

02.0310/06/2021
C136surf**02.03-1**10/06/2021
C136surf**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS****Settlement**

Strong population growth in the Shire's coastal towns is expected to continue due to sustained interest in the region's natural environment. While there is pressure to expand some settlement boundaries into areas of high landscape significance, the landscape settings between settlements need to be retained.

Torquay-Jan Juc and Winchelsea are the only towns with capacity to accommodate substantial growth. Other towns are limited in opportunities to grow due to various physical, environmental or infrastructure constraints.

Torquay-Jan Juc is the gateway to Bells Beach and is the main urban growth centre of the Shire, with a population expecting to grow to 30,000 by the year 2040 (Surf Coast Shire, 2014). It is a popular destination for surfers, tourists, young families and retirees and is becoming increasingly popular for permanent settlement by those valuing a coastal lifestyle. It is important that while Torquay continues to grow as a tourist destination, it also provides retail and entertainment services for the growing local and sub-regional population. The Spring Creek corridor west of Duffields Road is an area identified for long term urban growth.

Winchelsea is the largest inland town in the Shire and is the major service centre for the surrounding farming community. It is rich in heritage and has an active tourism industry with wineries, berry farms, restaurants, cafes and accommodation in the broader district. Winchelsea is well serviced by a railway station, hospital, community and recreation facilities, and reticulated services, providing opportunities for population growth.

Coastal towns

Lorne has a low permanent population and an economy that is strongly focused on tourism. Its tourism facilities, coastal location and association with the Great Ocean Road make it a prime tourism destination. The town encircles and slopes down to Louttit Bay. Larger lots surrounding the town serve as a buffer between the town and the Great Otway National Park. Further settlement growth is constrained by the National Park, significant remnant vegetation and extreme bushfire risk.

Out of all the coastal towns in the Shire, **Anglesea** has the highest percentage of permanent residents after Torquay-Jan Juc. It provides local convenience and tourist-related retailing services. Tourism is a vital component of the local economy and Anglesea is well placed to capitalise on the growing popularity of nature and adventure based tourism due to its natural setting and camp facilities.

The Anglesea Northern Hinterland, part of which was previously used for a power station and coal mine, lies to the north of Anglesea outside the settlement boundary. The facility's closure presents an opportunity for a select range of new uses. This land is significant for its biodiversity values, the presence of the Anglesea River and its landscape setting as the northern interface between the township of Anglesea and the Great Otway National Park.

Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View have a small permanent population and are popular holiday and retirement destinations. They are contained by dense bushland and a scenic coastline, abutting the Great Otway National Park. The Painkalac Creek, separating Aireys Inlet and Fairhaven, has significant environmental and geomorphological value. Further settlement growth is constrained by the conservation value of adjoining land, extreme bushfire risk and difficulties in providing infrastructure.

Rural towns

Moriac, Bellbrae and Deans Marsh are small rural towns with a majority of residents commuting elsewhere for employment opportunities, but who choose to live in the townships for their rural residential lifestyle. They each offer a range of services to their local communities.

Council seeks to:

- Concentrate urban growth in Torquay-Jan Juc and Winchelsea.
- Contain urban development within settlement boundaries to maintain compact townships.
- Maintain non-urban breaks between townships to protect the rural landscape and significant biodiversity assets from urban intrusion.
- Strengthen the individual role of each coastal and rural town to maintain the Shire's diverse offering of experiences and opportunities.

02.03-2

10/06/2021
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Environmental landscapes and values

Great Ocean Road and significant landscapes

The Great Ocean Road and south west coast region is characterised by scenic coastal vistas and landscapes that are of local, national and international importance. Native vegetation is intrinsic to the character of the area and is highly valued by the community and visitors alike. The Great Ocean Road with its coastal views is an important domestic and international tourist destination.

The physical landscapes of the Shire significantly contribute to the amenity of the Surf Coast, enhancing the lifestyle of residents and adding value to the tourism economy. Urban intrusion, visually prominent development, the introduction of pest species and the removal of vegetation can erode significant landscape qualities and coastal viewsheds.

The rural areas of the Shire have been categorised into landscape precincts, as follows and identified on the Landscape precincts plan in Clause 02.04:

- **Winchelsea Plains** (Area 1 on the Landscape precincts plan) – characterised by generally flat topography, with the Barwon River valley bisecting the flat plains. The Barwon River and its surrounding environs is the focal point of Winchelsea. The RAMSAR listed Lake Murdeduke is the dominant feature to the west, while to the east the landscape becomes more undulating gently rising to the volcanic cone of Mt Pollock.
- **Barrabool Hills** (Area 2 on the Landscape precincts plan) – a distinctive upland ridge that slopes steeply down to the Barwon River on the northern side and more gently southward to the Princes Highway. This precinct features Mount Moriac, the highest relief in the Shire. The Hills, comprising this precinct and west to Mt Pollock, are significant at a regional and local level for their historic and aesthetic qualities, geological and geomorphological properties and association with indigenous peoples.

Both Precinct 1 and 2 are open and uncluttered, offering views to the surrounding landscape.

- **Mixed Farming** (Area 3 on the Landscape precincts plan) - undulating, cleared pastoral land bisected by the Barwon River in the west and Thompsons Creek in the east, ending in low, environmentally significant, open swamp behind coastal dunes at Breamlea.
- **Cape Otway Road to the Northern Foothills and Coast** (Area 4 on the Landscape precincts plan) - consisting of undulating open farm land bordering dense bushland. The gently rolling hills, incised creeks and gullies and pockets of remnant vegetation contribute to a sheltered and enclosed landscape. The landscape and environmental values of this precinct make it attractive for tourist and lifestyle use and development.
- **Otway Ranges and Coast** (Area 5 on the Landscape precincts plan) - dominated by the Great Otway National Park and the Anglesea Heath, consisting largely of dense forest in hilly terrain edged with low coastal heath. It also comprises an open valley landscape at Painkalac Creek. Bells Beach forms the precinct's north-eastern boundary and is where the pastoral landscape meets the seascape. The landscape of the Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve and its surrounds is of high scenic value and is characterised by the relative absence of visible built structures. The hinterland to Bells Beach (bounded by Bones Road, Addiscot Road, Bells Beach Road and Jarosite Road) has a rural and bush landscape character, consisting of indigenous bushland comprising different vegetation communities from coastal scrub to treed dry forest, with remnant understorey and ground layers. The rugged coastline to the south-west encompasses

Point Addis with its beach and associated surf breaks. The heritage listed Split Point Lighthouse is the most prominent structure on the foreshore between Aireys Inlet and Eastern View. The settlements of Anglesea to Eastern View sit within fragile heathlands and open dry woodlands, making any development between townships highly visible along the coast.

Council seeks to:

- Protect and enhance the landscape values of the rural precincts.
- Encourage land use and development that is complementary to the rural landscape character.
- Protect and enhance the environmental qualities and landscape values of the Great Ocean Road and its coastal environs, including Point Addis, Bells Beach and its hinterland.
- Protect the visual prominence of the Great Ocean Road and public viewing points along the Otway Coast and Ranges.
- Protect the viewsheds of the region.

Biodiversity

The Shire's settlements, coastal reserves and hinterland support vegetation of local and state conservation significance, including a range of threatened flora and fauna.

Creek corridors, heathlands, native grasslands, grassy woodland and scattered mature native eucalyptus trees are important biodiversity features of the Shire. Remnant vegetation, including riparian vegetation in wetlands, has high ecological value for the habitat it provides to native and migratory fauna.

The Shire is experiencing loss and fragmentation of vegetation, including rare endemic species due to development pressures, bushfire mitigation measures and other clearing. Pest species also adversely affect biodiversity of coastal reserves, native grasslands and bushland areas. This causes degradation of flora and fauna habitat, biodiversity and ecosystem processes and functions.

Council seeks to:

- Protect and enhance the Shire's significant biodiversity features.
- Protect and enhance remnant vegetation communities.
- Protect, enhance and re-establish indigenous vegetation patches and links.

River corridors, waterways, lakes and wetlands

The Shire faces threats to the health of its waterways, wetlands, estuaries and marine ecosystems. Development on saline areas, such as lakes, estuaries, coastal wetlands and saltmarshes, can change hydrological processes and degrade land and water quality.

The Shire's remaining wetlands, including those in the Winchelsea Plains landscape precinct, have internationally significant ecological values. The management of development and use near waterbodies and waterways, including the Thompsons and Ravens Creek, can help minimise waste water discharge and any detrimental effects on water quality.

Council seeks to:

- Protect the health of waterways, wetlands, estuaries and marine ecosystems.

02.03-3

10/06/2021
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Environmental risks and amenity

Environmental risks

The Shire is in one of the most vulnerable bushfire prone regions in the world. The Otway Ranges and Coast landscape precinct is one of the most fire prone areas in the State. Forested land presents a bushfire threat to the hinterland towns of Deans Marsh and Bellbrae and the coastal towns of Anglesea through to Lorne and the western edge of Jan Juc.

Landscapes in high bushfire risk areas are visually pleasing and are often sought after for use and development, including for tourism. However, the extent of required bushfire protection measures to safeguard these can adversely impact landscape and neighbourhood character and vegetation cover that should be protected.

In the face of climate change, environmental risks and their impacts can worsen including increased sea level rise, bushfire risk, storm surge, coastal inundation and riverine flooding.

Council seeks to:

- Direct development to areas where environmental risks, particularly bushfire risk, are lowest.
- Discourage urban development in areas prone to environmental risks where those risks cannot be mitigated.
- Manage the impact of bushfire protection measures by balancing the need to remove vegetation with protecting native vegetation cover and landscape and neighbourhood character.

02.03-4

10/06/2021
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Natural resource management

Protection of agricultural land

The agricultural capability and current allotment and tenement sizes in the Winchelsea Plains and Barrabool Hills landscape precincts are conducive to agriculture and much land is still used for broadacre farming.

Increasing development pressure in rural areas, often associated with tourism, hobby farming, rural residential development, urban intrusion and infrastructure development, is changing the rural landscape. Inappropriate use and development in rural areas increases the price of land above its productive value, decreases farm affordability, and results in the loss of agricultural land.

These negative impacts are evidenced through:

- Development of multiple 'old Crown' titles with dwellings.
- Hobby farming or rural residential type living in productive farming areas.
- Small lot excisions.
- Construction of dwellings unrelated to farming.
- Pest plant and animal invasion.

Council seeks to:

- Protect the ability of future generations to productively farm the land.
- Avoid the loss of agricultural productivity associated with land use conflicts, particularly between farming activities and non-farm related residential development.

Sustainable agriculture

The potential exists for irrigated agriculture, particularly in the east of the Mixed Farming landscape precinct, when recycled water becomes available from facilities like the Black Rock Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The area around Deans Marsh, Bambra and Pennyroyal has seen a decline in dairying, while agroforestry, grass seed production, vines and olive groves are emerging. This has resulted in enhancements made to patches of remnant vegetation.

There is a continuing shift towards intensive agricultural industries and hobby or part time farming. Intensive farming is focussed mainly north of the Princes Highway where there is sufficient land to meet buffer requirements. The intensive animal production industries for pig and poultry are growing in the Winchelsea Plains landscape precinct. Subject to the availability of water, there

are also opportunities for more intensive horticultural production to locate in the Barrabool Hills landscape precinct due to its topography, agricultural capability and its strategic location near the major market of Geelong. Grazing and grain farming is often undertaken in the Bellbrae hinterland.

Council seeks to:

- Protect and enhance the rural areas for their diverse agricultural, environmental and landscape values and opportunities.
- Encourage sustainable agricultural activities and associated rural industries, to grow and maintain prosperous and sustainable rural communities.

02.03-5

06/06/2022
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Built environment and heritage

Neighbourhood character

Vegetation plays a key role in defining township character and in softening urban development.

The coastline and areas of remnant vegetation and landscape quality surrounding Torquay-Jan Juc contribute strongly to the character and amenity of the town.

Other coastal towns each have a unique character. They are generally characterised by the dominance of indigenous vegetation cover over low-density built form and low-profile buildings with a sense of space between properties. Views of surrounding landscape features also form part of their character and amenity.

Development pressure and insensitive suburban style development threaten township character, which has been impacted by re-subdivision, infill development, larger and bulkier replacement dwellings and vegetation loss, including from the desire for views or for the creation and maintenance of defensible space for bushfire protection.

The streetscape amenity of commercial and industrial areas, including its landscaping and built form also contribute to the character of towns.

Council seeks to:

- Protect the coastal township character values of low urban density, recessive built form, vegetated coastal landscapes and ecological values of the natural environment.
- Encourage development to achieve architectural and urban design outcomes consistent with the preferred character of a town or area.

Heritage

Throughout the Shire are numerous landscapes and sites of significance for their connections to Aboriginal living cultural heritage.

The Shire has post-contact European heritage places which define its character and contribute to the attraction of the municipality as a desirable place to live and visit. Throughout the Shire are buildings, streetscapes, structures, landscapes and precincts that represent community identity and need to be protected to maintain the Shire's character and sense of place. This includes a significant number of residential properties (including rural homesteads and coastal holiday homes), commercial buildings, places of worship, industrial complexes, and infrastructure.

Winchelsea features a number of valued historical buildings, including the Barwon Park Mansion and a bluestone bridge from the 1860's. In Lorne, the Mountjoy Parade Heritage Precinct is a significant and predominantly intact 19th and 20th century cultural heritage landscape that contains a number of significant individual heritage buildings. Bells Beach is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register for its surfing, cultural and aesthetic heritage values. The Great Ocean Road is listed on both the Victorian Heritage Register and the National Heritage List for its historical, archaeological, aesthetic and social significance. The Split Point Lighthouse in Aireys Inlet is also of State Significance.

Council seeks to conserve the Aboriginal and post-European contact cultural heritage places in the Shire and manage change in a manner that enhances their significance.

02.03-6

10/06/2021
C136surf

Housing

Lorne, Winchelsea and Anglesea are experiencing an aging population and declining household size. Lone person households are increasing in Anglesea and there is a higher than average number of people identifying as living with a disability in Winchelsea.

A significant proportion of dwellings in the coastal towns are not permanently occupied, serving as holiday homes. This contributes to a lack of affordable worker accommodation, particularly during peak tourism periods.

The Shire is faced with declining housing affordability and limited dwelling diversity, particularly on the coast where there is a lack of smaller dwellings near the town centres and commercial services, community facilities and designated tourist nodes.

However, any housing growth should not compromise neighbourhood character.

Council seeks to:

- Support a range of housing types, sizes and configurations to accommodate the future needs of the growing and changing population.
- Support residential development densities that protect the historic and coastal character of the settlements.

Rural residential development

Rural residential living is a highly sought after lifestyle in the Shire, especially in locations along the coast and within commuting distance of Geelong and Melbourne. However, rural residential development can lead to urban sprawl and requires the provision of services in remote areas to benefit relatively few households.

Rural residential development is not suitable in areas of high landscape or environmental significance, including land adjoining a conservation area, or in agriculturally valuable areas.

Rural living development is very limited in the Winchelsea Plains landscape precinct.

Torquay-Jan Juc, Winchelsea and Moriac contain opportunities for future rural residential development as identified on their respective framework plans in Clause 02.04.

Council seeks to:

- Limit the provision of rural residential lots outside settlement boundaries.
- Ensure that rural residential development does not detract from the landscape, cultural heritage, environmental or agricultural values of adjoining land.
- Locate rural residential development so that it avoids loss of agricultural land, natural hazards and adverse amenity impacts to residents.
- Direct rural residential development to identified areas in Torquay-Jan Juc, Winchelsea and Moriac where it can be efficiently serviced and does not encroach on future urban growth areas.

02.03-7

10/06/2021
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Economic development

Employment

There are opportunities to diversify the economy and provide local employment opportunities in Winchelsea by promoting the health, education, and tourism sectors, as well as the green industry sector (such as renewable energy and local food production), which seeks to minimise environmental impacts. The Princes Highway is a major truck route that presents opportunities for commercial enterprises.

There is minimal opportunity for industrial uses in Aireys Inlet due to amenity and environmental conflicts. These issues have also constrained the ability for the industrial estates in Anglesea and Lorne to expand. Employment precincts have been identified in Torquay-Jan Juc to enhance local employment opportunities.

Enabling residential and rural residential development on land close to recognised industrial areas often leads to residential amenity issues that compromise the viability of industrial operations, such as in the Anglesea Industrial Estate.

Council seeks to:

- Facilitate business and industry ventures in Winchelsea that provide local services, particularly in health and education or the tourism and green industry sectors.
- Promote economic development opportunities that protect local character, amenity and the natural environment.
- Protect industrial estates and employment precincts as an industrial land resource.

Tourism

The tourism industry is underpinned by the coastal location, environmental values and scenic qualities of the Shire. Tourism developments continue to capitalise on the environmental and landscape values of the rural hinterland, including for nature and farm based tourism.

The Great Otway National Park presents opportunities for the development of nature and adventure based recreational activities and the Lorne hinterland may provide opportunities for small scale tourist accommodation.

However, tourism development is often constrained by environmental risks in these areas and the need to protect the natural environment, landscape values and agricultural activities the industry seeks to capitalise on. Higher density and larger scale urban tourist development can compromise the low scale and vegetated character of the coast and its townships. Inappropriate tourism use and development can also cause amenity impacts on local communities.

The economy of Torquay-Jan Juc is largely based on tourism and the surfing industry. The Surf City tourist precinct is a primary destination for many visitors to Torquay.

With its shopping strip, hotels and other facilities, Lorne is a prime tourist destination of the Shire.

Winchelsea's historical and country village character provides an opportunity for further tourism growth for the town.

Council seeks to:

- Enhance the tourism industry by facilitating tourism use and development that protects residential amenity and the environmental, landscape, cultural and character values of the Shire.
- Promote natural resource and adventure based tourism use and development at a scale and form that respects its setting and surrounding land uses.
- Support the continued growth of Torquay-Jan Juc's local tourism and surf industry.
- Promote Lorne and its hinterland as a primary and year round tourist destination.
- Maximise tourism opportunities in Winchelsea by promoting its country village and historical character through commercial development.

02.03-8

10/06/2021
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Transport

The Shire is highly car dependent, with limited public transport services between and within townships. Insufficient public transport is an added constraint on residential growth in some towns. Increasing traffic volumes on the Great Ocean Road (especially during the bushfire season) is resulting in congestion, traffic hazards and emergency response difficulties.

Pedestrian and cycle paths between and within settlements are limited and lack connectivity. Busy roads create barriers to local access, including access to the beach. In Winchelsea in particular, the Princes Highway and Barwon River divide the town, further emphasising the importance of connectivity within and between towns to ensure good access to facilities and services.

Council seeks to:

- Provide a permeable and well-connected street network particularly in new estates.
- Facilitate a transportation system that reduces car dependence and encourages walking and cycling for local trips.
- Integrate walking and cycling pathways with public transport and public open space.
- Facilitate a pedestrian and cycling network that improves connectivity between and within settlements and access to the foreshore.

Car parking

Peak summer car parking demands within coastal townships are much greater than in the winter months. In Lorne, there is a heavy reliance on public car parking due to a lack of parking spaces on private land, particularly in the commercial area when peak periods coincide with high levels of foreshore activity. Given a lack of car parking opportunities on the Great Ocean Road, car parking supply is also likely to become an issue in Aireys Inlet as its centres incrementally develop.

While this shortage needs to be addressed, parking areas should not intrude on the visual and environmental sensitivity of the foreshore or detract from the public realm.

Council seeks to:

- Facilitate the provision of car parking spaces while maintaining environmental and amenity values.
- Discourage surface car parking that detracts from the public realm.

02.03-9

10/06/2021
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Infrastructure

Community infrastructure

Outdoor entertainment and recreation opportunities are an important aspect of the Surf Coast region. The foreshore and riverbank reserves are the primary areas for public open space. These may be affected by the impacts of climate change, resulting in potential loss of open space and the need to identify new areas. For example, there is an imbalance in the distribution of passive open space in Torquay-Jan Juc, with an over-reliance on its foreshore.

The coastal population can triple in size during the peak tourism season in summer. This significantly increases pressure on existing services and infrastructure.

Although the population is aging, there are limited services for the aged. There is also a need for long day child care services in Winchelsea.

Council seeks to:

- Facilitate the timely provision of a range of community and recreation facilities including public open space.
- Facilitate improved access to aged care services and facilities.

Development infrastructure

A key infrastructure constraint in Moriac, Bellbrae, Deans Marsh, Moggs Creek and Eastern View is the lack of reticulated services, such as water supply, stormwater drainage or sewerage. This, in addition to insufficient public transport, further limits the growth of the townships.

Moriac is provided with a reticulated water supply system that only has capacity to supply planned development with an elevation of less than 105 metres AHD. A number of old and inappropriate subdivisions in Deans Marsh are unable to retain wastewater on site.

Urban stormwater runoff from lots not connected to a stormwater drainage system, particularly in Moriac, could pose a threat to the sensitive environment and water catchment area. The limited capacity of drainage infrastructure in the older parts of Torquay will also struggle to cope with redevelopment using traditional drainage models.

The Water Reclamation Plant in Winchelsea has limited capacity for growth.

Council seeks to:

- Facilitate the provision of development infrastructure in a timely manner.
- Ensure development will not impede the expansion of the Water Reclamation Plant in Winchelsea.

02.03-10

10/06/2021
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Gaming venues

Gaming facilities are not part of the existing attraction of the Shire, with relatively few venues offering electronic gaming machines.

There are links between social disadvantage, problem gambling and proximity to gaming venues. Although gaming machines may be accessible to the community as a form of entertainment, they should not be convenient. The location of electronic gaming machines should also have regard to the socio-economic characteristics of a community.

Council seeks to:

- Discourage gaming facilities that may have a detrimental impact on the amenity, culture and character of the townships.
- Discourage locating electronic gaming machines in relatively disadvantaged areas that are most vulnerable to the potential harmful effects of gaming.
- Locate gaming machines at a distance that requires a pre-considered decision to gamble.