

21.09 ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

21.09-1 ENVIRONMENT AND CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

The Wodonga Council recognises its central position in the North East Regional Catchment. As the major urban centre in the regional catchment, the need to ensure sustainable natural resource management and consideration of impacts of land use and development on the downstream catchment form an integral part of the strategic framework for the city of Wodonga.

- Initiatives, including soil and stormwater management controls for development sites, protection of the hillsides, the addition of riparian reserves, flood overlay controls and policies which form part of this planning scheme, demonstrate the commitment the Wodonga Council has to catchment management and caring for the environment.
- The management of a system of regional parklands to protect significant patches of native vegetation and habitat corridors is required to ensure no major loss of biodiversity.
- The Wodonga Council will continue to participate in regional forums that impact on water quality and support North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA) in the implementation of the North East Regional Catchment Strategy.
- Albury Wodonga is one of Australia's largest inland centres and a major component of the Murray Darling basin which is the nation's most significant river catchment. Management of land and water resources is fundamental to the prosperity and lifestyle of the city's residents and those downstream.
- Urban and rural development must embrace the principles of sustainable development. The application of precautionary environmental policies ensures the maintenance of the region's ecology, biodiversity and environmental qualities, including the preservation of roadside reserves, significant stands of vegetation and protection of wildlife corridors.
- The position of Wodonga in the upper catchment of the Murray River will be respected at a local level through the implementation of Urban Stormwater Best Practice Management Guidelines and Water Sensitive Urban Design Engineering Procedures, Stormwater Technical Manual.
- Proper assessment will be required of the existing conditions of sites at the earliest stage and preferably prior to land being included in a zone that facilitates more intensive development. Where appropriate, significant elements of the environment will be protected in this planning scheme through the use of additional overlay controls, prior to or concurrent with being zoned for urban development.
- The Murray River and Kiewa River floodplains are regarded as significant natural landscapes for Albury Wodonga. The encroachment of urban areas onto the floodplains will be restricted. The Wodonga Council will work in partnership with NECMA to reduce impacts of flooding and preserve the natural functions of the floodplains.
- A minimum 30 metre wide buffer will be applied to all major waterways for all urban developments and applied through the creation of a reserve where practical and when urban subdivision is proposed. Existing native vegetation in waterways and wetlands will be retained. Further protection of waterways and wetlands will be provided through the local policy section of this scheme.
- The retention of existing wetland systems will be encouraged through the implementation of principles defined in Urban Stormwater Best Practice Management Guidelines.
- Development proposals in the southern area of the municipality, including Baranduda and Leneva, will take into consideration the high fire and erosion risk identified through the Wildlife Management Overlay.

- The Wodonga Council will continue to support NECMA in the enhancement of river health, including weed removal and bank stabilisation works in and around Wodonga.
- The implications associated with the North East Salinity Strategy will be assessed.

21.09-2 Native Vegetation

11/12/2008
C57

In 2006, the Wodonga Council, in conjunction with the AWC, completed a study of the natural environment in southern parts of the city, including South Wodonga through to Leneva and Baranduda. The study was commenced to overcome the conflicting situation that arises when urban development occurs on land that contains natural environmental values such as remnant native vegetation. A challenge with the current approach applied by the state through the policy in clause 52.17 is the fact that it does not distinguish between land that is zoned and not zoned for urban development.

Often the experience is that native vegetation is extremely difficult to retain on land that is already zoned for urban development. Measures to retain native vegetation on land zoned for urban development have often been piecemeal and have yielded little in the way of sustainable gains for habitat improvement.

With the objective of undertaking a more strategic approach, the Wodonga Council and AWC undertook the Wodonga Retained Environmental Network (WREN) Project. This project balanced the legitimate needs of protecting the environment and facilitating urban development by identifying and protecting significant corridors and patches of native vegetation before land is required for urban development and on a broad scale basis.

Strategic Actions

- Implement the WREN's approach to all future re-zonings that have the potential to impact on remnant native vegetation, identifying and protecting significant native vegetation as part of the strategic planning process.
- Implement the recommendations of the WREN's study incorporating the study as a precinct plan in the schedule to clause 52.17, including the protection of identified patches and corridors of remnant native vegetation in the planning scheme.
- Ensure that private land identified for inclusion in the Public Park and Recreation Zone or Public Conservation and Resource Zone is acquired as part of the rezoning process, in accordance with the recommendations of the WREN's study.

21.09-3 The Hills

11/12/2008
C57

- The hills surrounding Wodonga have been long recognised as being of visual importance. The significance of the hills is reinforced by the National Trust listing of many of them surrounding Wodonga as landscapes of significance, recommending that they be protected in the planning scheme.
- The hills are one of the most widely identified and supported environmental, lifestyle and community assets in Wodonga.
- It is important to maintain the system of ridgelines and hillsides that encircle Wodonga, Baranduda, Lake Hume and the Middle Creek Valley (Leneva) as major landscape elements, free of development.
- These hills will be protected from inappropriate urban development to provide a landscape backdrop to urban areas and where possible these land parcels will be added to the Regional Parks' System and made available for passive recreational use.
- The hills will be linked to the urban area and floodplains through a system of linear open spaces and vegetated areas throughout the municipality.
- Residential development will be prevented above nominated contour levels which are based on the keyline – major break in slope, between the hillface and valley as identified by the Environmental Significance Overlay.

- The hillsides will be protected in a manner that maintains the pristine landscape backdrop to the existing and planned urban areas in the municipality.
- Telecommunications facilities may be supported on the hilltops in recognition of the essential service they provide to the community.

21.09-4 Rural Land and Agriculture

11/12/2008
C57

In comparison to the neighbouring Shires of Indigo and Towong, the total value of agricultural production in Wodonga is relatively insignificant at \$5.5 million pa.

Due to topographical constraints such as hills and floodplains, a large percentage of the city of Wodonga will not be required for future urban development and will remain in rural use. These areas are identified by the Flood Overlay, Significant Landscape Overlay and are not marked as required for urban or Rural Living development on the Wodonga Growth Strategy Plan (refer to Figure 1). These areas require careful land management for a range of environmental, lifestyle and economic reasons. Some of these areas have been subject to speculation for future hobby farm development and are under pressure for further fragmentation.

This strategy seeks to protect existing and future farm units through the identification of all land likely to be required for future urban development and through the implementation of policies that discourage urban uses in rural areas. It is therefore clear which areas are to remain in rural use. The strategy also recognises the difficulties encountered at the interface between rural and urban activities. Rural landowners are likely to experience land management conflicts that impinge on regular agricultural operations, including weed infestation, feral animals and neighbour complaints regarding spray drift, noise and odour. This, combined with speculative land purchases, can diminish and discourage legitimate farming activities.

Strategic Actions

- Rural living, rural residential development and housing on small lots below the minimum area specified in this scheme will not be supported, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the development is ancillary to commercial rural production. Such rural enterprises are to be established prior to any proposal being considered. This strategic direction is in place to maintain the economies of scale and recognise the potential for farming to expand in the city of Wodonga.
- Rural living, rural residential development and small lot housing will be directed to specific areas as identified in the Rural Living and Low Density Residential Strategy Plan (refer to Figure 10).
- High quality agricultural land within the Murray and Kiewa floodplain will not be developed for new urban or rural residential purposes.
- All rural uses are to be sustainable and manageable as effective and operational uses. A balance will be maintained between agricultural best practice, use of whole farm management plans and ensuring minimal impact on the environment within non urban areas.
- Other uses, including tourist based uses, will be considered in non urban areas, where it is demonstrated that these activities contribute to the local economy and maintain the environmental quality and integrity of the landscape.

21.09-5 Lake Hume

11/12/2008
C57

Lake Hume is an important water storage resource for south east Australia and a recreational resource for the Albury Wodonga region. The council, in conjunction with various other authorities, has a responsibility to ensure coordinated development and

management of the lake foreshore and its catchment. Future land use and development must complement the objective of maintaining high quality water supply.

Strategic Actions

- The lake foreshore will be protected with appropriate buffers established through a policy for building works and septic systems (outside the Bonegilla township).
- The pristine setting of the lake will be maintained with its surrounding land kept free of urban development.
- The City of Wodonga will jointly investigate with Goulburn Murray Water, the Shires of Indigo and Towong, the provision of an Environmental Significance Overlay around the perimeter of Lake Hume.
- Urban development will be supported in Bonegilla and only in circumstances where reticulated sewerage and drainage services are provided.
- Housing and development associated with rural land must be sympathetic to the landscape and complement the setting provided by the lake.
- Maintenance and protection of the structural integrity of the dam wall is of national significance and will not be impeded by the requirements of this scheme.
- Tourism and recreational uses will be encouraged in accordance with approved management plans and policy for the lake.
- Urban stormwater treatments discharged into Lake Hume will have the consent of Goulburn Murray Water and will meet best practice environmental management guidelines prior to any discharge.
- Public access will be provided to the foreshore areas of Lake Hume with land use and development that acts as a barrier to public access and views from major roads through to the lake being actively discouraged.

21.09-6 Heritage

The City of Wodonga contains a diverse collection of heritage places, distinctive to the municipality, of both European and Aboriginal origin. The early European settlement of the area has provided the municipality with a collection of heritage buildings and places of both local and State significance. The heritage places, as well as the layout and settlement pattern of the central city Wodonga and surrounding rural areas, provide information about the history and development of the region. Heritage places of scientific, aesthetic, architectural, historical or other special value should be conserved and enhanced for future generations.

The Wodonga City Council completed Stage 1 of its Heritage Study in 2004. This study, *Wodonga City Council, Victoria, Heritage Study, Volume 1, Thematic Environmental History* (2004) produced a Thematic Environmental History and an inventory of post-contact places of potential cultural heritage significance across the municipality. Stage 2(a) of the Heritage Study, *Wodonga Heritage Study Stage 2(a)* was completed in 2011, and assessed 45 individual places, and one precinct, as having cultural heritage significance at a local level, and recommended their inclusion in the Heritage Overlay of the Wodonga Planning Scheme. Stage 2(a) is the first of a number Heritage Studies aimed at completing the assessment of all places of potential cultural heritage significance identified in the Stage 1 Heritage Study.

Wodonga City Council will continue to pursue funding for the completion of the study to enable appropriate planning for the protection of all places of cultural heritage significance. Council is committed to the documentation and protection of its built heritage.

The introduction of heritage overlays to protect and conserve these heritage assets is a recent initiative within Wodonga. Council will actively promote the aesthetic, environmental, economic, social and cultural value of the City of Wodonga's heritage places. It will educate the community regarding the value of the municipality's heritage, and promote the contribution that the conservation of heritage places makes to environmental, economic and social sustainability, as well as cultural tourism and the economy.

Strategic Actions

- Complete *Wodonga Heritage Study Stage 2* by continuing to undertake assessment of the cultural heritage significance of places identified in *Wodonga City Council, Victoria, Heritage Study, Volume 1, Thematic Environmental History* (2004).
- Implement appropriate planning scheme controls to protect identified places of cultural significance.
- Recognise and promote the importance of the City of Wodonga's heritage as a major cultural asset.
- Support the protection and conservation of the City of Wodonga's heritage places for their contribution to a sense of place, their role in the City's history and the potential to support tourism.
- Implement the findings of the *Wodonga Heritage Study Stage 2(a)* (2011).
- Develop Heritage Guidelines for the City of Wodonga's heritage places and precincts.
- Apply the Heritage Overlay 43.01 to individual heritage places and precincts.
- Apply the Cultural Heritage Policy at Clause 22.05.
- Review and update Clause 22.05, if required, following the completion of the *Wodonga Heritage Study Stage 2*.