

21.06 ECONOMIC ISSUES

21.06-1 Economic development

Objective

To foster economic development with an emphasis on the key areas of agriculture, tourism, industry and services.

Outline of the issue

Economic development is critical to the overall wellbeing of the municipality, both in terms of providing employment opportunities for its residents and in attracting business investment. The planning policy for metropolitan Melbourne "Living Suburbs" identifies the need to provide a business environment conducive to sustainable long term economic growth and the need to strengthen links between Melbourne and regional Victoria to increase the competitiveness of the Victorian economy as a whole.

Economic development must be considered in a wider regional context and the Cardinia Shire is strategically placed with links to the Melbourne metropolitan, Westernport, Dandenong Ranges and West Gippsland regions. A Regional Economic Development Strategy was recently completed for the Westernport Region, and the strategy identified that the key to strong and sustained economic development in the region lies in the promotion and development of agriculture, tourism and industry. Agriculture, tourism and industry, along with a growing services sector (including retailing), form the base for economic development in the Cardinia Shire.

The unemployment rate in the Cardinia Shire (4.8%) compares favourably with the Westernport Region (7.7%) and metropolitan Melbourne (8.4%). The challenge is to sustain this low rate of unemployment as the population of the municipality increases, particularly through urban development in the growth corridor, as Council's Corporate Plan recognises that population growth without employment growth is not sustainable.

Encouraging local employment opportunities results in residents travelling shorter distances to work, spending less time and money on travel and resulting in a better quality of life. In particular, opportunities to work from home are increasing due to the capacity of technology, and this should be encouraged (offices and cottage industries).

The unique and diverse environment in the Cardinia Shire must be recognised as an economic strength and if economic development is to be sustainable, it must not be promoted at the expense of the environment. A sound economy and health environment are in the long term dependant on each other, and this is recognised in the Westernport Regional Economic Development Strategy which identifies that there must be respect for the natural environment and ecology of the region in order that the agriculture and tourism sectors can continue to prosper and develop.

Strategies

- Encourage sustainable business opportunities, particularly the establishment of new small businesses and the growth and development of existing businesses.
- Retain and develop businesses in townships to ensure access to a range of commercial services is available to local residents and to provide for local employment.
- Provide the opportunity for people to work from home where the activity undertaken does not adversely impact on the amenity of the local area.

- Promote access to education and training, especially for young people, and seek the establishment of a TAFE College in Pakenham with links to the local economy, especially agriculture and tourism.
- Recognise the significant industrial base in the Dandenong area as an opportunity for employment for residents within the Cardinia Shire.
- Give priority to infrastructure projects which promote economic development.
- Contribute to the implementation of actions set out in the Westernport Regional Economic Development Strategy (October 1996).

Linkages to local policies, zones and overlays

The strategies in relation to economic development will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

- Including land in business and industrial zones to facilitate development.

21.06-2 Agriculture

Objective

To maintain agriculture as a strong and sustainable economic activity.

Outline of the issue

Farm products are Victoria's biggest export, earning in excess of \$4 billion per annum or 36% of Victoria's export income. As identified, agricultural production is one of the municipality's and the Westernport region's economic strengths, and this is shown in the following table which shows the proportion of the State's agricultural production attributable to the Cardinia Shire and the Westernport region.

Commodity	% Cardinia	% Westernport
Poultry	10.8%	54%
Vegetables	10.3%	26%
Flowers	6.6%	18%
Eggs	6.8%	30%
Turf	2.4%	31%
Cattle	2.0%	9.6%
Milk	2.3%	10%
Nursery products	1.8%	20%
Berries	1.5%	13%

The Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment and Land Protection Region, which includes the Cardinia Shire, is the third highest region in the State in terms of gross value of agricultural production after the Goulburn region and the Mallee region, and has double the gross value of agricultural production per hectare compared to any other region within Victoria. Therefore, the agricultural land in close proximity to Melbourne is of enormous value to the State economy and as a result of pressures from urban expansion of Melbourne, is also the most threatened.

The State Government is committed to protecting high quality agricultural areas from unplanned changes in land use, recognising it is essential that these areas retain their value to the State economy as a source of produce. This is reflected in the State Planning Policy Framework in relation to agriculture which seeks to ensure that the State's agricultural base is protected from the unplanned loss of high quality agricultural land. The State Planning Policy Framework also specifies that land capability is a fundamental factor in rural land use planning, and the Westernport Economic Development Strategy identifies that there needs to be a strategic base for land use planning, such as land capability analysis, if high quality land is to be protected from urban intrusion and increasing land values due to speculation. A land capability study has been recently completed for the Cardinia Shire by the Centre for Land Protection Research to provide a sound basis in preparing this planning scheme for the Cardinia Shire. Figure 4 identifies the general pattern of land capability for agriculture in the Cardinia Shire.

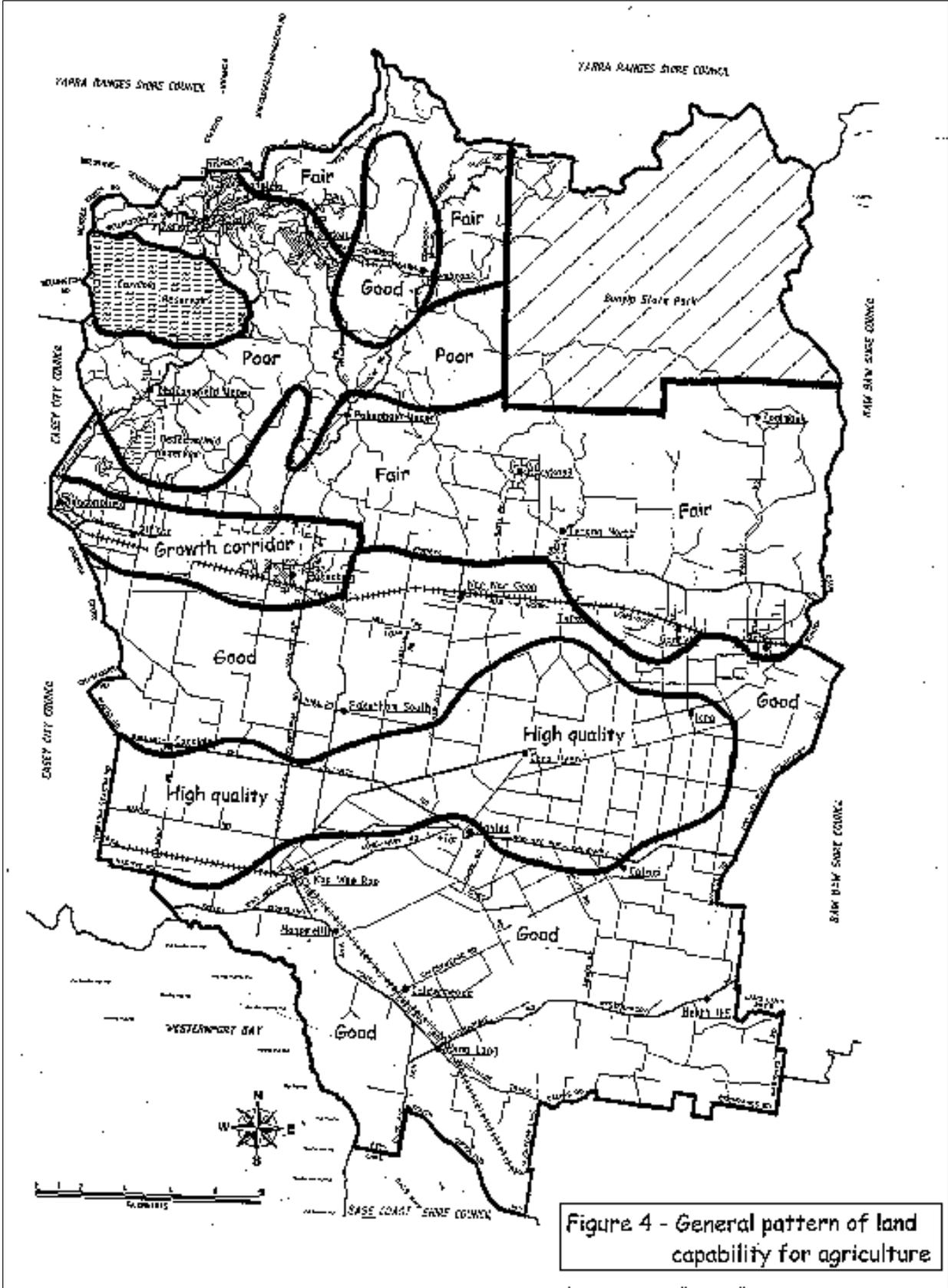
The Kooweerup Swamp area contains a peaty clay soil which is recognised as being of high quality agricultural land of State significance. This area produces 60% of Australia's export asparagus to Japan, and is also a significant area for the production of potatoes. The Gembrook area in the northern part of the municipality is also a significant producer of potatoes, but has been affected by dieldrin contamination and the Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) which places restrictions on cattle grazing and potato distribution. In light of these restrictions, further investigation of agricultural opportunities in the Gembrook area is required.

The Regional Economic Development Strategy identifies that the Asian processed food market is expected to expand by \$160 billion over the next decade. "Living Suburbs" encourages the development of industries which add value to regional products and there appears to be export opportunities for agricultural products and for the establishment of industries which process and add value to products. In addition, there are significant opportunities in the packaging and export of fresh produce.

The Port Phillip and Westernport Regional Catchment Strategy recognises that market forces are providing a strong incentive for subdivision of agricultural land on the urban fringes, and that such forces are not balanced by a clear and consistent approach to land use planning. Reductions in minimum lot sizes and changes to local rating schemes are combining with a deterioration in land condition to reduce the economic viability of agriculture in some areas. It must be appreciated that soil is a finite resource, and with a growing demand for food both domestically and internationally, it is important that we protect our agricultural land resource from inappropriate development and fragmentation, and encourage its sustainable development both from an economic and environmental perspective.

The Rural Zone allows the excision of a lot for an existing dwelling. The indiscriminate subdivision of land under this provision would lead to the fragmentation of rural land which would have significant impacts in terms of agricultural production and viability, environmental degradation and the amenity of existing residents. Such excisions should only be available to owners with a long term interest in the sustainable use of the land for agricultural production or environmental protection. It would be undesirable if the provision was used by speculators to buy land, subdivide it and then on-sell the land over a short period of time only for a financial gain. In many areas a fragmented pattern of subdivision exists with lot sizes often below an appropriate minimum lot size which reflects the purpose of the zoning of the land for agricultural or environmental purposes. The subdivision of smaller rural lots also has the potential to change the overall use of the land, and significantly increase the density of development in an area. Excisions should only occur if the area of the land is equivalent to the minimum lot size specified in the zone.

Figure 4: General pattern of land capability for agriculture



Strategies

- Protect agricultural land, particularly areas of high quality soils, from the intrusion of urban uses, inappropriate development and fragmentation which would lead to a reduction in agricultural viability, the erosion of the right of farmers to farm land, and ultimately the loss of land from agricultural production.
- Encourage the establishment of economically and environmentally sustainable farming practices.
- Recognise the growing demand for food, both domestically and internationally, and capitalise on opportunities to export fresh produce and processed food products.
- Encourage the establishment of value added industries in the municipality to process local produce.
- Provide for the restructuring of lots in agricultural areas to reduce the impact of old and inappropriate subdivisions on the agricultural viability of the area.
- Ensure efficient transport access to agricultural areas by heavy vehicles with particular attention being paid to road system improvements and the structural capacity of bridges.
- Minimise the risk of flooding which impacts on agricultural activities in the Kooweerup Flood Protection District.
- Investigate agricultural opportunities on the high quality soils in the Gembrook area where the land has been affected by dieldrin and PCN.
- Prevent non soil based uses (eg: poultry farms) being located on soils which are of high agricultural quality and, recognising the economic importance of such uses, encourage their location on rural land with a lesser soil quality.
- Allow the use of rural land for industry only if the industry is directly related to or supports agricultural production in the area. Other industrial uses should be located in industrial areas.
- Ensure that any agricultural development proposal is assessed in relation to the buffer distances in the EPA publication AQ 2/86 - Recommended Buffer Distances for Industrial Residual Air Emissions.
- Base decisions about the use or development, including subdivision, of agricultural land on land capability, and give consideration to the Land Capability Study for the Cardinia Shire (February 1997).
- Encourage the establishment of alternative and innovative agricultural activities such as herb farming, particularly in areas where fragmented lot sizes limit opportunities for broadacre agricultural activities.
- Provide for the establishment of intensive agricultural activities (eg: poultry farms and hot houses) in a location and manner which minimises the impact on nearby residents and the environment.
- Encourage research and education in relation to agricultural activities.
- Encourage responsible land management to minimise environmental degradation by pest plants and animals.

Linkages to local policies, zones and overlays

The strategies in relation to agriculture will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

- Including a local policy on rural subdivisions to ensure that small lot excisions do not impact on agricultural viability, the environment or the amenity of existing residents.
- Including an interim broiler farming policy to minimise adverse impacts from broiler farms until a new Victorian Code for Best Practice Broiler Chicken Farms is in place.
- Applying a Special Use Zone to preserve the peaty clay soils of State significance in the Kooweerup Swamp area for horticultural production by preventing the intrusion of urban and non soil based uses and the fragmentation of land.
- Specifying a 40 hectare minimum lot size for the Rural Zone to apply to general agricultural areas based on land capability for low intensity agricultural uses such as grazing.
- Applying a Restructure Overlay to reduce the impact of old and inappropriate subdivisions on the agricultural land.

21.06-3 Tourism

Objective

To develop tourism as a strong and sustainable economic activity.

Outline of the issue

The tourism planning guidelines for the State recognise that there is no universally accepted definition of tourism, and that this reflects the dynamic and comprehensive nature of the tourism industry. The guidelines put forward that “Tourism is defined as a multi-faceted industry which combines diverse activities including travel, leisure, recreation, entertainment, hospitality, business and conferences, and is supported by activities in a range of sectors including visitor attractions, visitor accommodation, retailing, transport and other services”.

The Cardinia Shire has a number of competitive strengths which support the development of strong and sustainable tourism in the municipality. These include:

- Existing tourist attractions of State and regional significance (eg: Puffing Billy Tourist Railway, Emerald Lake Park and Cardinia Reservoir Park).
- Significant regional links to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges, Gippsland and Westernport/Phillip Island, including key tourist corridors which run through the municipality (eg: South Gippsland Highway and Princes Highway).
- A landscape with high scenic and environmental values and attractive rural townships of historical interest.
- A proximity from Melbourne which allows for both day trips and overnight escapes from the urban environment.
- An active local tourism association.

The metropolitan planning policy for Melbourne “Living Suburbs” identifies that Melburnians should continue to have ready access to green spaces and non urban land offering recreational and related opportunities. The State Planning Policy Framework recognises the need to encourage tourism, including building on the assets and qualities of surrounding urban or rural activities, and cultural and natural attractions. The objective of the tourism planning guidelines for the State is to encourage tourism development to

maximise the employment and long term economic, social and cultural benefits of developing the State as a competitive tourist destination.

There is the opportunity to develop tourism as a strong and sustainable economic activity in the Cardinia Shire having regard to local, interstate and overseas tourist markets. In particular, the potential value of the local tourist market must not be under estimated.

It is important that any tourism development is sustainable and contributes to the attraction and marketing of tourism within the municipality. In this regard, caution should be exercised to avoid overdevelopment of facilities where a niche has been established, or development aimed at a short term financial goal to the detriment of tourism overall. If tourism is to be sustainable, it is also important that the scenic and environmental values of the landscape in the Cardinia Shire be protected, including the rural outlook from key tourist routes. Tourism development should be compatible and integrated with the locality and of a scale and design which minimises adverse impacts on the environment. It is important to ensure that the initial qualities which attract tourists are not destroyed in the development process.

The Puffing Billy Tourist Railway is an asset of cultural, historic and economic significance. It also is a major attractor of tourists to the municipality and provides the opportunity for related tourism development. There is a need to provide for its ongoing development to ensure its long term success, and this includes the need to protect the environs and visual corridor of the railway. The Puffing Billy Railway has recently been extended from Emerald Lake Park to Gembrook, and this will create significant opportunities for tourism, particularly in Gembrook which can be developed based on heritage themes as a major tourist destination.

Strategies

- Support the ongoing development of the Puffing Billy Tourist Railway and associated facilities as a tourist attraction of State significance, and ensure that the visual corridor along the railway is protected from inappropriate development.
- Encourage the establishment of tourism activities in the townships within the municipality through providing for the establishment of tourism activities (accommodation, restaurants, cafes, galleries, markets, etc), streetscape improvements and upgrading public amenities.
- Develop Gembrook township based on a heritage theme and the scenic qualities of the area as a major tourism destination.
- Support the development of tourist accommodation of varying sizes which does not adversely impact on the environment or affect the amenity of local residents.
- Protect areas of high scenic value and landscape quality, especially the rural outlook from key tourist routes (eg: South Gippsland Highway, Princes Highway and Bunyip Byways Tourist Trail route).
- Establish local tourism infrastructure and facilities to complement major regional attractions.
- Encourage activities which increase expenditure from tourists already visiting attractions in the municipality.
- Ensure that tourism development is compatible and integrated with the locality and is of a scale and design which minimises adverse impacts on the environment.
- Support the ongoing promotion and development of the Bunyip Byways Tourist Trail.
- Provide tourist information through the provision of directional and location signs, information centres and boards, and encouraging local businesses to provide tourist information.

- Recognise the importance of and opportunities for links between tourism and agriculture (eg: wineries, host farms and rural displays).
- Undertake research to assist in identifying tourism opportunities.
- Provide a safe environment for tourists.

Linkages to local policies, zones and overlays

The strategies in relation to tourism will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

- Including the Puffing Billy Railway land in a Public Use Zone to allow the operation of the railway as provided for under the Emerald Tourist Railway Act.
- Applying a Significant Landscape Overlay to protect the scenic corridor of the Puffing Billy Tourist Railway.
- Applying a Significant Landscape Overlay and Environmental Significance Overlay to protect significant landscapes and areas of landscape quality generally.
- Including a local policy on highway development to guide development along highways which are key tourism corridors.

21.06-4 Industry

Objective

To encourage the development of manufacturing and service industries to provide services to local residents and businesses and provide for local employment, and to ensure that industrial precincts reflect a high standard of urban design.

Outline of the issue

The Westernport region is home to 17.2% of Melbourne's manufacturing industry, and there are significant industrial land resources available in the Dandenong/Lyndhurst/Hallam area which is recognised as a major manufacturing precinct in Melbourne. This area will be a source of employment for existing and future residents in the Cardinia Shire, and there will be related opportunities for economic development.

A strategic industrial node exists around the intersection of Bald Hill Road and Kooweerup Road, Pakenham, and this will be further strengthened by the future construction of the Pakenham section of the Princes Freeway which will improve access. The development of a future strategic industrial node should be investigated in proximity to the interchange of the Pakenham section of the Princes Freeway and Cardinia Road as development in the growth corridor proceeds. Smaller industrial precincts are also located in Emerald, Maryknoll, Beaconsfield, Officer, Pakenham, Bunyip, Kooweerup and Lang Lang.

A number of existing industries add value to the process of agricultural production. Such industries should be encouraged as they support the development of the agricultural and industrial base in the municipality.

There is a need to improve the appearance of existing industrial areas, and to ensure that future industrial development creates an attractive, functional and safe business environment. This has a number of benefits including attracting further investment and development, particularly by larger industries, and creating an attractive working environment.

Strategies

- Establish a strategic industrial node at Pakenham and investigate the future option of a strategic industrial node at Officer.
- Encourage the establishment of service industries in townships to meet the needs of local residents, and to provide for local employment.
- Seek and encourage the establishment of key industries in the municipality, particularly those which create local employment opportunities.
- Encourage the establishment of industries which add value to local agricultural produce.
- Recognise the significance of the Dandenong/Hallam/Lyndhurst industrial area to the region in terms of providing employment, including for residents of the Cardinia Shire.
- Provide for limited retailing in industrial areas along arterial roads provided the retailing activities do not conflict with nearby activity centres.
- Improve the urban design of industrial precincts including streetscape, building design, landscaping, and advertising signs.
- Prevent the establishment of industrial activities in rural areas except if they are directly related, or contribute, to agricultural production.

Linkages to local policies, zones and overlays

The strategies in relation to industry will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

- Including land in close proximity to the proposed interchange of the Princes Freeway and Kooweerup Road in Pakenham in an Industrial 1 Zone.
- Specifying a minimum leasable floor area for restricted retail premises of 500 square metre in the Industrial 1 Zone.