**PRECINCT DESCRIPTION**

Precinct 1.3 is an expanse of large, gently rolling paddocks slashed with occasional lines of shelter belts and remnant trees. Shelter belts and roads follow a large scale grid pattern that rises and falls across undulations between different levels of plateau. Most valleys are broad depressions, some are more deeply incised, but few have significant amounts of vegetation cover. To the south, the wooded slopes of the Otway foothills provide a horizon. In other directions there are long views across the plain, with occasional volcanic cones visible against the skyline. Scattered farm buildings, including old structures related to sheep raising, tend to be located back from the road. In areas with smaller subdivisions, buildings are often located closer to the road. This is a sparsely treed landscape, but with some regeneration and new planting in specific locations.

**DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES**

The Western Plains, Cones and Lakes landscape character type is located in a horizontal band across the northern section of the study area. It is associated with the flat to gently rolling topography of the western plains, punctuated in some areas by volcanic cones, craters and outcrops. The landscape comprises mostly paddocks divided by shelter belts, with some remnant stands of vegetation throughout.

Within this character type, precinct 1.3 is distinctive for its gently rolling, larger pattern of paddocks and subtle features of landscape interest such as incised creeks and broad valleys. It is the precinct in the Western Plains, Cones and Lakes landscape area that is ‘hemmed-in’ by the Otway foothills to the south and western plains to the north, resulting in a variety of long range views.

A full explanation of the level of significance attributed to the landscape character is contained in the Regional Toolkit.
KEY CHARACTERISTICS
- Rolling, open pastures
- Shelter belts between paddocks
- A rural outlook from road corridors
- A variety of views, including the Otway foothills and volcanic features

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
The open, rural outlook from road corridors should be maintained and landscape features such as valleys and waterways could be further emphasised with additional indigenous vegetation. The clarity of the edges of townships such as Colac could be strengthened by preventing ribbon development and improving the appearance of residential development located on the fringes.

LANDSCAPE OBJECTIVES
- To increase the use of indigenous vegetation, particularly to emphasise landform features such as creek valleys.
- To retain the dominance of rolling pastures lined with shelter belts.
- To encourage the subtle placement of buildings and structures tucked into the landscape.
- To maintain a rural outlook from road corridors.
- To minimise the visual impact of infrastructure on the landscape.
- To improve the outlook from main road corridors by minimising the visibility of commercial timber plantations.
- To maintain the dominance of the natural landscape from main road corridors outside townships.
- To improve the appearance of rural residential development located on the fringes of townships.
**PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

**PRECINCT 1.3 | UNDULATING GRAZING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANDSCAPE ELEMENT</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>DESIGN RESPONSE</th>
<th>AVOID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VEGETATION</td>
<td>To increase the use of indigenous vegetation, particularly to emphasise landform features such as creek valleys.</td>
<td>Retain existing indigenous and native trees and understorey, wherever possible and provide for the planting of new indigenous vegetation.</td>
<td>Loss of indigenous vegetation, particularly adjacent to landform features such as creek valleys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHELTER BELTS</td>
<td>To retain the dominance of rolling pastures, lined with shelter belts.</td>
<td>Retain existing shelter belts wherever possible. Replace lost shelter belt trees with the same species or an alternative species, suitable to the local area.</td>
<td>Loss of shelter belts. Loss of rural qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEIGHT, SITING AND FORM</td>
<td>To encourage the subtle placement of buildings and structures, tucked into the landscape.</td>
<td>Utilise low scale building forms, tucked into the landscape. Keep development below the dominant tree canopy height. Locate development sparsely in the hinterland, retaining maximum space for vegetation between buildings.</td>
<td>Loss of sense of enclosure in the landscape. Visually dominant, bulky buildings. Buildings that have no relationship to landform. Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy height.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINISHES TOWNSHIPS AND SETTLEMENTS</td>
<td>To maintain a rural outlook from main road corridors.</td>
<td>Utilise colours and finishes that complement those occurring naturally in the hinterland landscape, with consideration as to how the materials will weather over time. Between townships, locate development a substantial distance from the Princes Highway and other Category 1 Roads wherever possible.</td>
<td>Loss of rural outlook from main road corridors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANDSCAPE ELEMENT</td>
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</table>
| INFRASTRUCTURE                    | To minimise the visual impact of large buildings and structures on the landscape, particularly from main road corridors and key viewing locations. | Locate and screen large buildings and structures (e.g., very large sheds, high tension transmission lines and associated cleared easements etc) to minimise their visibility from Category 1 Roads and key viewing locations. Prepare a landscape plan utilising appropriate species and demonstrating how the affected area will be remediated after the development. | Loss of vegetation.  
Landscape ‘scarring’ through loss of large areas of vegetation in visible areas. |
| TIMBER PLANTATIONS                | To improve the outlook from main road corridors by minimising the visibility of commercial timber plantations.                             | Screen commercial timber plantations that are located adjacent to Category 1 Roads with a 20 metre wide (minimum) indigenous or native vegetation buffer, including understorey. | Visibility of timber plantations from main road corridors.  
Landscape ‘scarring’. |
| TOWNSHIPS AND SETTLEMENTS         | To maintain the dominance of the natural landscape from main road corridors outside townships.                                       | Ensure townships have a definite visual edge, delineating the boundary between urban development and the natural landscape beyond. Locate signage away from entrances and exits to townships wherever possible. | Ribbon development.  
Unclear edges to townships.  
Signage clutter at entrances and exists to townships. |
| RURAL LIVING AND LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT | To improve the appearance of rural living and low density residential development located on the fringes of townships. | In rural living and low density residential areas:  
- Use permeable surfacing for all unbuilt areas to minimise surface run-off and to support vegetation.  
- Retain existing indigenous and native trees and understorey and provide for the planting of new indigenous and native vegetation wherever possible.  
- Utilise vegetation for screening and to delineate property boundaries, instead of fencing. If fencing is necessary, provide open style fencing of a type traditionally used in rural areas i.e. post and wire. | High, solid fencing.  
Loss of vegetation.  
Lack of vegetation  
Impervious surfacing. |
EDGES

The following ‘landscape edges’ exist within the precinct:
- Development at the edges of townships such as Colac
- Landscape features as edges within the landscape, such as rivers, creeks, Lake Colac etc.
- Interface of development landscape features
- Road corridors within the landscape and interface of development with those road corridors
- Plantation edges, particularly in the southern area of the precinct
- The horizon edge

CORRIDORS

The following, taken from field survey notes, provides a sequence description of the journey from Colac to around Rickett Marsh along the Princes Highway:

... Exit from Colac - residential then cross railway - service stations and timber yards - industrial feeling fringed by residential ridge development - rise up to open country side - cleaner edge to town - larger houses and old service station - flatter and less dairy - petering out the further east you go - farm houses are now set back from highway edge - some sheep - road follows edge of low foothills and plains division - drier country – turn off to Birregurra...
The major township within the precinct is Colac.

COLAC

The town of Colac is located at the western edge of the precinct, to the south of Lake Colac. It is centred on the Princes Highway, with most streets in a grid formation. The town has a commercial heart and a mix of residential housing styles, with some larger homes overlooking the lake. A creek winds its way southwards from the lake through the town and through a series of ridges, which exist to the south of the settlement. There are remnant shelter belts located on the fringes of the town, but little vegetation exists within the residential streets of Colac itself. The edges of the township are uncontained, being a combination of paddocks and housing estates.
PRECINCT ANALYSIS

PRECINCT 1.3 | UNDULATING GRAZING

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT | SEPTEMBER 2003
The satellite photo reveals mostly green pastures with dense vegetation along creek lines. The built form in Colac is dominant as are several timber Plantations and Lake Colac just north of the precinct.
CONTOUR MAP

The contours map shows gently undulating topography, with the steeper topography of the adjacent Otway foothills providing a contrast.
The Ecological Vegetation Classes map shows much of the precinct as private land with no tree cover, with Riparian Woodland, Grassy Woodland, and Swampy Riparian Woodland vegetation classes located along creek corridors. Several plantations and severely cleared land are also evident.
Much of the precinct is zoned rural, the townships of Colac and Birregurra include Residential, Low Density Residential, Business and Industrial zones.
RELEVANT OVERLAYS MAP

The overlays in this precinct relevant to landscape character include the Significant Landscape Overlay for the protection and enhancement of the landscape character of Otway Ranges Foothills, the volcanic cones, basalt plains, lava flows and other sites of geological significance, and also other natural features such as stony rises. Other relevant overlays include the Design and Development Overlay for the protection of the landscape character of the eastern entrance of Colac, the Vegetation Protection Overlay for remnant vegetation along roadsides, and the Environmental Significance Overlay for the protection and enhancement of water entering lakes and wetlands.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Municipality</th>
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<th>Development Pressures</th>
<th>Relevant Planning Controls</th>
<th>Local Policies</th>
<th>Issues and Priority Areas</th>
<th>Key Planning Scheme Recommendations</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Colac Otway</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Development Types:</td>
<td>Zoning:</td>
<td>22.01 Main Roads / Scenic Routes 22.02 Ridgelines 22.04 House Lot Excision in the Rural and Environmental Rural Zones</td>
<td>Permit trigger exists for development within 100 metres of RDZ1 Decision guidelines lacking Plantations adjacent to RDZ1</td>
<td>Review/strengthen MSS in relation to landscape generally, particularly 21.01-03 and 21.04-02 The Nature of the Land Review MSS in relation to townships in the landscape, particularly 21.01-04 and 21.04-03 Settlement Patterns and Rural Living Also review MSS Clause 21.04-10 Colac Review/strengthen all relevant Local Policies in relation to landscape Introduce new Local Policy including Development Principles for Precinct 1.3 Rural Zone Schedule amended to require permit for timber production 40 hectares adjacent to RDZ1 Local Policy perhaps amend 22.01 to include indigenous buffer requirement for plantations adjacent to RDZ1 Restructure and rewrite SL01 for each landscape type utilising the findings of this Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Pressure focused on Colac and its fringes • Rural use of land Potential Threats: • Sprawling development at town edges • Loss of shelter belts • Enclosure of open road corridor by structures</td>
<td>RUZ PCRZ primarily along waterways Primarily Residential 1 and Low Density Residential Zones in and on the fringes of Birregurra Residential 1, Business and Industrial Zones in Colac. Overlays: SL01 Coastal, Otway and Plains Landscapes ES02 Lakes, Wetlands and Streams VPO2 Roadside Vegetation DDO1 Industrial area on the eastern edge of Colac</td>
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**PLANNING SCHEME ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PRECINCT 1.3 | UNDULATING GRAZING**
## PLANNING SCHEME ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Surf Coast</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Development Types:</td>
<td>Zoning:</td>
<td>22.02 Rural and Environmental Development Policy</td>
<td>Good strategic basis for landscape protection and enhancement</td>
<td>Review MSS/strengthen if required: 21.04 Environment and Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Associated with the rural use of the land</td>
<td>RUZ</td>
<td>22.05 Surf Coast Design and Colours</td>
<td>Alternative ‘landscape units’ identified in MSS</td>
<td>Review MSS Clause 21.06 Landscape and Culture Strategy; review/amend landscape units, descriptions and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Potential Threats:</td>
<td>Overlays:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive suite of local policies, but Local Policy specific to landscape required</td>
<td>Introduce new Local Policy including Development Principles for Precinct 1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Loss of shelter belts</td>
<td>No overlays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review relevant Local Policies for inconsistencies eg with Development Guidelines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>