

22.02 RURAL AREAS POLICY

This policy applies to all land in the Rural, Environmental Rural and Rural Living Zones.

Policy Basis

The economic significance of rural areas is important to the development of Greater Bendigo. Agricultural production, tourism and recreation potential and the infrastructure of the region are valuable assets worthy of protection.

Isolated dwellings in rural areas have the potential to disrupt agricultural activities, and in bushland areas have the potential to fragment areas which contain significant environmental values. Ongoing agricultural production depends, in part, upon maintaining a mass of productive land, which excludes concentrations of residential type uses that have the potential to restrict normal agricultural practices.

Objectives

To promote a diverse rural industry and to support existing and potential agricultural enterprises.

To enhance the tourism and recreation potential of non-urban Greater Bendigo.

To support rural infrastructure and value adding rural industry in Greater Bendigo.

To discourage the rezoning of land in the Rural and Environmental Rural Zones to Rural Living Zones, whilst there is an adequate supply of rural living land.

To discourage the fragmentation of rural land, or land with significant environmental values.

To ensure that existing agricultural enterprises in the Rural Zone are not placed under pressure from the encroachment of residential activities.

To promote effective staging of rural living development linked to the effective supply of infrastructure and services and sound environmental management.

To limit the subdivision, use or development of land to that which is compatible with the utilisation of the land as a sustainable agricultural resource.

To ensure that dwellings which are excised do not prejudice agricultural production activities.

To ensure that dwellings which are excised are properly sited and designed.

To discourage the construction of dwellings on existing small lots within the Rural Zone.

Policy

It is policy that:

General

- The use and development of land zoned Rural should maintain the operation of sustainable agricultural enterprises.
- The use and development of land zoned Rural should support economic opportunities offered by rural land and rural production.
- Existing land zoned Rural be protected from fragmentation.

Rural Living

- The creation of isolated Rural Living Zones in rural areas be discouraged where there is potential to fragment and disrupt agricultural activities in areas, which are suitable for farming purposes and where there is the potential to fragment areas of high environmental qualities.
- The rezoning of land from a Rural Zone or Environmental Rural Zone to a Rural Living Zone be discouraged if there is no existing adjacent or nearby land zoned for Rural Living purposes or if there is an adequate supply of Rural Living zoned land within the locality.
- The creation of isolated areas of Rural Living Zones is discouraged where this may impose difficulties for the efficient provision of physical infrastructure and community services.
- The creation of isolated areas of Rural Living Zones which threaten flora and fauna habitats will not be supported.
- Development within Rural Living Zones is encouraged where the land meets one or more of the following criteria:
 - Close proximity to an urban boundary;
 - Abuttal to sealed main roads of at least sub arterial standard;
 - Proximity to a regional activity centre where substantial public infrastructure is provided and maintained;
 - Close proximity to important community facilities, school bus routes, and within areas provided with municipal waste collection services.

Where existing lots do not meet the Rural Living Zone preferred criteria, development will not be supported.

Subdivision

- Lots created by excising dwellings under the provisions of Clause 35.01-4 or 35.02-4 should have a maximum size of 2 hectares, except as otherwise required by a provision of this planning scheme.
- Subdivision that is likely to lead to such a concentration of lots as to change the general use and character of the rural area and which is not consistent with the purposes of the zones will be discouraged.
- Lots created under the provisions of Clause 35.01-4 or 35.02-4 for residential use and development must: -
 - Be clustered in order to minimise the area taken up by residential use and development.
 - Not be located so as to limit the productive use and development of rural land.
- Boundary realignments will be discouraged except if they are minor adjustments to take account of physical, man made or topographical features on the site.
- Subdivision of high quality agricultural land will not be supported.
- Serial excisions and further subdivision after re-configuration of existing titles will not be supported.

Dwellings

- Dwellings excised under the provisions of Clause 35.01-4 or 35.02-4 must be in a habitable condition and comply with the Building Code of Australia.

- Dwellings on existing small lots in all rural areas will be discouraged except if:
 - Subdivisions have been created since the introduction of planning controls;
 - Substantial infrastructure works have been completed; or
 - The land has no agricultural potential and native vegetation will be retained and managed.
- All dwellings on small lots must be completed within 5 years from the gazettal date of this Scheme.

Policy Reference Documents

Walters, M, *City of Greater Bendigo Performance Criteria for Subdivision Proposals in the Rural Living Zone*, 1999

City of Greater Bendigo, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Environmental Management Plans for Strathfieldsaye Rural Areas*, September 1994

Bluml, M et al., *Land Capability Study of the City of Greater Bendigo, Huntly District*, November 1995

Bryant, E & Lorimer, M, *Land Capability Study of the Rural City of Marong*, April 1993

Bluml, M, Boyle, G & Jones, E, *Land Capability Study of the City of Greater Bendigo, Strathfieldsaye District*, 1995