

21.03 The State and regional context

The Municipal Strategic Statement has been prepared within the context of the State Planning Policy Framework which is set out in the Victoria Planning Provisions. The MSS has been prepared to assist in the implementation of the State Policies.

The purpose of State Policies is to inform Councils and the community of those aspects of State level planning that are to be taken into account and given effect in planning and administering planning schemes in their respective areas. The State Policies are set out in Sections 11 to 19 of this Planning Scheme.

State context

The State policies are grouped under headings and a summary of those which are relevant to the Baw Baw Shire are listed below.

Settlement

Planning Authorities are required to plan to accommodate population growth and ensure a sufficient supply of land for at least the next ten years. The Baw Baw Shire planning scheme has been prepared so as to accommodate the expected increase of 5,565 persons and 2,507 households projected for the Baw Baw Shire to the year 2011 as set out in *Victorian in Future* (Department of Infrastructure, 1996). Existing zoning for residential development can support the projected rate of growth in all urban areas.

The major long term impact on the Shire's planning development is expected to be the continued expansion of the south east Melbourne metropolitan area and the focus of growth along the Princes Freeway east of Melbourne. The Baw Baw Shire Council is committed to maintaining the separate identity of the communities within the Shire and to protect the high quality productive land within the Shire from urban encroachment. Improved public transport commuting links are needed from the Shire's towns to Melbourne.

Environment

The Baw Baw Shire planning scheme through its Municipal Strategic Statement, local planning policies, choice and application of zones and overlays places a strong emphasis on the pursuit and achievement of the State's environmental policy framework, including that expressed through State Environment Protection Policies (SEPPs). The maintenance of water quality is critical and a co-ordinated program of action within the framework of the West Gippsland Catchment and Land Protection Board's Regional Catchment Strategy is to be pursued.

Land affected by flooding in urban and rural areas is identified with the relevant zones and overlays on the planning scheme maps.

The Shire contains a wealth of built heritage assets and the planning scheme will seek to apply a consistent approach to the retention of this built heritage.

Planning decisions are to assist in the conservation and sustainable use of the Shire's natural resources. Decisions are to support the maintenance of environmental quality by ensuring a co-ordinated approach on the location, layout, siting and timing of development and the provision of infrastructure. In order to assist this decision-making Council will, in the near future, develop a Shire-wide Environment Strategy.

Housing

Future residential development is required to be in accord with the relevant provisions of VicCode 1 and the Good Design Guide. Rural living areas in the form of low density residential areas have only been provided in and around existing townships where access to infrastructure and community facilities and services is provided. Land for this form of development has been set aside based on the previous planning scheme provisions of the former municipalities. There is more than sufficient land in these existing zones to cater for the projected demand to the year 2011.

Economic development

The Baw Baw Shire planning scheme places a strong emphasis on the protection of the Shire's agricultural base and the retention of the high quality productive agricultural land. The protection of the productive capacity and the minimisation of land use conflicts with continued agricultural production is of strategic significance at the local and regional level.

The Shire's timber resources are substantial. The Shire supports the sustainable utilisation of those resources and the use of increased timber planting to address environmentally damaged areas and increase economic activity. The siting of timber processing facilities in the Shire's communities in locations which will not conflict with residential and community amenity is required. Timber production is to be promoted on land that is already predominantly cleared but of marginal or low quality.

Tourism and recreational activities are growing industries in the Shire and the strategy is to support and encourage the utilisation of the Shire's resources for tourism where they are consistent with the sustainable management of the natural resource base and the provision of infrastructure.

The Shire contains a very large resource of sand north of Trafalgar which has been identified and mapped. This sand is suitable for extraction over the longer term. This area has been identified in the planning scheme as the Trafalgar Sands Area. The management of land use and development will be guided by a local policy and an overlay in the planning scheme.

Future opportunities for major industrial activity, particularly that which adds value to the Shire's primary products, is important to the economic development of the region. Identification of suitable locations for major industry will be carried out and sites will be rezoned as appropriate.

The Gippsland coalfields are an important energy resource suitable as a fuel source for the generation of electricity, and having potential for alternative fuels and other products.

The coal resource of the Gippsland Coalfields Policy Area affects the region shown on policy map titled Coal Resources. This policy relates to that part of the regional resource which occurs in the Baw Baw Shire, namely Coverlea and Andersons Creek.

In all designated coal resource areas there should be a general presumption against the use and development of the land for urban or non coal related industrial purposes, major overburden dumps or other uses which could prejudice the winning or processing of underlying coal. Uses of land which maintain and enhance land use capability and productivity should be encouraged in these areas.

Infrastructure

The Shire is served by high quality infrastructure in the form of the Princes Freeway and the Gippsland rail line. A network of major roads serve the rural areas and various towns. These facilities provide a spine for the Shire's overall planning and development. Better access to tourist and recreation facilities is required.

Facilities to support the provision of high quality water and the treatment of effluent are critical for the economic well being of the Shire and the maintenance of environmental quality. Future residential development must be supported with fully reticulated sewerage services. The Shire supports the provision of such services to currently unserved towns. In order to co-ordinate the provision of services and ensure their equitable resourcing the Council will prepare a development contributions scheme for infrastructure in the future.

Regional context

Baw Baw Shire's strategic planning is to continue to be co-ordinated with the strategic directions set by adjoining municipalities. In particular, the Shire proposes to develop a co-ordinated approach with the adjoining South Gippsland Shire, Cardinia Shire and Bass Coast Shire to ensure that the natural resource base is managed to protect the quality of the agricultural land base. Land in adjoining areas of these other municipalities also contains areas of high quality agricultural land and consistent policy needs to be established to protect its long-term potential.

Management of land and water resources will be assisted by continuing reference to the strategies and actions set out in the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority's Regional Catchment Strategy and relevant SEPPs. Given that most of Baw Baw Shire is in the headwaters of the Latrobe River system it is critical that water quality in streams be maintained through the management of run off from urban, *forest* and rural areas. A smaller area on the western edge of the Shire lies in the Westernport Bay catchment area which is covered by the Port Phillip CALP Board's Regional Catchment Strategy.

The economic development and urban growth opportunities in the Shire, particularly along the Princes Highway corridor are strongly influenced by the eastward expansion of Melbourne and the economic prosperity of the Latrobe Valley urban areas. Strategic planning of urban and economic development and transport infrastructure needs to continue to be co-ordinated with the adjoining Cardinia and Latrobe Councils.

