21.02 KEY INFLUENCES AND ISSUES

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21.02-1 Key influences and issues

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The key influences and issues are:

Land uses

- The need to recognise Mildura's role as a Regional City within a regional and State context.
- The need to recognise the proportion of growth likely to be accommodated within the Main Urban Area of Mildura (Mildura, Irymple and Nichols Point).
- Most towns are located in the irrigated areas of the municipality. Ouyen is the largest town in the dry land farming areas in the southern half of the municipality.
- The need to maintain an effective 15 year supply of residential land to meet the needs of the market and avoid serious distortions in residential and other land markets.
- The constrained rate of residential housing construction within the Main Urban Area of Mildura, as a result of the lack of appropriate stormwater infrastructure. A coordinated staged program and equitable distribution of the costs of new infrastructure is critical to ensure an ongoing supply of residential land.
- The need for a greater diversity of housing choice to meet the needs of an ageing population.
- The need to manage the provision of tourist accommodation, including backpackers' accommodation, to ensure residential amenity is protected.
- The need to recognise the demand for rural residential development, while ensuring this is provided where it will not compromise long term agricultural production and can support existing settlements.
- The need to maintain a retail hierarchy in the municipality, ranging from the Mildura CBD as the pre-eminent retail centre to local neighbourhood shops.
- The need to maintain and protect industrial land for a variety of activities with varying land size and buffer requirements.
- The critical importance of protecting agricultural land for agricultural purposes, in order to support the economic base of the municipality.
- The threat to urban development from urban salinity and rising groundwater levels.

Built form and amenity

- Avoiding land use conflicts between residential and agricultural or industrial activities.
- Maintaining Deakin Avenue and its adjoining development as one of the most impressive boulevards in regional Victoria.
- The municipality's cultural, natural heritage and environmental values, which can be easily and irreparably damaged by inappropriate development.
- The need to manage and protect the many significant Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values and historic places that can be found within the municipality.
- The need to ensure subdivision and building design responds to local climatic conditions, including anticipated impacts of climate change.
- Recognition of the strong links between neighbourhood design and the health and well-being of residents.
- The need to ensure housing is accessible and adaptable to facilitate response to changes in housing requirements over time.

Environment

- The Murray River, which forms Mildura Rural City's northern and eastern municipal boundary, represents a significant environmental, economic and social asset and underpins the vitality of the region.
- Total rainfall is insufficient to fully sustain horticultural, stock and domestic demand, and there is high demand for river and stored water to sustain horticulture and domestic needs, particularly in the summer months.
- Climate change (including drought and floods) and the deregulation of the water industry have resulted in the removal of land from intensive horticulture, underutilisation of irrigated land and increased pressure for non-agricultural uses.
- Extensive development along the river has brought with it a series of problems, including increased salinity and nutrient levels; reduced water availability downstream; outbreaks of blue green algae; pollution of the river; changes to flood regimes; the threat of floodwaters overtopping levees; and the loss of habitats and flora and fauna species.
- There is an absence of any defined natural surface drainage system within the municipality.
- The municipality contains habitats sensitive to disturbance and unique flora and fauna communities.
- There are extensive areas of Mallee dune fields within the municipality and significant areas of the municipality are affected by wind erosion.
- Public parks, reserves and forests play an important role in protecting significant landscape, flora, fauna, cultural and scientific values.
- There is a need to manage issues associated with the interface between public and private land.

Economic development

- The key economic drivers of the municipality include horticultural and agricultural production, tourism, government services, and retail and commercial activities.
- The protection of irrigated horticultural land for agriculture is important, particularly in the Mildura Older Irrigated Areas (MOIA) and the Newer Irrigated Areas (NIA).
- Significant economic potential exists through the solar industry; the extraction of limestone aggregate, gypsum, and salt; and future mineral sands mining.
- Apiculture is an important industry in the region, undertaken over large areas of public land throughout the municipality.
- Both dryland and irrigated horticultural sectors have recognised that "clean and green" production is vital to prosper in their export driven industries.
- The region's future economic growth will depend largely on the expansion of horticultural and agricultural industries, commodity prices and the future management of water.
- The commercial and retail centres throughout the municipality have many historical buildings and features that are valued by the community and contribute to the character of the centres.
- The Mildura Retail Strategy 2010 stated that:
  - Retail floorspace provision in the Study Area (the urban area of Mildura and the nearby towns of Merbein, Irymple and Red Cliffs) is estimated at approximately 151,200m² as at February 2010.
  - The population of the Primary Trade Area (PTA), which includes all of urban Mildura and the nearby townships of Irymple, Merbein, Red Cliffs and Wentworth (NSW) is forecast to increase by the year 2025 from approximately 55,700 residents to between 58,400 and 66,500 residents.

  - The population of the Secondary Trade Area (STA), which comprises the balance of the Rural City of Mildura and the areas extending north towards Broken Hill (NSW) and west into the Riverland (SA) is forecast to decrease slightly by 2025.
  - By 2025, potential exists for in the order of 48,000m² to 67,000m² of additional retail development in the Study Area.
  - The Mildura CBD will be supported as the primary activity centre in Mildura for a mix of activities including retail, business, entertainment, tourism, civic, health and education.
  - The City Gate Activity Centre will be supported as a sub-regional shopping centre.
  - Fifteenth Street will be supported as the principal location for homemaker retailing.
  - Development of accessible neighbourhood and town centres will be supported where there is an identified demand for such facilities and where it will not lead to significant adverse impacts on established centres.

- Activity centres in Mildura will be places where people enjoy shopping and doing business through the adoption of appropriate design guidelines.
- Tourism is expected to be a steadily growing contributor to the retail market.
- The Mildura Airport is an important transport hub and business/industrial precinct for the region and needs to be protected from residential encroachment.

Infrastructure

- The equitable provision of urban infrastructure.
- Stormwater infrastructure is expensive and requires a long time to fund and construct.
- The staging and location of urban land release should be co-ordinated with Council's infrastructure program and recognise the need to protect the integrity and functioning of rural and horticultural activity in interface areas.
- Extensive rail infrastructure (that is primarily utilised to move grain to ports) exists throughout the municipality but is currently under-utilised.
- In order to address the short, medium and long term passenger and freight transport needs of the region, the commitment of a wide range of stakeholders is required to the staged implementation of the Mildura Transport Plan for Long Term Regional Development.
- Extensive irrigation infrastructure is located within the horticultural districts of the municipality.
- Extensive piped and channelled stock and domestic water supply systems are located throughout the municipality in areas including Hattah, Nowingi, Carwarp, and the Millewa.
- Substantial grain handling and storage infrastructure exists throughout the municipality, but is not serviced by rail infrastructure.
- Power and communications infrastructure within the municipality is capable of serving foreseeable demand.
- The relocation of the Freight Gate from Mildura CBD.
- The development of a commercial/technology park at Mildura Airport.
- Capacity constraints of the reticulated gas supply.

21.02-2 Land use themes

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Clauses 21.04 – 21.09 identify the following six key land use themes for the municipality:

Clause 21.04 Settlement and housing;

Clause 21.05 Environment

Clause 21.06 Natural resource management

Clause 21.07 Built environment and heritage

Clause 21.08 Economic development

Clause 21.09 Infrastructure and transport

The identification of the key influences and issues for each of these themes forms the basis of the subsequent objectives, strategies and implementation in Clauses 21.04 – 21.09.

21.02-3 Local areas

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Clause 21.10 contains local measures to implement the objectives and strategies identified in Clauses 21.04 - 21.09, which relate to Mildura, Irymple, Nichols Point, Cabarita, Merbein, Red Cliffs and Ouyen. Clauses 21.04 – 21.09 should be read before Clause 21.10.