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NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Planning is to assist in the conservation and wise use of natural resources including energy, water, land, stone and minerals to support both environmental quality and sustainable development.

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Agriculture

14.01-1

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Protection of agricultural land

Objective

To protect productive farmland which is of strategic significance in the local or regional context.

Strategies

Ensure that the State's agricultural base is protected from the unplanned loss of productive agricultural land due to permanent changes of land use.

Consult with the Department of Primary Industries and utilise available information to identify areas of productive agricultural land.

Take into consideration regional, state and local, issues and characteristics in the assessment of agricultural quality and productivity.

Permanent removal of productive agricultural land from the State's agricultural base must not be undertaken without consideration of its economic importance for the agricultural production and processing sectors.

In considering a proposal to subdivide or develop agricultural land, the following factors must be considered:

- The desirability and impacts of removing the land from primary production, given its agricultural productivity.
- The impacts of the proposed subdivision or development on the continuation of primary production on adjacent land, with particular regard to land values and to the viability of infrastructure for such production.
- The compatibility between the proposed or likely development and the existing uses of the surrounding land.
- Assessment of the land capability.

Subdivision of productive agricultural land should not detract from the long-term productive capacity of the land.

Where inappropriate subdivisions exist on productive agricultural land, priority should be given by planning authorities to their re-structure.

In assessing rural development proposals, planning and responsible authorities must balance the potential off-site effects of rural land use proposals (such as degradation of soil or water quality and land salinisation) which might affect productive agricultural land against the benefits of the proposals.

Planning for rural land use should consider:

- land capability; and

- the potential impacts of land use and development on the spread of plant and animal pests from areas of known infestation into agricultural areas.

14.01-2 Sustainable agricultural land use

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Objective

To encourage sustainable agricultural land use.

Strategies

Ensure agricultural and productive rural land use activities are managed to maintain the long-term sustainable use and management of existing natural resources.

Encourage sustainable agricultural and associated rural land use and support and assist the development of innovative approaches to sustainable practices.

Support effective agricultural production and processing infrastructure, rural industry and farm-related retailing and assist genuine farming enterprises to adjust flexibly to market changes.

Facilitate the establishment and expansion of cattle feedlots, piggeries, poultry farms and other intensive animal industries in a manner consistent with orderly and proper planning and protection of the environment.

Policy guidelines

Planning must consider as relevant:

- *Ready for Tomorrow – a Blueprint for Regional and Rural Victoria* (State Government of Victoria, 2010).
- *Victorian Code for Cattle Feedlots* (Department of Agriculture, Energy and Minerals, 1995), in considering proposals for use and development of beef cattle feedlots.
- *Victorian Code for Broiler Farms* (Department of Primary Industries, 2009), in considering proposals for use and development of broiler farms.
- *Code of Practice: Piggeries* (Health Commission of Victoria and Department of Food and Agriculture, 1992), in considering proposals for use and development of piggeries.
- *Apiary Code of Practice* (May 1997) and any relevant scientific reports, in considering proposals for apiculture.
- *Planning Guidelines for Land Based Aquaculture in Victoria* (Department of Primary Industries, No. 21, September 2005), in considering proposals for land based aquaculture facilities.

14.01-3 Forestry and timber production

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Objective

To facilitate the establishment, management and harvesting of plantations, and harvesting of timber from native forests.

Strategies

Promote the establishment of softwood and hardwood plantations on predominantly cleared land as well as other areas subject to or contributing to land and water degradation.

Identify areas which may be suitably used and developed for plantation timber production.

Ensure protection of water quality and soil.

Ensure timber production in native forests is conducted in a sustainable manner.

Timber production (except agroforestry, windbreaks and commercial plantations of 5 hectares or less) is to be conducted in accordance with the *Code of Practice for Timber Production* (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2007).

Ensuring Victoria's greenhouse sinks are protected and enhanced by controlling land clearing, containing the growth of urban areas and supporting revegetation programs.

Policy guidelines

Planning must consider as relevant:

- *Code of Practice for Timber Production* (Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2007).

14.02 Water

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14.02-1 Catchment planning and management

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Objective

To assist the protection and, where possible, restoration of catchments, waterways, water bodies, groundwater, and the marine environment.

Strategies

Protect water catchments and water supply facilities to ensure the continued availability of clean, high-quality drinking water.

Consider the impacts of catchment management on downstream water quality and freshwater, coastal and marine environments.

Retain natural drainage corridors with vegetated buffer zones at least 30m wide along each side of a waterway to maintain the natural drainage function, stream habitat and wildlife corridors and landscape values, to minimise erosion of stream banks and verges and to reduce polluted surface runoff from adjacent land uses.

Undertake measures to minimise the quantity and retard the flow of stormwater runoff from developed areas.

Encourage measures to filter sediment and wastes from stormwater prior to its discharge into waterways, including the preservation of floodplain or other land for wetlands and retention basins.

Ensure that works at or near waterways provide for the protection and enhancement of the environmental qualities of waterways and their instream uses.

Ensure land use and development proposals minimise nutrient contributions to waterways and water bodies and the potential for the development of algal blooms.

Require the use of appropriate measures to restrict sediment discharges from construction sites.

Ensure planning is coordinated with the activities of catchment management authorities.

Policy guidelines

Planning must consider as relevant:

- *State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria).*
- Any relevant regional river health program, river and wetland restoration plans or waterway and wetland management works programs approved by a catchment management authority.
- *Murray River Regional Environmental Plan No 2 (REP2) of New South Wales*, for adjoining land.
- Any regional catchment strategies approved under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and any associated implementation plan or strategy including any regional river health and wetland strategies.
- Any special areas or management plans under the *Heritage Rivers Act (1992)*.
- Any Action Statements and management plans prepared under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.
- Any special area plans approved under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.
- *Technical Guidelines for Waterway Management* (Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2007).
- *Guidelines for planning permit applications in open, potable water supply catchment areas* (Department of Planning and Community Development , 2009).

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Water quality

Objective

To protect water quality.

Strategies

Protect reservoirs, water mains and local storage facilities from potential contamination.

Ensure that land use activities potentially discharging contaminated runoff or wastes to waterways are sited and managed to minimise such discharges and to protect the quality of surface water and groundwater resources, rivers, streams, wetlands, estuaries and marine environments.

Discourage incompatible land use activities in areas subject to flooding, severe soil degradation, groundwater salinity or geotechnical hazards where the land cannot be sustainably managed to ensure minimum impact on downstream water quality or flow volumes.

Prevent the establishment of incompatible land uses in aquifer recharge or saline discharge areas and in potable water catchments.

Encourage the siting, design, operation and rehabilitation of landfills to reduce impact on groundwater and surface water.

Policy guidelines

Planning must consider as relevant:

- Mapped information available from the Department of Sustainability and Environment to identify the beneficial uses of groundwater resources and have regard to potential impacts on these resources of proposed land use or development.
- *Victorian Nutrient Management Strategy* (Government of Victoria, 1995).
- *Construction Techniques for Sediment Pollution Control* (Environmental Protection Authority, 1991).
- *Environmental Guidelines for Major Construction Sites* (Environmental Protection Authority, 1996 - Publication 480).
- *Doing it Right on Subdivisions: Temporary Environment Protection Measures for Subdivision Construction Sites* (Environmental Protection Authority, 2004 - Publication 960).
- *Guidelines for planning permit applications in open, potable water supply catchment areas* (Department of Planning and Community Development , 2009).

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Water conservation

Objective

To ensure that water resources are managed in a sustainable way.

Strategies

Encourage the use of alternative water sources such as rainwater tanks, stormwater and recycled water by governments, developers and households.

Ensure the development of new urban areas and green spaces takes advantage of any opportunities for effluent recycling.

Protect areas with potential to recycle water for forestry, agriculture or other uses that can use treated effluent of an appropriate quality.

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Resource exploration and extraction

Objective

To encourage exploration and extraction of natural resources in accordance with acceptable environmental standards and to provide a planning approval process that is consistent with the relevant legislation.

Strategies

Protect the opportunity for exploration and extraction of natural resources where this is consistent with overall planning considerations and application of acceptable environmental practice.

Provide for the long term protection of natural resources in Victoria.

Recognise the possible need to provide infrastructure for the exploration and extraction of natural resources.

Planning schemes must not impose conditions on the use or development of land that is inconsistent with the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*, the

Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Act (2008), the *Geothermal Energy Resources Act (2005)*, or the *Petroleum Act (1998)*.

Planning permit applications should clearly define buffer areas appropriate to the nature of the proposed extractive uses, which are to be owned or controlled by the proponent of an extractive industry.

Buffer areas between extractive activities and sensitive land uses should be determined on the following considerations:

- Appropriate limits on effects can be met at the sensitive locations using practical and readily available technology.
- Whether a change of land use in the vicinity of the extractive industry is proposed.
- Use of land within the buffer areas is not limited by adverse effects created by the extractive activities.
- Performance standards identified under the relevant legislation.
- Types of activities within land zoned for public use.

Protect the brown coal resource in Central Gippsland by ensuring that:

- Changes in use and development of land overlying coal resources, as generally defined in *Framework of the Future* (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources and Minister for Planning and Environment, 1987) and the *Land Over Coal and Buffer Area Study* (Ministry for Planning and Environment, 1988), do not compromise the winning or processing of coal.
- Ensure coal-related development is adequately separated from residential or other sensitive uses and main transport corridors by buffer areas to minimise adverse effects such as noise, dust, fire, earth subsidence, and visual intrusion.
- Ensure uses and development within the buffer areas are compatible with uses and development adjacent to these areas.

Policy guidelines

Planning must consider as relevant:

- *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*.
- *Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Act (2008)*,
- *Geothermal Energy Resources Act (2005)*,
- *Petroleum Act (1998)*.
- *Melbourne Supply Area - Extractive Industry Interest Areas Review -Geological Survey of Victoria Technical Record 2003/2*.
- *Ballarat Supply Area - Extractive Industry Interest Areas – Geological Survey of Victoria Technical Record 1997/.3*
- *Bendigo Supply Area - Extractive Industry Interest Areas – Geological Survey of Victoria Technical Record 1998/6*.
- *Geelong Supply Area - Extractive Industry Interest Areas – Geological Survey of Victoria Technical Record 1999/2*.
- *La Trobe Supply Area - Extractive Industry Interest Areas – Geological Survey of Victoria Technical Record 1999/4*.
- Any relevant *State Environment Protection Policy*.