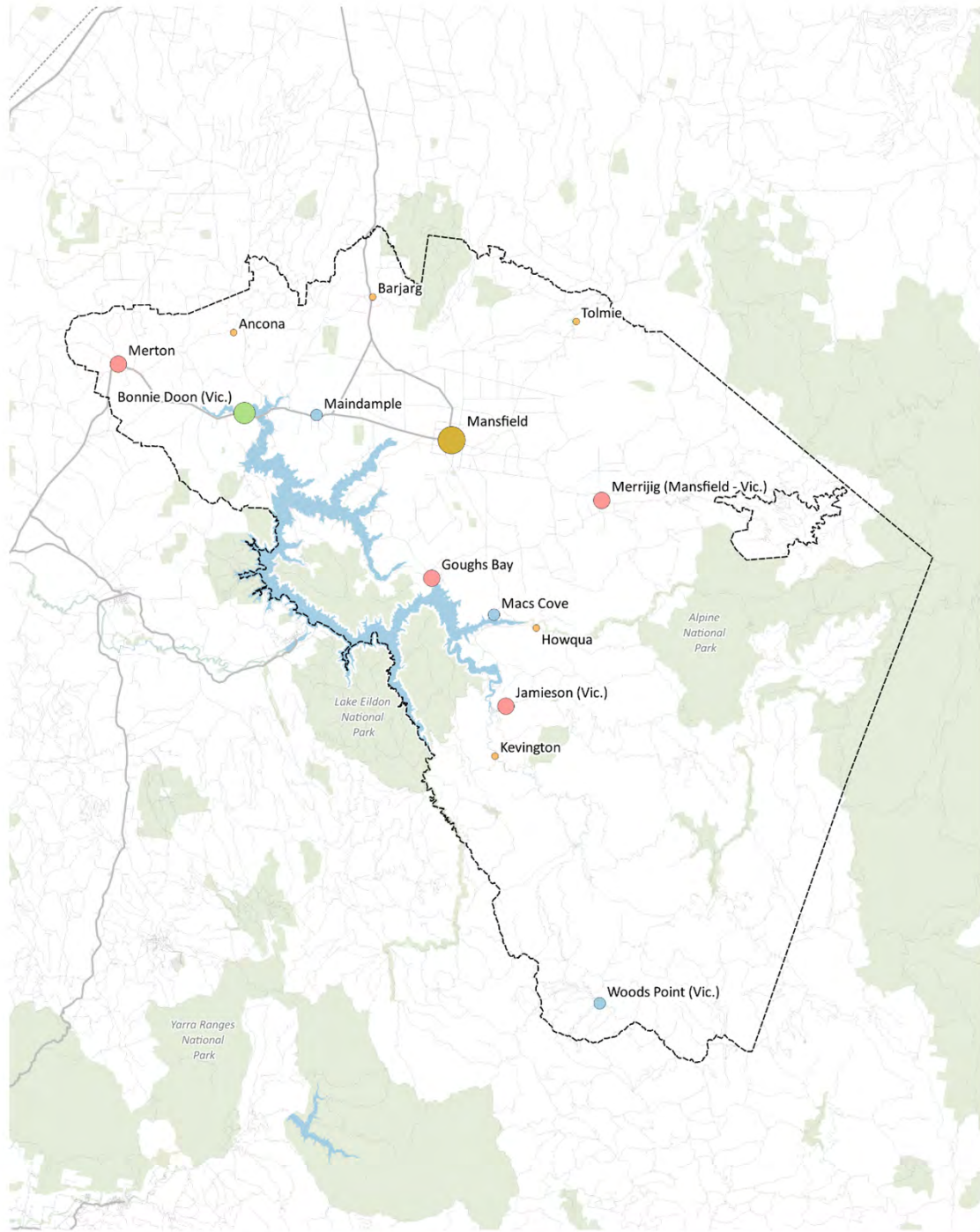
The Master Plan proposes several initiatives which signal an intention, particularly for Bonnie Doon and Gough's Bay, to support a greater number of commercial activities and attract an increasing number of tourists and share of tourism expenditure.

While a key initiative is the investment in the extension of trunk sewerage infrastructure from Mansfield to Goughs Bay, further work has identified that a localised system for wastewater management will be an effective way to unlock further development. The intent will still be achieved but will be done in a different way than originally visualised.

The plan also notes a lack of General Residential Zone Land (GRZ) in both Bonnie Doon and Gough's Bay. For Goughs Bay, there is little guidance as to if or when investment in additional sewerage infrastructure to support an increased population, is likely. Further investigations of the capacity of infrastructure in Bonnie Doon would be required to support additional residential land.

Reticulated sewerage infrastructure is a pre-requisite for the application of the General Residential Zone and investment by the State Government is necessary to realise the Mansfield to Gough's Bay sewerage line. The role of Gough's Bay and Bonnie Doon within the Settlement hierarchy outlined above and the extent of residential zoning in each will be revised when further clarity is provided regarding implementation of the Master Plan and specifically timeframes for delivery of reticulated sewerage infrastructure to support growth.

FIGURE 10: SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY



Locality Typologies Project Info

- Main Service Centre
- Town
- Township
- Settlement
- Rural Settlement



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

4.4 Accommodating future population growth

Victorian Planning Policy requires Local Governments to ensure sufficient land supply to accommodate at least 15 years of future population growth, taking into consideration the supply of zoned land across the municipality. In summary, state policy encourages municipalities to:

- Make the most of land already zoned for residential use through consolidation, redevelopment, and intensification.
- Reduce the share of new dwellings in greenfield, fringe and dispersed settlement areas.
- Establish clear town growth boundaries to limit the disbursement of dwellings and to support improved access to jobs and services, maximise the use of existing infrastructure, protect areas of environmental significance and agricultural productivity.
- Reduce exposure of residents to natural hazards.

This Strategy examines population growth and forecast housing need over the life of the Strategy to 2040. Based on official State Government population projections, population growth in Mansfield Shire to 2040 will result in a base level demand for an additional 1,348 dwellings across the Shire over the next twenty years.²¹

Two additional dwelling demand scenarios have been prepared. These reflect recent growth in dwelling construction activity across the Shire and consideration of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on population growth in high amenity regional areas like Mansfield Shire. Each of these scenarios is summarised in Table 2. The Medium Growth Scenario is based on projecting forward recent dwelling construction activity rates while the High Growth Scenario is based on forward projections of recent population growth rates (likely COVID-19 influenced) then tapering off over the medium and long term. These two scenarios project total demand for additional dwellings at 2,602 and 3,172 to 2040.²²

It is noted that non-residents also create a demand for dwellings through construction of homes for investment (for short term accommodation) and personal holiday home purposes. The number of dwellings not permanently occupied (for these reasons) is hard to quantify exactly because dwellings can shift between being occupied by permanent residents (which are captured in Census counts) and non-residents. As described in Section 4.1, it is estimated that approximately 40 per cent (or 2,600) dwellings in Mansfield at the 2016 may be used by non-resident ratepayers for the purposes of short-term accommodation or holiday homes.

Assuming the 40% share of not-permanently occupied dwellings holds in future there would be demand for a further 539 dwellings to 2040 in addition to the base scenario for permanently occupied dwellings. It is noted that the Medium Growth Scenario is based on past dwelling construction activity, which encompasses demand created by both permanent residents and non-resident ratepayers for housing stock. As such, the Medium Growth Scenario likely provides a more accurate picture of total demand over time. There are concerns that the Medium Growth Scenario may not fully capture latent demand for dwellings due to existing constraints on land supply.

²¹ Victorian Government (2019), *Victoria in Future: Population Projections*.

²² SGS Economics and Planning (2021).

This high growth scenario projects an additional 3,172 dwellings to 2040 and is suitable for planning purposes, as it provides an envelope for more sustained higher growth rates, consistent with those recently observed while capturing latent demand potential currently constrained by zoned land unavailable for development and allows for a subset of dwellings which might not be permanently occupied (for the holiday/short term accommodation market).

Based on past dwelling construction activity and a preference for consolidating future growth in established centres based on the above settlement hierarchy, it is expected that greater than 80 per cent of future growth will occur in and around Mansfield town.

TABLE 2: DWELLING DEMAND SCENARIOS

SCENARIO	DATA SOURCE	ANNUAL AVERAGE GROWTH RATE	DEMAND FOR ADDITIONAL DWELLINGS 2040
Base	Victoria in Future 2020 (population projections converted to housing demand)	1.2%	1,348
Medium	Mansfield Shire, Building permit activity, 2010 to 2021	2.0%	2,602
High*	Australian Bureau of Statistics Regional population 2019-2020: Population change ²³	3.3% to 2025 2.5% to 2031 2.0% to 2040	3,172

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021). *The High Growth Scenario is adopted for determining need for future residential land supply.

Objective 2. To ensure sufficient residential land is available to meet future dwelling demand.

To ensure Mansfield can fulfil its role as a key subregional settlement and to allow for anticipated growth, it is important to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of residentially zoned land. Future dwellings will be accommodated in several ways (below, Table 3 sets out available capacity by type and location):

- **Backfilling of vacant lots:** There is vacant lot capacity across the Shire to accommodate approximately 330 dwellings, with most vacant lots available in the Shire’s smaller towns and settlements.
- **Incremental infill development:** Development of small-scale multi-unit development (villas and townhouses) in the established residential areas of Mansfield town, close to the town centre. Infill development has been occurring at a rate of approximately 15 dwellings per year over the past ten-

²³ The high growth scenario is based on findings by the Federal Government’s Centre for Population Projection’s central estimates that the population growth rate in regional areas will rise in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, before returning to pre-COVID forecast growth rates.

year period, based on Council’s record of building permits and dwelling completions. Given the aging population and the general trend in preferences towards smaller housing types for this age group (observed in housing preference analysis conducted by SGS Economics and Planning), it is expected that this rate of infill development may reasonably increase to 20 dwellings per year (or 400 dwellings over the life of the Strategy).

- **Greenfield development:** new development areas zoned or identified for residential purposes likely to be developed for detached dwellings.

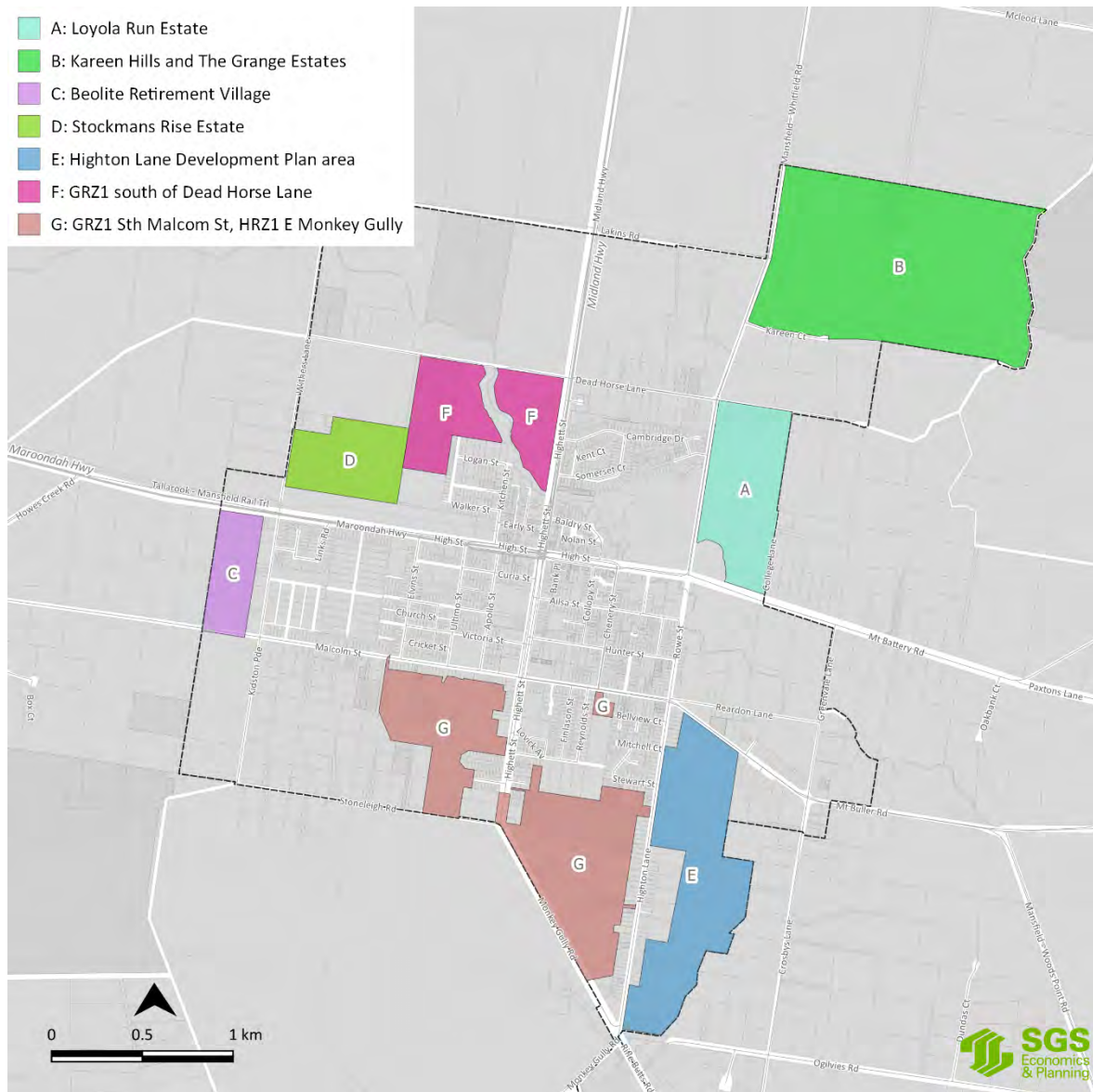
In Table 3, *vacant capacity* refers to land that is currently undeveloped, while *subdivision capacity* refers to land that may be developed already but is large enough to be further subdivided for some infill development in future.

TABLE 3: DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

LOCATION		CAPACITY (VACANT)	CAPACITY (SUBDIVISION)	TOTAL
ESTABLISHED INFILL (INCLUDING BACKFILLING OF VACANT LOTS)				
Mansfield town		20	905	925
Townships		235	0	235
PLANNED GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT				
A	Loyola Run Estate	15	253	268
B	Kareen Hills and The Grange Estates	45	137	182
C	Beolite Retirement Village	0	60	60
D	Stockmans Rise Estate	16	60	76
E	Highton Lane Development Plan area (east of Highton Lane)	0	180	180
UNPLANNED GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT				
F	GRZ1 south of Dead Horse Lane	0	340	340
G	GRZ1 south of Malcolm Street/ GRZ1 east of Monkey Gully Road	0	250	250
TOTAL CAPACITY		331	2,185	2,516

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021); Mansfield Shire Council (2021)

FIGURE 11: HOUSING PRECINCTS – MANSFIELD TOWN



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Table 4 compares dwelling demand under the adopted High Growth Scenario with the capacity of existing residentially zoned land. It shows that there is expected to be a shortfall of approximately 606 dwellings over the life of this Strategy.

However, constraints on the development potential of several sites have been identified which may limit short to medium term housing supply in these areas. These sites include land within the ‘GRZ1 south of Dead Horse Lane’ precinct’, Loyola Run Estate and Highton Lane Development Plan area. Together these areas represent a considerable amount of capacity (approximately 780 dwellings). Removing these areas from the capacity results in a total potential yield of 1,900 with implications for land supply summarised in Table 5.

TABLE 4: SUPPLY VS DEMAND – ALL AVAILABLE RESIDENTIALLY ZONED LAND

	HIGH SCENARIO
Dwelling demand	3,172
Over/ undersupply based on current capacity estimate for all available residentially zoned land	-486

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021); Mansfield Shire Council (2021)

TABLE 5: SUPPLY VS DEMAND – UNCONSTRAINED LAND

	HIGH SCENARIO
Dwelling demand	3,172
Over/ undersupply based on current capacity estimate for unconstrained land	-1,379

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021); Mansfield Shire Council (2021)

To ensure adequate land supply is available, further action is required. Possible pathways are:

- Identifying and seeking to resolve blockages to development in constrained areas.
- Zoning of additional residential land.

Strategies pertaining to these possible pathways are outlined below.

Strategy 2. Identify land suitable for residential rezoning to ensure sufficient land supply over the long term

Past strategic work undertaken by Council has identified several land parcels suitable for residential development or intensification. These are:

- **Mansfield - Whitfield Road (northeast)** - Currently zoned RLZ, this site has been identified for rezoning to LDRZ.²⁴ This zoning would allow for a transition between conventional and medium density residential dwellings to the south in Loyola Run and larger, rural living properties to the north in Kareen Hills and The Grange Estates. Development at this location will also connect the northern estates to the urban footprint of Mansfield and assist in ensuring fire risk can be managed.

This site has potential to yield a theoretical maximum of 118 dwellings based on lot sizes in the surrounding areas though there are slope, drainage, tree cover and landowner fragmentation constraints (a future subdivision plan would also need to overcome these challenges which may mean the ultimate lot yield is lower).

²⁴ This site has been previously identified for potential for future rezoning in the Mansfield Township Framework Plan (Clause 21.09 of the Mansfield Planning Scheme).

- **Dead Horse Lane (north of Stockmans Rise Estate)** – Currently zoned FZ, this site is proposed for rezoning to GRZ1.²⁵ This lot is partially encumbered by a buffer associated with the Wastewater Treatment Plant, with all land outside the buffer suitable for rezoning. The site abuts the proposed Heavy Vehicular Alternate route.

This site has potential to yield approximately 95 dwellings.

- **Monkey Gully Road** – Located south of Stoneleigh Road and west of Monkey Gully Road, this parcel is currently zoned RLZ. The site presents limited development constraints and is proposed for rezoning to GRZ1.

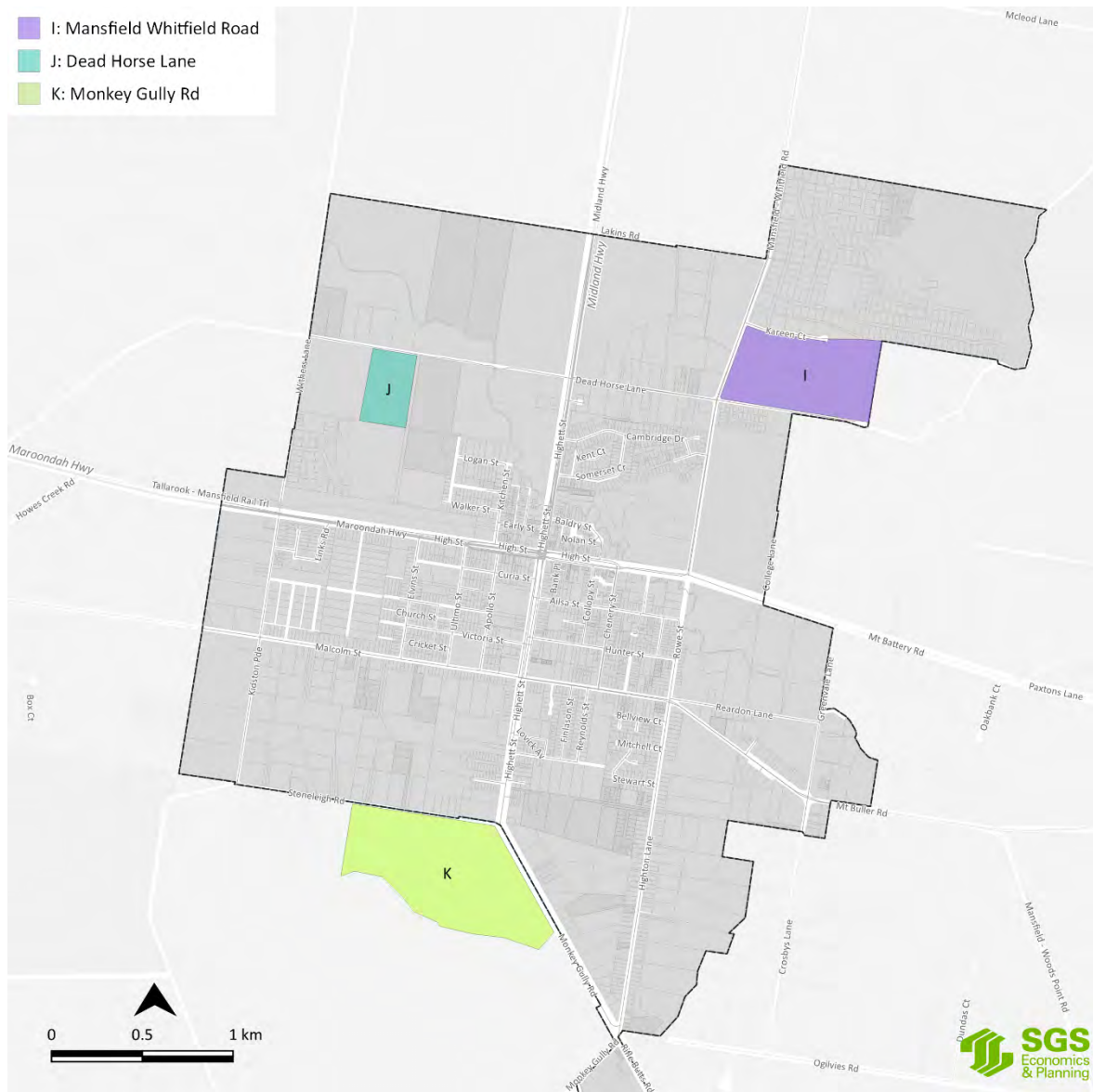
This site could potentially yield 130 dwellings.

The three sites outlined above have the potential to yield capacity for up to 340 additional dwellings.

Rezoning is expected to be undertaken in accordance with the program of land release outlined in the following strategy.

²⁵ This site has been previously identified for potential for future rezoning in the Mansfield Township Framework Plan (Clause 21.09 of the Mansfield Planning Scheme).

FIGURE 12: PROPOSED AREAS FOR RESIDENTIAL REZONING/ INTENSIFICATION



Source: Mansfield Shire Council (2021)

Strategy 3. Stage future greenfield residential development in Mansfield to consolidate growth and maximise investment in development and community infrastructure

As has been identified, there is a large amount of greenfield land surrounding Mansfield zoned or proposed for rezoned for residential use.

Of the land that is already zoned, some is subject to an existing Development Plan guiding the form and layout of future development and is currently being developed or nearing completion (refer to Table 7). Other areas face a range of barriers to development including fragmented ownership, uncertainty regarding landowner intentions for development, a lack of infrastructure servicing and the absence of an overarching plan.

Given the limited resources of Council and other government agencies to provide infrastructure across multiple development fronts and the benefits in consolidating future housing growth, an outline of preferred development staging in Mansfield is shown in Table 7. This staging will be supported by:

- Sequenced rezoning of land for residential use.
- Investment in reticulated water and sewerage infrastructure by Goulburn Valley Water (GVW) (refer to comments in Table 7 regarding serviceability).
- Investment in other development infrastructure by Council and landowners/ developers, including roads and public transport connections, public open space, pedestrian and cycling networks and water management infrastructure.
- Investment in community infrastructure where required to meet existing and future populations.
- Incentivising development of existing residentially zoned land (for example, through infrastructure provision or other mechanisms such as a differential rating schemes).

Several factors have been considered in identifying the staging including:

- Combined potential to meet demand under the Medium and High demand scenarios (including capacity of areas proposed for rezoning).
- Barriers to development (current Development Plan to guide growth, land fragmentation, landowner intention regarding development, exposure to natural hazards, existing and proposed infrastructure servicing).
- Proximity to Mansfield centre and potential to support contiguous growth of the town.
- Sensitive interfaces (for example, proximity to the proposed Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route).

A brief explanation of the actions required at each stage is provided in Table 6.

Table 8 provides a high-level estimate of the timing for the realisation of additional dwellings over the next 20 years based on five-year increments defined as immediate term supply (0 to 5 years), short term supply (5 to 10 years), medium term supply (10 to 15 years) and long-term supply (15 to 20 years+). These estimates are indicative.

It is noted that additional capacity will be realised through assessment of subdivision and as-of-right dwelling requirements in areas zoned Rural Living Zone (see Strategy 23). Total yield from these changes will be determined through this work. Figure 13 shows these areas spatially.

TABLE 6: EXPLANATION OF DEVELOPMENT STAGING

STAGE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME
1	No action required. Development progressing in accordance with approved plans.	No further action.
2	Undertake immediate planning for and rezoning of proposed residential areas.	Immediate (0 to 5 years)
3	Identify and seek to resolve blockages to development to bring forward supply where possible.	Immediate/ short term (0 to 10 years)
4	Undertake planning for existing residentially zoned areas. Rezone areas proposed for transition to residential use where further need is identified.	Medium term (5 to 10 years)

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

TABLE 7: GREENFIELD AREAS STAGING- MANSFIELD

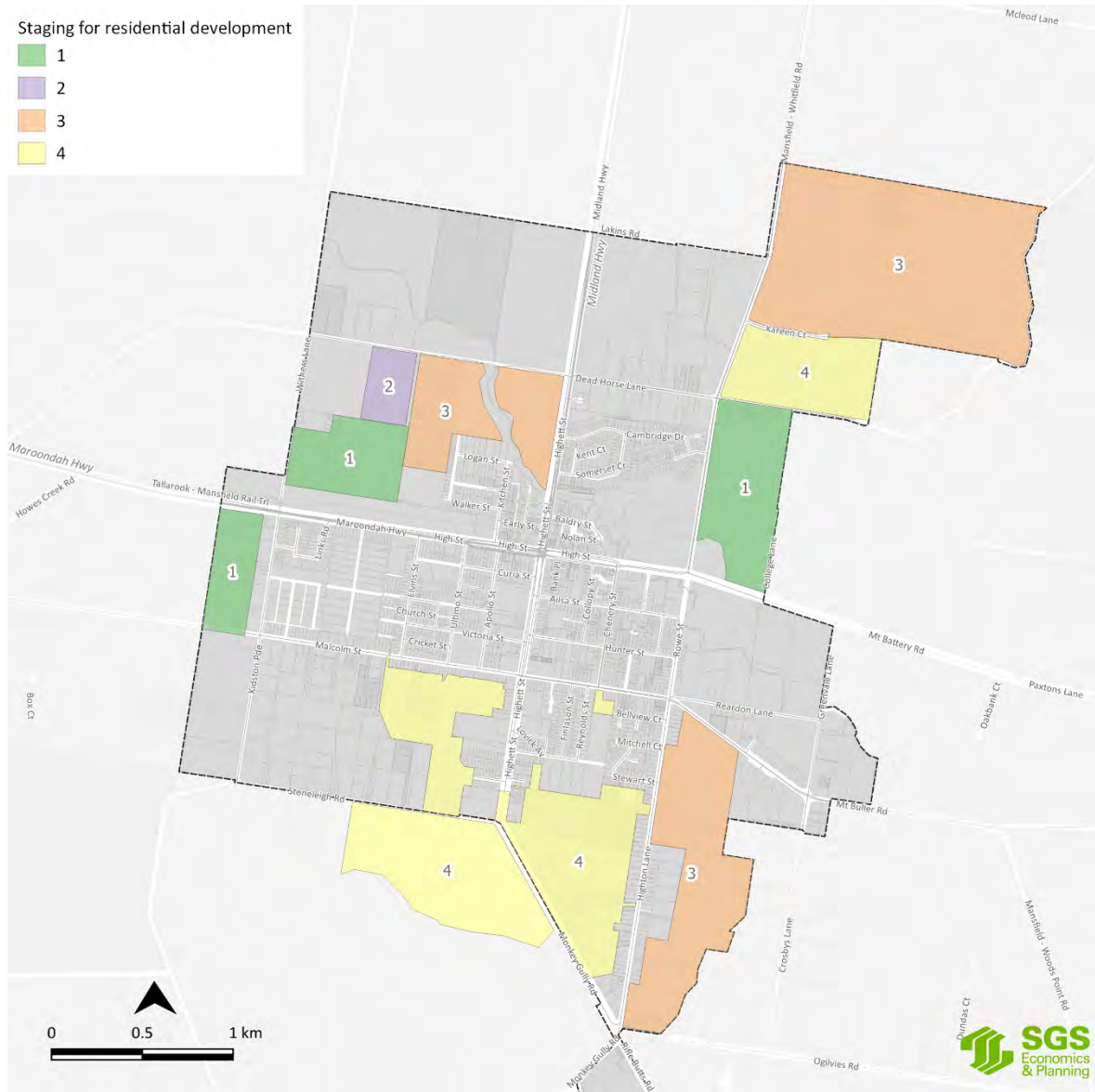
STAGE	GREENFIELD AREA	DESCRIPTION
1	Beolite Retirement Village	<p>Development of Beolite Village Estates is well progressed, with capacity for development of a further 90 dwellings in accordance with the existing Development Plan.</p> <p>While not within walking distance of the town centre, this development is continuous with the existing footprint of the town and faces minimal barriers to further development.</p> <p>An additional sewerage pump station will be required to service this area, to be funded by the developer.</p>
1	Kareem Hills and The Grange Estates	<p>Development of Kareem Hills and The Grange Estates are progressing in accordance with the existing Development Plan, with 45 vacant lots remaining in the existing subdivided areas and with 137 further lots proposed.</p> <p>Reticulated water and sewerage are available at this site and faces minimal barriers to further development.</p>
1	Stockmans Rise Estate	<p>The area of Stockman’s Rise that has been subdivided is almost complete. Rezoning of the western portion of the Estate to GRZ1 has potential to yield 60 additional lots.</p> <p>Stockman’s rise is within walking catchment of the town centre (800m or 10 minutes’ walk), with development of this area contributing to improving the contagiousness of the town footprint.</p> <p>This area is serviced by water and sewer.</p>
2	Mansfield-Whitfield Road (proposed LDRZ)	<p>As noted above, this site is proposed for rezoning to Low Density Residential Zone. Development of this area would support connection of Kareem Hills to the existing urban footprint of the town and assist in managing fire risk.</p> <p>Growth areas to the north and south have been identified for priority investment in reticulated sewerage infrastructure. Development of the Mansfield-Whitfield Road (northeast) site would allow for the consolidated and orderly provision of trunk infrastructure. Land ownership is fragmented (approximately 10 parcels) with owner intentions likely to vary. This area is constrained by slope, drainage and existing tree cover though once there are removed from its developable potential the area should be</p>

		<p>developed at conventional urban densities, consistent with those being achieved immediately to the south on Dead Horse Lane. Buffer treatments to limit the impact of the proposed Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route would be required for this site.</p> <p>Reticulated water and sewerage are available.</p>
2	Dead Horse Lane (north of Stockmans Rise Estate) (proposed GRZ1)	<p>The Dead Horse Lane precinct is proposed for rezoning from Farming Zone to GRZ1. The site has potential to yield a modest number of dwellings (maximum approximately 95) but faces several constraints related to its proximity to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the proposed Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route. As mentioned above, consideration of drainage lines will also be required at this location.</p>
3	Loyola Run Estate	<p>Development of Loyola Run Estate has commenced and is progressing in accordance with the existing Development Plan, with 15 vacant lots remaining in the existing subdivided areas and with 253 further lots proposed as per the approved Development Plan.</p> <p>This site has been identified as a priority for investment in trunk infrastructure. The site is also continuous with the existing urban area of the town and within walkable distance of the town centre (within 1,200m or 15 minutes walking distance).</p> <p>Landowner intentions for this site are unclear, potentially posing a barrier to continued development.</p>
3	Highton Lane Development Plan area	<p>Development of Highton Lane has commenced but faces constraints in terms of land fragmentation and development infrastructure to support development. The area has potential to yield approximately 180 dwellings.</p> <p>Development of Highton Lane will support continuous and co-ordinated growth of Mansfield town.</p> <p>Extension of trunk sewer main is required to service this area, as well as the potential need to upgrade the existing pump station in Reardon Lane.</p>
3	GRZ1 south of Dead Horse Lane	<p>This includes properties to the south of Dead Horse Lane and between Midland Highway and Stock Route. This area is zoned General Residential Zone and has the potential to accommodate greenfield development near the town centre. Fords Creek also traverses this area and provides the opportunity to create an open space connection to the town centre. Given that construction of Stockmans Rise to the west is underway, the site provides the opportunity to consolidate and integrate residential development throughout this area. The area has potential to yield approximately 340 dwellings.</p> <p>Landowner intentions for this site are unclear, potentially posing a barrier to continued development.</p> <p>Dead Horse Lane gravity sewer extension would support service to the area by gravity sewer network extension.</p>
4	GRZ1 south of Malcolm Street/ GRZ1 east of Monkey Gully Road	<p>Includes properties to the south of Malcolm Street and between Hightett Street and Stoneleigh Road, as well as land to the east of Monkey Gully Road, west of Highton Lane and south of View Street.</p> <p>Due to the fragmented land ownership, irregular shaped properties and the emergence of smaller lots fronting onto Hightett Street, Malcolm Street and Highton Lane further guidance will be required to ensure that future residential development here is well planned and coordinated. This area has potential to yield approximately 250 additional dwellings.</p> <p>Potential to extend existing gravity sewer to service development. Alternative sewer servicing options to be considered if gravity sewer servicing not feasible.</p>

4	Monkey Gully Road (proposed GRZ1)	<p>Currently zoned for Rural Living, the Monkey Gully Road precinct has been identified for rezoning to GRZ1. Development of this area has the potential to yield 130 additional lots.</p> <p>While not within walking distance of the town centre, the site is held in single ownership, is relatively unconstrained and does not present any sensitive interfaces. Future planning for this area should be undertaken in conjunction with that for the 'GRZ1 south of Malcolm Street/ GRZ1 east of Monkey Gully Road' precinct (above).</p> <p>Area may be able to be serviced by gravity (extension of existing gravity sewer from Griffin Avenue). Extension of trunk main required. Further detailed analysis is required to determine exact serviceability.</p>
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Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

FIGURE 13: STAGING OF DEVELOPMENT MANSFIELD



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

TABLE 8: DEVELOPMENT STAGING - CUMULATIVE TOTAL TO 2040

DWELLING DEMAND		2025 (Immediate term)	2030 (Short term)	2035 (Medium term)	2040 (Long term)
Additional dwellings (Medium)		896	1,409	1,976	2,602
Additional dwellings (High)		1,140	1,820	2,493	3,172
PRECINCT CAPACITY		2025 (Immediate term)	2030 (Short term)	2035 (Medium term)	2040 (Long term)
Mansfield (vacant and infill)	925	231	231	231	231
Townships (vacant)	235	59	59	59	59
1	Beolite Retirement Village	60	60	-	-
1	Kareem and The Grange Estates	182	92	92	-
2	Stockmans Rise Estate	76	38	38	-
2	Mansfield-Whitefield Road (proposed LDRZ)	60		30	30
2	Dead Horse Lane (north of Stockmans Rise Estate) (proposed GRZ1)	95	-	48	47
3	Loyola Run Estate	268	15	126	127
3	Highton Lane Development Plan area	180	60	60	60
3	GRZ1 south of Dead Horse Lane	340	-	-	170*
4	GRZ1 south of Malcolm Street/ GRZ1 east of Monkey Gully Road	250	-	83	83
4	Monkey Gully Road (proposed GRZ1)	130	-	-	65
Total		2,909	555	767	872
Cumulative total		2,909	555	1,322	2,194

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021). *Development potential may not be realised

Staging of residential development will be duly supported by plans for development and community infrastructure.

Strategy 4. Implement measures to accelerate release of suitable 'in-sequence' areas

As has been noted, Council has identified constraints on development in existing residentially zoned areas, with potential to impact the short-term supply of dwellings. These areas are Loyola Run Estate, the Highton Lane Development Plan area and the GRZ1 south of Dead Horse Lane precinct.

Council will undertake a proactive program targeted towards unblocking and bringing forward supply in constrained areas. Measures may include:

- **Consultation with landowners to identify barriers to land release.**
- **Prepare and adopt a Development Plan for Highton Lane.** Council will need to prepare and adopt a Development Plan for Highton Lane to facilitate the development of this area. This plan should consider the elements outline below in Strategy 6.
- **Consideration of prioritised investment in catalyst headworks infrastructure.** Funding and provision of development infrastructure (such as roads, drainage, footpaths etc.) are important for catalysing development. However, the cost of providing this infrastructure can be prohibitive for the development industry and Council. Without a Development Contributions Plan (see page 70), responsibility for funding this essential infrastructure is not always clear. The preparation of an Infrastructure Plan and supporting Funding Plan will be a priority for Council to assist in identifying funding mechanisms and prioritising investment in infrastructure required to support sequenced growth.
- **Consideration of appropriate incentives or punitive financial measures (for example differential rating schemes).** The *Local Government Act 2020*, which governs the activities of local councils, provides councils with the ability to apply different levels of rating based on land type or class. This is called Differential Rating. Council may consider applying Differential Rating as an incentive to encourage development in greenfield areas identified for residential development. The application of Differential Rating in these locations will assist in discouraging from long-term speculating (seeking future commercial gains) rather than developing the land for the benefit of the whole community. Introducing a differential rate will not necessarily increase Council's total rate revenue as the rate burden can be re-distributed to ensure that Council's rating system satisfies the principles of taxation, equity, benefit, ability to pay, efficiency and simplicity. Council will ensure that decision making regarding the implementation of a differential rating scheme is transparent.

Strategy 5. Undertake ongoing monitoring of dwelling demand and housing capacity

Given the uncertainty surrounding the longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on population growth and dwelling demand in Mansfield Shire and the success (or otherwise) of measures to encourage development of existing residentially zoned areas, regular monitoring of dwelling demand and capacity will be undertaken.

Monitoring will be undertaken every five years and preceding any decision to release further land for residential purposes. This monitoring and review process will take into consideration:

- Updated population projections, with reference to official State Government population projections (Victoria in Future).
- The rate of take up of residential land (assessed via building permit data).
- Capacity of remaining residentially zoned land to accommodate future growth.

Strategy 6. Ensure the orderly development of greenfield areas proposed for residential rezoning or intensification

There are several greenfield areas zoned for residential use for which planning is required to ensure development outcomes meet community expectations. These areas include:

- **GRZ1 south of Malcolm Street/ GRZ1 east of Monkey Gully Road:** This area is not currently subject to either the Development Plan Overlay or an existing Development Plan.
- **Monkey Gully Road (proposed GRZ1):** This area is not currently zoned for residential use. Future planning for this area should be considered together with that for the GRZ1 south of Malcolm Street/ GRZ1 east of Monkey Gully Road precinct.
- **GRZ1 south of Dead Horse Lane:** This area has been identified as significantly constrained for development. This area is subject to a Development Plan Overlay; however, no development plan has yet been prepared. Planning for this area should be undertaken where future development potential can be identified.
- **Dead Horse Lane (north of Stockmans Rise Estate) (proposed GRZ1):** This area is not currently zoned for residential use and is not subject to a Development Plan Overlay or Development Plan.
- **Mansfield-Whitfield Road (proposed LDRZ):** This area needs to be subject to a Development Plan Overlay accompanying any rezoning identifying access points to perimeter roads, land excluded by development constraints and a target density for the remaining developable lands that maximises the yields consistent with the zone. Council will work closely with the landowners and the community to prepare Development Plans and ensure the following is considered:
 - The mix, layout, and location of land uses
 - Provision of appropriate residential densities, including consideration of minimum lot sizes
 - Provision of shared and off-site infrastructure according to Council's requirements
 - The need for additional high quality, diverse and unencumbered open space areas
 - Integration with existing streets and open space networks
 - Access and traffic management impacts
 - Interfaces with rural areas and location within significant landscapes
 - Neighbourhood character
 - Key road networks
 - Natural hazard risk (including bushfire and flooding)
 - Environmental buffers (including Wastewater Treatment Plant buffer)
 - Impacts on water supply catchment, consistent with the Guidelines for the Protection of Water Quality.
 - Potential development contributions obligations.

Further fragmentation of these areas must be avoided.

Strategy 7. Support housing development in established areas, particularly areas within a convenient walking distance to shops and services

Opportunities for infill development exist within the established residential areas of Mansfield and other settlements across the Shire. Infill development in these areas has the potential to deliver additional and diverse housing options and is strongly supported, particularly in areas with convenient access to shops and services (for example, those that are within a 5-15 minute walk, or 400-1,200 metre distance from the main commercial area) (shown in Figure 14 and Figure 15).

Housing typologies such as townhouses and units, low scale apartment buildings, as well as shop-top housing are encouraged in these areas. These housing types will provide greater housing choices for the community and will be increasingly sought after as household sizes get smaller and the population ages.

An important consideration for future infill development and medium density housing will be to ensure this type of development provides a high level of amenity for residents, with high quality buildings designed in a way that reflects the country town setting of Mansfield and landscape outcomes (see Section 5).

Taking into consideration vacant lots and the possibility to subdivide some larger blocks, established areas have the potential to yield approximately 400 dwellings over the next 20 years.

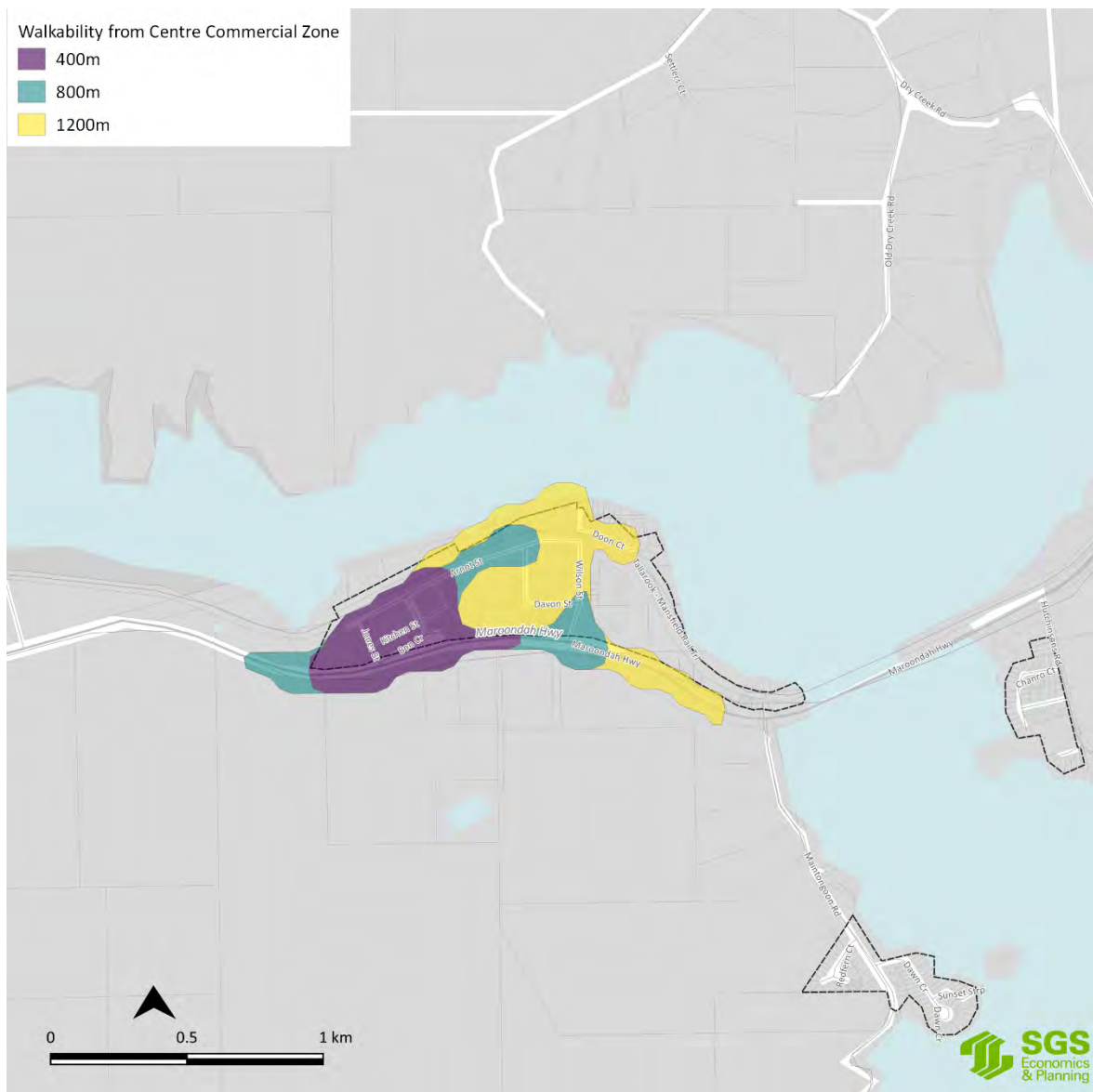
As a demonstration project, Council could also prepare an example plan which illustrates a preferred layout for development that supports integration with the public realm and walking connections. This example plan could then be promoted when working with landowners and developers, to identify Council's preferred approach to infill development.

FIGURE 14: AREAS WITHIN A CONVENIENT WALKING DISTANCE TO SHOPS AND SERVICES – MANSFIELD



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

FIGURE 15: AREAS WITHIN A CONVENIENT WALKING DISTANCE TO SHOPS AND SERVICES – BONNIE DOON



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2021)

Strategy 8. Revise land use zoning and infrastructure requirements in Gough’s Bay and Bonnie Doon in response to implementation/ expansion of reticulated sewerage services as outlined in the Lake Eildon Master Plan.

The *Lake Eildon Masterplan Business Case* (May 2020) identifies Bonnie Doon and Gough’s Bay as having potential to support growth in tourism accommodation and experiences and advocates for “strategic prioritization of investment” in these areas.

The Master Plan notes that expansion of activity is limited by the existing capacity of sewerage and water infrastructure in Bonnie Doon, the absence of reticulated sewerage and water infrastructure in Gough’s Bay and an undersupply of land zoned for General Residential use in both locations. Further guidance as to the capacity of existing zoned land and estimates of how much additional land is

required is not provided. The Master Plan lists the following initiatives of relevance to Bonnie Doon and Gough's Bay:

- Investment in sewerage infrastructure from Bonnie Doon to Peppin Point.
- Investment in sewerage infrastructure from Mansfield to Goughs Bay.
- Bonnie Doon Township Landscape Master Plan.
- Goughs Bay Township Landscape Master Plan.
- Bonnie Doon Adventure Park.
- Bonnie Doon Waterplay Park.
- Proposal for Premier Nature-based Precinct at Fry Bay (Gough's Bay).
- Tourism Park accommodation in both locations.

The realisation of these initiatives would have implications for land use planning outcomes in both towns requiring review of existing land use controls. Council will undertake review of zoning and overlays applying to Bonnie Doon and Goughs Bay as further plans are announced for the implementation of the above actions.

Strategy 9. Prepare local area plans for towns, townships, and settlements across the Shire.

Local townships are valued by residents for their character, community, and lifestyle. They represent a different style of living to Mansfield and contribute to the diversity of lifestyle and choice in the municipality. Services and infrastructure are unique to each township, many areas are not serviced by water and sewerage and properties are instead self-reliant.

In recognition of the unique nature of each local area, Council will work with communities to develop local area plans to guide their long-term future direction. These plans help communities define a shared vision for their town, township or settlement, and guide decision-making over the long-term to achieve it.

Local area plans will be prepared in consultation with communities for the following towns, townships, and settlements:

- Bonnie Doon
- Jamieson
- Gough's Bay
- Merton
- Merrijig
- Macs Cove
- Howqua
- Maindample
- Woods Point

Strategy 10. Progress a planning scheme amendment to correct zoning errors and other minor planning scheme anomalies

Through preparation of this strategy, planning permit application assessments, enquiries, and requests from the public and ongoing review of the planning scheme, several planning scheme anomalies have been identified. These anomalies include instances where land has been zoned erroneously and no longer appropriately reflects the use of the land (i.e., public sporting facilities and open space within the General Residential Zone). Some identified anomalies for rezoning include 9 Maroondah Highway, Merton, 65 Mt Battery Road Mansfield, The Tolmie Recreation reserve and 1575 Maroondah Highway Bonnie Doon. There are also several instances where zoning boundaries are not correct (i.e., the Public Use Zone applying to the Mansfield District Hospital does not cover the full extent of the site). A full assessment of anomalies throughout the Shire will be undertaken as part of formally creating the amendment.

These errors can create problems and unnecessary work for owners and Council. They can have the effect of prohibiting otherwise appropriate developments and uses and upholding planning controls that do not reflect the current ownership and land use patterns.

Updates to correct these anomalies are policy neutral and should be addressed through a planning scheme amendment separate to that undertaken to implement this strategy. This is part of Council's ongoing 'housekeeping' work to ensure the planning zones are applied appropriately to various parcels of land based on their land use and development potential. Making sure the planning scheme is up to date and correct will avoid future confusion or the potential for poor planning outcomes that may arise as a result of these errors.

4.5 Meeting needs for diverse and affordable housing

The purchase price of housing across the Shire has increased considerably over recent years, at a rate of four per cent per annum (Figure 16); outpacing growth in household incomes which have remained relatively stable. This is placing pressure on local housing markets, including contributing to rapidly rising rents. Anecdotally, the availability of rental vacancies is a significant issue in the Shire. While Census data indicates vacancies are around 40 per cent of total dwelling stock, much of this housing is used for holiday homes or short stay accommodation and is not made available to permanent renters. This places upwards pressures on rents and makes finding suitable rental housing difficult.

As a result of these trends, a growing number of renter households and families in the Shire are experiencing “rental stress” (refer to Box 2 below), particularly those reliant on welfare income, such as Newstart or the retirement pension. In Mansfield Shire, fewer and fewer properties are available for these groups. High house prices and rising monthly mortgage repayments are likely contributing to an increasing number of households experiencing mortgage stress. However, addressing mortgage stress requires policy solutions that are typically outside of the control of local government. As a result, this section of the report is primarily focused on rental stress in the Mansfield Shire and is an underestimate of the total extent of total housing (rental and mortgage) in the Shire.

FIGURE 16: HOUSE PRICE GROWTH COMPARISON, 2006 TO 2016



Source: Victorian Government (2021), Data Vic: Victorian property sales data.

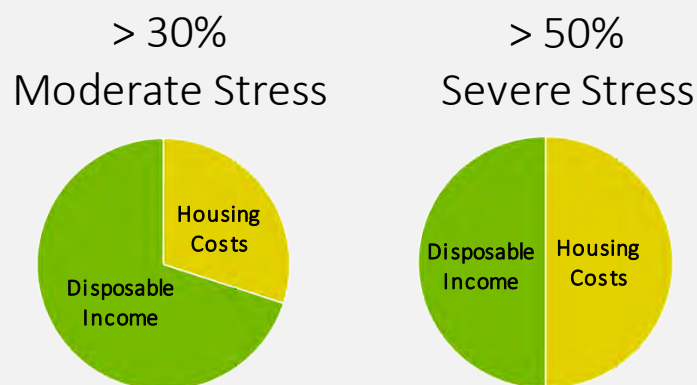
BOX 2: WHAT IS RENTAL STRESS?

Rental stress is the situation where a moderate (or lower) income household's rental payments are so high that they must sacrifice on life's necessities such as food, health care, or education.

Moderate housing stress is when a household must spend more than **30 percent** of their income on rent.

Severe housing stress is when a household must spend more than **50 percent** of their income on rent.

Affordable housing is appropriate for **very low, low and moderate-income households** in rental stress. It is not appropriate for high-income households because high housing costs are unlikely to impact their ability to pay for necessities.



Source: SGS Economics and Planning.

Currently, more than 9 percent of all households and 60 percent of all renter households in Mansfield Shire are identified as experiencing rental stress.²⁶

The number of households experiencing housing stress is used as a base to measure the level of need for social and affordable housing, with some adjustments:

- Accounting for households that might be only temporarily in stress (for example, following the birth of a child, when experiencing short term unemployment, or adjusting to the breakdown of a relationship).
- When households might pay higher housing costs by choice (to live in a better house, better neighbourhood, locations where transport costs are lower).
- 'Unformed' households that are priced out of the market are also likely to be in evidence. These unformed households might include younger family members that would prefer to leave the

²⁶ SGS Economics and Planning (2020), Housing Assistance Demand Model. The assumptions and methodology for the HADS Model are included in an appendix to the *Background Technical Report* for this project.

parental home but cannot afford to, elderly family members that must live with other family members to have affordable accommodation, or multiple families occupying a single dwelling.

The estimate of need also encompasses people who are homeless (rough sleepers and people in insecure housing situations), existing social housing tenants and those in the private rental market experiencing rental stress.

Those households most in need of assistance are eligible for placement in social housing. In Mansfield Shire, there are currently 87 social housing dwellings available, approximately 1.4 per cent of all dwellings. Another 736 households are on the priority access and register of interest waiting to move and transfer to a social housing property in the Ovens Murray (Wangaratta/ Benalla) Region (which includes Mansfield LGA).²⁷

The prevalence of rental stress is likely to increase as the Shire's population grows. Without any intervention, the number of households in rental stress in Mansfield Shire could rise by 39 percent to 465 over the next 20 years.

There remains a **shortfall** between the number of households requiring assistance and the number of available dwellings, a gap estimated currently at approximately **248 houses**. If the State Government continue to adopt a relatively passive approach to investment in social housing and the number of social housing dwellings in Mansfield remains stable, it can be expected that this gap in provision will increase to **378 houses** by 2036.²⁸

To address income related housing need and stress would require 35 per cent of future dwellings to be social and affordable rental dwellings to 2040.

Providing housing that meets the needs of a diverse range of households - including households of different sizes, compositions, with people of varying ages and life stages and with different occupations and incomes etc - will deliver several significant benefits to the individuals and to communities within Mansfield Shire more broadly. Research undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning (2019) found these benefits include but are not limited to:

- **Supporting local business and workers:** Providing affordable housing targeted towards local workers can assist in attracting workers and provide local businesses access to a labour pool with a greater diversity of skills. For example, Mansfield Shire's top three industries all contain a high proportion of people who would be considered vital to the local economy: retail trade (10.2 percent of workers), accommodation and food services (6.6 percent), and agriculture, forestry, and fishing (10.7 percent).²⁹
- **Allowing people to live in their communities for longer:** People's housing needs change as they move through the many stages of life. Ensuring that a diversity of housing forms and tenures is

²⁷ Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Housing Assistance Delivery Data 2017 – 18.

²⁸ Department of Health and Human Services (2020), Victorian Housing Register and transfer list by local area – March 2020.

²⁹ .iD Consultants, *Economic Profile – Mansfield Shire Local Workers Key Statistics*, based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing (2016). Profile available from URL: <https://economy.id.com.au/mansfield/workers-key-statistics>.

available across the affordability spectrum allows individuals and households to find appropriate housing and stay in their communities for longer.

- **Enhance the reputation of Mansfield Shire as a diverse and inclusive place:** Places that maintain a reputation for diversity, multi-culturalism and tolerance are highly competitive in attracting business investment, managerial staff, and knowledge workers, as well as tourism. The provision of housing to accommodate diverse communities is seen as crucially important in achieving this.
- **Helping to reduce the experience of disadvantage:** Providing affordable accommodation for those who are experiencing disadvantage can relieve stress and provide greater housing stability. Research shows that secure and affordable housing contributes to many benefits, including improved health outcomes, increased participation in work and study and greater community participation and inclusion.³⁰

Objective 3. To increase supply of social and affordable housing.

There are several policy levers available to Council to help increase the supply of social and affordable housing in the municipality. Suggested approaches that Mansfield Shire may take are set out in Table 9.

TABLE 9: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE SUPPLY OF SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN MANSFIELD SHIRE

LEVER	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
Regulate	Strategy 11. Strengthen policy statements about the need for affordable housing in Mansfield	Update the Planning Scheme to include policy statements based on the evidence presented in this report, which highlight the need for social and affordable housing to be provided alongside conventional dwelling stock into the future. This will be encouraged to address the current and forecast shortfalls identified.
	Strategy 12. Develop processes for Council to support or advocate for affordable housing contributions	Develop a Section 173 Agreement (voluntary agreement) template to provide options for developers to make affordable housing contributions. This might contain a range of options such as a target for a proportion of new housing to be affordable, or for developers to provide cash contributions in lieu of floorspace.
Partner	Strategy 13. Engage with and educate the community on social and affordable housing as important local infrastructure	Develop an approach to educating the community on the need for and benefits of social and affordable housing.
	Strategy 14. Adopt a relationship building, information sharing and brokerage role between the development and affordable housing sectors	Publish information on the Community Housing Sector for developers and provide a single point of contact at Council for enquiries
	Strategy 15. Assist marginalised households to transition into the private rental market	Foster partnerships to assist 'rental ready' marginalised households to enter, or transition from public or community housing to the private rental market

³⁰ SGS Economics and Planning (2019), Housing Needs Analysis

LEVER	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
Advocate	Strategy 16. Advocate for State Government investment in Mansfield	<p>The State Government has massively increased its capital investments in new social housing stock with the record \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build stimulus package. The State plans to build over 12,000 dwellings across Greater Melbourne and regional Victoria over the next four years.</p> <p>Council can seek to attract investments from the State Government via the Big Housing Build.</p> <p>Council will also advocate for state-wide mandatory inclusionary zoning and direct government investment and subsidies.</p>
	Strategy 17. Provide in-principle support for the State Government’s secondary dwelling pilot program	<p>State Government is undertaking a pilot program to facilitate secondary dwellings, with key aspects of the program covering siting and design considerations in residential zones.³¹</p> <p>Council is supportive of initiatives that encourage the supply of diverse housing stock, such as granny flats and other alternative homes.</p>

Objective 4. To encourage increased diversity in housing supply to meet the needs of people of all ages and lifestyles

Encouraging the provision of diverse housing products is important for ensuring choice in the housing market, to meet the needs of households as they move through the many stages of life and to provide affordable options within the private housing market. An increased diversity of housing stock – both conventional private market housing and social and affordable housing – is supported throughout the settlements of Mansfield Shire.

Council supports innovative and diverse forms of housing in the Shire and as with all other housing, seeks to ensure new dwellings reflect the valued character of Mansfield’s towns and settlements (refer to Section 5).

Identification of preferred areas for diverse, social, and affordable housing will assist in clarifying preferred housing outcomes in this location to developers and the broader community. Social and affordable housing is particularly encouraged in locations within walking distance (approximately 1,200 metres) of shops and services in Mansfield (refer to areas shown in Figure 14 on page 70. Further actions to support the realisation of diverse, social, and affordable housing are:

- Develop built form and design guidelines for infill housing projects to provide guidance for new development (for example, preferred form and character). These ultimately should be expressed in

³¹ For further information on the Secondary Dwelling Code Pilot Program, visit: <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/smart-planning-program/rules/secondary-dwellings-code>

clear form-based policy guidance to be included or referenced at cl 16.01-1L that facilitates streamlined approval of favoured modes of housing.

- Consider potential to apply a Parking Overlay to the area to allow for removal of minimum parking requirements where appropriate and which will assist in encouraging more diverse housing forms.
- Undertake public realm improvements including enhancements to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, streetscape upgrades and planting.

Strategies supporting the realisation of this Objective are:

Strategy 18. Encourage and facilitate development of retirement and aged care living options.

Strategy 19. Encourage development of a crisis accommodation centre in Mansfield Shire.

Strategy 20. Encourage lot size diversity when planning for greenfield residential areas, for example smaller lots of approximately 600-800 square meters in areas zoned GRZ1 within walking distance (1,200m) of the town centre and larger lots (2 ha) in township fringe areas zoned for lower densities.

Strategy 21. Support diverse, social, and affordable housing, especially in areas with walking access to a range of services and commercial activities.

This objective and the associated strategies should be inserted at clause 16.01-1L and 16.01-2L of the restructured Planning Policy Framework (PPF).

4.6 Rural residential development

Rural lifestyle opportunities are a significant drawcard of Mansfield Shire. Whether it be lifestyle, part time or hobby farming, the natural and agricultural landscape of Mansfield Shire drives interest in rural living. This section applies to land zoned Rural Living Zone (RLZ). It is important to note that Farming Zone (FZ) land is not considered part of the rural residential land supply; the primary purpose of that Zone is to support agricultural activities.

While recognising the popularity of rural residential lots for lifestyle purposes, state planning policy seeks to manage development in rural areas to protect agriculture and avoid inappropriate rural residential development.

State policy includes the following additional objectives in relation to rural residential development:

- *“Manage development in rural areas to protect agriculture and avoid inappropriate rural residential development.*
- *Encourage the consolidation of new housing in existing settlements where investment in physical and community infrastructure and services has already been made.*
- *Demonstrate need and identify locations for rural residential development through a housing and settlement strategy.*
- *Ensure land is not zoned for rural residential development if it will encroach on high quality productive agricultural land or adversely impact on waterways or other natural resources.*

- *Discourage development of small lots in rural zones for residential use or other incompatible uses.*
- *Encourage consolidation of existing isolated small lots in rural zones.”*

Objective 5. To support rural residential housing opportunities that provide social, economic, and environmentally sustainable land use outcomes

Council recognises the contribution that rural residential areas make to providing housing choice in the Shire and seeks to manage rural residential land to ensure that these areas contribute positively to the character of Mansfield Shire while supporting sustainable land use outcomes.

Strategy 22. Support rural residential development that does not compromise sustainable land use outcomes, including farming

The Rural Living Zone caters for residential use in a rural setting. The purpose of this zone is to:

- *“To provide for residential use in a rural environment.*
- *To provide for agricultural uses which do not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding land uses.*
- *To protect and enhance the natural resources, biodiversity and landscape and heritage values of the area.*
- *To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.”*

Although the Rural Living Zone is catering primarily for residential use, the allotment size and subdivision layout should provide the opportunity for farming activities to occur, without adversely affecting the natural environment or the amenity of surrounding land uses. Residents in RLZ areas have a reasonable expectation that their amenity will be protected.

In the Rural Living Zone, development must be provided with certain community infrastructure and services normally expected for residential areas.

Strategy 23. Undertake assessment to determine potential to increase capacity within the Rural Living Zone

As described above, areas zoned for rural living provide choice within Mansfield’s housing market, attracting many new residents to the Shire. However, the Shire’s existing Rural Living Zone (RLZ) areas are largely at capacity under existing minimum lots sizes and averaging provisions. Pressure for subdivisions and dwelling development in the Farming Zone may be due in part to a lack of suitable land zoned for Rural Living.

Two schedules currently apply to the RLZ in Mansfield Shire. These are:

- **Rural Living Zone – Schedule 1 (RLZ1):** Includes a minimum subdivision area of 2 hectares with an average lot size of 4 hectares. No permit is required to construct a dwelling on lots more than 4 hectares. The RLZ1 applies to large areas of land around Mansfield township, adjoining Lake Eildon and in various townships and settlements including Tolmie. RLZ1 applies to approximately 8,800 hectares of land across the Shire.

- **Rural Living Zone – Schedule 2 (RLZ2):** Includes a minimum subdivision area of 8 hectares. No permit is required to construct a dwelling on lots more than 8 hectares. RLZ2 applies to parcels of land outside of Merton. RLZ1 applies to approximately 1,500 hectares of land across the Shire.

To better manage demand for rural living development, it is important that sufficient capacity is available for rural living purposes. One approach that would increase capacity in the RLZ would be to reduce the minimum lot size for subdivision under the as-of-right use requirements, which would create some incremental opportunities for further subdivision. However, adjustments for the purpose of increasing capacity under the current RLZ schedules are not appropriate because:

- RLZ1 applies to a large and diverse area of land across the Shire, including in areas where increased intensification of development may not be appropriate.
- RLZ2 applies to parcels of land not adjoining a township or settlement, further subdivision of which will not realise the capacity required.

A suitability analysis is required to identify locations where further subdivision is appropriate (and determine an appropriate density), taking into consideration the settlement and housing principles outlined in Section 4.2 on page 49. Rural Living Zone land surrounding Mansfield is most appropriate for reductions in minimum lot sizes to support sustainable development patterns. Changes to subdivision and use requirements will be implemented through the introduction of a new schedule(s) to the RLZ.

Strategy 24. Support discretionary uses in the Rural Living Zone only where these are consistent with the rural- residential character and do not compromise farming on adjacent land.

Uses in the Rural Living Zone need to be considered carefully, to ensure that the zone does not become an unplanned urban area and farming on adjacent land is not compromised.

This objective and the associated strategies should be inserted at cl 16.01-3L of the restructured PPF.

Objective 6. To prevent further ad-hoc residential development in the Farming Zone that creates dispersed settlements and threatens productive farming uses.

Strategy 25. Strongly discourage dwellings in the Farming Zone except where required in support of farming or other agricultural activities

The Farming Zone is primarily concerned with preserving land for agricultural use and avoiding land uses that could limit future farming or constrain agricultural activities. In this zone:

- Farming is the dominant land use and all other land uses are subordinate to farming.
- Farming uses are encouraged to establish and expand with as little restriction as possible, subject to proper safeguards for the environment.
- Dwellings and land use not associated with farming may be considered but should not limit the operation and expansion of agricultural uses.
- Uses that could lead to the loss or fragmentation of productive agricultural land, or which could be adversely affected by farming activities, are strongly discouraged.
- Land subdivision that could take farmland out of production or limit future farming productivity is strongly discouraged.

The main purpose of the Farming Zone is the use of land for agriculture. In the FZ, a dwelling is an ancillary use, intended to support running a farm. The Schedule to the zone sets the minimum subdivision area for lots and as-of-right use of the land for a dwelling at 40 hectares.

Despite this, many properties in the Farming Zone across the Shire are used for rural residential, rural living or hobby farms. Many are attracted to locate in the Farming Zone due to its attractive landscape setting and pricing per hectare can be more affordable in a more remote area. In these instances, the character of the property may be generally in keeping with a rural aesthetic; however very little or no income-generating activities related to the land may be occurring there.

There are around 4,300 lots in the Farming Zone, of which over 70 percent are under 40 ha in size and consume around 34 per cent of land in the Farming Zone.³² There are over 2,400 lots that are less than 20 ha in size. This is a substantial supply of small lots and landholders commonly have expectations that they will be able to construct a dwelling on a small rural lot.

Based on recent dwelling approvals across the Shire, farming land is being used for rural living and rural lifestyle purposes. Unfettered dwelling development in rural areas has several significant consequences, including:

- An impermanence syndrome for commercial agriculture – competition for rural land increases, land prices increase, tracts of farmland become isolated, and farmers are deterred from investing in their operations as they anticipate the conversion of their land out of commercial agriculture.
- Rural land use conflict as new migrants in an agricultural landscape have an expectation of a benign rural environment.
- Poor development and take up of land in appropriately zoned rural living estates.

Council will strengthen its policies related to residential development in Farming Zone areas to ensure the long-term productivity of agricultural land (refer to Objectives and Strategies in Section 7.5 on 141).

This objective and strategy should be inserted at cl 14.01-1L of the restructured PPF.

³² Mansfield Shire Council (2020), Mansfield Planning Strategy: Background and Technical Report

4.7 Settlement and housing implementation summary

TABLE 10: PLANNING SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
ESTABLISHING A HIERARCHY OF TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS			
To support sustainable patterns of population growth and residential development across the Shire	Direct future population growth in accordance with an established settlement hierarchy to support the efficient use of land and infrastructure and support convenient access to jobs and services.	Update clause 16.01-2L	Short Term (0-5 years)
ACCOMMODATING FUTURE POPULATION GROWTH			
To ensure sufficient residential land is available to meet future dwelling demand	Identify land suitable for residential rezoning to ensure sufficient land supply over the long term	Update clause 16.01-2L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Stage future greenfield residential development in Mansfield to consolidate growth and maximise investment in development and community infrastructure	Update clause 16.01-2L	Short Term (0-5 years)
		Rezone land at Mansfield-Whitfield Road to Low Density Residential Zone	
	Implement measures to accelerate release of suitable 'in-sequence' areas	Update clause 74.02 to include preparation and adoption of a Highton Lane Development Plan	Short Term (0-5 years)
Undertake consultation to resolve barriers to land release		Short Term (0-5 years)	

		Review appropriate incentives or punitive financial measures	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Undertake ongoing monitoring of dwelling demand and housing capacity	Update Clause 74.02 to include program of monitoring and review.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Ensure the orderly development of greenfield areas proposed for residential rezoning or intensification	Update Clause 74.02 to include consultation and preparation of development plans as further strategic work.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Support housing development and intensification in established areas, particularly areas with good access to shops and services	Introduce relevant objectives and strategies at 16.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Revise land use zoning and infrastructure requirements in Gough's Bay and Bonnie Doon in response to implementation/ expansion of reticulated sewerage services as outlined in the Lake Eildon Master Plan	No further action required	N/A
	Prepare local area plans for towns, townships, and settlements across the Shire	Update Clause 74.02 to include consultation and preparation of settlement plans as further strategic work.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Progress a planning scheme amendment to correct zoning errors and other planning scheme anomalies	Progress anomalies amendment	Medium Term (5-10 years)
MEETING NEEDS FOR DIVERSE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING			
To increase supply of social and affordable housing	Strengthen policy statements about the need for affordable housing in Mansfield	Objectives and strategies at 16.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)

	Develop processes for Council to support or advocate for affordable housing contributions	Advocacy through DELWP	Ongoing
	Engage with and educate the community on social and affordable housing as important local infrastructure	Develop an approach to educating the community on the need for and benefits of social and affordable housing.	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Adopt a relationship building, information sharing and brokerage role between the development and affordable housing sectors	Publish information on the Community Housing Sector for developers and provide a single point of contact at Council for enquiries	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Assist marginalised households to transition into the private rental market	Establish liaison service to foster partnerships between real estate agents and marginalised rental households.	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Advocate for State Government investment in Mansfield	Advocacy through DELWP	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Provide in-principal support for the State Government's secondary dwelling pilot program	Advocate to DELWP for improved planning tools (for example secondary dwelling codes).	Ongoing
To encourage increased diversity in housing supply to meet the needs of people of all ages and lifestyles.	Encourage and facilitate development of retirement and aged care living options.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Encourage development of a crisis accommodation centre in Mansfield Shire.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)


	Encourage lot size diversity when planning for greenfield residential areas, for example smaller lots of approximately 600-800 square meters in areas zoned GRZ1 within walking distance (1,200m) of the town centre and larger lots (2 ha) in township fringe areas zoned for lower densities.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Support diverse, social, and affordable housing, especially in areas with walking access to a range of services and commercial activities.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT			
To support rural residential housing opportunities that provide housing choice	Support rural residential development that does not compromise sustainable land use outcomes, including farming.	Include objectives and strategies at 16.01-3L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Support discretionary uses in the Rural Living Zone only where these are consistent with the rural- residential character and do not compromise farming on adjacent land.	Include objectives and strategies at 16.01-3L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Undertake assessment to determine potential to increase capacity within the Rural Living Zone	Undertake land suitability assessment	Short Term (0-5 years)
To prevent further ad-hoc residential development in the Farming Zone that creates	Strongly discourage dwellings in the Farming Zone except where required in support of farming or other agricultural activities.	Objective and strategy at 14.01-1L	Short Term (0-5 years)

dispersed settlements and threatens productive farming uses.

Ensure that the development of existing small rural allotments does not prejudice any existing surrounding agricultural activities.

Objective and strategy at 14.01-1L

Short Term (0-5 years)



05 Neighbourhood Character and Heritage

MANSFIELD PLANNING STRATEGY

| APRIL 2022

5. Neighbourhood character and heritage

The character of Mansfield Shire's built environment varies across the municipality. Across Victoria, the term 'neighbourhood character' means the cumulative impact of every property, public place, or piece of infrastructure, whether great or small.

The interplay between different features forms the basis of a place's unique character. Those features may include:

- Topography (flat, undulating, hilly, physical features like river valleys)
- Range of house types
- Built form (buildings: height, size, setbacks, roof form, heritage, site coverage and space around houses)
- Extent of rear gardens and private open spaces
- Landscaping and vegetation (size, type, native/non-native, or a mix)
- Size and spacing of lots
- Street widths and patterns (a grid layout, curvilinear streets with lots of courts)
- Fences (style and height).

This section provides an overview of the key features of neighbourhood character in each of Mansfield Shire's main towns and settlements and sets out policy recommendations to enhance elements of current planning regulations that may support improved outcomes in future. The Shire's main towns are Mansfield and Bonnie Doon. Smaller settlements are Goughs Bay, Merrijig, Jamieson, Howqua and Macs Cove, Merton, Maindample, the Upper Delatite settlements and Woods Point.

Documenting neighbourhood character helps to understand built form challenges and opportunities within the municipality. It is important to have a reference for the feel of a place, influenced by its buildings and street networks, to make sure that new development in Mansfield Shire feels like it belongs, reflecting local values and features. The analysis and recommendations sit alongside recommendations related to housing in Section 4 of this Strategy, in order to comprehensively address the inter-related issues of housing needs, location and design throughout the Shire.

The next sections discuss existing and preferred future neighbourhood character for Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon, Goughs Bay, Jamieson, and the Shire's smaller settlements.

5.1 Context: Mansfield

Mansfield is a strategic service centre for the Hume/Goulburn and Alpine regions, and it is the largest town in the Mansfield Shire. It contains civic, business, retail, educational and community services.

Mansfield is located 150 kilometres north-east of Melbourne and 60 kilometres south of Benalla, at the terminus of the Maroondah and Midland Highways. Mansfield has an estimated resident population

(ERP) of around 4,791.³³ During peak tourism periods, there can be as many as 14,436 weekend visitors to the Shire per day, with many seeking accommodation, retail, dining, or services within Mansfield itself.³⁴

Mansfield is located on Ford Creek, which flows into Lake Eildon. The town's wide streets afford mountain views in several directions, including to the iconic Mount Buller and the Great Dividing Ranges to the south-east. The relationship between the surrounding landscape and the built environment within Mansfield is an important aspect of the town's character, especially key view lines down main streets to the surrounding agricultural areas and to the Great Dividing Range.

As set out in the *Mansfield Structure Plan*, the township of Mansfield was surveyed in 1851, following the squatting boom of the late 1830s and the establishment of large runs for grazing stock. The two main streets (now High Street and Highett Street) were laid out to allow the turning of horse and bullock wagons and have a street width of at least 61 metres.³⁵

There are several instances where residential development has formed linear strips along roadsides, with paddocks behind, in land zoned for General Residential throughout the township. Current policy seeks to contain this, emphasising that along the major routes into and out of Mansfield should be sensitive to the role that the town plays as an 'Alpine Approach'. It emphasises that development along the Maroondah Highway on the western entry into town should be designed in such a way that the 'gateway' to the Alpine areas is promoted and themed, so it becomes obvious to locals and visitors that Mansfield has embraced its heritage and capitalised on its attractiveness. Indeed, the open and low-scale character of the Township allows visual connections from many locations to the surrounding pastoral landscape and beyond to the Great Dividing Range. This visual cue is an important defining feature of the residential area, and the landscape dominance lends a true sense of place despite significant variation in dwelling construction eras.

The character of Mansfield is also linked to its heritage, which is expressed most clearly through its extant original buildings in the commercial area and close to the town centre. These include prominent buildings within the central retail area of High Street, as well as less obvious residential buildings.

Dwellings in the commercial core (Commercial 1 Zone, C1Z)

Mansfield Township's commercial core is arranged around the Maroondah (east-west) and Midland (north-south) highways and forms a long east-west strip from the former Railway Station (around Ultimo Street) to Chenery Street in the east. Most commercial activity is concentrated between Highett Street and Chenery Street. The land in this area is zoned Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z) which is primarily focussed on retail, office, business, entertainment, and community uses and also permits housing.

The Maroondah Highway (High Street) and Midland Highway (Highett Street) have very wide road (61 metre) reserves, with gardens, significant tree planting and some car parking in the median. The street widths afford a sense of openness and arrival in the town centre. Several State- and locally significant

³³ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.

³⁴ Urban Enterprise, *Mansfield Shire Economic Profile 2018*, p. 30. Available from URL: <https://www.mansfield.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Mansfield%20Shire%20Economic%20Profile%20and%20Directions%20Paper%2022-02-19.pdf>.

³⁵ Mansfield Shire Council, *Mansfield Structure Plan*, 2015.

heritage buildings are found along High Street, including the Court House, Delatite Hotel, Davies Building, Mansfield Hotel, Mansfield Post Office, Police Memorial (at the High Street/Highett Street roundabout), National Australia Bank, former Railway Station, and former Farmer's Bank.

Development along High Street is defined by single-storey shop fronts with a generally continuous canopy (verandahs) and business signage along and above verandahs. The Commercial, Mansfield and Delatite Hotels and National Australia Bank building, are among the few examples of two storey buildings along the main street.

Residential development in the commercial core

On the western parts of High Street (Maroondah Highway) and set off High Street, some parts of land zoned Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z) are used for housing. Throughout these areas, a mix of commercial and residential land use is also interspersed with other community uses such as the Mansfield Bowls Club (Ailsa Street), Ambulance Station (Curia Street) and Mansfield Library (corner of High and Collopy Streets). The average lot size for residential lots through the C1Z is 860 square metres.

Through the town centre, the topography is generally flat or gently sloping. On Highett Street, dwellings are generously set back from the road between 7 to 10 metres, while on neighbouring narrower streets front setbacks are narrower, ranging from 3 to 5 metres. Residential development is characterised by one storey dwellings with low (usually open chain mesh or timber), or no front fencing. There are a variety of construction eras ranging from Federation-era weatherboard dwellings with hipped and gabled iron roofs, to mid- and late-20th Century brick dwellings that have tiled hipped roof forms. Regardless of dwelling era, chimneys and eaves are a prominent design features and most dwellings address the street with a front projecting bay, front verandahs, and recessed garaging/car parking (often a long driveway with a garage/carport in the backyard). Lots generally have well established gardens with large, mature trees (often in both the front and rear setbacks) which contribute to a sense of greenery throughout the town centre.

There are examples of recent infill development in the C1Z, with small-scale single storey multi-unit developments. These recent subdivisions (generally two to four lots) do not follow many hallmarks of the town's prevailing character, in that they have much higher site coverage (owing to long driveways and car parking areas), less tree planting and narrower front, side and rear setbacks. Garaging on these developments is more visually prominent and attached to the dwelling. Masonry fencing (as opposed to low, open chain mesh and timber fencing) has often been used on these newer developments, lending a more suburban-urban character than the prevailing country town feel of older dwellings. Narrower eaves are also typical of newer developments, again contributing to a more urban feel.

Some areas of land currently developed with housing in the Commercial 1 Zone appears to have little prospect of commercial development, specifically the lots facing Curia Street, between Elvins and Apollo Streets, and would warrant rezoning to General Residential Zone to better reflect its existing and likely future development. All this land is further from the centre of town and is ideal for providing additional housing supply and diversity. However, there is opportunity to guide that emerging form to respond more appropriately to the existing character than previous infill development.

Housing in the General Residential Zone (GRZ1)

The areas zoned General Residential (GRZ1) around Mansfield Township's commercial core are characterised by three different typologies:

- **Township character:** established lots within the original grid/rectilinear subdivision pattern
- **Garden contemporary character:** recent subdivisions with curvilinear street layouts
- **Township fringe character:** larger lots on the fringe of the Township, along roads that have a traditional country town feel with fewer footpaths, gravel edges, swale drains and wide, grassy verges.

Residential land around Mansfield's commercial core is zoned General Residential Zone (GRZ1). Some land is also zoned Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ); discussed in the section below. Several precincts are covered by a Development Plan Overlay (DPOs), which identifies areas for new development; these precincts are in various stages of completion throughout the town (e.g., Loyola Run on Mansfield-Whitfield Road and Highton Lane).

Mansfield Township's residential areas are characterised by wide streets with large lots, established gardens and street tree planting. Some recent medium density housing has recently been constructed within the town boundary, to the south and east (for example, Highton Lane).

Development across Mansfield Township's GRZ1 areas is well-established and has a fairly consistent single-storey form. However, as highlighted above and in the *Mansfield Urban Design Framework* (2005), the specific character and style of houses varies greatly according to the era of development. The character statements below highlight how the lot layout, streetscape and proximity to High Street have influenced residential character within the Township.

Township character

In the GRZ1 areas around Mansfield Township's commercial core, lot sizes typically range from 800 to 950 square metres. The township character is defined by a sense of spaciousness, greenery (created by established gardens and street tree planting) and a formal rectilinear (grid-like) street pattern. Similar to the commercial core, the residential character features are:

- Residential development is characterised by one storey dwellings with low (usually open chain mesh or timber), or no front fencing.
- There are a variety of construction eras ranging from Federation-era weatherboard dwellings with hipped and gabled iron roofs, to mid- and late-20th Century brick dwellings that have tiled hipped roof forms.
- Regardless of dwelling era, chimneys and eaves are a prominent design features and most dwellings address the street with a front projecting bay, front verandahs.
- Garaging/car parking is well recessed behind the front wall of the dwelling (often a long driveway with a garage/carport in the backyard).
- Lots generally have well established gardens with large, mature trees (often in both the front and rear setbacks) which contribute to a sense of greenery throughout the town centre.

The sense of spaciousness and greenery in Mansfield Townships' Township Character area is at risk from inappropriate contemporary infill that does not respect underlying elements of character. There are examples where subdivision and contemporary construction has resulted in:

- Loss of established vegetation
- Higher site coverage and less permeable surfaces
- Narrow or no eaves
- Use of cladding and masonry, including on fences

- Narrow front, side, and rear setbacks (which also limit significant tree planting)
- Visually dominant garaging/carports
- Side-by-side or terraced forms of housing.

The above challenges create a feel of urban/suburban character that is jarring in the Mansfield Shire context and should be avoided. There are opportunities to support infill development, especially to encourage opportunities for improved housing affordability and ageing in place, that is still sensitive to Mansfield Township's local character.

Given the variation in construction eras across the Township Character area, there are opportunities to strengthen Mansfield Township's character through material selection, garden planting and siting (position of a dwelling on its lot) that preserve a sense of spaciousness and connect to Mansfield Shire's alpine landscape and pastoral identity. Recommendations below set out how this could be addressed.

Garden contemporary character

Around Fords Creek, along Mansfield-Whitfield Road and on Mansfield's western edge (just south of the Maroondah Highway and west of the golf course) are areas of more recent residential development that has a contemporary garden character and is zoned GRZ1. These areas are distinct from Mansfield Township's established areas in that their street layout is curvilinear (sometimes following hillier topography), with courts rather than gridded through-streets. In these locations, the average lot size is around 800-950 square metres, with some examples of lots being subdivided into two lots of around 350 square metres each, plus common property driveways.

These garden contemporary areas are defined by single storey dwellings with hipped roofs, predominantly brick construction and no front fencing. Streets have wide nature strips and street tree planting that is establishing (many recent plantings). There are examples of lots with very wide frontages and the occasional two-storey dwelling compared to the Township Character area. Front setbacks generally range from 7-9 metres with establishing trees and gardens planted in front setbacks. A sense of greenery pervades, in some places enriched by remnant gums on public land. Building footprints and site coverage is higher in the Garden Contemporary areas than closer to town, with more examples of narrow side setbacks and prominent garaging, expanding the frontage of dwellings and in some cases limiting views to landscape features and back gardens between houses.

These elements, alongside concrete driveways, dominant garaging, the use of masonry and rendered building exteriors with narrow eaves lends a more suburban character to the precincts. Nevertheless, the absence of front fencing continues to contribute to a sense of openness.

Township fringe character

There are several large lots, especially south of the Mansfield commercial core, that are zoned GRZ, but which resemble a much lower density rural lifestyle typology. In these locations (south of Malcolm Street to Stoneleigh Road and between Monkey Gully Road and Highton Lane), there are some lots along roadsides with a conventional residential lot size around 950 square metres, however lots set back from the road have areas up to 5 hectares (50,000 square metres).

These areas are defined by narrower paved roads, wide road reserves with gravel verges, grassy swales, and no footpaths. Most driveways are gravel, and the development has a much more rural character, with post and rail fencing, some picket fencing, or significantly vegetated front boundaries with mature hedges and trees, screening housing behind.

The housing construction era and materials in these locations varies, however the dwelling siting, extent of vegetation planting along front fences and side boundaries, the space between lots and fencing materials is a strong unifying character throughout these areas which signify rural lifestyle rather than township residential typologies.

As the zoning in these locations is GRZ1 (typical residential), the zoning permits significant further subdivision to occur in future (subject to servicing requirements). This has been incrementally occurring along Highton Lane, Malcolm Street and Highett Street at various scales (in terms of the number of new lots created). Future subdivision should consider opportunities to consider through-roads that preserve the grid-like pattern of the Township Character area, rather than creating several private or semi-private cul-de-sacs throughout the southern parts of the precinct. This could be managed in partnership with Council through the use of a Development Plan Overlay, or a less formal community master planning exercise involving multiple landowners in these locations.

Town surrounds (Low Density Residential Zone, LDRZ)

This character area applies to land zoned for Low Density Residential (LDRZ) on the northern (Kareen Hills), western (Stockmans Rise Estate) and southern edges of Mansfield Township. In these locations, lot sizes are typically around 2 hectares (20,000 square metres), which is the minimum subdivision lot size permitted in the LDRZ.

Development in the LDRZ areas consists of ranch-style houses (single storey with sprawling floorplans) on large lots, located at the transition between residential and rural parts of the Township. Dwellings are generally single storey, with large floorplates and informally sited (often to take advantage of views) on curvilinear street patterns, which generally follow topography. Throughout this character area, housing design is individual, meaning the style and material selection is highly varied and often contemporary in design. Materials range from timber weatherboard, brick, rendered masonry or a combination. Roof forms also vary, with some hipped and gable and others having long, pitched roofs. Entries are grand and sometimes located on return gravel driveways. Dwellings are accompanied by detached sheds and outbuildings.

Due to their location outside the townships, there are generally few footpaths and less formal road cross sections, with wide grassy nature strips. In some locations roads are sealed to the verge with curb and channel; however more often drainage is managed in grassy swales. The feel of these areas can vary based on vegetation density in the public and private realms; much of which is still establishing.

5.2 Context: Bonnie Doon

Bonnie Doon is the gateway to the High Country and is connected to the Lake Eildon foreshore. Although a high proportion of houses (68 percent) are holiday homes, Bonnie Doon is Mansfield's second largest town and is highly valued for its landscape setting on the Lake Eildon foreshore.

Bonnie Doon is an attractive town catering for a population of around 540 people, as well as a substantial number of non-resident landowners and tourists (Urban Enterprise estimates there are

around 309 permanent homes and 610 holiday homes in and around the Bonnie Doon township).³⁶ The town and its surrounds attract around 135,000 visitors per year (including 34,000 holiday home visitors), coming to experience the picturesque alpine environment and lakeside access.³⁷ The settlement is serviced by reticulated water and sewer infrastructure. Lake Eildon and the nearby Great Victorian Rail Trail are key environmental features and tourism drawcards for the town.

Residential development in Bonnie Doon is clustered mainly to the north of Maroondah Highway, while there are small areas of General Residential Zone (GRZ1) south and east of the town, on Maintongoon Road and Hutchinsons Road. The town contains the Bonnie Doon Recreation Reserve, Cemetery Reserve, and a caravan park. There is a small area of commercially zoned land north of Maroondah Highway. In current planning policy, the town is promoted as a place for affordable and attractive housing choices, with reticulated water and sewer, excellent proximity to water views, with a lakeside atmosphere. The *Mansfield Planning Scheme* (2016) and *Lake Eildon Master Plan* (2020) suggest Bonnie Doon may be an appropriate site for some additional residential development, as well as housing for tourism, holiday homes and retirement living, (subject to water and sewerage infrastructure upgrades). In the short-medium term, the focus for most residential growth is Mansfield Township, while Bonnie Doon may cater for some additional development over time if infrastructure can be upgraded as part of the Lake Eildon Masterplan implementation.

Lot sizes across Bonnie Doon's residential area range from 700 to 1,000 square metres, with a small number of much larger semi-rural blocks. Detached dwellings are set within these medium-large sized, heavily vegetated parcels that are complemented by dense, informal native vegetation in the public realm that blends with the vegetation of private gardens.

The residential character is typified by:

- Timber weatherboard, single and some two-storey dwellings in a range of construction eras from Federation to present
- Low, open post-and-wire, some wire mesh and some timber picket fences
- Hipped and gabled roof forms, a mixture of tiled and corrugated iron
- Well-established vegetation around dwellings, with predominantly exotic gardens
- Generous front, side, and rear setbacks
- Large, established tree planting in median strip along Phillip Street and around the war memorial off Bon Crescent
- In the eastern parts of the town along Zimmerman Road and east of the Recreation Reserve, as well as Maintongoon Road, character is more open and rural with unsealed roads and unmade verges.

5.3 Context: Smaller Settlements

The character of Mansfield Shire's smaller settlements is strongly influenced by their landscape setting, topography, and extent of vegetation in the public and private realm. Street layouts that also follow

³⁶ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016 and Urban Enterprise, *Mansfield Shire Economic Profile*, June 2018.

³⁷ Urban Enterprise, *Mansfield Shire Economic Profile*, June 2018.

topography have a distinct influence on the settlements' atmosphere compared to the more formal layout of Mansfield's central areas.

Goughs Bay

Goughs Bay is a small settlement with a permanent resident population of around 270 people (including Mountain Bay).³⁸ It is nestled in the hills, on the edge of Lake Eildon and bordering national parks. The street layout is arranged around Lake Eildon, meaning a series of curvilinear roads fan out from around the lake, enabling views from residential development to the water. It is a popular destination for recreation and access to Lake Eildon: swimming, fishing, water sports, bushwalking and cycling. Goughs Bay is a key tourist destination in the Shire and there are many visitors over both the summer and winter holidays. It is estimated that around 280 homes are used as holiday homes and around 195 are permanent homes.³⁹



Development in Goughs Bay designed and oriented to take advantage of water views.



Some instances of high front fencing detract from the sense of openness and informal, holiday feel of the area.

To the east, Mountain Bay is low density, rural living area which is intended for development for a range of tourist and residential accommodation, recreation and water-based facilities and commercial activities. Future development of this area in line with the Special Use Zone, schedule 1 (SUZ1 – Mountain Bay) and development options examined in the *Lake Eildon Master Plan (2020)* would require investment in water and sewerage infrastructure, as well as further detailed planning (as set out in the SUZ1).

Lots throughout Goughs Bay range in size from around 700 square metres to 0.3 hectares (3,000 square metres), with some larger lots, especially on steeper sites. Goughs Bay was originally planned as a holiday settlement catering predominantly for non-resident landowners. However, given its location on the shores of Lake Eildon in an attractive waterfront and bushland setting, there is an increasing trend towards permanent occupation (influenced also by rising house prices in Mansfield Township). There is no reticulated water or sewer.

³⁸ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.

³⁹ Urban Enterprise, *Mansfield Shire Economic Profile*, June 2018.

Residential development in Goughs Bay is defined by:

- Dwellings take advantage of topography and orient towards Lake Eildon with large windows and often two storey buildings
- Range of construction eras and materials, with many houses constructed during 1960s-70s with a typical lakeside holiday home design, on stilts/reverse living and large verandahs oriented towards the Lake
- Large garages and sheds associated with boats
- Low or no front fences
- Often limited vegetation in front yards/screening views, with established trees in side and rear yards.

The character in Goughs Bay can be described as *Lakeside residential* and a preferred character statement and design guidelines are set out in Table 13, below.

Jamieson

Jamieson is a small local settlement catering providing services for the surrounding rural community and tourists, as well as a substantial number of non-resident landowners. It has a population of around 270 people.⁴⁰ An estimated 105 dwellings are occupied by permanent residents, with 285 holiday homes.⁴¹ There is no reticulated sewer. Due to the extent of vegetation in and around the settlement, bushfire risk is high in this location.

The town is located alongside the Jamieson River, at the southern end of Lake Eildon and its curved main streets follow the valley's topography. The central part of the town is arranged around a grid street layout, which lends a heritage feel to the town, reinforced by avenues of significant tree planting which create green canopies overhead. The town features significant heritage buildings (such as the Courthouse, currently occupied by the Jamieson Museum) which date back to the town's history as a gold rush settlement.

Topography dictates dwelling siting in some locations, where housing directly abuts the road or has a very narrow front setback. Given the scale of vegetation around private properties and on public land, Jamieson has a sense of lushness, enclosure, and seclusion, framed by dark green hills around the township.

⁴⁰ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.

⁴¹ Urban Enterprise, *Mansfield Shire Economic Profile*, June 2018.



Significant street trees in the Jamieson public realm contribute to its unique hamlet feeling.



Older dwellings set close to roadsides and with canopy tree and vegetation planting around the dwelling.

Housing in Jamieson is often low-scale single dwellings of timber or brick construction, with hipped and gabled roofs and well-established gardens with significant trees. There is a variety of lot sizes in town, ranging from 700 square metres to 0.15 hectares (1,500 square metres). Roads are made with unsealed verges and several roads are framed by avenues of significant street trees. Given this greenery, topography and sense of seclusion, Jamieson feels like a small hamlet unique from Mansfield's other small settlements.

Further features of residential development in Jamieson are:

- In some locations, narrow or no front setbacks (especially steep lots abutting main roads)
- Low or no front fences, especially on the edges of town, which contribute to its rural ambiance
- Views between houses and along roads to surrounding hillsides
- Established vegetation in front gardens and along roadsides often partially obscures development, such that trees and the surrounding hills are the most visually dominant skyline features
- Unsealed road verges with grassy swales and significant roadside vegetation, including avenues of street trees in some locations.

The character in Jamieson can be described as *Rural Village character* and a preferred character statement and design guidelines are set out in Table 13, below.

Howqua and Macs Cove

Howqua and Macs Cove are nestled within the Howqua River valley. The two small settlements are separated by Lake Eildon and the river and have a population of around 300 people.⁴² The location is highly valued by the Macs Cove community for its peaceful and quiet, scenic, and natural setting which includes Lake Eildon, the Howqua River, and surrounding mountains. The two settlements are popular destinations for holiday homes. It is estimated there are around 127 permanent homes and 231 holiday homes between Howqua and Macs Cove.⁴³ The settlements are not connected to reticulated sewer.

⁴² ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.

⁴³ Urban Enterprise, *Mansfield Shire Economic Profile*, June 2018.

Housing in and around Howqua and Macs Cove is a mixture of development eras, however a remote and rural character is established in both townships based on:

- Predominantly timber and some brick dwelling construction
- Dwellings sited in relation to views rather than with direct frontage to roadsides
- Large lots with gravel driveways and generous side and rear setbacks
- Significant vegetation on public and private property and along roadsides
- A mixture of native and exotic vegetation on private property
- Unsealed road verges
- Open post-and-wire fencing styles
- Sheds, water tanks and outbuildings familiar to rural lifestyle settings
- Views to surrounding hillsides and mountains and to Lake Eildon in some locations.



Dwellings positioned on hillsides and oriented to take advantage of views towards Lake Eildon.



Howqua Inlet.

Merton

Merton is a small settlement off the Maroondah Highway and the first township on the western edge of the Mansfield Shire. It has a population of around 170 people and an estimated 36 percent of dwellings are holiday homes.⁴⁴ Merton and Hut Creeks flow through the town, which is also located alongside the Great Victorian Rail Trail. Some rural properties offer accommodation for tourists visiting the Shire. The Merton Racecourse on Merton-Euroa Road hosts turf races and holds an annual Merton Picnic Cup on New Years' Day.

Housing in Merton is characterised by a small number of houses clustered along Shaws Road and Merton-Euroa Road within the Township Zone (TZ). Some land on the south side of Maroondah Highway near the Merton Cemetery reserve is subdivided into smaller allotments between 0.2-0.5 hectares (2,000-5,000 square metres) and is currently undeveloped. Development features include:

- Generous front setbacks, generally a minimum 20 metres
- Established trees (native and exotic) planted around dwellings and outbuildings (sheds)

⁴⁴ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.

- Water tanks and outbuildings familiar to rural lifestyle settings
- Unsealed roads and verges and driveways
- Development era and construction materials vary, with some timber construction and hipped tin roofs, while other houses are brick construction with tiled roofs.

Residential character Merton represents the *Rural village* typology, further explained in Table 13, below.

Maindample

Maindample is a small settlement whose community value the quiet, family friends and relaxed atmosphere within a rural and bushland setting. It currently operates as a small local service centre and as a town appealing to people who desire a small town lifestyle. Maindample has a population of around 200 people.⁴⁵ There is no reticulated sewerage.

Development across Maindample sits on a plateau with a sense of big skies, framed by surrounding low and rolling hills. Land clearing has occurred for agriculture, but several remnant significant trees dot paddocks throughout the locality, as well as some planted shelterbelts along paddock fencelines. Housing is low (predominantly single storey), with hipped and gabled corrugated iron roofs. The streetscape character lends itself to a rural lifestyle feel, with unsealed roads, wide, unmade verges, and post-and-wire fencing. There is a sense of spaciousness and there are long-ranging glimpses through properties to the paddocks and hills beyond the town.

Maindample has a *Rural village* typology, described in Table 13, below.

Settlements along the alpine approach

From Merrijig to Mirimbah, there are several small settlements zoned for township and residential purposes (TZ and GRZ1) along Mount Buller Road: Merrijig, Pinnacle Valley, Alpine Ridge and Sawmill Settlement. These small settlements and the surrounding rural area have a population of around of around 1,040 people, with 300 permanent homes and 370 holiday homes in the area.⁴⁶ The settlements are currently serviced with reticulated water and sewer, however further large-scale residential development would require upgrades to current infrastructure. The settlements are also constrained by bushfire risk.

⁴⁵ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.

⁴⁶ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.



Views east to Mount Buller and Mount Stirling dominate this character area.

The settlements follow Mount Buller Tourist Road, winding along the Delatite River. The gentle topography of the river valley creates opportunities for spectacular, long-ranging views to Mount Buller and Mount Stirling.

Local character in these settlements is defined by the alpine approach, with ever-present mountain views only occasionally obscured by dense vegetation along roadsides or dips in the winding river valley. Some properties front and enjoy views to the Delatite River itself. The proximity to mountain and rural views lends the settlements an alpine atmosphere and popularity as a tourism location, both for their picturesque views and close proximity Mansfield and the Alpine Resorts.

Current plans discourage the creation of new access to the road. There is very little development within the Township Zone (TZ) at Merrijig itself. Development that is visible from Mount Buller Road has a strong rural character defined by buildings sited in large, open fields and oriented towards the mountain views. Progressing east, the other Upper Delatite Settlements (Pinnacle Valley, Alpine Ridge and Sawmill Settlement) are obscured from the Mount Buller Tourist Road by dense vegetation and the undulating topography which climbs through the foothills of the Great Dividing Range.

Remnant River Red Gums along roadsides define short-range views and frame development across the Upper Delatite Settlements, especially along the river corridor. Residential development is typically located close to the road, with hallmarks of rural lifestyle development: large dwellings with a series of outbuildings, significant trees, and open, post-and-wire fences with farmgate entrances. In many places, development is screened from the road by established trees and thick vegetation on private and along the verges.

Woods Point

Woods Point is an important heritage settlement, appealing primarily to those interested in the town's history, outdoor pursuits, and the natural attractions in the surrounding area. There is no reticulated potable water or sewerage. The resident population numbers approximately 40 people and around 76 percent of dwellings are estimated to be holiday homes.⁴⁷

Woods Point lies within the Goulburn River valley and is surrounded by national parkland. Residential development is nestled close to the roadside and several buildings relate to the town's settlement during the Gold Rush. The town is framed by treed hillsides, where Scott Street cuts between two ridgelines. Off the main road, some housing sits prominently on slopes, or below the road level. Off the thoroughfare, roadsides are well-vegetated and often enclose short-ranging views along winding bush roads.

⁴⁷ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.

5.4 Strategic directions for neighbourhood character decision making

The following strategic directions underpin the policy objectives and recommendations below:

- Maintain and enhance the valued and diverse character of Mansfield Shire's towns and settlements.
- Ensure that new subdivision layouts and development preserves and enhances key urban design features that signify a person's place in the alpine region and in Mansfield Shire.
- Continue to preserve sites and precincts identified as having heritage values under Clause 43.01 of the Planning Scheme.

5.5 Protecting and enhancing valued local residential character

Based on the above, the following objectives and recommendations are made regarding updates to the Mansfield Planning Scheme.

Objective 7. To preserve and enhance the township and alpine character of Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon, and the Shire's smaller settlements.

Strategy 26. Update local policy to include the preferred character statements and proposed design guidelines for Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon, and the Shire's smaller settlements.

The preferred character statements and design guidelines set out below would form the basis of updates to local policy in the Mansfield Planning Scheme at Clause 15.01-5L.

Currently, the character statement outlines preferred approaches to character in Mansfield and provides commentary about development on ridgelines or highly visible slopes but does not provide specific guidance about the Shire's towns and smaller settlements. The following updates could be made:

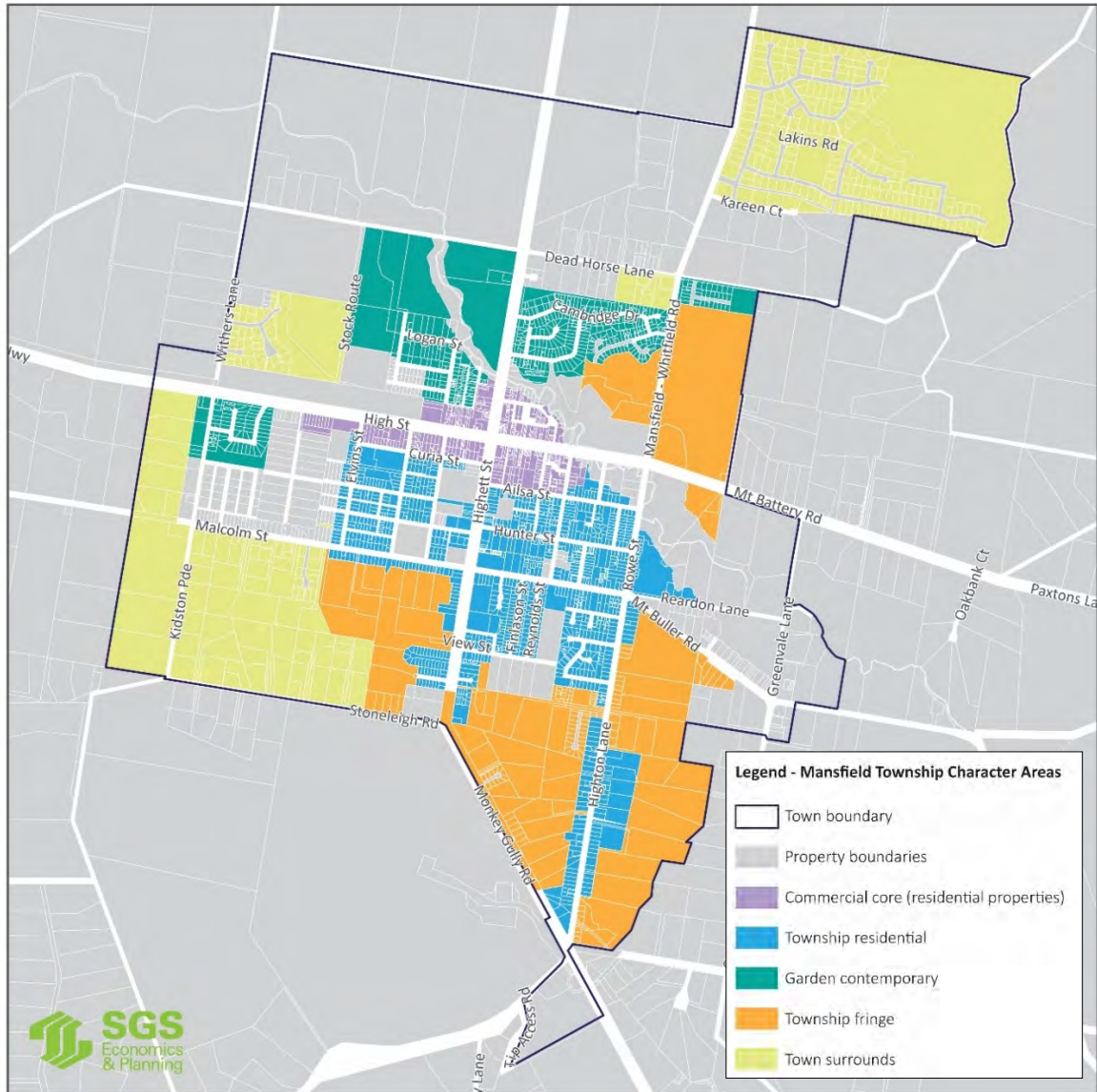
- Policy basis: Update the policy overview section by expanding the definition of residential character and its significance in Mansfield Shire, as set out at the beginning of this chapter.
- Outline policy objectives based on the following principles of neighbourhood character:
 - To recognise, support and protect neighbourhood character, cultural identity, and sense of place in Mansfield Shire.
 - To encourage new development to achieve architectural and urban design outcomes that positively contribute to local character, having particular regard to the applicable preferred future character statement for the area.
 - To protect and enhance the special character of rural settlements and limit further development in locations that are poorly serviced, environmentally constrained or have significant landscape features as identified by the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO).
 - To encourage provision, in appropriate locations, of a variety of housing types in Mansfield that cater for future housing needs and preferences.
 - To direct any residential growth to central and walkable locations within Mansfield and to limit residential expansion in the Shire's other towns and settlements.
- Add policy direction that neighbourhood character is intended to:

- Support development that respects the existing or contributes to a preferred neighbourhood character.
- Ensure the preferred neighbourhood character is consistent with infill development outcomes in Mansfield Township, in locations identified as suitable for some increased housing diversity.
- Ensure development responds to its context and reinforces a sense of place and the valued features and characteristics of the local environment and place, by respecting the:
 - Pattern of local residential areas and subdivision layout.
 - Underlying natural landscape character and significant vegetation.
 - Neighbourhood character values and built form that reflect community identity.
- Add sub-clauses that describe the existing and preferred character outcomes as set out in this chapter.
- Include more specific design guidance about preferred building materials, design and siting, fencing, garaging and vegetation planting, as set out in this chapter.

Mansfield

Preferred character statements for each of Mansfield Township's character areas (Figure 17) are set out below (Table 11), followed by built form and design considerations for new development in each location. These statements and recommendations can be used to update the LPP at Clause 11.01-1L (Mansfield Township).

FIGURE 17: MAP OF CHARACTER AREAS IN MANSFIELD



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2021.

TABLE 11: PREFERRED CHARACTER STATEMENTS FOR MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP

Character area	Preferred character statement
Commercial core (residential areas)	<p>A change in scale to more two-storey development is encouraged, with the additional height used to minimise building footprint and maximise landscaping. New development should use simple built forms, low-hipped and gabled roof forms with eaves and building materials that have muted and natural colours and tones that are sympathetic to existing development styles.</p> <p>Consistent front and side setbacks will reinforce the feeling of spaciousness that pervades this character area. These spaces allow for significant tree and vegetation</p>

Character area	Preferred character statement
	planting, supporting the sense of greenery. Low and visually permeable front fences allow views to front gardens and dwellings.
Township residential	<p>New development is consistent with the predominantly small-scale dwellings of 1-2 storeys, using simple building and pitched, hipped, or gabled roof forms with eaves. Garaging and car parking is well-recessed behind dwellings.</p> <p>Consistent front and side setbacks create a sense of spaciousness around dwellings, allowing significant tree and garden planting.</p> <p>Low, visually permeable, or absent front fencing reinforces open streetscapes, allows opportunities for views through to established gardens and longer-ranging views to surrounding landscapes in some locations.</p>
Garden contemporary	<p>New development reflects the moderate scale of existing dwellings, using contemporary façade articulation and a consistent palette of muted materials, colours, and tones. Front and rear setbacks are generous, allowing significant tree and vegetation planting.</p> <p>New development is sited to retain public views to landscapes beyond the residential area, limiting boundary-to-boundary development wherever possible. Garaging is recessed behind the front wall plane. Fencing is absent or low and made from visually permeable materials, allowing views to dwellings and front gardens.</p>
Township fringe	<p>If rural lifestyle lots in this character area are to transition to a more conventional residential development style over time (taking up subdivision potential afforded by the GRZ1), the preferred character should reflect the Township Residential character type.</p> <p>Where possible, landowners should coordinate the location of new roads to enable rectilinear through-connections that respect the Township’s existing street layout in these locations.</p>
Town surrounds	<p>Defined by individually designed dwellings often capitalising on topography to maximise views and sometimes sited informally to capture views, this character area is defined by larger lots that often contain substantial vegetation and detached outbuildings.</p> <p>New development reflects the scale of existing buildings (1-2 storeys), using simple building forms, pitched roof forms with eaves and muted colours/tones. Buildings are sited on large lots with significant side and front setbacks, allowing for significant vegetation and tree planting around dwellings and on boundaries. Fencing (especially front fencing) is limited to post and wire or is highly visually permeable.</p>

Design recommendations

In all residential areas:

- Dominant garages and parking within the front setback should be avoided. Parking behind the dwelling, utilising a single shared driveway, is encouraged for multi-dwelling development. Double garages, if provided, should be partially obscured from the street by the dwelling’s frontage.
- Crossovers should be minimised, with not more than one crossover for each frontage. New crossovers should not be created to serve a single dwelling in multi-dwelling development.

- Front and side setbacks should match prevailing setbacks on the street and allow for significant tree and vegetation planting, supporting the sense of greenery.
- Maintain and enhance the Township’s sense of greenery and connection to landscapes by encouraging significant tree planting in front and rear setbacks.
- Encourage retention of significant vegetation on sites planned for redevelopment.

In the Commercial Core residential areas:

- Encourage more consistent street tree planting throughout the C1Z that reflects heritage values of the township, especially along the High Street and Highett Street median gardens.
- Where infill housing is proposed, encourage material selection and scale that is sensitive to the prevailing muted colours and tones.
- Encourage development that respects the rhythm of street frontages and front setbacks to avoid transitioning to an urban suburban character. New development should generally utilise a single dwelling facing the street with additional dwellings behind.
- Two-storey development is encouraged with simple forms and minimal ground floor footprint to maximise landscaped area around buildings. Unnecessary articulation should be avoided where the use of simpler forms contributes to minimising footprint and increasing landscaped areas.
- One- and two-bedroom dwellings are encouraged.
- Low front fencing (up to 1.3 metres high) that is visually permeable (at least 50 percent) and constructed from timber, chain mesh or similar materials.

In the Township and Garden Contemporary character areas:

- Encourage more consistent street tree planting (for example, selected native species) to reinforce local character at the streetscape level. Consistent street tree planting and other urban design measures (such as footpath treatments) can be used to strengthen a sense of arrival “in Mansfield Shire” by creating a local design vernacular.
- Encourage selection of materials and elements of design that are sensitive to the town’s pastoral and landscape setting, for example:
 - Timber construction and exposed brick
 - Hipped and gabled roof forms
 - Eaves
 - Front projecting bays and verandahs
 - Selection of muted colours and tones
 - Car parking (including carports and garaging) well-recessed behind the front wall of the dwelling and visually subservient to the dwelling
 - Permeable driveway treatments and avoid large, paved areas, especially in front setbacks.
 - In the Township character area: low front fencing (up to 1.3 metres high) that is visually permeable (at least 50 percent) and constructed from timber, chain mesh or similar materials
 - In the Garden Contemporary character area: no front fencing is preferred. Where fencing is provided it should be low (up to 1.3 metres high) and visually permeable (at least 50 per cent) and constructed from timber, chain mesh or similar materials.

- For medium density and infill development, encourage the selection of materials and elements of design are sensitive to the town’s pastoral and landscape setting (see list above), albeit at a smaller scale.
- Reduce percentage of the site covered by impermeable surfaces.
- Require sufficient space for canopy/significant tree/ vegetation planting in front and back yards.
- New development should reflect typical side and front setbacks.
- Consider minimum subdivision sizes or siting guidelines for areas where housing diversity/ infill development is encouraged.
- Examine the best ways of maintaining views between dwellings of planting in rear gardens, sense of spaciousness and streetscape rhythm, by including guidelines that:
 - encourage upper-level setbacks and front and side setbacks for the provision of landscaping and significant vegetation
 - maintain key siting considerations (front, side setbacks)
 - discourage developments that are substantially out of scale in height or bulk with nearby dwellings.
- specify preferred roof forms where this is consistent.

In the LDRZ and Town Surrounds character areas:

- Preserve the rural lifestyle feel by limiting large impermeable concrete/hardstand and paved driveways.
- Avoid front fencing other than post and wire or highly visually permeable treatments.
- Encourage significant vegetation planting along boundaries and across properties.
- Encourage material selection that is sympathetic to the surrounding landscape (for example, muted colours and tones; avoid highly reflective materials such as zincalume).

Bonnie Doon

Residential development in Bonnie Doon is characterised by its bushland and lakeside setting. House blocks have significant space around dwellings and established gardens with mature trees. There are ample views to large remnant eucalypts along streets and between dwellings. The streets in Bonnie Doon have a largely informal character as there are no footpaths (other than off the highway) and roadsides are often grass swales/unmade verges (sometimes one side of the road has a kerb and channel gutter).

The architectural style of dwellings in Bonnie Doon varies, with a range of construction eras and some dwellings dating from Federation. Dwellings are typically detached, single storey developments. Significant street setbacks from the street and between buildings contribute to the character of the area, affording ample space for significant garden planting and some native vegetation.

TABLE 12: PREFERRED CHARACTER STATEMENT FOR BONNIE DOON

Character area	Preferred character statement
Bushland residential character	This character area is defined by informal bush gardens, surround low scale dwellings on spacious sites. New development provides large front and side setbacks to allow

Character area	Preferred character statement
	<p>for the retention and continued planting of vegetation, native vegetation, and significant canopy trees, preferably endemic to the Hume Region.</p> <p>New development reflects the existing low scale dwellings, using simple built forms. Dwellings to not penetrate the existing tree canopy and are often obscured by vegetation. Dwellings use natural materials, with natural materials in muted colours and tones befitting the surrounding environment.</p> <p>No front fencing is preferable. Where front fencing is provided, it should be low (up to 1.3 metres high) and visually permeable (at least 50 percent). Timber, chain mesh, post and wire or similar materials are encouraged.</p>

Design recommendations

- Garages, car ports, sheds and outbuildings should be located behind the dwelling's front wall plane or significantly recessed on the property to avoid the dominance of these structures.
- Parking behind the dwelling, utilising a single, shared driveway, is encouraged. Double garages, if provided, should be partially obscured from the street by the dwelling's frontage.
- Crossovers should be minimised, with not more than one crossover for each frontage. New crossovers should not be created to serve a single dwelling in multi-dwelling development.
- Where possible, permeable treatments for driveways are preferred (gravel, etc.) and extensive paving, especially highly reflective concrete, should be avoided.
- Front and side setbacks should match prevailing setbacks on the street and allow for significant tree and vegetation planting, supporting the sense of greenery.
- Maintain and enhance the Township's sense of greenery and connection to landscapes by encouraging significant tree planting in front and rear setbacks.
- Encourage retention of significant vegetation on sites planned for redevelopment.
- When selecting materials and colour schemes, consider the following:
 - Timber construction or the use of exposed brick
 - Hipped and gabled roof forms
 - Natural or muted colours and tones, avoid highly reflective roof materials such as zincalume.

Smaller settlements

Table 13 sets out preferred character statements, followed by design guidance for development in Mansfield Shire's smaller settlements: Goughs Bay, Jamieson, Howqua and Macs Cove, Merton, Maindample, the Alpine Approaches (Merrijig and the Upper Delatite Settlements of Pinnacle Valley, Alpine Ridge and Sawmill Settlement) and Woods Point.

TABLE 13: PREFERRED CHARACTER STATEMENTS FOR MANFIELD SHIRE'S SMALLER SETTLEMENTS

Character area	Preferred character statement
Lakeside character area (Goughs Bay, Howqua, and Macs Cove)	These settlements are defined by their proximity to Lake Eildon and dwellings that are designed and oriented to take advantage of water views. Dense vegetation around dwellings and large sheds and outbuildings to accommodate boats are common in these locations. The settlements have a holiday and

Character area	Preferred character statement
	<p>waterside feel where lots are often delineated using vegetation and generous spacing as opposed to formal side fencing.</p> <p>At higher points in the settlement, new development is sited to retain public views to the water and makes reasonable effort to ensure view sharing between neighbouring properties. Dwelling design is sympathetic to the surrounding landscape features by employing muted colours and tones.</p> <p>New development should seek to contribute net gains in vegetation where possible, to soften the appearance of large outbuildings and storage which are visually dominant along the streetscape.</p> <p>In Goughs Bay, dwellings are particularly visually prominent and often built up from the slope or reverse living with high second storeys to achieve height and maximise views to the water. Here, fencing should be incorporated into the design and selected with visually permeable or natural materials to allow for views to front garden areas. Vegetation should assist to soften the appearance of dwellings, even if low-lying to preserve water views.</p>
<p>Rural village character area (Jamieson, Merton, Maindample, Woods Point)</p>	<p>Rural villages are small settlements set among wider farming and rural areas, sometimes with national park close by. Vegetation in the public and private realm is a key feature of these areas, with large native and introduced trees and supporting undergrowth. In locations where topography is undulating, dwellings may have narrower front setbacks and be highly visible from roadsides.</p> <p>Intermittent views of surrounding landscapes and vegetation are afforded by streets that wind across gently undulating topography. Settlements are generally laid out according to a loose grid which lends a heritage feel and may itself be oriented to make best use of topography. Views through the settlement to the surrounding rural landscape or national park are readily available along road corridors and between dwellings, given the intimate scale of these settlements.</p> <p>New dwellings make use of natural materials with muted colours and tones to fit within the rural and landscape setting. Use of eaves, permeable driveway treatments, significantly recessed garaging and unobtrusive (at least 50 percent visually permeable) front fencing (or an absence of front fencing) are key features of these settlements which should be replicated in new development.</p>
<p>Alpine approaches character area (Upper Delatite settlements and Merrijig)</p>	<p>Settlements within the Alpine Approaches character area are dominated by long-ranging views to Mount Buller and Mount Stirling. Dwellings sit within medium- to large-sized lots, sometimes built up and oriented to take advantage of mountain views. At lower points, dwellings are set among denser bushland vegetation with remnant trees and understorey.</p> <p>Significant front and side setbacks are provided to allow for the retention of remnant vegetation, or for new planting to uphold the prevailing river valley character.</p> <p>New development should not project above key ridgelines or at key viewpoints along the alpine approach, to ensure visual primacy to the significant views identified in the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO1 – Alpine Approach Significant Landscape Area) extent. New development should follow the design guidelines set out in Clause 12.05-2L of the Mansfield Planning Scheme: <i>Significant landscapes, ridgelines, and alpine approaches.</i></p>

Design recommendations

While the local character of Mansfield Shire's small settlements varies as described in the existing and preferred character statements above, the approach taken to support design outcomes that are sympathetic to local context is similar from a policy standpoint, as set out below.

Design and siting:

- Buildings retain a simple and low scale, with low-hipped or gabled roofs allowing visual dominance to established vegetation.
- If two storey development is to be provided, encourage upper level, front and side setbacks that allow for significant tree and vegetation planting to soften the development's impact on adjoining properties. Encourage low-hipped roof forms to preserve the overall feeling of low-scale and open settlements.
- Maintain key siting considerations that follow the pattern of the site's context (e.g., front, side, and rear setbacks).
- Where roof forms are consistent in a streetscape, encourage new development to adopt the prevailing style.

Materials selection:

- Encourage selection of materials and elements of design that are sensitive to the settlement's landscape setting and surrounding context, for example:
 - Timber construction and exposed brick
 - Hipped and gabled roof forms
 - Eaves
 - Front projecting bays and verandahs
 - Selection of muted colours and tones that allow vegetation and the landscape setting to visually dominate, rather than the built form.

Access and car parking:

- Dominant garages and parking within the front setback should be avoided.
- Avoid large areas of hard-paved areas in favour of permeable treatments such as gravel, especially in front setbacks.
- Locate garages and carports behind the front wall plane of the dwelling and preferably towards the rear of the site, visually obscured from the roadside.
- Crossovers should be minimised, with not more than one crossover for each frontage. New crossovers should not be created to serve a single dwelling in multi-dwelling development.

Front fencing:

- Encourage front fencing that reflects the typical styles in the area. Where the prevailing character is no front fencing, it should be avoided.
- Front fencing should be visually unobtrusive.
- Where front fencing is appropriate and provided, it should be low scale (less than 1.3 metres) and visually permeable (at least 50 percent) to allow views to front gardens and between buildings to the surrounding landscapes or rural setting.

Subdivision:

- Further subdivision in Mansfield Shire's smaller settlements should consider how best to preserve lot widths and street rhythm that contributes a sense of openness to each location. In some instances, it may be best to site new development to the rear of a lot rather than achieve a terraced or side-by-side outcome.

Vegetation and landscaping:

- Require large side and rear setbacks in areas of heavy vegetation, to allow for planting of significant trees and gardens.
- Apply site coverage maximums to retain sufficient site area for vegetation.

5.6 Conservation of local heritage features

Many places, natural areas and buildings hold heritage significance across Mansfield Shire. Heritage is an important aspect of local character and identity for the municipality. It is unique and authentic, provides a connection to the past and can enrich a community's appreciation and experience of a place.

The heritage significance of several places and features within the Shire have been recognised through registration on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) or through the application of the Heritage Overlay in the Mansfield Planning Scheme.

The VHR lists and provides legal protection for heritage places and objects that are significant to the history and development of Victoria. It can include:

- **Heritage place:** buildings, trees, parks and gardens, streetscapes, archaeological sites, cemeteries, precincts, and structures such as bandstands.
- **Heritage objects:** furniture, shipwrecks, relics, archaeological artefacts, equipment, transport vehicles and everyday articles that contribute to an understanding of Victoria's history.

Places which do not meet the criteria of the Heritage Council of Victoria may be of local significance and may merit inclusion in the Shire's Heritage Overlay.

As well as covering places listed on the National Trust Heritage Register of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), there are a broad range of categories for including features under the Heritage Overlay, including places or features that are of local heritage significance because of:

- Cultural or natural historical significance
- Rarity, representativeness and/or research potential
- Aesthetic or technical significance
- Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural, or spiritual reasons.
- Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.

While Mansfield has a rich natural, cultural, and built heritage, there are gaps in the knowledge of the Shire's heritage assets, particularly sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage and in rural areas and the smaller settlements. There are a few places that are formally acknowledged and protected.

In 2014, the Shire undertook a Heritage Survey to identify places of heritage significance. The purpose of the heritage study was to identify, assess and document post-contact places of cultural significance and to make recommendations for their future conservation.

Stage One of this survey identified 32 places, predominantly in Mansfield and Jamieson, of heritage significance. The Heritage Overlay was subsequently applied to these places via Amendment C39 to the Mansfield Planning Scheme. Most of these heritage places are commercial buildings located along the High Street in Mansfield.

Taungurung cultural heritage

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage can be found across Country as evidenced in the many Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMP) held on file by Taungurung Land and Waters Council. CHMPs identify and assess the potential impact of a proposed activity on Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Cultural mapping highlights Taungurung cultural heritage including art sites, rock art, natural resources, flora and fauna, birthing trees, scar trees, burial sites, waterholes, our rivers and waterways and post colonisation massacre sites and missions. A significant amount of Taungurung cultural heritage has been damaged, destroyed, removed, or lost.

Many of the locations identified as having Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Significance are also covered by an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO). The purpose of the ESO is to identify and protect important environmental features and systems requiring protection from land use and development activities. Therefore, it is not the planning tool most suitable to protecting cultural and landscape features within landscapes (because, for example, it does not contain guidelines intended to influence built form outcomes).

In recent years, wildfires have redefined the Taungurung cultural heritage landscape, in some instances destroying cultural heritage and in others uncovering and allowing access to cultural material on mountaintops previously not accessible and understood by current land managers.

Since 2009, the Taungurung Land and Waters Council has been recognised by the State of Victoria as the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for cultural heritage on Taungurung Country and is working to find out more about what exists on Country and how to protect identified heritage.

The *Taungurung Country Plan* identifies as a priority the identification and protection of cultural heritage sites, including vulnerable art sites that require immediate protection,

State planning policy supports the conservation of places of heritage significance, including Aboriginal cultural heritage significance. This is underpinned by strategies promoting the identification and protection of natural heritage sites and man-made resources; encouraging appropriate development that respects places with identified heritage values and ensuring that an appropriate setting and context for heritage places is maintained or enhanced.

The Goulburn, Howqua and Big Rivers have been declared Heritage Rivers under the Heritage Rivers Act 1992, which has implications for land use in the vicinity of watercourses.

Objective 8. To protect and enhance sites of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance across Mansfield Shire.

Strategy 27. Work with the Taungurung Land and Waters Council to identify the most appropriate ways the planning system can protect places of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance across Mansfield Shire.

The *Taungurung Country Plan* identifies the need to ‘establish ongoing support and investment for a major audit – cultural mapping activity – on Taungurung Country – from the tops of our mountains to our waterways and tributaries, including tangible and intangible heritage.’

Mansfield Shire Council has an ongoing relationship with the Taungurung Land and Waters Council and could engage further to understand the most appropriate ways that the planning system can protect places of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance across the Shire.

The current arrangements regarding Aboriginal heritage are subject to dedicated legislation (the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*). While this framework appropriately recognises that management of Aboriginal heritage involves unique challenges distinct from those raised by colonial heritage, it may also limit the responses able to be implemented through the planning system.

It will be important when working with the Taungurung Land and Waters Council to explore both implementable actions under the current framework, as well as identifying areas where the current framework is not meeting the needs of traditional custodians of the land. The latter may need to become the focus of advocacy by council to state government.

Council will seek a Memorandum of Understanding with the Taungurung Land and Waters Council to reinforce and recognise the existing relationship. This should outline commitment so engagement and consultation, with a view to establishing:

- Commitments with regards to ongoing consultation and governance arrangements for matters of interest to Taungurung Land and Waters Council.
- Policy priorities for the Taungurung Land and Waters Council, including possible inclusions in future local Planning Policy Framework clauses; and
- Opportunities for advocacy by council from improving governance arrangements regarding Aboriginal cultural heritage and other matters of interest to the Taungurung Land and Waters Council.

Objective 9. To identify sites of heritage significance in the Shire.

Strategy 28. Ensure new development preserves and respects the heritage features and places.

Strategy 29. Identify and document buildings, places and sites that have important cultural significance and set out policies to enhance and protect those places.

Heritage documentation and protection

There is a lack of documentation and research into the significance of the extant built heritage of Mansfield Shire, which means it is difficult for heritage protections in the Mansfield Planning scheme to

be appropriately expanded. Without a review or continuation of the 2014 Study, it may be challenging to appropriately update heritage protections at Clause 43.01 (Heritage Overlay).

Further investigation into places of local significance could include a Council-managed register of sites and buildings that are not currently protected by the appropriate planning controls. Such a process could involve the community and seek their feedback on what people value most about their area and what heritage elements they would like to see changed or retained in the future (including, trees, vegetation, bushland, and natural habitats).

5.7 Neighbourhood character and heritage implementation summary

TABLE 14: PLANNING SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER			
To preserve and enhance the township and alpine character of Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon, and the Shire's smaller settlements.	Update local policy to include the preferred character statements and proposed design guidelines for Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon, and the Shire's smaller settlements.	<p>Include character statements at Clause 15.01-5L.</p> <p>Review the schedule to the General Residential Zone (GRZ) at Clause 32.08. Consider introducing additional schedules that modify the requirements of Clause 54 and 55 to achieve preferred built form, design and siting outcomes based on preferred character statements.</p>	Short term (0-5 years)
HERITAGE			
To protect and enhance sites of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance across Mansfield Shire.	Work with the Taungurung Land and Waters Council to identify the most appropriate ways the planning system can protect places of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance across Mansfield Shire.	If appropriate following further engagement with TLaWC, update Clause 15.03-2L and Clause 43.01.	Ongoing
To identify sites of heritage significance in the Shire.	Ensure new development preserves and respects the heritage features and places.	Following further investigation, update Clause 15.03-2L and Clause 43.01 as appropriate.	Ongoing
	Identify and document buildings, places and sites that have important cultural significance and set out policies to enhance and protect those places.	Following further investigation, update Clause 15.03-2L and Clause 43.01 as appropriate.	Ongoing



06 Infrastructure Provision and Funding

MANSFIELD PLANNING STRATEGY | APRIL 2022

6. Infrastructure provision and funding

This section sets out the policy context, challenges, opportunities, and recommended policy directions to manage development, transport, and community infrastructure provision across Mansfield Shire.

6.1 The context for planning for infrastructure in Mansfield Shire

Community and development infrastructure is needed to support the ongoing liveability and productivity of the Shire to 2040. These assets include infrastructure that support growth, development, and economic productivity in the Shire (such as roads, intersections, shared paths, bridges, drains) and infrastructure to support community health and wellbeing (such as schools, public childcare, Maternal Child Health facilities, community halls and parks and gardens).

Council works collaboratively with developers, other state government departments and agencies and private sector organisations responsible for managing other major infrastructure assets to plan, deliver and maintain the Shire's diverse infrastructure base.

There are a range of factors that require consideration in planning future infrastructure and services:

- **Managing development across the Shire's towns and settlements:** The diversity of towns and settlements attracts many new residents to the Shire. However, this dispersed settlement pattern and multiple locations of residential growth and development presents challenges for Council in coordinating the efficient and cost-effective delivery of infrastructure.
- **A growing and changing population:** Continuing population growth will place pressure on existing public amenities (for example, pool, ovals, and courts) and require ongoing consideration of service capacity. Population growth and ageing will necessitate expansion of education and aged care facilities. A diversifying community (for example in terms of ethnicity, English proficiency, employment status and occupation) will influence participation and utilisation trends.
- **Responding to the impacts of climate change:** The impacts of climate change, including higher temperatures and changing rainfall patterns, will have implications for future infrastructure provision and maintenance. The lifespan of infrastructure assets is likely to be shorter than planned and maintenance costs will increase significantly. Climate change will mean that repairs and upgrades are needed more frequently and that materials used in construction will deteriorate more quickly.
- **Seasonal population fluctuations:** The Shire's popularity as a holiday and recreation destination results in large, seasonal fluctuations in the population. The dynamic nature of seasonal populations makes planning for infrastructure and services in tourist towns difficult. There are challenges for local government where the local rate base is small, while the infrastructure and service demand of part-time and peak populations is high.
- **Increasing community expectations:** Expectations and needs vary between the permanent, non-resident and tourist populations and these need to be balanced when making servicing and infrastructure decisions.

- **Rate capping and infrastructure funding pathways:** In 2016, the Victorian Government introduced rate capping to restrict the amount that councils can raise their rates each year. A cap to rates revenue limits Council's total income and requires careful management of resources across Council functions, including infrastructure delivery.

6.2 Strategic directions for infrastructure provision and funding

The following principles underpin the recommended approach to managing development and community infrastructure across the Shire. They have informed the suite of objectives and strategies which follow and will be used to guide future Council decision-making.

Council will:

- Take a strategic, whole-of-organisation approach to infrastructure planning and delivery based on identified existing and future need and in support for the sustainable use of Council resources and patterns of growth across the Shire. Community facilities and infrastructure not owned by Council will be considered when analysing community needs.
- Undertake decision making regarding infrastructure funding in a consistent, transparent, and evidence-based manner, directing the Shire's resources where the benefit is greatest.
- Design, cost, and construct infrastructure considering sustainability outcomes and the impacts of climate change and ensure decision-making processes consider the long-term costs of maintaining and managing infrastructure.
- Adopt a people-first approach to ensure infrastructure projects focus on connecting people to services, facilities, and experiences to enhance their overall health and wellbeing.
- Deliver projects that are universally accessible and aim to be welcoming, socially inclusive and encouraging of active lifestyles, considering the diverse needs of our community (including but not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, multicultural, all abilities, child, and age friendly and gender sexuality preferences).
- Ensure infrastructure responds to and is integrated with the surrounding area, encouraging social connection, building a sense of place, and contributing to developing social capital and capacity building.
- Implement design processes that promote innovative and adaptable infrastructure solutions that can respond to the emergence of new technologies and changing community priorities in the future, while maintaining equitable service delivery.
- Prioritise improved access to municipal (Mansfield town) and regional centres (including Wangaratta and Benalla) from towns, townships, and settlements where services and facilities are not available and where future provision is not planned.
- Plan and design community facilities for the broadest possible use by a range of groups, services and activities and are multi-purpose in nature.
- Proactively advocate to state and Federal Government for investment in required infrastructure that is beyond the responsibility of Council to deliver.

6.3 Infrastructure to support development

Mansfield supports 35 per cent of the Shire's population and will continue to accommodate the largest share of future residential growth and economic activity. The Shire's smaller towns and settlements, including some in remote locations, will support modest growth in line with the established Settlement Hierarchy (refer to Strategy 1).

As in many regional areas, this distribution of residentially zoned land and development activity poses a challenge for Council to support sustainable patterns of growth, provide accessible community services and meet infrastructure expectations of community members across these dispersed settlements.

Additional and upgraded infrastructure will be required to support projected population growth and economic activity into the future.

Objective 10. To provide development infrastructure to support preferred patterns of development.

Strategy 30. Prepare an Infrastructure Plan and associated Funding Plan that supports economic productivity and underpins preferred locations for residential growth.

State government planning policy supports the timely, efficient, and cost-effective delivery of development infrastructure that meets the needs of the community and supports preferred development sequences in areas of growth.

Development infrastructure includes transport infrastructure (regional transport connections and internal township and settlement networks), as well as infrastructure to support residential development economic activity (such as drainage and reticulated services)

Council has undertaken past strategic work to identify infrastructure needs across the Shire, including:

- Draft Mansfield Shire Road Strategy 2017
- Future Vision Mansfield Transportation Strategy 2016
- Draft Integrated Water Management Plan 2021
- Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2014
- Waste Strategy 2020
- Planning for the Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route

To ensure that infrastructure is provided and maintained in a manner that is targeted and efficient, an Infrastructure Plan will be prepared to align infrastructure planning and delivery with preferred locations and staging of growth and development, taking into consideration the priorities identified through past work.

The Infrastructure Plan will include consideration for:

- The quantum of population growth expected across the Shire based on policy principles established by the Settlement Hierarchy (Strategy 1), proposed staging of greenfield development (Strategy 3) and locations of economic activity (Strategy 32).
- The quantity, condition, economic life, and revenue-generating capacity of existing infrastructure.

- The level of additional servicing required to support expected growth taking into consideration the following infrastructure categories:
 - Roads (including parking)
 - Bicycle networks and footpaths
 - Drainage and reticulated services
 - Public transport
 - Public realm improvements (earthworks, landscaping, fencing, seating, and playground equipment).
 - Community facilities such as childcare, Maternal Child Health facilities, community halls and recreation facilities.
- State Government policies and priorities for infrastructure planning, such as the new Movement and Place Framework outlining a place-based approach to transport planning.
- Timing and staging of infrastructure delivery to best support the efficient use of Council resources and to provide clear signals to industry as to preferred areas for growth.
- Ongoing operation and maintenance requirements of infrastructure, including consideration for the impacts of climate change.
- Variations in infrastructure and services demand resulting from seasonal population fluctuations.
- Funding pathways for infrastructure delivery, including consideration of development contributions mechanisms, including Development Contributions Plans (see further discussion below and Table 16) and State and Federal Government grant opportunities (Table 18).
- Rolling timelines for review and update to ensure that both the Infrastructure Plan and Funding Plan continue to appropriately reflect the needs of the community, changes in policy and advancements infrastructure provision and funding models.

The infrastructure plan should follow best practice in the integration of transport and land use planning, including reference to the Commonwealth Government's Australian Transport Assessment and Planning guidelines, the *Transport Integration Act 2010* and the state government's Movement and Place planning framework.

The Movement and Place approach recognises that transport links perform two functions: movement of people and goods and serving as a place (a destination in its own right). This way of thinking ensures that planning for and developing transport networks considers the needs for movement and placemaking simultaneously.

Consultation with the Department of Transport in the preparation of this strategy highlighted the following matters for consideration in the development of a Movement and Place Plan for Mansfield Shire:

- Recognition of the following Major Tourism Roads and the potential for future upgrade.
- Consideration of the strategic placement of electric vehicle charging facilities.
- The activation of commercial activity around carparks.
- Connectivity within existing and future housing development areas, and to the broader urban area.

Infrastructure funding pathways

The State's designated tool for funding assets like distributor roads and trunk drainage lines is the DCP system (see further information below). In a DCP costs **must** be apportioned according to share of usage. To the extent that part of the user catchment for higher order infrastructure is within the established urban footprint of Mansfield, the Council will face a gap between the cost of the works and collections from development contributions.

This gap will have to be filled from other sources such as general rate revenue. In a rate capping environment, this could be problematic.

Other considerations for Council relate to financing and establishing responsibility and/ or partnerships for the funding delivery of expensive infrastructure necessary to catalyse ongoing development of an area.

With these considerations in mind, it is more important that Council has some kind of staging plan for its growth areas. This will ensure orderly extension of infrastructure and give Council its best chance of meeting the funding challenge. Any 'out of sequence' development would be required to forward fund the extension of required infrastructure.

Once complete, the Infrastructure Plan will help to inform our Council Plan, Budget, Finance Plan, Asset Plan and Capital Works Program.

The Infrastructure Plan will also form the necessary background for the development of potential future Development Plans in identified unplanned greenfield areas.

TABLE 15: INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PATHWAYS

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PATHWAY	HOW DOES IT WORK?	TYPES OF INFRASTRUCTURE THAT CAN BE FUNDED	HOW DO WE IMPLEMENT IT?
Development Contributions Plan	<p>A DCP is a mechanism to equitably levy contributions from new developments to go towards the provision of planned infrastructure required to accommodate the needs of a growing population.</p> <p>DCP payments offset the contribution paid by Council from rate income to provide the planned infrastructure.</p>	<p>Infrastructure which would otherwise be wholly funded by council or State Government, typically defined as either ‘development infrastructure’ or ‘community infrastructure’</p> <p>Development Infrastructure: roads (including bicycle, footpaths, traffic management and control devices), public transport infrastructure, drainage works, basic improvements to public open space.</p> <p>Community infrastructure includes projects involving the construction of all other buildings or facilities used for community or social purposes.</p>	<p>An approved DCP is implemented through the Development Contributions Plan Overlay and schedule in the Planning Scheme. The Development Contributions Plan Overlay indicates the area covered by the DCP. The schedule indicates the levies that apply in a particular area.</p> <p>Levies for development infrastructure projects are generally collected through conditions on planning permits.</p> <p>Levies for community infrastructure projects are collected through the building permit process.</p>
Special Charge schemes	<p>A charge is levied on the property owners who receive benefit from the works or services pursuant to the Local Government Act.</p>	<p>Any infrastructure improvements in a particular area requested by residents, external statutory service authorities or council officers.</p>	<p>For a scheme to proceed, most property owners must support the proposed works and agree to financial contribution.</p>
Voluntary agreement	<p>There is an opportunity within the planning system for landowners, the council and other parties to freely negotiate agreements for the payment or provision of infrastructure at the time a development proposal is considered.</p>	<p>There is wide scope for infrastructure inclusions in voluntary agreements. However, an agreement should not be used if an objective can be met through a permit condition.</p>	<p>A voluntary agreement in relation to infrastructure provision can be initiated when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the council considers a planning scheme amendment request and ▪ the council considers a planning permit application.

Asset recycling	Selling Council land and buildings and redirecting the proceeds into infrastructure funding.	Funds collected can be directed towards the provision of any infrastructure item administered by Council.	Taking inventory of owned assets to identify those that are surplus to Council and community requirements.
Public Private Partnership (PPP) <i>(Relevant to infrastructure financing)</i>	Council contracts private sector to design, build, finance and maintain infrastructure. The infrastructure is then handed back to Council at the end of the contract period.	Funds collected can be directed towards the provision of any infrastructure item administered by Council.	Detailed business planning process undertaken before moving on to bidding phase. Payment is based on services delivered and conditional upon meeting performance standards.

TABLE 16: FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT GRANTS

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PATHWAY	GRANT NAME	DESCRIPTION
Federal Government grants	Local Roads and Community Infrastructure	\$500 million has been committed to funding for local road and community infrastructure projects that must deliver benefits to the community. Councils can select projects to be funded in their community according to local level priorities.
	Community Development Grants Programme	Supports the delivery of infrastructure that promotes stable, secure, and viable local and regional economies. Intended to fund the construction or upgrade of community facilities, create jobs in delivery of projects and use of infrastructure and improve social amenity. Only projects scheduled for completion with a final payment made before 30 June 2026 and identified by the Australian Government will be considered for funding.
	Building Better Regions Fund	Focuses on tourism-related infrastructure (\$100 million) and general infrastructure and community projects in regional remote Australia (\$100 million). This grant is intended to provide between \$20,000 to \$10 million to cover 50% or more of eligible project costs. The Australian Government announced \$250 million in the 2021-22 Budget towards a sixth round of the BBRF.

State Government grants	Victorian Local Government Grants Commission	Allocates financial assistance grants to support councils deliver community services. Grants are allocated by the Commission based on an assessment of councils' needs.
	Roadside Weeds and Pests Program	Provides up to \$75,000 a year for councils to manage invasive plants and pests along rural roadsides. Mansfield was allocated \$24,349 in the 2020-21 budget.
	Community Infrastructure Loans Scheme	<p>The Scheme supports the delivery of community infrastructure by providing councils with access to low-interest subsidised loans of between \$500,000 and \$10 million per project.</p> <p>Projects that could be supported by the Community Infrastructure Loans Scheme include but are not limited to community centres and hubs; multi-purpose community facilities; arts and cultural facilities; public libraries; kindergartens and early learning facilities; restoration of heritage buildings to enable community use; and parks, play spaces, reserves, and trails.</p>
	Living Libraries Infrastructure Program (LLIP)	<p>The LLIP enables Victorian councils and regional library corporations to deliver new or renewed library infrastructure that meet the needs of communities and, in doing so, support the role of libraries in strengthening communities and encouraging opportunities for community participation.</p> <p>Funding is available through two categories: minor works and major works.</p>

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS PLANS

Development Contributions Plans (DCP) are the most appropriate mechanism for requiring a levy towards infrastructure provision in the planning scheme across several users and are effective in ensuring that all new development contributes fairly to the cost of infrastructure.

Infrastructure projects can include new infrastructure, an upgrade in the standard provision of an existing infrastructure item, an extension to an existing facility and total replacement of an infrastructure item after it has reached the end of its economic life.

To qualify for inclusion in DCPs, all infrastructure:

- Must be used by a broad cross-section of the community,
- Must serve a neighbourhood-sized catchment or larger area and
- Must be basic to the health, safety or well-being of the community, or be
- Consistent with current community expectations of what is required to meet its health, safety or well-being.

A DCP cannot be used to fund the following:

- The total replacement of an infrastructure item if the replacement is necessary as a result of poor maintenance.
- Basic utilities, such as water supply and sewerage, provided by servicing authorities under their own legislation.
- Existing infrastructure in a DCP that was funded through general taxes or rates.

Through a DCP, the cost of infrastructure projects is apportioned across all the likely users for the purposes of calculating the contribution charge. Likely users include existing and future development a defined area. New development will not therefore be charged for the whole cost of an infrastructure project that others (i.e., the existing community) will use, to ensure that costs reflect 'usage' and are distributed on a fair and equitable basis.

6.4 Community infrastructure

Community (or social) infrastructure refers to the facilities, places and spaces that support community members to live healthy and connected lives, such as kindergartens, aged care facilities and community meeting spaces. It includes facilities like sports and recreation facilities, schools, and hospitals; and programs like Social Support Groups, Learn Local, community exercise classes, adult literacy, and community support groups.

Community infrastructure can include both public and privately provided facilities and services, including council-owned/run and non-council (private or other government agency) facilities. Some places and programs are provided by Council, while others are provided by the non-government and not-for-profit (or profit-for-purpose) sectors.

Within the Shire, Mansfield is the focus for community services and facilities, with some smaller community halls and spaces dotted across other parts in the Shire. The Hume Regional Growth Plan notes that the centres of Wangaratta and Benalla will continue to accommodate and expand higher order community services into the future. This includes provision of sub-regional level health services (Wangaratta) and a range of education facilities, such as public and private schools, TAFE, and university campuses.

STATE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE:

Clause 19.02-1S Health facilities

- Facilitate the location of health and health-related facilities (including acute health, aged care, disability services and community care facilities) taking into account demographic trends, the existing and future demand requirements and the integration of services into communities.
- Plan public and private developments together, where possible, including some degree of flexibility in use.
- Locate hospitals and other large health facilities in designated health precincts and areas highly accessible to public and private transport. Provide adequate car parking for staff and visitors of health facilities.

Clause 19.02-2S Education facilities

- Consider demographic trends, existing and future demand requirements and the integration of facilities into communities in planning for the location of education and early childhood facilities.
- Locate childcare, kindergarten and primary school facilities to maximise access by public transport and safe walking and cycling routes. Ensure childcare, kindergarten and primary school facilities provide safe vehicular drop-off zones.
- Ensure streets and accessways adjoining education and early childhood facilities are designed to encourage safe bicycle and pedestrian access. Develop libraries as community based learning centres

Clause 19.02-4S Social and cultural infrastructure

- Encourage the location of social and cultural infrastructure in activity centres. Ensure social infrastructure is designed to be accessible.
- Plan and design community places and buildings so they can adapt as the population changes and different patterns of work and social life emerge.
- Support innovative ways to maintain equitable service delivery to settlements that have limited or no capacity for further growth, or that experience population decline. Identify and protect land for cemeteries and crematoria.

Clause 19.02-5S Emergency services

- Ensure police, fire, ambulance and other emergency services are provided for in or near activity centres.
- Locate emergency services together in newly developing areas.

Objective 11. To provide community infrastructure to meet community needs.

Strategy 31. Prepare a Community Infrastructure Plan that considers provision of community infrastructure and services in accordance with the identified Settlement Hierarchy.

In Mansfield Shire, Council owns several community facilities and spaces, such as the Mansfield Family and Children's Centre, the Youth Centre, Mansfield Community Centre, aquatic facilities, and library. These spaces and other spaces across the Shire host a range of government-run and non-government programs, including (but not limited to):

- Childcare and kindergarten
- Early years' playgroup
- Learn Local
- Maternal and Child Health Care (from the Mansfield Family and Children's Centre)
- L2P Driver Program
- FReeZa youth events
- Mansfield Community Radio
- Men's Shed
- Social Support Groups
- Spring Senior Citizens
- Citizens Support Group
- Indoor bowls.

There are several established state government policies relevant for planning for community infrastructure in the Shire. These policies consider demographic trends, accessibility of services from transport networks, co-location, and future flexibility.

At present, Council buildings are at or nearing capacity, both in the size/flexibility of spaces to accommodate enough people and in their scheduling, which is in high demand.

To determine what facilities and services may be needed into the future, Council will prepare a *Community Infrastructure Plan*. That plan could consider a range of information, including:

- Population projections and demographic changes across the Shire
- Social infrastructure benchmarks
- An inventory and review of Council's assets (for example, their state of repair, quality/functionality, physical capacity and capacity for scheduling/programming, the flexibility and adaptability of spaces)
- Public infrastructure including health and education infrastructure, primary and secondary schools.
- Identification of the network of non-government and not-for-profit partners who deliver programs and activities across the Shire
- Best practice examples

- Community and stakeholder input.

Such a study would examine the best use of Council’s resources, to provide and maintain the existing network of buildings and to accommodate enough programs in those spaces. It may include an asset review, to determine the condition of buildings and whether they are fit-for-purpose. It would examine the capacity of local community buildings to accommodate the many activities and programs in demand across the Shire, the quality and functionality of community spaces. Best practice examples would be examined. For example, many new spaces are designed to be multi-purpose and collocated with several services, so that small and large groups and groups with lots of different needs, can all make use of the facility.

Adopting a High Growth Scenario (discussed in Section 4.4) for future population will result in an additional 6,450 residents to 2040.

To gain an understanding of infrastructure needs, Table 17 provides indicative population benchmarks for facilities provisioning have been used to broadly estimate what additional infrastructure may be required in Mansfield Shire to 2040. The benchmarks may vary according to specific community characteristics. Actual needs will vary depending on the capacity and quality of existing infrastructure determined through preparation of the *Community Infrastructure Plan*, as described above. Facilities provided by private and not-for-profit entities have been excluded.

TABLE 17: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE BENCHMARKS

COUNCIL OR STATE PROVISION	FACILITY TYPE	INDICATIVE BENCHMARK	INDICATIVE REQUIREMENT FOR MANSFIELD SHIRE
State	Maternal Child Health	1 per 800 6-year-olds	Further analysis required
Council	Community facilities (meeting rooms and community centres) (local)	1 room per 1,500 people	4.3
Council	Neighbourhood houses	1 per 20,000 people	0
Council	Swimming pools and aquatic centres (local)	1 per 30,000 people	0
Council or private	Indoor sports courts	1 per 3,500 people	2
Council or private	Outdoor sports courts	1 per 2,000 people	3
Council or private	Sports grounds	1 per 3,000 people	3

COUNCIL OR STATE PROVISION	FACILITY TYPE	INDICATIVE BENCHMARK	INDICATIVE REQUIREMENT FOR MANSFIELD SHIRE
State	Government primary schools	1 per 800 5- to 12-year-olds	Further analysis required
Council	Arts and cultural facilities (local)	1 per 8,000 people	0
Council	Playgrounds	1 per 2,000 3- to 12-year-olds	0
Council	Skate parks	1 per 18,000 people	0
Council	Exercise equipment	1 per 15,000 people	0

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2020)

Community infrastructure will be provided in accordance with the role and functions of each place as described in Table 18.

TABLE 18: SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

CATEGORY	SETTLEMENTS	DESCRIPTION	FUTURE ROLE
Main Service Centre	Mansfield town	<p>Mansfield is location of a diverse range of community services and infrastructure, including primary (public and private) and secondary school, pre-school, kindergarten, and adult education.</p> <p>Mansfield also has a range of recreation and sporting facilities, including a Men's Shed, football and netball club, bowling club, tennis courts, cycling and walking path and trails.</p> <p>Mansfield services the smaller townships and settlements of the Shire</p>	<p>Mansfield will be prioritised for future infrastructure provision to support the local town population, as well as serving communities across the municipality.</p> <p>Council will advocate for improved public transport connections to higher order services in regional centres such as Wangaratta and Benalla.</p>
Town	Bonnie Doon	<p>Bonnie Doon provides for a limited range of community services and infrastructure.</p> <p>Council owned / run facilities and services are the Bonnie Doon Community Centre and the Bonnie Doon Recreation Reserve</p>	<p>Growth in Bonnie Doon will be supported by maintaining and upgrading (where relevant) existing community infrastructure.</p> <p>Council will advocate for improved public transport connections to Mansfield and regional centres of Wangaratta and Benalla for higher order community services.</p>

CATEGORY	SETTLEMENTS	DESCRIPTION	FUTURE ROLE
			Council will support the community in implementing Community Plan priorities in Towns.
Township	Jamieson Gough's Bay	Townships have some urban zoned land and accommodate a small population. Community facilities are limited.	<p>Council will provide basic community infrastructure in Townships, such as community meeting spaces and basic recreational facilities.</p> <p>In townships where a full range of community infrastructure and services are not available, Council's priority will be in supporting access to Mansfield and regional centres of Wangaratta and Benalla for higher order community services.</p> <p>Council will support the community in implementing Community Plan priorities in Townships.</p>
Settlement	Merrijig Macs Cove Howqua Maidample Woods Point	Settlements generally do not have community facilities.	<p>Council will provide limited investment in community facilities in Settlement locations.</p> <p>For Settlement residents, Council's priority will be in supporting access to Mansfield and regional centres of Wangaratta and Benalla for higher order community services.</p> <p>Council will support the community in implementing Community Plan priorities in Settlements.</p>
Rural Settlements	Ancona Barjarg Howqua Kevington Tolmie (RLZ)	<p>Rural settlements represent areas of dispersed dwellings within the Farming Zone.</p> <p>Settlements do not include any urban zoning, commercial activity, community facilities or reticulated services.</p>	Council will support the community in implementing Community Plan priorities in Rural Settlements.

6.5 Infrastructure provision and funding implementation summary

TABLE 19: PLANNING SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT			
To provide development infrastructure to support preferred patterns of development	Prepare an Infrastructure Plan and associated Funding Plan that supports economic productivity and underpins preferred locations for residential growth.	Update Clause 74.02 to include preparation of Infrastructure Plan as further strategic work.	Short term (0-5 years)
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE			
To provide community infrastructure to meet community needs	Prepare a Community Infrastructure Plan that considers provision of community infrastructure and services in accordance with the identified Settlement Hierarchy	Update Clause 74.02 to include preparation of Infrastructure Plan as further strategic work.	Short term (0-5 years)
OPEN SPACE			
To provide direction for current and future public open space requirements	Complete, exhibit and adopt the Mansfield Open Space Strategy	Update the Mansfield Planning Scheme as appropriate from the recommendations of this Strategy	Short term (0-5 years)

07 Employment Lands

MANSFIELD PLANNING STRATEGY

| APRIL 2022

7. Employment lands

This section sets out the policy context, challenges, opportunities, and recommended policy directions to manage economic growth and development across Mansfield Shire.

7.1 The context for planning for employment lands in Mansfield Shire

Mansfield is the Shire's largest settlement and acts as its main service and commercial centre, as well as the primary location for business and employment. Smaller towns of Bonnie Doon, Jamieson, Goughs Bay, Merton, Merrijig, Macs Cove, Maindample, and Woods Point play a supporting role and have some areas of commercial, industrial, or township-zoned land (land that can be used for economic purposes).

The Shire's economy is one of the Hume Region's strongest performers. The average annual growth rate since 2010 of 1.95% per annum of economic output and 0.9% per annum of employment growth demonstrate that the Shire's economy is continuing to grow.

While the composition of employment has been relatively stable, there is evidence of underlying change in the focus of the local economy in line with macroeconomic trends. Specifically, the number of people employed in the delivery of services has been growing, which is evident in the ongoing job numbers growth in education, training, and professional service employment sectors.

Tourism is important to the Shire's economy. Visitors are largely drawn to the Shire's natural assets including High Country landscapes, Mount Buller/Mount Stirling, Lake Eildon, Alpine National Park, and the many scenic waterways (for example, Delatite River, Howqua River, Big River, Jamieson River and Goulburn River). The lifestyle and recreational opportunities offered in the Shire act as a drawcard, attracting visitors and new residents alike.

Agriculture remains a significant contributor to the local economy, supporting the largest share of jobs in the Shire. Major agricultural pursuits in Mansfield are pasture seed production, wool production, prime lamb, and beef production. Advancements in technology and expansion of digital communications have enabled producers to expand operations and capitalise on export markets. Opportunity for more intensified farming pursuits (such as viticulture and hydroponics) on smaller lots offer potential to further diversify the Shire's agricultural base. These activities can be augmented by initiatives that capture the Shire's large tourist market, such as farmgate sales and cellar door.

While the Shire's economy is strong, there are several factors which present challenges for continued economic growth and development:

- The Shire's tourism-focused economy is highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and other major events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A growing population is resulting in ongoing demand for new housing in the Shire. The emergence of residential development is creating conflict with existing employment uses and encroaching on the Shire's primary industrial areas. This is particularly the case for employment precincts at Mount Buller Road, Monkey Gully Road and Dead Horse Lane / Lakins Road Precincts.

- The Shire’s popularity as a holiday and recreation destination results in large, seasonal fluctuations in the population, in part driven by the high number of non-resident ratepayers. This high variability places pressure on local businesses and emphasises the need for greater diversification particularly during the off-season.
- In addition, the tourism accommodation and non-resident landowner (holiday home) market has contributed to a housing affordability challenge for local key workers (retail, hospitality, local services, agriculture, etc.). Without appropriate accommodation, especially during peak tourism periods, the Shire’s economy will suffer from a key worker shortage.
- There is limited appropriately zoned and serviced industrial land and instances where the zoning of employment land does not align with its current use or employment capability.
- A planning permit is required to construct a dwelling on a lot less than 40 hectares in the Farming Zone. There is a high degree of land fragmentation across the Shire contributing to a considerable number of dwellings being approved on land zoned for farming uses and raising concern for the ongoing, productive use of agricultural land.

7.2 Strategic directions for economic development

The following principles underpin the recommended approach to managing employment lands across the Shire. They have informed the suite of objectives and strategies which follow and will be used to guide future Council decision-making.

Council will:

- Plan to enhance the servicing capacity of the Shire to ensure its employment lands can adequately satisfy the needs of the community.
- Support the growth and diversification of trades and industries (including service-based) within the Shire.
- Ensure equitable allocation of land between agriculture, industrial, commercial, and other sectors of the community.
- Work to implement appropriate planning mechanisms to avoid future conflicts over land use, particularly between employment and residential land uses.
- Continue to grow the Shire as a visitor destination and provide for a range of tourism-related uses.
- Ensure tourism uses are balanced with sustainable management of the region’s assets, particularly areas of high visitation including sensitive ecosystems and productive areas.
- Prioritise the protection of productive agricultural land while supporting the diversification of the agricultural base.

7.3 Commercial and Industrial Land

Council is undertaking a Planning Scheme Amendment to implement the strategic directions contained within the *Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy 2021* (CILUS). This amendment covers:

- Updates to Local Planning Policies contained within Clauses 11.01-1L-01 and 17.03-1L relating to commercial, retail, and industrial development, seeking to address issues relating to potential land use conflict, land supply, office and service space and business attraction.
- Updates to Local Planning Policies contained within Clause 11.01-1L-01 relating to strategic development outcomes in Mansfield Centre, Mount Buller Road Precinct and Dead Horse Lane / Lakins Road Precincts.
- Introduction of a schedule to the Commercial 1 Zone to identify various land parcels in High, Curia, Nolan and Baldry Streets, Mansfield where a planning permit is required for a retail shop in all instances.
- Introduction of Schedules to allow a development plan process to be applied to selected areas of Industrial 1 Zone to guide the future use, development, and subdivision of land.
- Rezoning of specific land parcels to reflect desired future land use outcomes and correct existing zoning anomalies. A summary of proposed changes.
- Update to Clause 72.08 to include the Mansfield Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy, 2021 as a background document to the Mansfield Planning Scheme.

The Objectives and Strategies outlined below seek to integrate outstanding strategic directions of the (CILUS) and provide guidance for future strategic planning regarding commercial and industrial land across the Shire.

Objective 12. To consolidate commercial and industrial activity.

Strategy 32. Direct future employment uses in accordance with the established settlement hierarchy to support economic productivity.

State policy seeks to encourage the ongoing consolidation of retail, commercial and community uses within existing activity centres. There is a need to recognise and prioritise the Shire's existing centres in accordance with the identified settlement hierarchy to prioritise investment by Council, enhance economic productivity and viability and to ensure residents can access the jobs and services they need.

The settlement hierarchy shown in Table 20 classifies each of Mansfield Shire's towns and settlements as either a Main Service Centre, Town, Township, Settlement or Rural Settlement. These classifications have been established taking into consideration:

- Existing population size
- Extent of commercial activity and presence of defined commercial areas
- Infrastructure servicing including the provision of reticulated services and community services
- Land use zoning patterns

Table 20 also provides description of the preferred future employment role of each place based on:

- State and regional planning policy guidelines
- Potential and desirability of each place to accommodate expansion of commercial and industrial activity
- Planned investment in infrastructure and services by Council and other government agencies.

TABLE 20: SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY FOR EMPLOYMENT LANDS

CATEGORY	SETTLEMENTS	DESCRIPTION	FUTURE ROLE
Main Service Centre	Mansfield Township	<p>The Shire’s largest employment centre within the Shire, supporting a diverse range of commercial and industrial activities.</p> <p>Mansfield includes several key employment areas, including the CBD, Mount Buller Road bulky good retailing precinct and several industrial areas.</p>	<p>Mansfield will continue to be the focus for economic activity within the Shire. The town will service the personal and professional service needs of the Shire’s residents and businesses, along with the major retailing needs of visitors.</p> <p>Mansfield will accommodate future growth in industrial activity.</p>
Town	Bonnie Doon	<p>Bonnie Doon contains the Shire’s largest commercial area outside Mansfield providing convenience and energy services to local residents, visitors and passing motorists.</p> <p>The service centre includes fuel supplies, food retailing and food services.</p> <p>Bonnie Doon does not contain industrial land.</p>	<p>The Bonnie Doon commercial areas will continue to act as a secondary commercial area within the Shire, servicing the needs of motorists, summertime visitors and residents.</p> <p>Commercial growth that supports local employment and commercial diversity in accordance with the Shire’s settlement hierarchy will be encouraged.</p> <p>The extent of commercial zoning in Bonnie Doon will be revised following confirmation of the implementation of the Lake Eildon Master Plan.</p>
Townships and Settlements	<p>Jamieson</p> <p>Gough’s Bay</p> <p>Merton</p> <p>Merrijig</p> <p>Macs Cove</p> <p>Maindample</p> <p>Woods Point</p>	<p>Townships and Settlements contain limited commercially zoned land and support local level convenience needs.</p> <p>Townships and Settlements do not contain industrial land.</p>	<p>Townships will continue to service the convenience and fuel needs of residents and visitors.</p> <p>Commercial growth that supports local employment and commercial diversity in accordance with the Shire’s settlement hierarchy will be encouraged.</p> <p>The extent of commercial zoning in Gough’s Bay will be revised following confirmation of the implementation of the Lake Eildon Master Plan.</p>
Rural Settlements	<p>Ancona</p> <p>Howqua</p> <p>Barjarg</p> <p>Kevington</p> <p>Tolmie</p>	<p>Rural Settlements generally do not have commercially zoned land.</p> <p>Rural Settlements do not contain industrial land.</p>	<p>Further commercial and industrial zoning is not supported in Rural Settlements.</p>

Adapted from: Mansfield Commercial and Industrial Strategy, 2021.

Objective 13. To ensure there is sufficient land to support future needs.

Strategy 33. Assess ongoing need for commercial and industrial land.

The *Mansfield Shire Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy* (CILUS) (2021) reviewed the availability of zoned land within each of the Shire's employment precincts and found that there is currently no suitable zoned land within the Shire to support industrial expansion. The Strategy identified the following land parcels for rezoning for industrial uses:

- Land at 175 Dead Horse Lane as the preferred location for the Shire's new industrial and commercial precinct.
- Land between 264 and 282 Dead Horse Lane to be rezoned to the Mixed-Use Zone.

The Strategy further identifies the area bound by Withers Lane, Midland Highway, Dead Horse Lane, and Lakins Road as an investigation area for future industrial expansion (see Figure 18). This land is contiguous with 175 Dead Horse Lane and will directly benefit from the delivery of the Mansfield Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route.

To determine the need for further industrial expansion, Council will monitor the take-up of land in 175 Dead Horse Lane. Recommendations for further expansion will require investigation of the infrastructure and environmental/heritage implications of industrial land uses in this area.

It is noted that rapid expansion of industrial supply beyond land identified at 175 Dead Horse Lane risks the oversupply of industrial land and the viability of new investment.

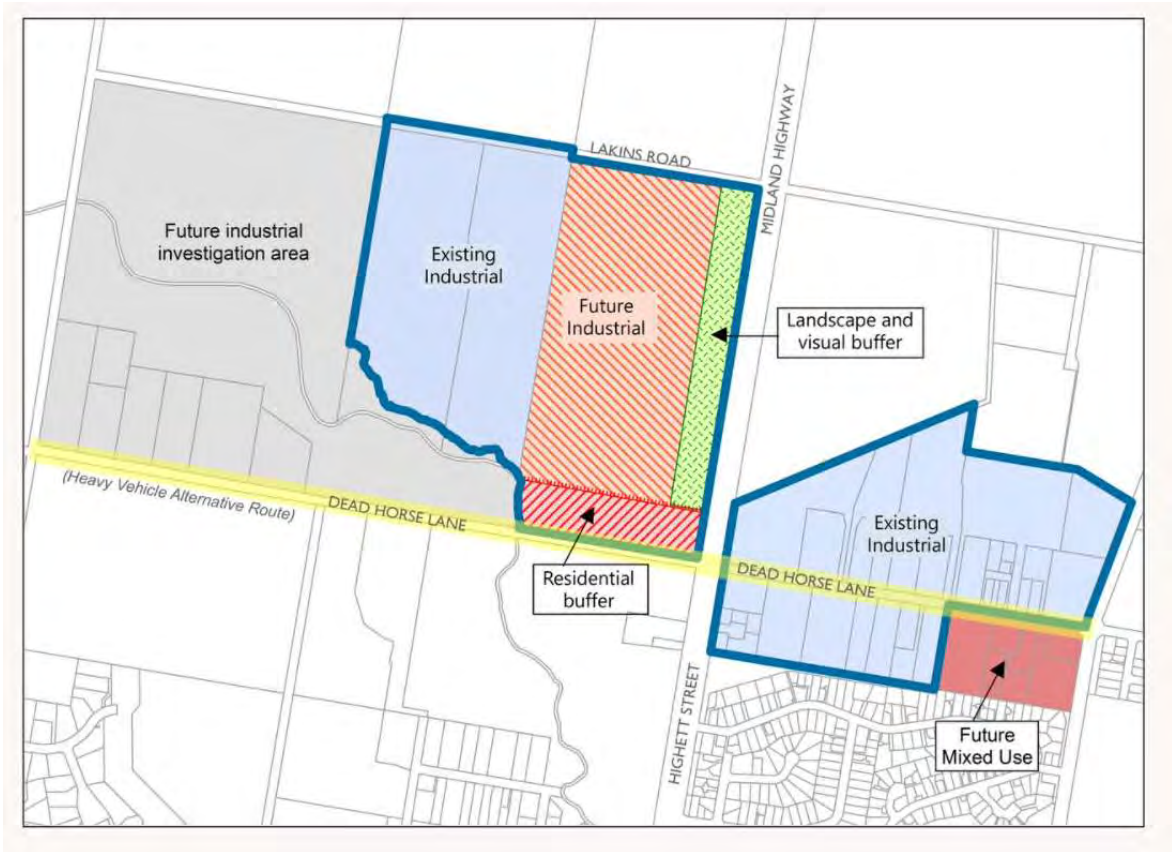
Strategy 34. Assess suitability of rezoning land no longer suitable for employment purposes

The Stock Route former Sawmill site is a single 5-hectare former industrial site surrounded by residential and public uses.

The site lacks appropriate road infrastructure to support heavy vehicle access and abuts residential land to the west, east and north and a wetland to the south. Given its size, limited capacity, and context, the *Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy* (2021) notes that this site is not suited to redevelopment as a future industrial or commercial estate and supports the rezoning for residential purposes.

A Preliminary Risk Assessment is required to determine the suitability of this site for rehabilitation for sensitive uses.

FIGURE 18: FUTURE INDUSTRIAL INVESTIGATION AREA



Source: Mansfield Shire Council (2021) Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy

7.4 Visitor Economy

Year-round leisure and recreational opportunities attract significant numbers of mostly domestic visitors to the Shire. In 2018, there were an estimated 556,000 visitors to the Shire, contributing over \$180 million to the local economy.⁴⁸

As is well known, the Shire functions as a major gateway to Victoria's ski resorts including those at Mount Buller and the resorts within the Mount Buffalo National Park. The Shire is also a focus for water-based recreation, with Bonnie Doon, Jamieson and the Howqua areas attracting large numbers of tourists in the warmer seasons.

The Shire's popularity as a holiday and recreation destination results in large fluctuations in its population. Over peak vacation periods, campers and visitors expand the Shire's temporary population significantly.

⁴⁸ Mansfield Shire Council (2021), *Mansfield Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy: Background Issues and Options report*, Pg. 12

Forecasts of future visitation project that the Shire could attract an average annual visitation of more than 784,000 by 2029. However, these forecasts may be impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which is having substantial impacts on the tourism industry globally.⁴⁹

The local visitor economy faces additional risks because of changes in the climate. Hotter and drier landscapes contribute to health and safety risks for nature based recreational visitors and may limit summertime accessibility to some locations.

Hotter conditions are also projected to impact on ski conditions. According to research by *Infrastructure Victoria*, by 2050 there is the potential for the ski season to be 30 to 80 days shorter. For the Hume Region, the value of the tourism economy exceeds \$1.3 billion, of which ski-based tourism is a substantial component.⁵⁰

Encouraging tourism development is a priority at the state level, with an ambition to maximise the economic, social, and cultural benefits of developing Victoria as a competitive domestic and international tourist destination. In particular, the Hume Regional Growth Plan includes objectives to:

- Support opportunities for nature-based tourism throughout the region.
- Support large commercial tourism uses in rural areas of lower agricultural value and away from areas identified as strategic agricultural land.
- Facilitate rural tourism activities that support agricultural enterprises such as cellar door and farm gate sales and accommodation in appropriate locations.
- Support the region’s network of tracks and trails and activities that complement and extend their use.

Local planning policy supports the attraction of high-quality tourism development that is conducive to the environmental attributes of the area and is empathetic to the character of the Shire.

Supporting tourism development in the Shire requires action across a range of themes covered in this Planning Strategy, including settlement and housing, neighbourhood character, environment, significant landscapes, cultural heritage, infrastructure and transport and commercial and industrial land.

Several specific objectives and strategies are outlined below to facilitate further development of the tourism industry in Mansfield Shire. Other objectives outlined in this Planning Strategy directly relevant to supporting the visitor economy are summarised in Table 21.

TABLE 21: OTHER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO THE VISITOR ECONOMY

THEME	OBJECTIVE
Neighbourhood character	To preserve and enhance the township and alpine character of Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon, and the Shire’s smaller settlements.

⁴⁹ Mansfield Shire Council (2020), *Mansfield Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy: Background Issues and Options report*, Pg. 12

⁵⁰ Mansfield Shire Council (2020), *Mansfield Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy: Background Issues and Options report*, Pg. 12

THEME	OBJECTIVE
	To protect and enhance sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance across Mansfield Shire.
	To identify sites of heritage significance in the Shire.
Infrastructure provision and funding	To provide development infrastructure to support preferred patterns of development
	To provide community infrastructure to meet community needs
	To provide direction for current and future public open space requirements
Employment lands	To consolidate commercial and industrial activity
	To ensure there is sufficient land to support future needs
Environment and landscape	To protect and enhance significant landscapes in Mansfield Shire for their cultural, environmental, and historic values
	To protect and enhance waterways, wetlands and lake environments and enable access to safe, secure, and affordable water supplies.
	To ensure natural resources and environmental values are not compromised by ongoing development.

Objective 14. To strengthen and diversify the visitor economy.

The Shire’s visitor economy is largely dependent on nature-based and experiential tourism which tends to be low yield, weather dependent and at risk due to climate change uncertainties. The longevity of the tourism sector relies on attraction of investment in products that attract higher yielding visitors, encourage overnight stays, and produce year-round tourism offerings that are not weather-dependent.

Offering a diverse range of tourism options can help to increase visitation in off-peak times. This can also alleviate pressure on key travel routes and visitor services within Mansfield.

The Taungurung Country Plan outlines a range of initiatives relevant to strengthening the tourism offering across the Shire, including cultural and nature-based tourism opportunities. There is potential for council to work closely with TLaWC to diversify the Shire’s tourism offer.

Strategy 35. Encourage development of ancillary and off-season attractions to enhance the Shire’s tourism offer.

Visitors to Mansfield Shire are primarily attracted by nature-based activities, with key strengths in both water-based and land-based natural assets and associated activities, such as fishing, recreational boating, other water-based activities (e.g., kayaking, jet skiing), outdoor adventure activities (e.g., hunting, four-wheel driving) and camping.

However, the Shire lacks some basic supporting tourism product that drives visitors and entices them to stay in the region, including contemporary commercial accommodation, quality food and beverage establishments and family-friendly activities.

Actions to strengthen the primary and secondary nature-based assets of the Shire and to further diversify the tourism offering are:

- Facilitating the development of a range of well-designed and sited tourist facilities, including integrated resorts, accommodation, host farms and bed and breakfasts.
- Supporting growth in other ancillary businesses, such as accommodation, retail, food, and entertainment in locations that are visible and highly accessible to visitors.
- Establishing and facilitating off-peak activities that focus development away from on water experiences, such as major festivals and events showcasing visual arts, music, theatre, dance, quality food and wine, fishing, and other family-friendly activities.
- Encouraging agri-tourism development in rural areas (recognising that non-agricultural uses should be ancillary to the primary agricultural and environmental role of existing farming uses).
- Expanding highly popular cycling paths and rail trails throughout the Shire and wider region.
- Encouraging an early morning and night-time economy in Mansfield by activating streets, laneways, and public spaces, particularly in High and Highett Streets. This can serve to enhance the town centre's role as a tourist destination (as well as tourism-based activity support centre).

Strategy 36. Support the implementation of the Activating Lake Eildon: Lake Eildon Master Plan.

Lake Eildon is Victoria's largest inland water storage, which provides a dual irrigation and recreation role. The Lake's primary role is to supply rural water for irrigation purposes, bulk water for provision of potable water to rural towns and environmental purposes to Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) entitlement holders. Its secondary role is to provide a recreation offering for local residents and visitors to the region. It is estimated that Lake Eildon supports \$275 million annually in economic output and 1,421 jobs in Mansfield Shire.⁵¹

Prepared for Regional Development Victoria, the Lake Eildon Master Plan establishes a shared vision for the activation of Lake Eildon, identifying priority tourism and recreation developments.

Master Plan vision statement:

"The Lake Eildon region will fulfil its potential as Australia's premier inland water destination, with enhancement of its water-based tourism assets, activation of nature-based tourism and improvement to the visitor experience in the key destination villages surrounding the Lake." (RDV 2020, pg. 6).

The Master Plan study area takes into consideration the land and townships more closely surrounding Lake Eildon and the Lake Eildon National Park land, including areas within both Murrindindi and Mansfield Shire Councils.

⁵¹ RDV (2020) pg. 19

The Master Plan advocates for a range of priority projects to expand the visitor offering and appeal of the Lake Eildon region. Projects are categories as either:

- **Business case projects:** Large scale projects that can be delivered within a short timeframe and which are expected to result in large economic impact. Require substantial funding.
- **Tier 1 Regional Impact Projects:** Large scale projects that are expected to result in large economic impact but have potential constraints likely contributing to longer delivery timeframes. Require substantial funding.
- **Tier 2 Sub-regional Impact Projects:** Smaller scale projects that may also service community need. The impact is expected to be more localised.

Several projects relevant to settlements in Mansfield Shire Council, particularly Bonnie Doon and Gough’s Bay, are identified. These are summarised in Table 22.

TABLE 22: LAKE EILDON MASTER PLAN ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SETTLEMENT	ACTION/ RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY
Bonnie Doon	Township landscape masterplan	Tier 1 project
	Bonnie Doon Adventure Park	Tier 2 project
	Bonnie Doon Waterplay Park	Tier 2 project
	Rezoning of Bonnie Doon Hotel	Tier 2 project
Gough’s Bay	Fry Bay Nature-Based Precinct	Business case project
	Integrated Golf Resort at Mountain Bay	Business case project
	Large scale accommodation investment	Business case project
	Sewerage system investment	Business case project
	Primary lakeside visitor precinct	Tier 1 project
	Township landscape masterplan	Tier 1 project
	Mansfield to Gough’s Bay cycling trail	Tier 2 project

Source: Regional Development Victoria (2020) Activating Lake Eildon: Lake Eildon Master Plan

Investments in sewerage infrastructure are required to catalyse economic and tourism development in Gough’s Bay and Bonnie Doon, providing opportunities for further commercial development and residential expansion.

The Master Plan notes there is a lack of Commercial 1 Zone land in the town centres of village in the Lake Eildon region.

Council will advocate for the realisation of sewerage infrastructure and revise the extent of commercial zoned land in response.

7.5 Agriculture

Agriculture is a significant industry and economic output for Mansfield Shire, having contributed around \$20 million in output in 2015-16. Wool and meat are the industry's two largest sectors. The meat industry is showing positive growth trends, with both strong domestic demand for grass fed beef, combined with rising demand from overseas as diets (especially across Asia) are becoming more high protein.⁵² Mansfield Shire and the Ovens Murray Region more widely, has inherent advantage factors (availability of good rainfall, water, pastures, and fodder) to continue to offer expansion and investment opportunities for livestock grazing. In addition, it has potential for an unparalleled tourism offering, leveraging its waterways, alpine valleys, and wineries, with the growing consumer demand for agritourism experiences and differentiated products that highlight their provenance.

The Planning Strategy contains objectives to protect and enhance agricultural opportunities in the Shire, so that the local economy can continue to build on and benefit from these agriculture opportunities in future.

Trends affecting agriculture

Given the significance of agriculture to the Shire's economic development, it follows that the preservation of rural land for productive purposes should be prioritised.

There is a trend towards larger farm size and concentration of agricultural output on larger livestock businesses. Generally, large farms are found to perform at a higher financial rate compared to smaller farm businesses. Farming is becoming more diverse, in response to domestic and international consumption patterns, as well as the need for farm businesses to remain profitable and sustainable.

Modern farming is complex and uses sophisticated technology and equipment. It may involve state-of-the-art irrigation and monitoring equipment, hydroponics, robotics, and all-hours operation. At the same time, in some places more farmers are taking off-farm work and the economic value of off-farm work is increasing, meaning there is a shift from full- to part-time work. Indeed, across the Ovens Murray Region (Mansfield, Alpine, Benalla, Wangaratta, Wodonga, Indigo and Towong LGAs), over 40 percent of farmers have completed tertiary education, meaning this innovative workforce is well placed to drive future growth in the region's agriculture and food processing capabilities.⁵³

In Mansfield Shire, most lots within areas zoned for farming uses are held as part of a larger tenements with nearly 70 per cent of land held as a tenement of 100 hectares, or larger. This is consistent with findings that most agriculture in the municipality is broadacre livestock grazing. There are, however, over 2,400 lots that are less than 20 hectares in size. This is a substantial supply of small lots and landholders commonly have expectations that they will be able to construct a dwelling on a small rural lot.

Across the Shire, there are many properties in rural farming areas being occupied as rural residential, rural living or hobby farms. This conflicts with their intended purpose (in farming areas, housing is meant to be ancillary to the operation of farms). The main purpose of rural land is to be used for

⁵² Agriculture Victoria, *Ovens Murray – Invest in Victorian agriculture and food prospectus*, August 2018.

⁵³ Agriculture Victoria, *Ovens Murray – Invest in Victorian agriculture and food prospectus*, August 2018.

primary production, or small-scale non-agricultural uses that support or are in harmony with agriculture.

Housing and residential uses can threaten the viability of agricultural practices, which in turn undermines a primary drawcard for Mansfield Shire: its rural character. It is strongly recommended that there be minimal conversions of agricultural land to rural lifestyle or low-density residential developments, to avoid detracting from the Shire's agricultural productivity and rural landscape values. Residential demand can also contribute to higher land prices, restricting the capacity of farmers to expand the farm footprint (to achieve economies of scale with larger property sizes), thereby driving further intensification to remain viable.

As well as increased land prices, increased competition for rural land and unrestrained residential development in rural areas can lead to tracts of farmland becoming isolated, deterring farmers from investing in their operations in anticipation of the conversion of their land out of commercial agriculture. It also creates buffer and interface issues, where rural lifestyle residents are often unused to standard agricultural practices such as crop spraying, backburning and other smelly or noisy activities that are appropriate to farm management. This type of encroachment from non-agricultural uses poses a significant threat to the ongoing viability of farming in the Shire, especially where there are clusters of smaller lots being used for rural lifestyle (residential) purposes near working farms.

Analysis of Mansfield Shire building permit data from 2010 to 2020 showed that 15 percent of permits to construct a dwelling were issued in the Farming Zone (FZ), or a total of 140 dwellings. In terms of planning permit activity, between 2010 to 2020 there were 272 approvals for the construction of a dwelling in the Farming Zone (32.1 percent of all planning permits issued for new dwellings). Current planning controls in the Mansfield Planning Scheme allow a dwelling to be constructed on a lot that is greater than 40 hectares as-of-right in the Farming Zone, that is, without needing a planning permit (this may vary depending on potential additional zone and overlay triggers). If a lot is less than 40 hectares, then planning approval is required to use land for a dwelling and the applicant required to meet the zone control requirements.

The number of new dwellings constructed in the Farming Zone suggests that there is rural residential development occurring in the Farming Zone in Mansfield Shire and which is not directly related to the agricultural use of the land. This is a consistent issue across regional Victoria.

This type of residential development in the Farming Zone has implications for settlement and housing in Mansfield related to:

- Leakage of residential development from designated rural living areas: this reduces the viability of development in these areas and may stretch Council's infrastructure and servicing resources, notwithstanding that this housing is typically 'off-grid' in terms of water and sewer (and energy).
- Land use and associated amenity conflicts for lifestyle dwellings in the farming zone (chemical sprays, noise etc) which can impact new migrants' expectations for a benign natural landscape and undermine the operations and viability of agricultural activities.
- Long-term loss of strategically important agricultural land.
- Conflicting lifestyles and expectations of people with non-agricultural backgrounds and farming landowners.
- Land use conflict, including opposition to traditional farming practices and increased incidence of trespass and vandalism.

- Poor management of small lots (including animals and weeds) where productive use is not the primary objective of land management.
- Detriment to environmental or landscape character values caused by the proliferation of houses and associated outbuildings and earthworks.

State planning policy guidance

State policy provides clear direction for the protection of productive farmland by:

- Identifying areas of productive agricultural land, including land for primary production and intensive agriculture.
- Avoiding permanent removal of productive agricultural land from the state’s agricultural base without consideration of the economic importance of the land for the agricultural production and processing sectors.
- Protecting productive agricultural land from unplanned loss due to permanent changes in land use and protecting strategically important agricultural and primary production land from incompatible uses.
- Limiting new housing development in rural areas by:
 - Directing housing growth into existing settlements.
 - Discouraging developments of isolated small lots in the rural zones from use for dwellings or other incompatible uses.
 - Encouraging consolidation of existing isolated small lots in rural zones.
- Giving priority to the restructure of inappropriate subdivisions where they exist on productive agricultural land.

State policy also promotes the ongoing sustainability of the agricultural industry by providing support for industry diversification, adoption of innovative production practices and technologies and implementation of initiatives that increase flexibility in the face of market shifts and climate change.

Policy in the Mansfield Planning Scheme largely aligns with State policy, promoting growth in the agricultural sector and diversification of the agricultural base through the development of viticulture, horticulture, and more intensified agricultural pursuits.

Opportunities for agriculture in Mansfield Shire

Based on current trends affecting agriculture, there are several opportunities in the Shire:

- Value-adding to agriculture, to tap into agritourism opportunities associated with Mansfield Shire’s proximity to alpine valleys, Lake Eildon, and other significant waterways. This includes pick-your-own, cafes selling farm produce, farming and cooking workshops and on-farm accommodation.
- Production of high-value, gourmet and regionally branded boutique food and fibre products for high-end restaurants and markets (e.g., grass-fed beef and lamb).
- Excellent road connection to Melbourne and Sydney and close proximity to major logistics handling in Wodonga, connecting Mansfield Shire produce into a road and rail network that can reach 75 percent of Australia’s population within 24 hours.

- Leverage the local workforce’s skills and education to innovate and adapt farming practices to embrace new technology.
- Connect to and support food processing centres in Wodonga, Wangaratta, Wahgunyah, and Benalla.
- Promote Mansfield Shire as an investment destination for agriculture based on its climatically diverse farmland, strong connection to the tourism sector, availability of water and close connection to important freight routes.

The Mansfield Planning Scheme currently contains a local policy to support agricultural growth and manage rural land:

- Clause 02.03-4 – Natural Resource Management (Agriculture)
- Clause 02.03-7 – Economic Development (Agriculture)
- Clause 14.01-1L – Dwellings and Subdivisions in Rural Areas)

The policy should be strengthened and enhanced by adding or updating the objectives, as follows.

Objective 15. To protect rural lands for productive agricultural purposes.

Strategy 37. Protect and enhance the ongoing productivity and viability of agricultural lands across the Shire.

The principal role of land in Mansfield Shire’s Farming Zone is for primary production. To support the ongoing productivity and viability of farmland in the Shire, it is policy to:

- Retain and enhance opportunities for agricultural land use.
- Encourage ancillary land uses that support productive activities related to agritourism.
- Limit further fragmentation of rural land.
- Plan for Mansfield and, to a lesser extent, Mansfield Shire’s rural settlements, as great places that support the rural area and are the focus for residential use/growth.
- Manage the interface between township/settlement and rural areas.

The points above could be added to Clause 14.01-1L, further supporting the growth of the agricultural sector in Mansfield Shire. Based on the principles above, it is recommended that:

- The extent of Farming Zone (FZ) land be retained, and local policy strengthened to encourage ancillary land uses that would enable farms additional revenue streams from agritourism activities (for example).
- Support relevant actions from the Economic Development Strategy, related to the rural area.
- Prevent the creation of small lots and dwellings unrelated to agricultural activity in the FZ.
- Review the minimum land size for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling in the FZ. This will address fragmentation and encroachment issues associated with non-agricultural residential uses in farming areas.

Objective 16. Limit further fragmentation of agricultural areas.

Strategy 38. Require new dwellings to demonstrate a strong nexus with agriculture in the Farming Zone (FZ).

Strategy 39. Strengthen subdivision policies to avoid further fragmentation and small lot excisions in the Farming Zone (FZ).

There are around 4,300 lots in the Farming Zone, of which over 70 percent are under 40 hectares in size and consume around 34 percent of land in the FZ. Most smaller lots are held as part of larger tenements, with nearly 70 percent of land held as part of a tenement of 100 hectares or larger. The size of most properties in the FZ is consistent with the analysis of agriculture in the Shire, which found most activity is broadacre livestock grazing.

There are over 2,400 lots that are less than 20 hectares in size. This is a substantial supply of small lots and landholders commonly have expectations that they will be able to construct a dwelling on a small rural lot. Unfettered dwelling development in rural areas has several significant consequences, including:

- An impermanence syndrome for commercial agriculture:
 - Competition for rural land increases.
 - Land prices increase.
 - Tracts of farmland become isolated.
 - Farmers are deterred from investing in their operations as they anticipate the conversion of their land out of commercial agriculture.
- Rural land use conflict as new migrants in an agricultural landscape have an expectation of a benign rural environment.
- Poor development and take up of land in zoned rural living estates.

In the Mansfield Planning Scheme, the Farming Zone currently manages dwelling construction and subdivision in the following way:

- Minimum subdivision area: 40 hectares.
- Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling: 40 hectares.

Clause 14.01-1L – Dwellings and subdivisions in rural areas contains the following strategies:

Discourage dwellings and subdivision (including house lot excisions) unless:

- *It is required to support the agricultural use of the land.*
- *Off-site impacts and land use conflicts can be minimised, and it will not result in reduced agricultural capability of the land or long-term viability of rural production in the area.*
- *It will result in no net loss of vegetation.*
- *Any development is sited, designed, and constructed to mitigate bushfire risks.*

- The provision of necessary infrastructure for the dwelling or lot created (such as access to potable water supply, effluent disposal, and stormwater drainage systems) is consistent with the capability of the land.

Plan for the lot created for an existing dwelling to be the smallest practicable lot based on the characteristics of the site including necessary setbacks from the road frontage, dams, topography, and vegetation.

Site and design development to not adversely impact existing rural activities conducted on site and on adjoining land.

Avoid development (including subdivision) that is likely to lead to a concentration of small lots or dwellings and change the use and development of an area or result in a loss of its rural character, unless the clustering of dwellings will not limit the productive use and development of adjacent agricultural land.

The current policy guidelines which relate to small lot excisions are to:

Consider as relevant:

- *Limiting the size of a lot created for an existing dwelling as part of a dwelling excision to a maximum of 2 hectares, provided:*
 - *the dwelling for which a lot is to be created existed on the date of gazettal of the new format Mansfield Planning Scheme (3 May 2003).*
 - *the dwelling has been occupied for a continuous period of two years immediately prior to the subdivision, and*
 - *the dwelling is in a habitable condition.*

Using an agreement under Section 173 of the Act to:

- *Ensure the dwelling is used to support the agricultural use of the land.*
- *Minimise land use conflict by affirming the understanding that the amenity of the dwelling may be subject to off-site impacts of adjoining or nearby agricultural activities, such as noise, dust, and odour.*
- *Prevent future subdivision and dwelling excision.*

Small lot excisions and residential development on the already numerous small lots across the Farming Zone are likely to exacerbate issues of non-agricultural residential encroachment and interface (land use conflict) concerns, highlighted earlier in this section. It is recommended that the Mansfield Shire Planning Scheme be updated to discourage this practice.

To expand and strengthen policies protecting agriculture, Clause 14.01-1L should be strengthened to address agricultural production and strengthen the direction regarding non-agricultural dwellings and small lot excision. The policy could include additional requirements and direction as set out below.

Land use and development in the Rural Zones

Strategic Directions at 02.03-4 and 02.03-7:

- *Explaining the value of agriculture to Mansfield Shire and the region and threats to the ongoing viability and productivity of agriculture in the municipality (as set out above).*

Objectives at Clause 14.01-1L:

- *To protect agriculture and agricultural land from inappropriate encroachment by urban and non-production based rural land use and settlement.*
- *To limit the further fragmentation of rural land by subdivision, including to strongly discourage the creation of small lots on farming properties.*
- *To ensure that lots resulting from subdivision are of a sufficient size to benefit agricultural production.*
- *To encourage the consolidation of rural lots for more efficient agricultural production.*
- *To limit the cumulative impact of house lot excisions, including serial small lot subdivisions.*
- *To ensure that house lot excisions are undertaken for legitimate reasons, related to agriculture. That is, to discourage dwellings on small lots that do not support and compromise rural production activities and operations.*
- *To ensure that inappropriate small rural lot development does not occur in areas of environmental significance and sensitivity.*
- *To discourage the use and development of agricultural land that would be incompatible with its sustainable use for ongoing agricultural production.*
- *To provide a consistent basis for considering planning permit applications for the subdivision of rural land.*

The following strategies should be added to clause 14.01-1L to guide applications to subdivide, use or develop land in the Farming Zone, Rural Conservation Zone or Rural Activity Zone:

Subdivision:

- Subdivision is strongly discouraged, unless it can be demonstrated that it will facilitate and provide greater flexibility for continued agricultural production.
- Encourage the consolidation of farming operations which support agricultural viability and environmental sustainability.
- Boundary realignment should not create additional subdivision potential or create a situation whereby the boundary places a dwelling on a smaller farming allotment, thereby establishing a vacant allotment which would allow an additional dwelling.
- Discourage subdivision within proclaimed water supply catchment areas to protect water quantity and quality.
- The area of land remaining after a small lot is created should comply with the minimum lot size specified in the relevant zone. An agreement under Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 should be entered into to restrict the ability to use the small lot provision again in respect of the affected land.
- House lot excision that is likely to lead to such concentration of lots as to change the general use or development of the area where this is not consistent with the purpose of the zone should not be permitted.
- Discourage creation of irregular shaped lots which do not support efficient agricultural practices.

- Small rural lots must be located to minimise impact on significant environmental features such as remnant vegetation, wetlands, coastal reserves, and waterways and should be strongly discouraged in domestic water supply catchment areas.

Dwellings:

- The use and development of new dwellings in the Farming Zone, Rural Activity Zone and Rural Conservation Zone, is strongly discouraged unless it can be demonstrated that the dwelling is required for carrying out an economically viable and sustainable rural activity on the land and where the sustainability of the agricultural resource is not threatened by the use of the land for housing.

Non-agricultural land uses:

- Encourage new opportunities for agritourism enterprises that are compatible with agriculture/primary production, environmental and landscape characteristics of the area.
- Agritourism enterprises should be located in areas with appropriate infrastructure provision such as roads, water, electricity, and communications.

Other considerations:

- Ensure that use or development in rural areas, including advertising signage, is compatible with and has an association with surrounding agricultural activity.
- Discourage use and development adjacent to main roads in rural areas that is unrelated to agriculture or agritourism.
- Strongly discourage commercial, industrial, and other land uses that do not demonstrate a direct link with ongoing and sustainable agricultural land use or agritourism enterprises. Such uses should be directed into Mansfield Township's commercial and industrial zones.

The following application requirements should apply for applications for new dwellings or subdivisions in the rural zones. Under current state government direction these can no longer be included in the PPF, so council will need to prepare separate application guidance for applicants. Application requirements under such a document should include:

- A site analysis, outlining notable features of the site and surrounding area including topography, orientation, slope, vegetation, existing buildings and works, roads (made and unmade), utility services, easements, soil type and other relevant features.
- A report that:
 - Addresses this policy and the decision guidelines in the Farming Zone.
 - Substantiates that the dwelling is required to support the agricultural use of the land.
 - Sets out evidence via a land capability assessment that the land is capable of containing appropriate wastewater treatment system in accordance with relevant legislation, policies, and codes of practice.
 - Full specifications of the means of potable water supply to the dwelling.
 - Details of fire prevention and management measures available to the dwelling.
- An environmental assessment, detailing:

- Full specifications of the proposed means of potable water supply, domestic and stock water supply, effluent disposal, and stormwater drainage.
- The possible fire risk faced by the proposal and details of the fire prevention and management measures to be employed.
- The impacts of the proposal on the environment including no net loss of vegetation.
- A proposed plan of subdivision drawn to scale and showing proposed boundaries, lot sizes and dimensions.
- A detailed set of plans, drawn to scale, showing site layout, floor plans, elevations, building materials, proposed access arrangements, any significant vegetation.

7.6 Employment lands implementation summary

TABLE 23: EMPLOYMENT LANDS IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LAND			
To consolidate commercial and industrial activity	Direct future employment uses in accordance with the established settlement hierarchy to support economic productivity	Update Clause 11.01-1L to include settlement hierarchy directions.	Short Term (0-5 years)
To ensure there is sufficient land to support future needs	Assess ongoing need for commercial and industrial land	Monitor take-up of new industrial and mixed-use land to assess need for additional land release.	Ongoing
	Assess suitability of rezoning land no longer suitable for employment purposes	Undertake a preliminary risk assessment to determine suitability of rezoning Sawmill site for residential uses.	Medium term (5-10 years)
VISITOR ECONOMY			
To strengthen and diversify the visitor economy	Encourage development of ancillary and off-season attractions to enhance the Shire's tourism offer	Update Clause 17.04-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)

	Support the implementation of the Activating Lake Eildon: Lake Eildon Master Plan	Advocate to relevant agencies for implementation of Lake Eildon Master Plan.	Short Term (0-5 years)
AGRICULTURE			
To protect rural lands for productive agricultural purposes	Protect and enhance the ongoing productivity and viability of agricultural lands across the Shire.	Update Clause 14.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)
To limit further fragmentation of agricultural areas.	Require new dwellings to demonstrate a strong nexus with agriculture in the Farming Zone (FZ).	Update Clause 14.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Strengthen subdivision policies to avoid further fragmentation and small lot excisions in the Farming Zone (FZ).	Update Clause 14.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)



08 Environment and Landscape

MANSFIELD PLANNING STRATEGY | APRIL 2022

8. Environment and landscape

This section outlines Mansfield Shire’s environmental and landscape values and natural hazards. It sets out objectives and strategies to protect and enhance those features and principles to manage natural hazards that would be appropriate to include in the Mansfield Planning Scheme.

8.1 The context for environmental and landscape features in Mansfield Shire

Environmental features and significant landscapes

A large portion (60 percent) of Mansfield Shire is public land, in places identified as State and National Parks, State Forests and Nature Reserves.⁵⁴ The Shire has a diverse environment due to its topographic variation and microclimates.

Mansfield Shire sits within a stunning landscape setting, where many townships within the Central Victorian Uplands are green and gently undulating. Merton, Woodfield, and Bonnie Doon are surrounded by the Puzzle Range to the south-west and the Strathbogie Range to the north. Sixty percent of the Shire is public land, in places identified as State and National Parks, State Forests and Nature Reserves.

Mansfield is located in a wide valley, surrounded by mountain ranges. There are four major valleys in the Shire: Upper Goulburn, Howqua, Jamieson and Upper Delatite.⁵⁵ The Strathbogie Ranges and The Paps frame the western part of the Shire, while to the north-west is Mount Samaria and the Tolmie Plateau (north). In the east of the municipality is the Great Dividing Range, with Mounts Buller, Stirling, and Timbertop (Warrambat) and the low hills of the Blue Range in the south. These mountains give rise to the Broken, Howqua, Jamieson, Goulburn, Delatite and Big Rivers.⁵⁶

The municipality is known for its iconic landscapes and 95 percent of the LGA is also within a Special Water Supply Catchment, with important environmental values.⁵⁷ Major water storages in the LGA are Lake Eildon (fed by the Delatite, Howqua, Jamieson, Goulburn, and Big Rivers) and Lake Nillahcootie (fed by the Broken River). These landscape features form the basis of iconic scenery that is of environmental and cultural significance to residents in Mansfield, as well as the broader Victorian community.

⁵⁴ Mansfield Shire Council, *Environment Strategy 2019-2023*. Endorsed 2019.

⁵⁵ Mansfield Shire Council, *Mansfield Planning Scheme* (Clause 21.01 Municipal Profile).

⁵⁶ Mansfield Historical Society, *History of Mansfield*, Accessed June 2020 from URL: http://www.mansfieldhistoricalsociety.com.au/?page_id=15.

⁵⁷ Special Water Supply Catchment Areas are declared under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act, Vic., 1994*. These areas require careful planning and land use management, recognising the importance of a catchment for water supply purposes. Further information is available from URL: <http://vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/landuse-water-supply-catchments>.

Mountain Ranges

Mansfield sits within the Great Dividing Range landform and views east are to the Glenroy Hills, Mount Buller, Mount Stirling, Mount Terrible and Timbertop. Mount Buller and Mount Stirling sit in the Alpine National Park. Further north, the Wombat Range sits on the LGA boundary. Around Mairdample, the Bald Hills, and Mount Samaria frame views north. Panoramic views to Lake Eildon, Mansfield, surrounding farmland and Mounts Buller, Stirling, Terrible and Timbertop can be viewed from the Paps Lookout, at 700m elevation.

In the southern part of the LGA, Mount Matlock is a peak north of Jericho within the Victorian Alps bioregion. Nearby, several sites have local heritage significance for their conservation values and are identified under the Heritage Overlay in the Mansfield Planning Scheme.

The landform of the Great Dividing Range and nearby dissected plateaux such as the Strathbogie Range lends several iconic landscape features to the Mansfield LGA. Near Macs Cove, Sheeppark Flat and Tobacco Flat are part of the Highlands bioregion and surround the Howqua River, where several campgrounds highlight the popularity of this wilderness. This location includes the site of Frys Bridge and several buildings and sites where gold mining occurred in the 1860s.



View east along Mount Buller Road, from the Central Victorian Uplands to the Highlands and Victorian Alps landforms.



Remnant River Red Gums on private property provide natural landmarks in short- and medium-range views throughout the Uplands.



Iconic views across Lake Eildon, from Goughs Bay.



Farmland with long-ranging views to well-vegetated hills, between Jamieson and Mansfield.

Waterways

Six major waterways flow through the region: The Broken River, Delatite River, Howqua River, Goulburn River, Big River and Jamieson River. All of these rivers are catchments for the water storages at Eildon and Nillahcootie and ultimately contribute to the flow and health of the Murray Darling system. These lakes and rivers have significant environmental and cultural value and are significant to the Shire.

Lake Eildon is Victoria's largest inland water storage, and it has many values both for the community and as part of the Upper Goulbourn Water Supply Catchment. The Lake's primary role is to supply water for irrigation purposes and bulk water for the provision of potable water to rural towns, as well as to Goulburn-Murray Water. The Lake is a popular tourist destination, attracting approximately 900,000 visitors per annum.⁵⁸ The main rivers systems supply Lake Eildon are: Delatite River, Jamieson River, Taponga River, Goulburn River, Big River, Howqua River, Jerusalem Creek and Brankeet Creek. The reservoir at Lake Eildon was constructed in 1956, to supply irrigation water for mixed farms downstream in the Goulburn Valley, to mitigate flooding and for hydro-electric power generation.⁵⁹ Lake Eildon is highly valued by the local and visitor communities for its water recreation opportunities and as a camping, caravanning and holiday home location due to its picturesque scenery and bushland surrounds. The main tourism towns on Lake Eildon within Mansfield Shire are Bonnie Doon, Goughs Bay, Howqua, and Macs Cove. There are many campsites dotted around the Lake's vast environs.



Picnic spot near Lake Eildon.



Gently rolling plains south of Mansfield.

Howqua River is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register owing to its cultural significance as a spectacular landscape and based on its use for goldmining. Like other rivers across the Shire, the site is also culturally significant to the Taungurung who have a continuous connection to Mansfield's landscapes for more than 60,000 years. Several walking tracks that reach the river are also identified as having local heritage significance and protected by the Heritage Overlay planning control.

For much of its length the Howqua River valley is deep and narrow. However, in a few areas it has widened slightly, and a narrow floodplain has developed, such as at Sheepyard Flat, Frys Hut and in the

⁵⁸ Urban Enterprise (2020), Mansfield Shire Economic development Strategy 2020-2025

⁵⁹ Soil Conservation Authority and Land Conservation Council, *Report on a proposed land use determination for part of the Upper Goulburn Water Supply Catchment: Lake Eildon and environs*, Available from URL: [http://vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/gbbreg.nsf/pages/pwsc_docs/\\$FILE/lake_eildon3.pdf](http://vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/gbbreg.nsf/pages/pwsc_docs/$FILE/lake_eildon3.pdf).

lower section as the river approaches Lake Eildon. The river valley is essentially forested. Along its mid-section, the south side of the corridor is flanked by spectacular rocky scarps, including The Bluff. The mountains flanking the valley are usually snow-covered in winter.⁶⁰ In addition to its popularity for recreation (camping, 4WD touring, fishing, bushwalking, and canoeing), the Howqua River valley is a significant biodiversity corridor, containing rich and diverse macroinvertebrates (in the river waters), significant floral communities and the endangered spotted tree frog. Devonian fish fossil beds are also found along the corridor and riverbed.

The **Goulburn River** stretches from Lake Eildon to the Murray River near Echuca. The river corridor has significant in-stream and riparian values, and it has ideal conditions for trout making it a popular destination for fishing. The river has high scenic value, particularly where remnant River Red Gums are present, providing a visual contrast to the surrounding landscape. Riparian vegetation along the river provides important habitat for the squirrel glider, brush-tailed phascogale, and barking owl—all rare species in Victoria.⁶¹ From Lake Eildon to Toolamba, there are several areas of public land through which the Goulburn River can be accessed, where it flows across a broad floodplain.

Big River forms the western boundary of the LGA and is also identified on the Victorian Heritage Database. The character of the river valley changes markedly along its course. In its upper section, above Big Bend, it tends to be open and small alluvial flats adjoin the river. Similar conditions occur below Enoch Point, but the middle reaches flow through a magnificent V-shaped valley. This section of the river can be viewed from the Big River 4WD track that runs south from Enoch Point, following a probable access route developed during the gold-mining era. In places, the track is only one vehicle wide, and it clings to the very steep eastern side of the valley. Many popular camping and picnicking areas are located in the more open sections. Recreational activities are enhanced by the scenic qualities and the river winds between gravel shoals and falls over rock outcrops, separated by long quiet pools.

Landscape features across Mansfield Shire

Figure 19 illustrates the rich variety of environmental and landscape features across Mansfield Shire.

⁶⁰ Land Conservation Council, *Rivers and Streams Special Investigation: Final Recommendations Report*, June 1991. Available online from URL: <http://www.veac.vic.gov.au/documents/376-RiversandStreamsSpecialInvestigationReport.pdf>.

⁶¹ Land Conservation Council, *Rivers and Streams Special Investigation: Final Recommendations Report*, June 1991.

FIGURE 19: ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES IN MANSFIELD SHIRE



Legend

- Mansfield Shire boundary
- Public land
- Waterway
- Wetland
- Areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity

Planning overlays

- Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)
- Heritage Overlay (HO)

Bioregion

- Central Victorian Uplands
- Highlands - Northern Fall
- Highlands - Southern Fall
- Victorian Alps

Features of interest

- camp ground
- historic site
- lookout
- tourist attraction
- mountain

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, based on the various datasets.

Biodiversity

The current state of biodiversity is good in terms of extent, although fragmented and disconnected. Many large, old trees and native pastures occur on private land, while public land supports large forest blocks.

Common vegetation types are herb- rich forest Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC), which is classified as ‘least concern’ or ‘depleted’ and Valley Grassy Forests which are considered vulnerable to extinction.

The Shire has many flora and fauna species, some of which are listed as critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable under *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Mansfield Shire Council, 2013). This includes pockets of the vulnerable Striped Legless Lizard found at Mt Battery and Dry Creek and the critically endangered Leadbeater’s possum.⁶²

Table 24 lists those species considered either critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable in the Shire, identified in the *Mansfield Shire Environment Strategy* (2019).

TABLE 24: SUMMARY OF ENDANGERED AND VULNERABLE SPECIES

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	ENDANGERED	VULNERABLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Synemon plana</i> – Golden Sun Moth - <i>Gymnobelideus leadbeateri</i> – Leadbeater’s possum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Anthochaera phrygia</i> – Regent Honeyeater - <i>Burramys parvus</i> – Mountain Pygmy-Possum - <i>Dasyurus maculatus</i> – Spot-tailed Quoll - <i>Galaxias fuscus</i> – Barred Galaxias - <i>Lathamus discolor</i> - Swift Parrot - <i>Litoria raniformis</i> – Growling Grass Frog - <i>Litoria spenceri</i> – Spotted Tree Frog - <i>Macquaria australasica</i> – Macquarie Perch - <i>Pseudomys fumeus</i> – Smoky Mouse - <i>Maccullochella macquariensis</i> – Bluenose Cod (Trout Cod). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Delma impar</i> – Striped legless lizard - <i>Litoria verreauxii alpine</i> – Alpine tree frog - <i>Maccullochella peelii</i> – Murray cod.

⁶² A detailed summary of endangered and vulnerable species is included in the *Environment Strategy* (2019).

Source: Mansfield Shire Council, *Environment Strategy*, 2019. Note: More information can be found by visiting *the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas*.

There are several weeds and pest animals that are of particular concern to the Mansfield Shire Council. These include:

TABLE 25: WEED AND PEST SPECIES THREATENING LOCAL BIODIVERSITY

REGIONALLY CONTROLLED WEEDS	WEEDS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	ESTABLISHED PEST ANIMALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ulex europaeus</i> – Gorse - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> (agg.) – Blackberry - <i>Genista monspessulana</i> - Cape Broom - <i>Cystisus scoparius</i> – English Broom - <i>Hypericum perforatum</i> – St John’s Wort - <i>Echium plataginuem</i> – Paterson’s curse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Nassella neesiana</i> – Chilean needle grass. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i> – Rabbits - <i>Lepus sp.</i> – Hares - <i>Vulpes</i> – Foxes - Feral deer - <i>Canis familiaris</i> – Wild dogs - <i>Cyprinus caprio</i> – European Carp.

Source: Mansfield Shire Council, *Environment Strategy*, 2019.

Council is responsible for managing weeds on Council owned land and roadsides and continuously work with others to ensure efforts are maximised.

Across the LGA, several planning controls are in place to recognise and protect environmentally significant vegetation features. In Victoria, there are three planning controls which enable Council to protect vegetation, ecological features, or significant landscape qualities.

8.2 The context for natural hazards and environmental management

The effects of climate change are already impacting Mansfield Shire. In the coming decades, increased temperatures, less predictable rainfall, and longer fire seasons are predicted. Water resources will be increasingly stretched, meaning more restrictions and pressure on vegetation. Economic and population growth will also put added pressure on the environment. Growth requires more resources, produces more waste, and uses more land.⁶³

Climate change

The challenges we face today threaten the health of our natural environment and the health of our people and liveability of our communities. Climate change has already started to impact the Hume

⁶³ Mansfield Shire Council, *Mansfield Shire Environment Strategy 2019-2023*, Endorsed 2019.

region where the Mansfield Shire is located. The climate has already become warmer and drier, and forecasts indicate that:

- Temperatures will continue to rise year round
- Fewer frosts will occur
- More frequent and more intense downpours
- More hot days and warm spells
- Less rainfall in autumn, winter, and spring
- Harsher fire weather and longer fire seasons.⁶⁴

Global surface air temperatures have risen by around 1° C over the last 100 years due to human activity. Atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide (a heat trapping greenhouse gas) are more than 40 percent higher now, compared to before the industrial revolution.

The changing climate has the potential to impact significantly on primary production, infrastructure, tourism, health and community and the environment. This may include:

- Changed distribution of pests and diseases
- Increased risk of bush fires
- Changed pasture growth
- Reduced water security
- Increased flood risk
- Increased maintenance costs
- Reduced snow depths and shorter seasons
- Risks to tourists in unfamiliar conditions
- Increased stress on health and emergency services
- Amplification of existing threats to biodiversity
- Changed habitats
- Contraction of alpine ecosystems

Bushfire

Much of the freehold land in the Shire surrounds areas of native bush and can incorporate large tracts of privately owned remnant vegetation. As a result, a large proportion of the municipality is subject to possible bush fires, which is recognised in the application of the Bushfire Management Overlay and identification as being a Bushfire Prone Area.

⁶⁴ Mansfield Shire Council, *Mansfield Shire Environment Strategy 2019-2023*, Endorsed 2019.

Flooding

Mansfield Shire sits in the upper Goulburn Broken catchment, which collects rainfall from Woods Point to Mount Skene and the western end of the Alpine National Park.

Mansfield Shire can experience both riverine and flash flooding. Riverine flooding typically occurs when the Goulburn or Jamieson Rivers (or both) break their banks and overflow after heavy or prolonged rainfall in the steep catchments of the surrounding state forests and Alpine National Park. Flash flooding can occur at any time of year during and after heavy rain or thunderstorms. The hilly terrain makes flash flooding more likely as water can gain both speed and power as it flows downhill. Flash flooding in September 2010 caused the largest recorded flood in the Jamieson area with 27 properties and the Jamieson caravan park flooded. This flood peaked soon after midnight, dropping away early the following morning.⁶⁵

Fords Creek flows through the township of Mansfield and is the primary source of flooding on the township. In 2014, the Goulburn Broken CMA prepared the Mansfield 1% AEP Flood Mapping Project identified 100-year ARI flood levels and recommended that:

- The 1% AEP (100-year ARI) flood levels determined from this flood study where (Figure 6-1) are used to set appropriate floor heights for buildings and extensions proposed in the study area.
- The Municipal Flood Emergency Plan (MFEP) be updated by Mansfield Shire to reflect the outcomes of the flood study.
- Amend planning zones and overlays be amended to reflect the study findings.⁶⁶

Planning Scheme Amendment C15, in 2016, amended the extent of the Urban Floodway Zone and applied the Floodway Overlay and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay to parts of the municipality prone to flooding or inundation. The planning overlays applied under Planning Scheme Amendment C15 cover flood extents modelled by the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority in the 2014 study.

Land management

The *Mansfield Shire Environment Strategy (2019-2023)* identifies that Mansfield Shire's natural landscapes and biodiversity are under pressure from population growth, subdivision, and climate change. Noxious weeds and animal species (see Table 25) and native vegetation clearing risk reducing the significance of biodiversity values in the Shire. The quality of private land management and land along roadsides also varies, where fuel reduction activities and knowledge about health soil management is sometimes limited.

8.3 Landscape features

A landscape area is defined by the unique interplay between several elements that make up how a place looks and feels. This is fundamental to the place-based

⁶⁵ Victoria SES, *Mansfield Shire Council Flood History*, Available from URL: <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/get-ready/your-local-flood-information/mansfield-shire-council>.

⁶⁶ GBCMA (2014) Mansfield 1% AEP Flood Mapping Project.

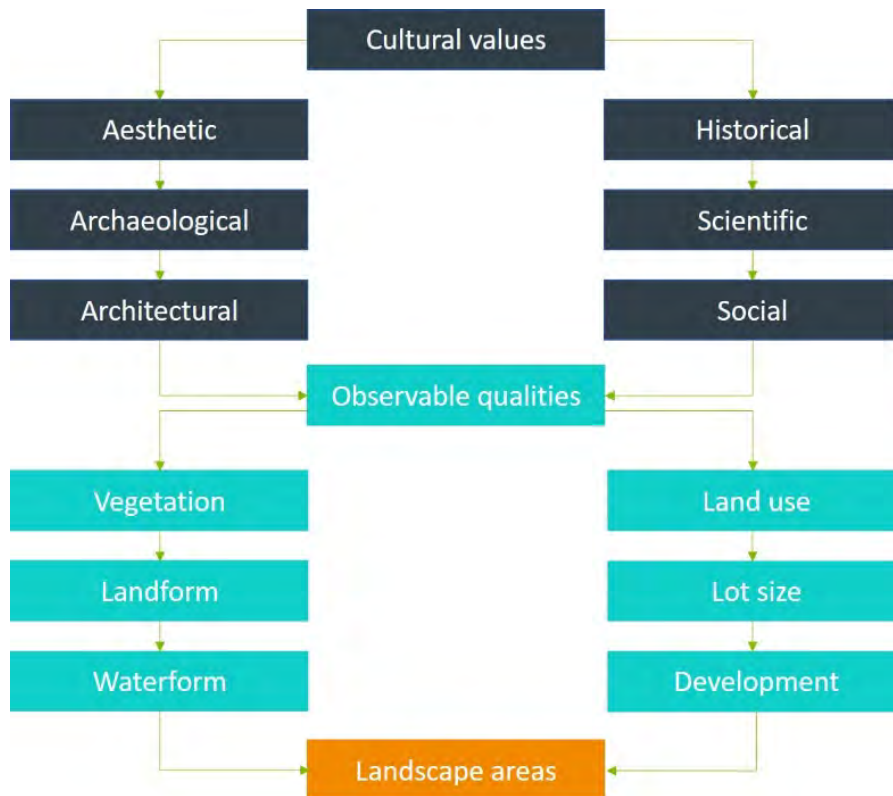
concept of planning: identifying a place based on its look and feel and preparing policies that support and enhance that sense of place.

Understanding landscape character

Defining ‘landscape areas’ is a technique used to specify the look and feel of different places, based on composite visual features, both natural and resulting from development/subdivision patterns. The identification of landscape areas in Mansfield Shire will enable Council and the community to articulate what is special about different rural places and may include identifying some parts of the rural area where there is room for change. Significant landscape areas are protected using the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) in the Mansfield Planning Scheme.

The landscape area assessment approach requires establishing how the underlying landform, geomorphology, vegetation and waterform affects the way a landscape looks and feels. This, combined with a review of settlement patterns (land use, development, lot sizes), typically forms the basis of landscape areas, as shown in Figure 20.

FIGURE 20: DEFINING AND CHARACTERISING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2021, based on various sources.

Some places are strongly defined by specific land uses that guarantee and sustain biological diversity. Others (for example) embody an exceptional spiritual relationship of people with nature and are associated with the minds of the communities with powerful beliefs and artistic and traditional

customs.⁶⁷ The cultural values of landscapes may be related to their aesthetic, archaeological, historical, scientific, social, or architectural values, any, or all of which could co-exist in the one place. These values may be significant to communities at local, state, national or world (universal) levels.⁶⁸

Bioregions: A basis for identifying regional landscape areas

Australian bioregions capture the patterns of ecological characteristics in the landscape and underlying environmental features and patterns of use of the land, providing a natural framework to recognise and respond to biodiversity values. Bioregions are relatively large land areas characterised by broad, landscape-scale natural features and environmental processes that influence the functions of entire ecosystems. They capture the large-scale geophysical patterns across Australia. These patterns in the landscape are linked to fauna and flora assemblages and processes at the ecosystem scale, thus providing a useful means for simplifying and reporting on more complex patterns of biodiversity.⁶⁹

Generally, this dataset is used to understand and plan for biodiversity conservation across a broad region. However, it also provides very useful information that underpins how a place looks and feels, as a starting point for the landscape area assessment.

Landform and biodiversity in the Mansfield LGA are highly varied. More than 60 percent of the LGA is designated Crown Land and a large part of the Shire falls within State or National Parks and State Forests (Lake Eildon and the Alpine National Parks, Mount Samara State Park, and the Upper Goulburn State Forest).

Across Australia, there are 89 large geographically distinct bioregions based on common climate, geology, landform, native vegetation, and fauna. These are classified under the national 'IBRA' system (Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia).⁷⁰ In Mansfield Shire, there are four subregions under the IBRA7 classification:

- **Central Victorian Uplands:** Around the northern and western parts of the LGA, covering Bonnie Doon, Mansfield, Lake Eildon, Goughs Bay, Delatite and Macs Cove.
- **Highlands – Northern Fall:** Around Strathbogie north of Bonnie Doon, as well as east and south of Mansfield, Jamieson extending south to Gaffneys Creek and north from Howqua Hills to Mirimbah.
- **Highlands – Southern Fall:** Small area on the eastern boundary of the LGA towards Licola.
- **Victorian Alps:** The foothills of Mount Bulla around Howitt Plains, Toombon and Matlock.

⁶⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

⁶⁸ Heritage Council of Victoria, *Landscape Assessment Guidelines*, 2016. See also: Australia ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*, Australia ICOMOS, Canberra, (2013 ed.).

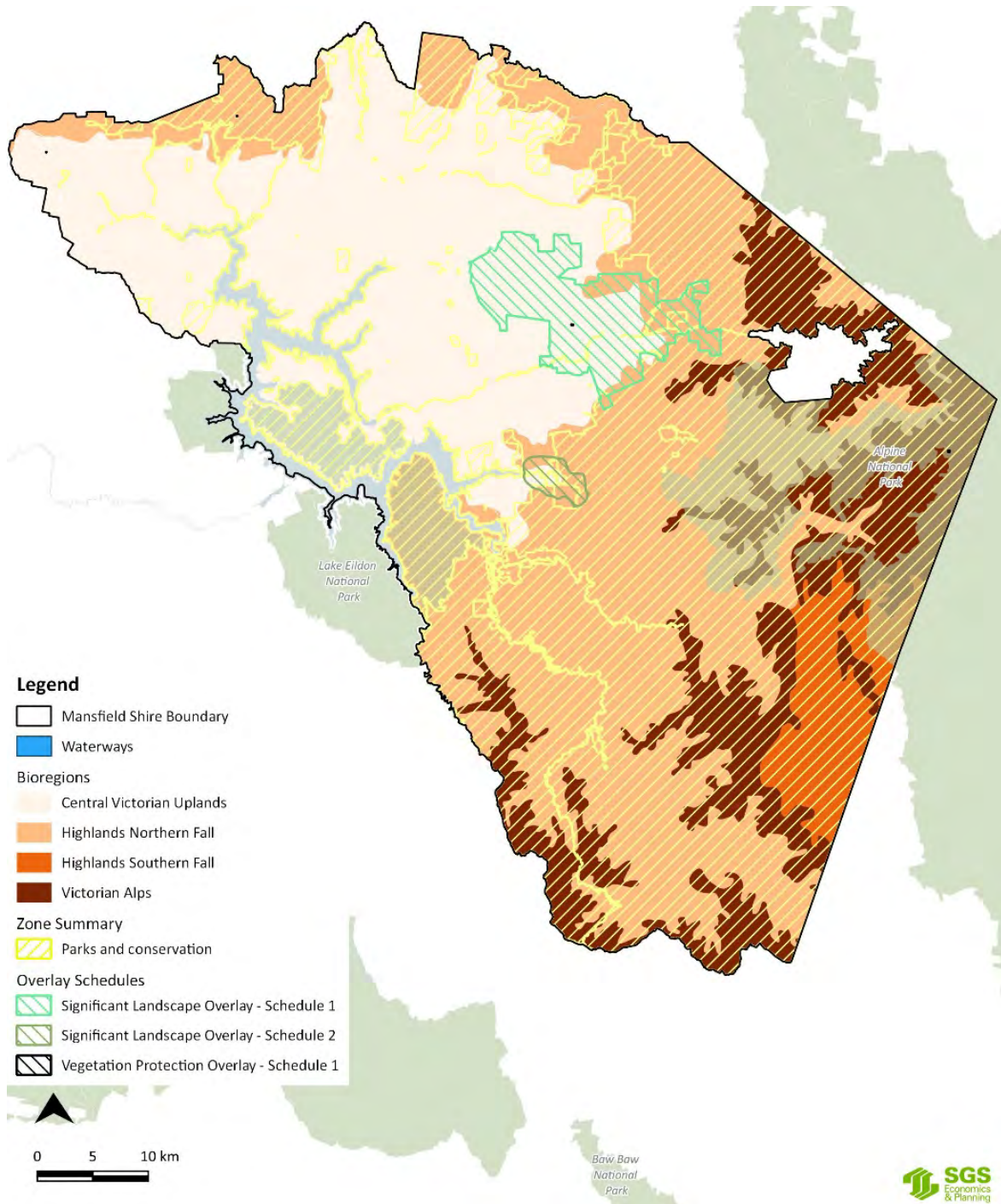
⁶⁹ NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2016, *Bioregions Explained*, Available from URL: <<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/bioregions/BioregionsExplained.htm>>.

⁷⁰ The Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) is a framework for identifying land for conservation. It is a spatial mapping and information tool for vegetation communities and ecosystems. Across Australia, there are 89 large geographically distinct bioregions based on common climate, geology, landform, native vegetation and species information. Further information is available on the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment website: <https://www.environment.gov.au/land/nrs/science/ibra>.

The landform and biodiversity in Mansfield are protected and managed using a range of approaches at the Federal and State level, including the *Environment Protection Act (1970)*, the *Planning and Environment Act (1987)* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)*.⁷¹ Most townships and farming areas are within the Central Victorian Uplands bioregion in the Mansfield Shire, while smaller settlements (for example Jamieson, Merrijig, Mirimbah) in the foothills of the Alps are within the Highlands—Northern Fall bioregion.

⁷¹ For further information about the policies and legislation that cover environmental protection and management, refer to the *Mansfield Environment Strategy, 2019*, prepared by RMCG.

FIGURE 21: BIOREGIONS IN MANSFIELD SHIRE



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, based on various DELWP datasets, 2020.

8.4 Strategic directions regarding environment and landscape

The following strategic directions underpin the policy objectives and recommendations below:

- Continue to maintain, protect, and enhance Mansfield Shire’s biodiversity, environmental and landscape values.
- Ensure that new development and land uses do not undermine the significance (environmental, biodiversity, cultural) of Mansfield Shire’s environments and landscapes.
- Mitigate the effects of climate change and natural hazards.
- Adapt land use and development practices to minimise property damage and loss of life arising from natural hazards and climate change.
- Enhance land management practices to manage the proliferation of invasive plant and animal species.

8.5 Approach to managing environment and landscape and natural hazards

Objective 17. To protect and enhance significant landscapes in Mansfield Shire for their cultural, environmental, and historic values.

Strategy 40. Update local policy to strengthen protection for identified features of significance across Mansfield Shire.

Strategy 41. Review the extent of application of SLO1 and SLO2 to ensure that the extent of overlay is sufficient to achieve the objectives of the overlay and cover all areas of value.

Investigate application of an SLO similar to the Murrindindi SLO2 to comparable landscapes around the portion of the surrounds of Lake Eildon within Mansfield. Current planning controls for significant landscapes

The **Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO1): Alpine Approach Significant Landscape Area**, currently applies to land along the Mount Buller Tourist Road, from the eastern extent of Mansfield to Sawmill Settlement and across areas zoned for farming (FZ) north and south of the Tourist Road. The policy objectives of the SLO1 (Alpine Approach Significant Landscape Area) are to:

- *Identify and protect the visual values of the landscape of state significance on the approaches to mountains and ranges, including Mount Buller, Mount Stirling, Mount Timbertop, and other significant mountains.*
- *Protect short and long-distance views of Mount Buller from the Mt Buller Road, other approach roads and public viewpoints.*
- *Avoid the visual impact of buildings and works in the landscape.*
- *Minimise the visual impact of buildings and works by requiring setbacks from prominent visual areas, ridgelines and adjoining and nearby private land.*

The SLO1 applies to planning permit applications seeking to:

- Construct a building or carry out works, including the following exemptions:

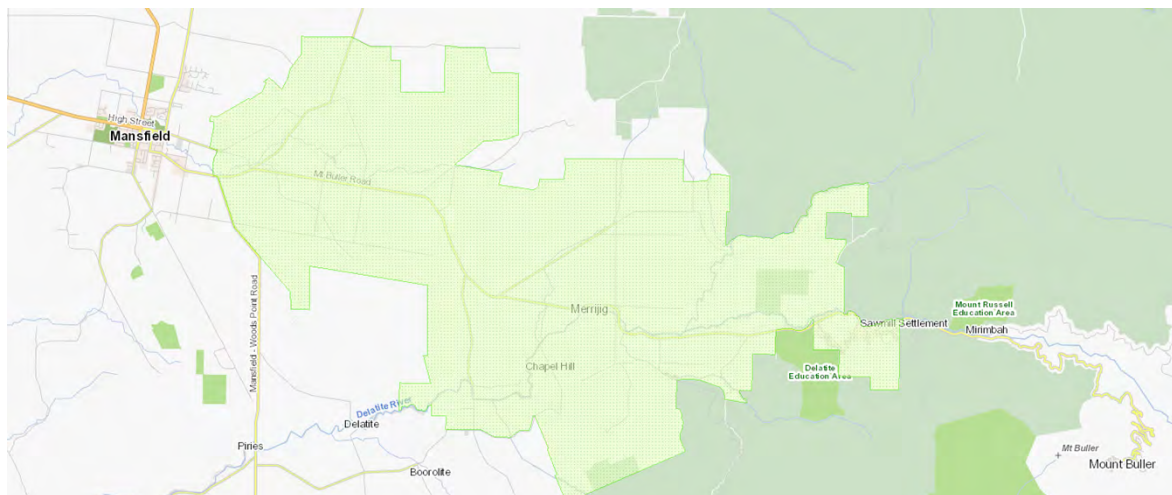
- Any agricultural development or activity, including cultivation, dam, and fencing.
- Alterations or additions to an existing dwelling or outbuilding, provided the floor area is not greater than 50 percent of the existing floor area and there is no increase in building height.
- A swimming pool.
- Extensions or alterations to existing caravans, annexes or onsite cabins used in conjunction with an existing 'caravan park'.
- Any development or works in accordance with any approved management plan adopted by the responsible authority or the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.
- Removal, destruction or lopping of any dead or exotic vegetation.
- Removal of native vegetation if that vegetation is seedlings or regrowth less than 10 years old and if the land is being re-established or maintained for cultivation or pasture.

Applicants must demonstrate:

- *The impact of the proposed buildings and works on the landscape including effect on landscape within and outside the land (due to siting, design, size and colour and texture of external construction materials), flora and fauna, landform, heritage values and views to the land from roads, other public viewpoints, and private land.*
- *The impact of buildings and works on views to the land from any road, public viewpoints, and private land.*
- *Effluent disposal systems and measures to improve water quality.*

The SLO1 does not define the topography at which significant visual impacts should be avoided, key viewpoints referenced, or contain specific guidance regarding preferred design techniques to achieve its policy objectives. Some additional guidance is provided in local policy at Clause 22.02, set out below.

FIGURE 22: EXISTING SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY (SLO1) EXTENT



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, based on the Mansfield Planning Scheme, 2021.

It is important that the extent of the existing overlays covers sufficient area to achieve the intent of the overlay, including all areas in which buildings and works need to be controlled to protect the landscape of significance.

In addition to this policy protecting the Alpine Approaches, the Mansfield Planning Scheme contains policy at cl 12.05-2L (supporting strategic direction in the Municipal Planning Strategy, notably at cl 02.03-2) relating to design in rural areas and along ridgelines.

The policy objective is:

- *To protect the environmental, landscape and visual significance of landscapes, alpine approaches, and significant ridgelines, particularly in areas of high visual amenity.*

Strategies are:

- *Minimise the environmental and visual impact of development including buildings, sheds, driveways, and associated earthworks.*
- *Site and design development to be responsive to the topography of the land and unobtrusive in the landscape.*
- *Retain existing mature scattered native and exotic trees and encourage the use of substantial landscaping to further complement development and reduce the visual impact of buildings on the landscape.*
- *Avoid development on visually exposed ridgelines unless its visual impact can be minimised by using designs and colours that blend with or compliment the landscape.*
- *Incorporate building setbacks from property boundaries, roads and waterways that are consistent with the scale of the building, site characteristics, and potential impact on the environment and rural activities conducted on the site.*
- *Use building materials with external finishes that:*
 - *Blend with the natural surrounding environment whether this be in natural form or via a tailored paint scheme that reflects the colours and textures evident in the natural environment.*
 - *Have a low reflectivity to minimise glare and visual impact.*

A Policy Guideline is:

Consider as relevant:

- *Designing buildings located on or close to a visually exposed ridgeline to not exceed 1 storey or 6 metres in height from natural ground level.*

The above policy is translated from the former cl 22.02, which applied to ‘all planning permit applications in all zones of the Shire where significant ridgelines or areas deemed to be of a high-level visual amenity are proposed to be developed for the purpose of a building.’ The translated policy has general application, which broadens the applicability of the policy but may risk diluting it in locations of greatest sensitivity.

Locations of high visual amenity are not defined in the policy. However, it could be strengthened and provided greater specificity by highlighting those locations on a plan within the policy or selecting appropriate contours (based on context) above which visually prominent development would be discouraged.

Recommendations

The Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) is applied to key road corridors that provide views to the Alpine National Park and Great Dividing Range; however, there are several places where significant views and some alpine approaches have no statutory protection in the planning scheme.

The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) has been applied extensively across the Shire, to manage and protect waterway health in the Significant Catchment Areas. However, the tool does not recognise broader or other ecological values across the Shire such as significant tree species, or specific riparian corridors.

Sixty percent of the Shire is public land, designated as a National or State Park, or Nature Reserve. Generally, planning tools such as the SLO and ESO are not applied in those locations given the range of other conservation and environmental protections applied under acts other than the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. However, there are opportunities to enhance built form outcomes in terms of design and siting that is sympathetic to Mansfield Shire's wide range of valued landscape features which underpin many people's reasons to live in the municipality.

Lake Eildon and its surrounds are a significant landscape asset. Parts of the western banks of the lake, around Eildon township, have an SLO under the Murrindindi Planning Scheme (Murrindindi SLO2 – Lake Eildon and Surrounds). The planning controls should be consistent for comparable landscapes around the lake regardless of local government boundary.

Based on the current extent of the SLO1 and Clause 12.05-2L, the following steps could be taken to strengthen the protection of landscape character features and improve design outcomes in visually prominent locations across the Shire.

- Based on the summaries in this section, update Clause 02.03-2 to include a *Statement of nature and key elements of landscape* which describe the Shire's landscape features in greater detail.
- Set out design guidelines which provide more specific guidance on the design and siting requirements being sought under the SLO1 and Clause 12.05-2L. For example:
 - Preferred materials
 - Materials to avoid
 - Techniques for sensitively siting development below ridgelines
 - Using appropriate vegetation to soften the appearance of development.
- Review the extent of application of existing SLOs to ensure that the extent of overlay is sufficient to achieve the objectives of the overlay and cover all areas of value.
- Based on location/context within the Shire, consider nominating elevations at which Clause 12.05-2L ridgelines come into play and designating key landscape features/views to be protected on a map within the policy.
- Investigate application of an SLO similar to the Murrindindi SLO2 to comparable landscapes around the portion of the surrounds of Lake Eildon within Mansfield.

Where ridgelines, viewing corridors and viewpoints are noted for protection in the policy, specify which corridors and points are of particular significance. This will assist both in the policy's application and making it clearer to applicants when the policy will be applied.

Objective 18. To protect and enhance waterways, wetlands and lake environments and enable access to safe, secure, and affordable water supplies.

Strategy 42. Review/strengthen the planning scheme to ensure it appropriately protects water resources and environmental assets for future generations.

Across the LGA, several planning controls are in place to recognise and protect environmentally significant waterways and water resources Table 2).

TABLE 26: PLANNING CONTROLS TO MANAGE SIGNIFICANT WATERWAYS

OVERLAY	PURPOSE	USE IN MANSFIELD SHIRE
<p>Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) Clause 42.01</p>	<p>The ESO is used where there are environmental constraints on development, or where other important ecological values occur, such as coastal or riparian habitats. In Mansfield, two different ESOs have been identified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ESO1 (Catchments at high risk of water quality impacts) and ESO2 (Catchments at medium risk of water quality impacts). - These overlays emphasise the importance of lake and river systems across the Shire for irrigation, potable water supply to townships and for recreation. - The controls seek to balance development and land use activities on and near the waterways to ensure there is no detriment to the catchment. - Depending on lot size, a planning permit may be required to construct dwellings, outbuildings and associated works connected to a sewer system.
<p>Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) Clause 42.03</p>	<p>The purpose of the SLO is to identify and conserve the character of a significant landscape, where areas have a significant aesthetic or visual importance.</p> <p>There are two Significant Landscape Overlays applied in Mansfield Shire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The SLO1 covers the alpine approach, including views from the Mansfield - Mt Buller Road to surrounding mountains and ranges. - The SLO2 covers land along the Howqua River, which is a Heritage River under the <i>Heritage Rivers Act</i> (1994) and has environmental and significance for recreation (canoeing, fishing), cultural heritage sites (Frys Bridge, early settlement, and mining features), fish fossil beds and habitat for the spotted tree frog.

OVERLAY	PURPOSE	USE IN MANSFIELD SHIRE
<p>Planning Policy Framework</p>	<p>Clause 14.02-1L – Catchment Planning and Management sets out the preferred approach for water catchment planning in Mansfield Shire.</p>	<p>The strategies are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimise adverse impacts from wastewater management systems (both individually and cumulatively) on catchment health and water quality. - Discourage land uses that would contribute to the degradation of downstream water quality. - Discourage further development, particularly new rural residential estates on the lakes' shores. - Support new development only where connection to reticulated sewerage infrastructure can be provided or it will not have a cumulative impact on nutrient and pathogen loads. - Support redevelopment and extensions of existing unsewered dwellings only if an incremental cumulative benefit will be gained by way of upgrading the existing system. - Incorporate integrated Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) techniques and mitigation measures to reduce overall wastewater volumes and level of nutrients, pathogens and pollutants entering the catchment from use and development, particularly in high-risk areas as per Schedule 1 to the Environmental Significance Overlay. - Ensure any drainage scheme is consistent with the capability of the land.

Source: *Mansfield Planning Scheme*, Victorian Heritage Database.

Recommendations

Based on the extensive application of the ESO1, ESO2 and requirements of Clause 14.02-1L, policy protection for waterways and catchments in Mansfield Shire is relatively strong. Ongoing issues concerning poor onsite wastewater management will require a combined effort from Council and community members to mitigate negative environmental impacts, as highlighted in the *Mansfield Shire Environment Strategy* (2019).

The Rural Conservation Zone, which currently has limited application in Mansfield Shire, offers an additional tool to aid protection of features of environmental significance. The purpose of the zone is to:

- *To conserve the values specified in a schedule to this zone.*
- *To protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological, and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat, and cultural values.*
- *To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.*
- *To encourage development and use of land which is consistent with sustainable land management and land capability practices, and which takes into account the conservation values and environmental sensitivity of the locality.*
- *To provide for agricultural use consistent with the conservation of environmental and landscape values of the area.*
- *To conserve and enhance the cultural significance and character of open rural and scenic non-urban landscapes.*

Environmental protection through the appropriate use of the Rural Conservation Zone should be considered.

Objective 19. To ensure land management supports diverse and self-sustaining landscapes that support healthy ecosystems now and into the future.

Objective 20. To ensure natural resources and environmental values are not compromised by ongoing development.

Strategy 43. Identify mechanisms to protect large old River Red Gum, Yellow Box, and other species of remnant indigenous trees.

Strategy 44. Ensure native vegetation is protected in the Mansfield Planning Scheme.

Strategy 45. Advocate for the establishment of native vegetation off-set sites within the Mansfield Shire region.

Strategy 46. Encourage urban tree cover by supporting the planting of suitable trees on public and private land within Mansfield Township and the Shire's other settlements.

In Victoria, there are planning controls which enable Council to protect vegetation and ecological features (Table 27).

TABLE 27: LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERLAYS IN MANSFIELD SHIRE

OVERLAY	PURPOSE	USE IN MANSFIELD SHIRE
<p>Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) Clause 42.02</p>	<p>Specifically designed to protect significant native and exotic vegetation in an urban or rural environment. This control can be applied to individual trees, stands of trees or areas of significant vegetation.</p> <p>Its purpose includes to minimise the loss of vegetation due to development and recognise protection areas as places of special significance, natural beauty, interest, and importance. The policy is also used to enhance habitat and habitat corridors for indigenous flora and encourage the regeneration of native vegetation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is one VPO schedule (VPO1) in Mansfield Shire. - The VPO applies to four small sites across the LGA, on Euroa-Merton Road, at the former Tabletop Township, on Buttercup Lane in Merrijig and near Lovick’s Hut on the Bluff Track. - In these locations, the identified vegetation is considered to have historical, botanical, or environmental significance, as well as being valued by the local community.
<p>Municipal Planning Statement / Local policy</p>	<p>Clause 02.03-2 (Environmental and Landscape Values - Biodiversity) highlights that the incremental loss off remaining habitat is a major issue.</p> <p>It notes that protection of remnant vegetation is a high priority including in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roadsides, which provide some of the most significant native habitats and are under threat through pressures from development and degradation. ▪ Riparian zones, where vegetation is particularly important for the protection of native habitat and biodiversity values, but also for its benefits to water quality that result from riparian buffer zones with a width of at least 30 metres. 	<p>The strategies at clause 12.-1-1L are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect significant vegetation communities, especially from higher residential densities that lead to fragmentation and incremental clearing and disturbance. - Protect large old paddock trees for their significant habitat and landscape value, especially in the context of the intensification of land use, including residential and rural living developments. - Prevent unjustified removal of native vegetation and encourage the recovery of threatened species and communities.
<p>Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation</p>	<p>This policy is a permit trigger for all planning permit applications to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation.</p> <p>The policy applies to all land across Mansfield Shire but contains a range of exemptions including when clearing land for agricultural activities or farm buildings in the Farming Zone (FZ) (with a range of conditions about the type and extent of</p>	<p>Applications to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation are required to provide a response to the <i>Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation</i> (DELWP, 2017). The principles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

OVERLAY	PURPOSE	USE IN MANSFIELD SHIRE
	vegetation to be removed), or on land that has a lot size less than 0.4 hectares (4,000 square metres).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Minimise impacts from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation that cannot be avoided. – Provide an offset to compensate for the biodiversity impact if a permit is granted to remove, destroy, or lop native vegetation. – To manage the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation to minimise land and water degradation.
Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) Clause 35.06	<p>This zone is intended to protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes. It recognises features for their historic, archaeological, and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat, and cultural values.</p> <p>The RCZ encourages development and use of land which is consistent with sustainable land management and land capability practices.</p>	The RCZ is only applied in limited areas in Mansfield Shire.

Source: *Mansfield Planning Scheme*, Victorian Heritage Database.

Recommendations

Based on the range of native vegetation protections above, the following are opportunities to strengthen recognition and protection of significant vegetation:

- Either expand Clause 12.01-1L, or develop a new specific clause 12.01-2L, to reference tree species identified for protection in the *Mansfield Shire Environment Strategy* (2019): Remnant River Red Gum and Yellow Box and other remnant indigenous trees.
- Enhance urban tree canopy cover in urban areas by using mechanisms in the General Residential Zone (GRZ) at Clause 54 (One dwelling on a lot) and Clause 55 (Two or more dwellings on a lot and residential buildings) to require additional landscaping and significant tree planting as part of new development.
- Implement other recommendations from this and the *Mansfield Shire Environment Strategy* (2019) which establish urban boundaries around Mansfield and other settlements, to limit expansion of urban/residential land uses that would lead to further land clearing.
- Consider the potential application of the Rural Conservation Zone to protect areas of conservation significance across the Shire.

The Taungurung Land and Waters Council have an essential role to play in partnering with council and other agencies in the identification and protection of significant and/ or threatened species. Local Landcare groups are also an important partner in this process.

As highlighted in the *Environment Strategy*, it is important that the community has an awareness of regulations and requirements around native vegetation management which are already contained in State and local policy within the *Mansfield Planning Scheme*.

Objective 21. To mitigate the effects of climate change and encourage new land use and development that uses climate adaptation techniques.

Strategy 47. Develop a Climate Change Action Plan

The *Mansfield Shire Environment Strategy* (2019) highlights the following, for the Shire:

- 'Climate change is impacting us now. We will see increased temperatures, less predictable rainfall, and longer fire seasons in the coming decades. Water resources will be increasingly stretched, meaning more restrictions and pressure on vegetation.
- Economic and population growth in our Shire will also put added pressure on the environment. Growth requires more resources, produces more waste, and uses more land.
- Our economy must reduce waste and use resources more efficiently to be sustainable in the long-term.'⁷²

The Climate Change Action Plan will address the following, as set out in the *Environment Strategy* (2019):

- 'Consult to establish a Mansfield Shire Council Greenhouse Emissions Reduction target and plan for implementation.
- Ensure Mansfield Station Precinct Activation Project meets Green Star design and construction standards.
- Encourage urban tree cover by supporting the planting of suitable trees within the urban landscape.
- Support the implementation of an Asset Management Plan for Council managed buildings and structures that considers opportunities for renewable energy projects.
- Advocate for investment in public infrastructure that facilitates a future low carbon economy, such as electric vehicle charging stations, bicycle and walking paths and provision for better public transport.
- Work in partnership and support Taungurung Land and Water Council with the management of public lands.
- Support community led renewable energy and efficiency programs for greater energy independence.'⁷³

⁷² Mansfield Shire Council, *Mansfield Shire Environment Strategy 2019-2023*, Endorsed 2019, p. 25.

⁷³ Mansfield Shire Council, *Mansfield Shire Environment Strategy 2019-2023*, Endorsed 2019, p. 26.

In the short-term, the Mansfield Planning Scheme can be updated to reference initiatives to enhance urban tree canopy cover and planting as part of new developments in the General Residential Zone (GRZ) by updating the landscape requirements at Clause 54 (One dwelling on a lot) and Clause 55 (Two or more dwellings on a lot and residential buildings).

In addition, Clause 02.03-3 – Environmental Risks and Amenity can be updated to expand reference to climate change issues identified in the *Environment Strategy* and in the forthcoming Climate Change Action Plan. Actions from that strategy should be the basis of new policy at cl 13.01-1L – Natural Hazards and Climate Change. Once prepared, the Action Plan could be a reference document to the Planning Scheme.

The Climate Change Action Plan should address the following considerations, as set out in the *Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2017-2020)*:

- Mansfield Shire Council’s role to provide leadership and good governance, represent the needs and values of local communities and foster community cohesion:
 - ‘Manage climate change risks to council community services and assets, with support from the State Government.
 - Identify the needs and priorities of the municipality and communicate these to State Government where needed.
 - Develop and deliver locally appropriate adaptation responses.
 - Build the resilience of local assets and services.
 - Plan for emergency management at the municipal level, provide relief and recovery services and support emergency response operations.
 - Help the State Government understand localised impacts and responses.
 - Work with the community to help people understand and get involved in climate change adaptation.
 - Help connect the State Government with the community.’
- Help the community understand and manage the risks of climate change and build their capacity to:
 - ‘Plan and act responsibly to reduce the exposure of their own person, families, private property and livelihoods to risks caused by climate change impacts.
 - Develop innovative local responses to climate change risks.
 - Explain to government and decision-makers what the community needs and values.
 - Support and encourage adaptation efforts on the ground.’
- Encourage adaptation across all policy areas and sectors of the local economy, including actions among other organisations, businesses, and industry to:
 - ‘Provide education and training to help people learn and build skills.
 - Collect data.
 - Advocate to decision-makers and the community based on an in-depth understanding of environmental and social issues.
 - Connect grass-roots community action and government policy development.

- Identify opportunities created by the need to adapt.
- Drive innovation and changes in products, services, and markets to create more sustainable practices.
- Influence customers, suppliers and investment decisions.'

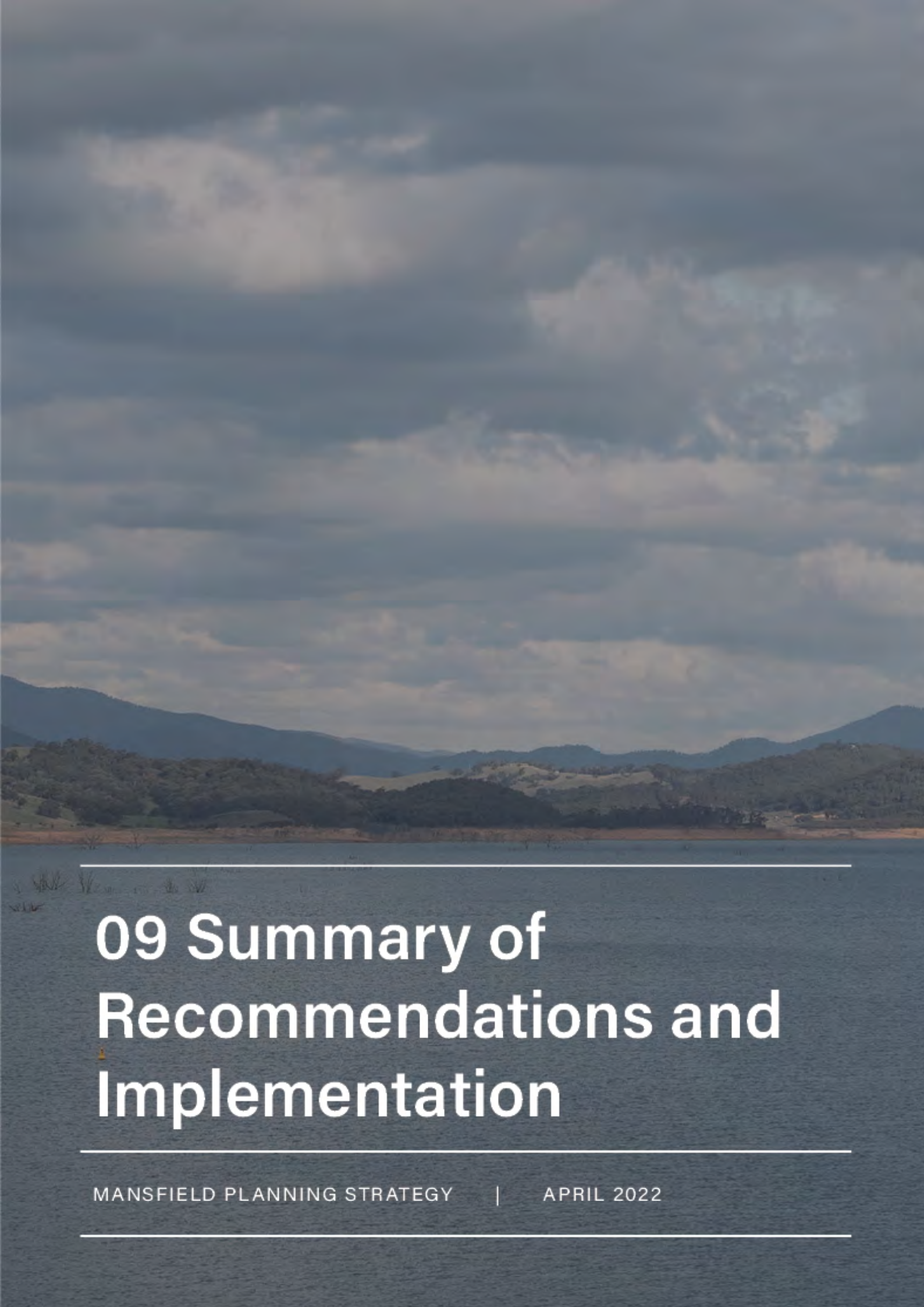
As part of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan, consideration should also be given to actions that are directly linked to land use and development. Those actions would form the basis of updates to local policy and planning requirements in the *Mansfield Planning Scheme*.

8.6 Environment and landscape implementation summary

TABLE 28: ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPES			
To protect and enhance significant landscapes in Mansfield Shire for their cultural, environmental, and historic values.	Update local policy to strengthen protection for identified features of significance across Mansfield Shire.	Update Clause 12.05-2L. Review extent of SLO1 and SLO2 to ensure they are sufficient to achieve their landscape objectives. Investigate application of SLO to Lake Eildon surrounds.	Short term (0-5 years)
To protect and enhance waterways, wetlands and lake environments and enable access to safe, secure, and affordable water supplies.	Review/strengthen the planning scheme to ensure it appropriately protects water resources and assets for future generations.	Update Clause 14.02-1L.	Short term (0-5 years)
To ensure land management supports diverse and self-sustaining landscapes that support health ecosystems now and into the future.	Identify mechanisms to protect large old River Red Gum, Yellow Box, and other species of remnant indigenous trees.	Undertake planning scheme amendment to include “grandfather” trees into the VPO at the nomination of property owners.	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Ensure native vegetation is protected in the Mansfield Planning Scheme.	Update Clause 12.01-1L and / or add cl 12.01-2L.	

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
To ensure natural resources and environmental values are not compromised by ongoing development.	<p>Advocate for the establishment of native vegetation off-set sides within the Mansfield Shire region.</p> <p>Encourage urban tree cover by supporting the planting of suitable trees on public and private land within Mansfield Township and the Shire's other settlements.</p>	<p>Consider potential to apply the Rural Conservation Zone to protect areas of native vegetation across the Shire.</p> <p>Require additional landscape outcomes (significant tree planting) in a schedule to the General Residential Zone (GRZ) for Clause 54 and Clause 55.</p>	
NATURAL HAZARDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT			
To mitigate the effects of climate change and encourage new land use and development that uses climate adaptation techniques.	<p>Develop Climate Change Action Plan.</p> <p><i>For planning, focus on opportunities for land use and development techniques that mitigate the effects of climate change and examine opportunities to introduce adaptation concepts into new development.</i></p>	Update the relevant Municipal Planning Statement (MPS), local policy and other planning controls (Zones, Overlays) in the Mansfield Planning Scheme based on recommendations from the Climate Change Action Plan.	Underway



09 Summary of Recommendations and Implementation

9. Summary of recommendations and implementation

This section presents a consolidated implementation plan to realise the objectives and strategies for the Mansfield Planning Scheme. For each strategy, the table highlights Council's role and likely timing for its related implementation action.

9.1 Approach to implementation

The Mansfield Planning Strategy is built around a series of objectives and strategies which respond to the core project aims:

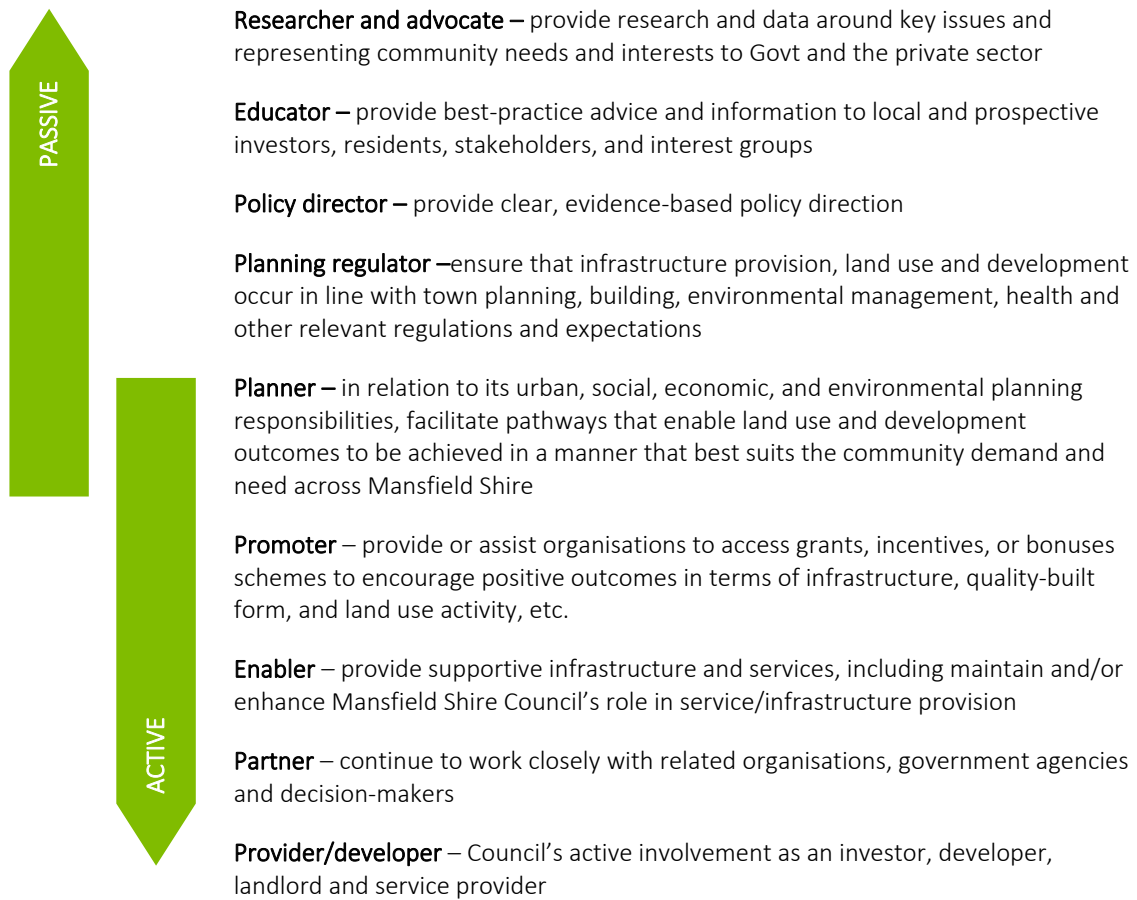
- Facilitate orderly development of urban land uses that makes effective use of existing infrastructure and responds to environmental constraints.
- Protect areas of agricultural productivity and environmental significance and sensitivity and areas subject to natural hazards.
- Identify the need for additional infrastructure to service changing communities.
- Enable change that appropriately responds to the valued character and qualities that distinguish each of the municipality's townships and settlements.

Each of the objectives and strategies are distinguished by their intent, related back to the project aims above. The objectives and strategies are supported by implementation actions, many of which relate to updates to the Mansfield Planning Scheme, influencing development and land use outcomes in the Shire.

Timing and responsibility for each action has been set out in the detailed table in Section 9.5. Council has many roles to play in the Strategy's implementation, as set out below.

9.2 Council's role

TABLE 29: COUNCIL'S ROLE



9.3 Timing/prioritisation

The actions set out in Section 9.5 are prioritised in terms of short-, medium-, or long-term priority to be completed over the lifetime of this Strategy. Actions should be periodically reviewed and reassessed in line with available budgets, resources and funding opportunities. The timeframe for completing prioritised actions is:

- Short-term: Action to occur over the next 0-5 years
- Medium-term: Action to occur over the next 5-10 years
- Long-term: Action to occur over the next 10+ years
- Ongoing: Action to be undertaken on an ongoing basis.

9.4 Partner organisations

Some actions identified in this Strategy may involve participation and collaboration with State, regional and local organisations to enable their realisation. These include but are not limited to the agencies listed below.

- Taungurung Land and Waters Council
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DJPR)
- Regional Development Victoria
- Environmental Protection Authority Victoria
- Department of Transport
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Goulburn Valley Water
- Goulburn Murray Water
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Various Mansfield Shire Council departments
- Councils for adjoining local government areas (LGAs)
- Regional tertiary and other education providers.

9.5 Implementation Plan

TABLE 30: SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING			
OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
ESTABLISHING A HIERARCHY OF TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS			
To support sustainable patterns of population growth and residential development across the Shire	Direct future population growth in accordance with an established settlement hierarchy to support the efficient use of land, infrastructure, and support convenient access to jobs and services.	Update clause 16.01-2L	Short Term (0-5 years)
ACCOMMODATING FUTURE POPULATION GROWTH			
To ensure sufficient residential land is available to meet future dwelling demand	Identify land suitable for residential rezoning to ensure sufficient land supply over the long term	Update clause 16.01-2L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Stage future greenfield residential development in Mansfield Shire to consolidate growth and maximise investment in development and community infrastructure	Update clause 16.01-2L Rezone land at Mansfield-Whitfield Road to Low Density Residential Zone	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Implement measures to accelerate release of suitable 'in-sequence' areas	Prepare and adopt a Development Plan for Highton Lane to link existing approved development plans and ensure the orderly development of Highton Lane.	Short Term (0-5 years)

		Undertake consultation to resolve barriers to land release	Short Term (0-5 years)
		Review appropriate incentives or punitive financial measures	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Undertake ongoing monitoring of dwelling demand and housing capacity	Update Clause 74.02 to include program of monitoring and review.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Ensure the orderly development of greenfield areas proposed for residential rezoning or intensification	Update Clause 74.02 to include consultation and preparation of development plans as further strategic work.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Support housing development and intensification in established areas, particularly areas with good access to shops and services	Introduce relevant objectives and strategies at 16.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Revise land use zoning and infrastructure requirements in Gough's Bay and Bonnie Doon in response to implementation/ expansion of reticulated sewerage services as outlined in the Lake Eildon Master Plan	Review extent of residential rezoning through development of local area plan.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Prepare local area plans for towns, townships and settlements across the Shire	Update Clause 74.02 to include consultation and preparation of settlement plans as further strategic work.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Progress a planning scheme amendment to correct zoning errors and other minor planning scheme anomalies	Progress anomalies amendment	Short Term (0-5 years)

MEETING NEEDS FOR DIVERSE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

To increase supply of social and affordable housing	Strengthen policy statements about the need for affordable housing in Mansfield	Objectives and strategies at 16.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Develop processes for Council to support or advocate for affordable housing contributions	Advocacy through DELWP, who may provide advice about how Council can best collect contributions towards affordable housing stock (for example, with voluntary agreements or other mechanisms)	Ongoing
	Engage with and educate the community on social and affordable housing as important local infrastructure	Develop an approach to educating the community on the need for and benefits of social and affordable housing.	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Adopt a relationship building, information sharing and brokerage role between the development and affordable housing sectors	Publish information on the Community Housing Sector for developers and provide a single point of contact at Council for enquiries	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Assist marginalised households to transition into the private rental market	Establish liaison service to foster partnerships between real estate agents and marginalised rental households.	Medium term (5-10 years)
	Advocate for State Government investment in Mansfield	Advocacy through DELWP	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Provide in-principal support for the State Government's secondary dwelling pilot program	Advocate to DELWP for improved planning tools (for example secondary dwelling codes).	Ongoing
To encourage increased diversity in housing supply to meet the needs of people of all ages and lifestyles.	Encourage shop top housing in town centres and consider the potential to further incentivise the provision of this form of housing	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Encourage and facilitate development of retirement and aged care living options.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)

	Encourage development of a crisis accommodation centre in Mansfield Shire.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Encourage lot size diversity when planning for greenfield residential areas.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Support diverse, social, and affordable housing, especially in areas with walking access to a range of services and commercial activities.	Include policy support at 16.01-5L	Short Term (0-5 years)
RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT			
To support rural residential housing opportunities that provide housing choice	Support rural residential development that does not compromise sustainable land use outcomes, including farming.	Include objectives and strategies at 16.01-3L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Support discretionary uses in the Rural Living Zone only where these are consistent with the rural- residential character and do not compromise farming on adjacent land.	Include objectives and strategies at 16.01-3L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Undertake an assessment to determine potential to increase capacity within the Rural Living Zone	Undertake rural living zone land study.	Short Term (0-5 years)
To prevent further ad-hoc residential development in the Farming Zone that creates dispersed settlements and threatens productive farming uses.	Strongly discourage dwellings in the Farming Zone except where required in support of agricultural activities.	Objective and strategy at 14.01-1L	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Ensure that the development of existing small rural allotments does not prejudice any existing surrounding agricultural activities.	Objective and strategy at 14.01-1L	Short Term (0-5 years)

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
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NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

To preserve and enhance the township and alpine character of Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon and the Shire's smaller settlements.	Update local policy to include the preferred character statements and proposed design guidelines for Mansfield Township, Bonnie Doon and the Shire's smaller settlements.	<p>Include character statements at Clause 15.01-5L.</p> <p>Review the schedule to the General Residential Zone (GRZ) at Clause 32.08. Consider introducing additional schedules that modify the requirements of Clause 54 and 55 to achieve preferred built form, design and siting outcomes based on preferred character statements.</p>	Short Term (0-5 years)
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HERITAGE

To protect and enhance sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance across Mansfield Shire.	Work with the Taungurung Land and Waters Council to identify the most appropriate ways the planning system can protect places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance across Mansfield Shire.	If appropriate following further engagement with TLaWC, update 15.03-2L and Clause 43.01.	Ongoing
To identify and protect sites of heritage significance in the Shire.	Ensure new development preserves and respects the heritage features and places.	Following further investigation, update Clause 15.03-2L and Clause 43.01 as appropriate.	Ongoing
	Identify and document buildings, places and sites that have important cultural significance and set out policies to enhance and protect those places.	Following further investigation, update Clause 15.03-2L and Clause 43.01 as appropriate.	Ongoing

INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION AND FUNDING

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
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INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT

To provide development infrastructure to support preferred patterns of development	Prepare an Infrastructure Plan and associated Funding Plan that supports economic productivity and underpins preferred locations for residential growth.	Update Clause 74.02 to include preparation of Infrastructure Plan as further strategic work.	Short term (0-5 years)
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COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

To provide community infrastructure to meet community needs	Prepare a Community Infrastructure Plan that considers provision of community infrastructure and services in accordance with the identified Settlement Hierarchy	Update Clause 74.02 to include preparation of Infrastructure Plan as further strategic work.	Short term (0-5 years)
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OPEN SPACE

To provide direction for current and future public open space requirements	Complete, exhibit and adopt the Mansfield Open Space Strategy	Update the Mansfield Planning Scheme as appropriate from the recommendations of this Strategy	Short term (0-5 years)
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EMPLOYMENT LANDS

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
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COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LAND

To consolidate commercial and industrial activity	Direct future employment uses in accordance with the established settlement hierarchy to support economic productivity	Update Clause 11.01-1L to include settlement hierarchy directions.	Short Term (0-5 years)
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To ensure there is sufficient land to support future needs	Assess ongoing need for commercial and industrial land	Monitor take-up of new industrial and mixed-use land to assess need for additional land release.	Ongoing
	Assess suitability of rezoning land no longer suitable for employment purposes	Undertake a preliminary risk assessment to determine suitability of rezoning Sawmill site for residential uses.	Medium term (5-10 years)
VISITOR ECONOMY			
To strengthen and diversify the visitor economy	Encourage development of ancillary and off-season attractions to enhance the Shire's tourism offer	Update Clause 17.04-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Support the implementation of the Activating Lake Eildon: Lake Eildon Master Plan	Advocate to relevant agencies for implementation of Lake Eildon Master Plan.	Short Term (0-5 years)
AGRICULTURE			
To protect rural lands for productive agricultural purposes	Protect and enhance the ongoing productivity and viability of agricultural lands across the Shire.	Update Clause 14.01-1L	Short Term (0-5 years)
To limit further fragmentation of agricultural areas.	Require new dwellings to demonstrate a strong nexus with agriculture in the Farming Zone (FZ).	Update Clause 14.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)
	Strengthen subdivision policies to avoid further fragmentation and small lot excisions in the Farming Zone (FZ).	Update Clause 14.01-1L.	Short Term (0-5 years)

ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	TIMING
ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPES			
To protect and enhance significant landscapes in Mansfield Shire for their cultural, environmental and historic values.	Update local policy to strengthen protection for identified features of significance across Mansfield Shire.	Update Clause 12.05-2L. Review extent of SLO1 and SLO2 to ensure they are sufficient to achieve their landscape objectives. Investigate application of SLO to Lake Eildon surrounds.	Short term (0-5 years)
To protect and enhance waterways, wetlands and lake environments and enable access to safe, secure and affordable water supplies.	Review/strengthen the planning scheme to ensure it appropriately protects water resources and environmental assets for future generations.	Update Clause 14.02-1L. Review extent and application of Rural Conservation Zone to ensure environmental assets and sensitive areas have appropriate protection.	Short term (0-5 years)
To ensure land management supports diverse and self-sustaining landscapes that support health ecosystems now and into the future. To ensure natural resources and environmental values are not compromised by ongoing development.	Identify mechanisms to protect large old River Red Gum, Yellow Box and other species of remnant indigenous trees. Ensure native vegetation is protected in the Mansfield Planning Scheme. Advocate for the establishment of native vegetation off-set sides within the Mansfield Shire region.	Undertake planning scheme amendment to include “grandfather” trees into the VPO at the nomination of property owners. Update Clause 12.01-1L and / or add cl 12.01-2L. Consider potential to apply the Rural Conservation Zone to protect areas of native vegetation across the Shire. Require additional landscape outcomes (significant tree planting) in a schedule to the	Medium term (5-10 years)

	Encourage urban tree cover by supporting the planting of suitable trees on public and private land within Mansfield Township and the Shire's other settlements.	General Residential Zone (GRZ) for Clause 54 and Clause 55.	
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NATURAL HAZARDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

To mitigate the effects of climate change and encourage new land use and development that uses climate adaptation techniques.	Develop Climate Change Action Plan. <i>For planning, focus on opportunities for land use and development techniques that mitigate the effects of climate change and examine opportunities to introduce adaptation concepts into new development.</i>	Update the relevant Municipal Planning Statement (MPS), local policy and other planning controls (Zones, Overlays) in the Mansfield Planning Scheme based on recommendations from the Climate Change Action Plan.	Underway
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