



Urban Futures Strategy

Context Report

March 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Surf Coast Shire Council Acknowledges the Wadawurrung People and Eastern Maar People as the Traditional Owners of the lands our Shire spans. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise and respect their beliefs, customs and values, which continue to sustain their intrinsic connection with Country that has endured for more than 60,000 years.

We value the contribution their Caring for Country makes to the lands, ocean, waterways, plants, wildlife and people of Surf Coast Shire, and Acknowledge we have much to learn from the Traditional Owners, especially in changing how we think, work and act in relation to climate change.

We therefore commit to walking alongside the Traditional Owners, allowing them to guide us so that together we can have a more positive impact on our environment and communities in the Surf Coast Shire.

We embrace the spirit of Reconciliation, working towards self-determination, equity of outcomes and an equal voice for Australia's First Nations People.

Wadawurrung

As Wadawurrung Traditional Owners we live by Bundjil's lore to care for Country and all things living as our Ancestors have always done. Our Dja (Country) is more than a place. Our coastal cliffs, wetlands, grassy and volcanic plains, and people were all formed by Bundjil and our Ancestor spirits who continue to live in the land, water and sky. Kareet Bareet (Black Hill near Gordon) is where Bundjil created Wadawurrung people. Lal Lal Falls near Ballarat is where Bundjil created the waterways and where he returned to before heading to his resting place in the stars, continuing to watch over us.

Our Dja is interwoven with relationships no matter whether the shape of that relation is human, granite hills, Waa (Crow) or Larrap (Manna gum). Country is filled with relations speaking language, sharing stories and following lore. These spirits link us back through time in a continuing connection with our past, our cultural practices and our stories. These spirits connect us to our Country and each other, which gives us ongoing respect for our obligation to care for our Country.

Paleert Tjaara Dja – Let's Make Country Good Together
[Wadawurrung Healthy Country Plan 2020-2030](#)

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

Eastern Maar

The contemporary Eastern Maar Nation traces an unbroken line of descent back to our Ancestors over many thousands of years.

We have survived as our Country's First People and, despite the well-documented colonial history, continue to maintain economic, traditional, cultural, familial and spiritual ties to our homeland.

Through the leadership and authority of our Elders, we are practicing our laws and customs, strengthening our system of governance and nurturing our connection to Country.

We continue to pass on our traditional knowledge from generation to generation, inducting our young people into Maar society as a cultural practice initiated by our Ancestors. It is a process that keeps customs and stories alive and ensures we are able to maintain Maar culture, language and society.

Drawing strength from our identity and past, we are able to live our culture as a set of attitudes, customs and beliefs, helping us to be resilient and adaptable in changing circumstances.

Meerreengeeye Ngakeepoorryeeyt
[Eastern Maar Country Plan 2015](#)

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation

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1.0 Purpose of Context Report

The context report:

- Provides the detailed justification for the principles and directions outlined within the Urban Futures Strategy (the Strategy).
- Explains the methodology adopted in the development of the Strategy.
- Provides an overview of the current and emerging strategic context and planning policy relating to growth at a state, regional and local level, including the Surf Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscape Statement of Planning Policy (SPP).
- Explores key drivers of the strategy and outcomes for growth, including managing bushfire risk, protecting the natural environment and landscape, environmental risks, and protecting agricultural land. Information is also provided on climate resilience and issues surrounding housing affordability and diversity.
- Provides a comprehensive summary of all key engagement activities undertaken in the preparation of the Strategy.

The context report is an Appendix to the main strategy document. The diagram below shows the structure of the Strategy and its appendices.

Figure 1 - Strategy Structure Diagram



Source: Surf Coast Shire

2.0 Purpose of the Urban Futures Strategy

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- Understand landscape level opportunities and constraints to determine where forecast growth can and should occur.
- Establish a clear policy framework defining the future role of towns within the Surf Coast Shire to guide future land use planning at the township and precinct level.
- Consider forecast population growth to determine future housing and employment needs.

The Strategy considers population and housing growth to a planning horizon of 2051. The Strategy responds to the State Planning Policy Framework requirement to plan to accommodate projected population growth over a 15-year period. Residential land supply must be considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by-town basis.

The Strategy explains how growth will be managed while protecting the shire's unique environment, heritage and lifestyle. It also identifies future strategic work that will be required at a township level.

The Strategy does not seek to identify specific locations for growth, change current settlement boundaries or provide detailed land use directions at a township level. This more detailed work will form part of further strategic planning for individual townships.

3.0 Methodology

The first stage of preparing the Strategy included preparation of a Background Context Report that set out the known opportunities and constraints associated with future urban development within the shire. The focus of the Strategy is on urban growth and development and is specifically concerned with urban residential outcomes (land in the residential zones) as opposed to rural or hinterland development (land in the rural zones). It is acknowledged that rural and hinterland areas have their own unique set of challenges. It represented one of the first key outputs from the project and has been used to inform and guide the development of the Strategy. It was also used to inform the community and other stakeholders about the scope and parameters for consideration in preparing the Strategy.

The Background Report provided the following:

- The identification of State government policies and requirements that will feed into and, limit local planning decisions impacting growth;
- A summary of the environmental values, risks and challenges that will constrain the options available for future growth;
- Basic information on past and forecast population and housing growth; and
- A township-by-township summary of recent residential development, current planning provisions, and constraints on future urban growth and suitability for additional 'greenfield' urban growth.

In considering the impacts of urban growth on both urban and rural landscapes, the shire was divided into 8 districts, each incorporating a township. Information from the Background Report was used to build a profile for each district. The profiles identify urban growth-related opportunities and constraints, as well as key data on population, housing, the role of the township, community infrastructure services and utilities, environmental hazards and assets.

As an input to the Strategy, and to ensure that the threat of bushfire is properly considered in planning for growth, Council engaged consultant Kevin Hazell Bushfire Planning to prepare a municipal wide assessment of strategic bushfire hazards. The *Surf Coast Shire Strategic Bushfire Assessment, July 2023* acknowledges State policies prioritising human life above all other considerations and provides high-level recommendations to inform the development of the Strategy.

This work was shared publicly as part of the Phase 1 Community Engagement, which also provided an introduction to the project and the objectives of the Strategy. The purpose of the engagement was to share with the community the current state and seek input on how the strategy could respond to the challenges identified.

The above documents and feedback collated from the first and second phases of community engagement have been used to inform and guide the preparation of the Strategy.

These documents were also provided to key internal and external stakeholders and feedback was received.

The Strategy has been informed by several key technical reports prepared by consultants Spatial Economics that have provided a robust evidence base to guide the principles and directions in the Strategy. These reports provide details of the individual methodologies used to undertake the projections and assessments, and include:

Growth Projections for the Urban Futures Strategy, April 2024

Residential Land Supply and Demand Assessment – Surf Coast Shire, June 2024

Industrial Land Supply and Demand Assessment – Surf Coast Shire, June 2024

A description of the purpose and inclusions of these reports is provided in the structure diagram above.

4.0 Community Engagement

4.1 Phase 1

A range of engagement activities was undertaken during November and December 2023 to introduce the project to Surf Coast communities and seek feedback on the initial information that was prepared for the first stage of the Strategy (discussed above). Engagement activities included an online survey, community information drop-in sessions in three locations, and five targeted information sessions with community groups across the shire. All of the information relating to the project was provided on a dedicated webpage on Council's website.

A total of 59 responses to the survey and 14 individual submissions were received, with 4 of these received from community organisations. 31 people attended the community information drop-in sessions. Representatives from 8 different community groups attended the targeted sessions.

4.2 Phase 2

Phase 2 of community engagement sought feedback from the community and stakeholders on the draft Strategy and included a range of engagement activities.

The draft Strategy and key technical documents were provided on a dedicated webpage on Council's website which included an online submission portal to enable feedback to be provided. Other engagement activities included two community information drop-in sessions in Torquay and Winchelsea (where the majority of growth is planned) and three targeted information sessions with

community groups in Aireys Inlet (capturing the coastal towns groups), Winchelsea and Torquay held during July 2024.

Information sessions were held with both internal and external stakeholders and feedback on the draft strategy was invited.

A total of 54 submissions were received including 7 from local community groups and 6 from external agencies including Barwon Water, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA), Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and the Department of Education.

A significant proportion of submitters (19 of 34 individual submitters) were residents and landowners in Winchelsea (or those with an interest in the township). Seven submissions were from residents or landowners in Torquay-Jan Juc, three from Anglesea and one each from Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven and Deans Marsh. Five submissions were also on behalf of the local development industry.

5.0 Working with Traditional Owners

The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation are the Registered Aboriginal Parties within the Surf Coast Shire area.

The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) with the statutory authority for the management of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Values across an area that stretches west from the Painkalac Creek at Aireys Inlet and the Barwon River at Winchelsea, taking in Lorne, Warrnambool, Port Fairy, Colac and the Twelve Apostles.

The Surf Coast Shire area is situated on both Gulidjan and Gadubanud Countries, with Eastern Maar also representing other Maar clan groups including Peek Wurrung, Djab Wurrung, Kirrae Wurrung and others.

The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) with the statutory authority for the management of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Values across an area of more than 10,000 square kilometres to the west of Melbourne, including the east part of Surf Coast Shire and the start of the Great Ocean Road.

Caring for Country, including land, sky and waters and continual cultural practices are core to the identity of the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners.

The Surf Coast Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 aims to ensure that decisions consider and respect Traditional Owner perspectives, culture and knowledge.

Theme one of the Council Plan is First Nations Reconciliation and Council has made a commitment to work with Traditional Owners and other First Nations people within the community to walk together on this path. Council is seeking to broaden its understanding of Traditional Owners' perspectives and to use this knowledge to make better decisions that will benefit Country and the entire community.

Engagement with the RAPs has been a key priority throughout the preparation of the Strategy and will continue to be so in future growth planning work.

6.0 Surf Coast Shire Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council Plan sets out Council's strategic direction for the four years until 2024. It describes the goals for the term of the current Council and provides a road map for how these will be achieved. It also incorporates a long term community vision for Surf Coast Shire.

Housing affordability and growth pressure are recognised as two of the main challenges the shire currently faces.

The Strategy has been informed by the relevant goals and strategies as set out below.

Figure 2 – Goals and Strategies of Surf Coast Shire Council Plan 2021-2025

	Goal	Strategy
First Nations Reconciliation	Reconciliation with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community through respectful engagement, acknowledgement and collaboration.	Strategy 1: Work with traditional owners and other aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people in our community to achieve reconciliation. Strategy 2: Ensure council decisions consider and respect traditional owner perspectives, culture and knowledge.
A Healthy Connected Community	To foster a thriving, connected, healthy community.	Strategy 3: Facilitate the provision of social infrastructure and open space to enable healthy lifestyles. Strategy 4: improve access to local services and programs that support people to be healthy and well. Strategy 5: Make it easier for people to move around our towns and in nature without relying on cars.
Environmental Leadership	Protect our environment and help our community to thrive through environmental leadership.	Strategy 7: Protect significant habitats, landscapes and biodiversity. Strategy 8: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit the impacts of climate change. Strategy 10: Adapt to a changing climate.
Sustainable Growth	Growth is not at the expense of environmental values or the unique heritage and character of our townships.	Strategy 11: Protect heritage and township character. Strategy 12: improve access to affordable residential accommodation.
Robust and Diverse Economy	Our economy is sustainable and supports a diversity of local enterprises and people.	Strategy 14: Enable people to run successful local businesses that grow and create jobs in our changing economy.

Source: Surf Coast Shire

Under sustainable growth, it is recognised how important heritage and township character are to our communities and seeks to strengthen the uniqueness of towns and neighbourhoods, including their natural elements and character.

7.0 Victoria's Housing Statement – The Decade Ahead 2024-2034 & Plan for Victoria

Victoria's Housing Statement was released by the State Government in September 2023. It recognises that finding an affordable home is becoming harder than ever before and puts forward a plan to tackle what is seen as the root of the problem: housing supply. The plan sets a target to build 800,000 homes in Victoria over the next decade, with a target to 425,600 of homes across the regions by 2051.

It sets out proposed reforms to Victoria's planning system to boost housing supply across the state, and this includes measures to make it easier to build a second small home on properties. The Planning Scheme has been amended to enable a small second dwelling under 60 square metres to be built without requiring a planning permit (with some exceptions).

Other measures include:

- encouraging provision for more, and more diverse, housing around activity centres and in other appropriate locations.
- building more affordable and social housing, including in regional Victoria.
- introducing a levy on short-stay accommodation to help fund the provision of additional affordable and social housing.
- providing financial assistance for the provision of key worker housing in regional Victoria.

The Statement includes a direction to update Plan Melbourne – the Victorian Government's current metropolitan planning strategy spanning 2017-2050 and expand it to cover the whole state.

Plan For Victoria (the Plan) was released in March 2025 and is a community-led, whole-of-state plan to address housing and land use needs for Victoria over the next 30 years. The Plan will replace the existing metropolitan strategy *Plan Melbourne* and regional growth plans to guide growth and development across the state.

Plan for Victoria is structured around five pillars:

- Self-determination and caring for country
- Housing for all Victorians: delivering sufficient affordable homes for all Victorians
- Accessible jobs and services: making sure you have good access to facilities and good jobs
- Great places, suburbs and towns: creating thriving places that are attractive, safe and welcoming for everyone
- Sustainable environments: preserving the natural values of Victoria and addressing climate change.

Twenty-two short term actions have been developed which are linked to the key pillars. The actions are predominantly to be delivered by the State Government, with some partnership with local Councils.

The State Government's Housing Statement in 2023 identified a vision for what is needed to meet housing demand, including a goal of 2.24 million homes by 2051. The Plan has established how many new houses each municipality needs to build, and where they should be built, to reach the goal. It

provides guidance on how we create more homes near transport, job opportunities and essential services in vibrant, livable and sustainable cities, towns, suburbs and regions.

The Plan seeks to provide all Victorians with a choice of a well-designed homes at an affordable price and close to daily needs. Ensuring housing is affordable, diverse and accessible is central to creating inclusive, prosperous, livable communities.

There will be more housing and choice in regional cities in locations well-serviced with jobs, shops, public transport and community facilities and services.

Key actions include:

- Implement housing targets for every local government area.
- Implement new planning controls to streamline planning in activity centres.
- Carefully manage the outward sprawl of regional cities and towns.
- Increase the number of social and affordable homes.
- Match car and bike parking requirement and bike facilities with demand.
- Update the Better Apartments Design Standards and the Apartment Design Guidelines for Victoria.

This plan sets out housing targets for every local government area across Victoria, specifying their share of the extra 2.24 million homes that are needed by 2051.

The targets are based on creating more homes in areas with good access to transport and services.

The housing target for Surf Coast Shire is an additional **8,000 dwellings by 2051**. Torquay continues to be designated as a Regional Service Centre; a pivotal town in Victoria's regional development, fostering economic activity and providing a key network of service hubs.

The targets will ensure that every planning scheme identifies enough realistic opportunities for new development to deliver the targeted number of homes. Councils will be held accountable with explicit directions to change planning schemes if they are not providing enough housing capacity.

Other actions include:

- Improve transport network planning policy.
- Ensure new industrial and commercial land is ready for development.
- Streamline community infrastructure developer contributions.
- Coordinate public infrastructure and service delivery to support more homes.
- Protect and enhance canopy trees
- Make the best use of land at train stations
- Update design guidance to deliver better public places
- Encourage walking and cycling.
- Improve the environmental sustainability of development.
- Better communicate and manage flood, bushfire and climate hazard risks.
- Protect and carefully use regional resources.

The Strategy recognises the key actions in the Plan and considers the housing target.

8.0 Current Strategic Context –Relevant Planning Policy

The existing planning policy framework provides a sound basis for the key strategic planning matters in the municipality and has informed the preparation of the Strategy.

8.1 Surf Coast Planning Scheme

Planning for growth is provided through the Surf Coast Planning Scheme.

8.1.1 Planning Policy Framework – State Policies

State policy at *Clause 11.01-1 S Settlement* seeks to facilitate the sustainable growth and development of Victoria and deliver choice and opportunity for all Victorians through a network of settlements. Planning is to facilitate sustainable development that takes full advantage of existing settlement patterns and investment in transport, utility, social, community and commercial infrastructure and services. A key strategy is to ensure regions and their settlements are planned in accordance with their relevant regional growth plan; in this instance the G21 Regional Growth Plan (discussed below). The Victorian Settlement Framework identifies Torquay-Jan Juc as a Peri-Urban/District Town. A key strategy is to manage growth in peri-urban areas to protect and enhance their identified valued attributes.

The policy encourages the development of sustainable communities offering convenient access to jobs, services, infrastructure and community facilities, as well as encouraging a form and density of settlements that supports healthy, active and sustainable transport. It seeks to limit urban sprawl and direct growth into existing settlements.

State Policy at *Clause 11.02-1 S Supply of Urban Land* requires the provision of land and supporting infrastructure to support sustainable urban development with a requirement for Local Government Areas to plan to accommodate projected population growth, over at least a 15 year period of expected housing demand based upon official population forecasts (VIF 2023), provide clear direction on locations where growth should occur and ensure sufficient land is available. Residential land supply will be considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by-town basis.

The policy seeks to ensure a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional and other community uses.

It states that planning for urban growth should consider:

- *Opportunities for the consolidation, redevelopment and intensification of existing urban areas.*
- *Neighbourhood character and landscape considerations.*
- *The limits of land capability and natural hazards and environmental quality.*
- *Service limitations and the costs of providing infrastructure.*

.Clause 11.03-1S *Activity Centres* encourages the concentration of major retail, residential, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres that are highly accessible to the community.

Activity Centres are identified as locations to encourage a diversity of housing types at higher densities (both in and around these centres).

Clause 11.03-2S *Growth Areas* seeks to locate urban growth close to transport corridors and services, and provide efficient and effective infrastructure to create sustainability benefits.

This policy provides directions on preparing Growth Area Framework Plans and a hierarchy of structure plans or precinct structure plans, the latter of which provide the broad planning framework for an area as well as the more detailed planning requirements for neighbourhoods and precincts.

Plans should:

- *Provide for the development of sustainable and liveable urban areas in an integrated manner informed by the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as relevant.*
- *Protect and enhance areas of natural and cultural significance.*
- *Assist the development of walkable neighbourhoods.*
- *Facilitate the use of active and sustainable transport modes.*
- *Facilitate the logical and efficient provision of infrastructure.*
- *Facilitate the use of existing infrastructure and services.*
- *Encourage renewable energy generation, storage and distribution.*
- *Incorporate integrated water management and urban greening.*

Key strategies (from Clause 11.03-3S) relating to peri-urban areas are:

- Identify and protect areas that are strategically important for the environment, biodiversity, landscape, open space, water, agriculture, energy, recreation, tourism, environment, cultural heritage, infrastructure, extractive and other natural resources.
- Provide for development in established settlements that have capacity for growth having regard to complex ecosystems, landscapes, agricultural and recreational activities including in Torquay-Jan Juc, and other towns identified by Regional Growth Plans as having potential for growth.
- Establish growth boundaries for peri-urban towns to avoid urban sprawl and protect agricultural land and environmental assets.
- Enhance the character, identity, attractiveness and amenity of peri-urban towns.
- Prevent dispersed settlement and provide for non-urban breaks between urban areas.
- Ensure development is linked to the timely and viable provision of physical and social infrastructure.
- Improve connections to regional and metropolitan transport services.

In relation to coastal settlements, a key objective of Clause 11.03 -4 is to plan for sustainable coastal development by:

- *Planning and managing coastal population growth and increased visitation so that impacts do not cause unsustainable use of coastal resources.*
- *Supporting a network of diverse coastal settlements that provide for a broad range of housing types, economic opportunities and services.*
- *Identifying a clear settlement boundary around coastal settlements to ensure that growth in coastal areas is planned and coastal values are protected.*

Other relevant objectives and strategies of state policy include:

- *To strengthen and diversify the economy.*
- *To ensure availability of land for industry and provide an adequate supply of industrial land in appropriate locations.*

- *To encourage tourism development to maximise the economic, social and cultural benefits of developing the state as a competitive domestic and international tourist destination.*

8.1.2 Policy Planning Framework – Regional Policies

Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Geelong G21 refers to the relevant strategies of the Geelong 21 Regional Growth Plan (discussed below).

Clause 11.03 – 5R The Great Road Region provides policy direction for the Great Ocean Road Region, which seeks to manage the sustainable development of the region by protecting identified significant landscapes, directing urban growth to strategically identified areas, ensuring that growth respects the character of the towns, and that development responds to the identified landscape character. It also encourages sustainable tourism.

G21 Regional Growth Plan (April 2013)

The G21 Regional Growth Plan seeks to manage growth and land use pressures to 2050. The framework for growth provides a planned response for a region of 500,000 people. It also provides capacity to grow beyond this where the provision of supporting infrastructure can be sustainably managed. The region includes the municipalities of the City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire, Borough of Queenscliff, Golden Plains Shire, and Colac Otway Shire.

The Growth Plan recognises Torquay as a district town, where planned growth should be supported to reinforce its role in providing services to surrounding areas by building on existing and planned infrastructure and focusing growth along key road and rail networks.

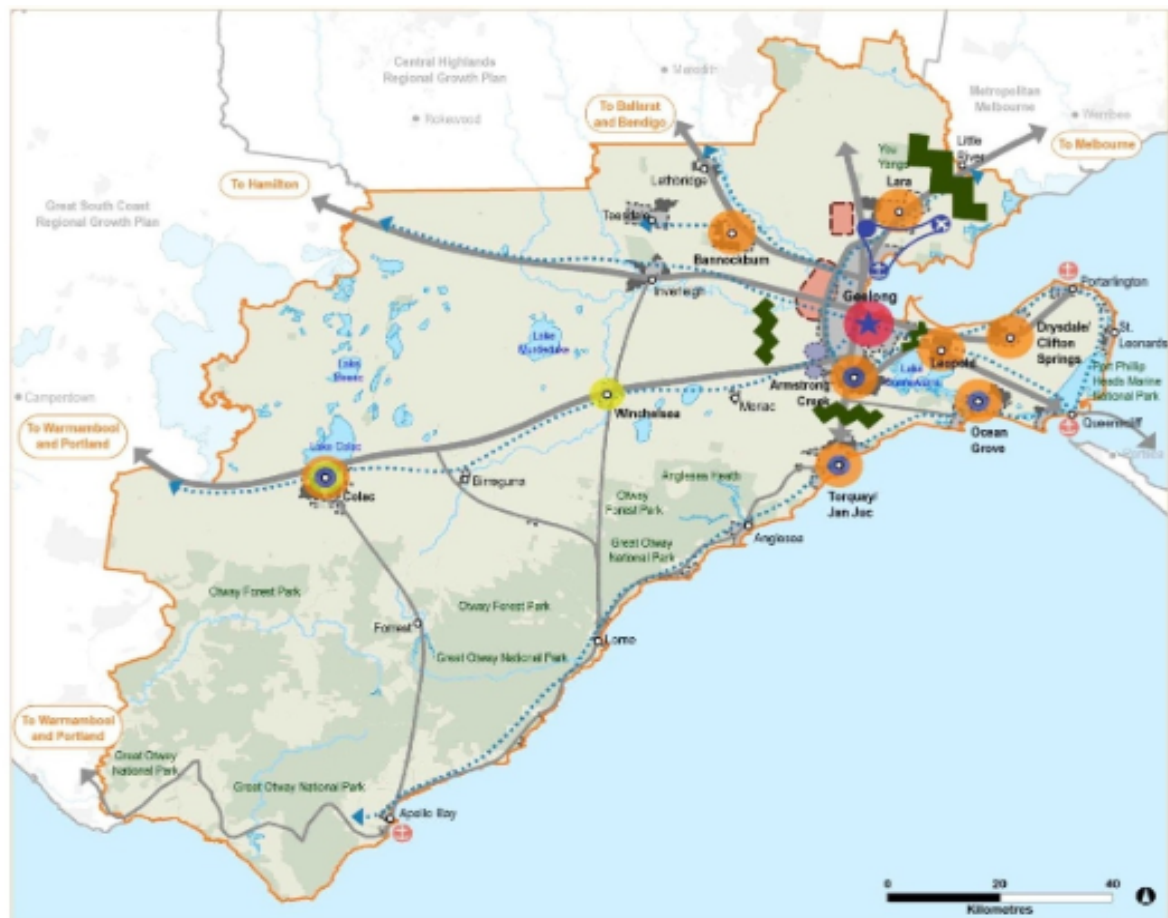
Towns with a population of between 10,000 and 100,000 are recognised as a District Town by the State government.

Winchelsea is identified as a targeted growth node, with an aspirational population of 10,000 people by 2050. A key direction is to undertake further strategic work to identify the most appropriate areas for growth and to identify major incentives to support growth, as well as plan for expansion of industrial employment areas in the township.

Other key strategies include:

- *Provide for settlement breaks between towns to maintain their unique identities.*
- *Require a settlement boundary for all towns.*
- *Facilitate infill development in district towns.*
- *Maintain productive agricultural land.*
- *Provide infrastructure and services for planned growth areas and infill development.*
- *Strengthen and protect the identified existing and planned employment areas.*

Figure 3 - G21 Regional Growth Plan



SETTLEMENT ROLE AND GROWTH

- ★ Reinforce the role of Geelong as a regional city and Victoria's second largest city
 - Strengthen Central Geelong's role as a major regional city centre by supporting growth with a focus on identified infill housing opportunity areas and building on the region's health, education and research capabilities
 - Support planned growth and reinforce the role of district towns
 - Introduce new targeted growth nodes at Colac and Winchelsea
 - Identification of two Further Investigation Areas in Geelong
 - Identification of four key settlement breaks
 - Settlement
 - Existing urban areas
 - Planned growth areas
 - Designation of settlement boundaries for all towns
- Provide infrastructure and services for planned growth areas and infill development

MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE

- An efficient and equitable public transport, road and freight network leveraged off existing infrastructure
- ✈ Airport
- ⚓ Port of Geelong
- ⚓ Minor port

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

- Maintain productive agricultural areas
 - Development of a national transport and logistics precinct
 - Strengthen and protect the identified existing and planned employment areas
 - Future employment nodes
- Provide land and infrastructure for existing and future employment nodes

ENVIRONMENT

- Maintain and enhance natural assets and infrastructure
- Lakes and wetlands
- Rivers

Source: Surf Coast Planning Scheme (Clause 11.01-1R)

8.1.3 Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS)

The MPS provides key overarching principles and strategic directions for the shire based around the relevant themes of settlement, environmental landscapes and values, environmental risks and amenity, natural resource management, built environment and heritage, housing, economic development (including employment and tourism), transport and infrastructure.

The strategic direction at Clause 02.03-1 Settlement indicates that:

'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'.

The main direction relating to growth and settlement is, 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.

Torquay-Jan Juc is recognised as the main urban growth centre of the shire and 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.

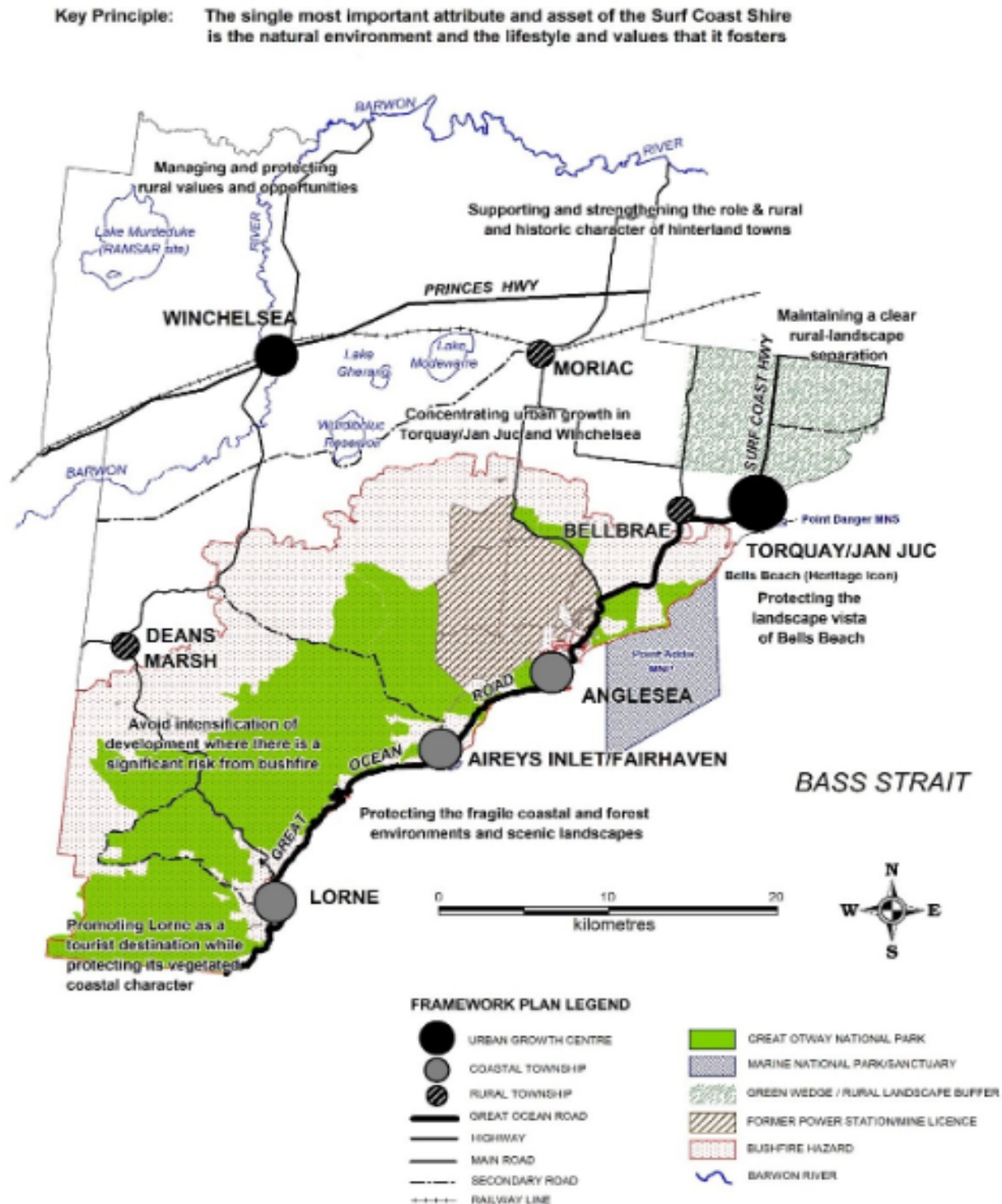
Winchelsea is recognised as the largest inland town in the shire and the major service centre for the surrounding farming community and as providing opportunities for population growth.

Located on the Great Ocean Road, the coastal towns are recognised as important tourist destinations, as well as providing services to local residents and the small rural hinterland towns are attractive for the rural residential lifestyle that they offer and provide a range of services to their local communities.

All of the existing settlements, including the coastal townships and rural townships have an existing settlement boundary.

The Municipal Strategic Framework Plan recognises these directions, with the key principle acknowledging that the most important attribute of the Surf Coast Shire is the natural environment, and the lifestyle and values that it fosters. It identifies the hierarchical role of the townships, with both Torquay and Winchelsea identified as Urban Growth Centres.

Figure 4 - Existing Municipal Strategic Framework Plan



Source: Surf Coast Planning Scheme (Clause 02.04-1)

A Framework Plan is also provided for all of the individual townships including Winchelsea, Torquay-Jan Juc, Anglesea, Aireys Inlet to Eastern View, Lorne, Deans Marsh, Moriac and Bellbrae. These provide more detailed place specific directions based on their relevant local structure plans.

The Strategic direction relating to housing (Clause 02.03-6) recognises the declining housing affordability and limited dwelling diversity, particularly in the coastal towns, but indicates that any housing growth should not compromise neighbourhood character.

It states that 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.*

A key strategic direction relating to employment (Clause 02.03-7) is to *'protect industrial estates and employment precincts as an industrial land resource.'*

8.1.4 Planning Policy Framework – Local Policies

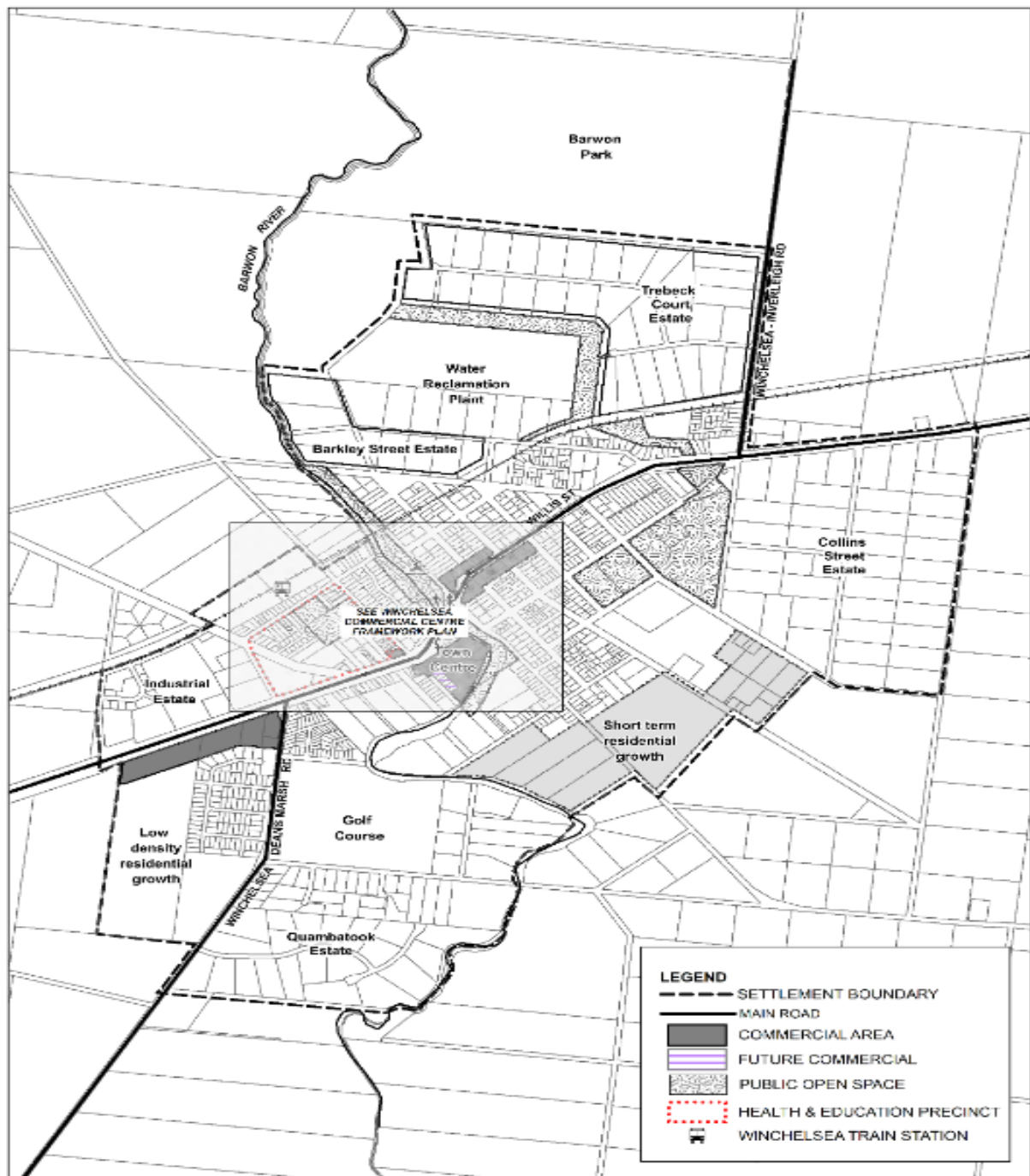
The local policies in the Planning Policy Framework provide specific direction for the municipality and have been informed by strategic work undertaken at a local level.

The following local strategies and structure plans are relevant to settlement and growth:

- *Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Structure Plan 2015*
- *Anglesea Structure Plan 2012*
- *Bellbrae Structure Plan 2010*
- *Deans Marsh Structure Plan (2008) and Desktop Review (2018)*
- *Growing Winchelsea – Shaping Future Growth 2015*
- *Lorne Strategy Plan Review (2004)*
- *Moriac Structure Plan 2023 (Adopted but not yet implemented in the Planning Scheme)*
- *Sustainable Futures Plan Torquay-Jan Juc 2040 (2014)*
- *Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy (2019)*

Of particular relevance, are the key strategies relating to Winchelsea at Clause 11.01-1L-03, which include encouraging residential development in the Short Term Residential Growth area (as shown on the Winchelsea framework plan in Clause 02.04 below) and accommodating growth that respects the town's country village character and heritage.

Figure 5 - Winchelsea Strategic Framework Plan



Source: Surf Coast Planning Scheme (Clause 02.04-4)

The Torquay-Jan Juc Framework Plan (next page) provides land use directions for the township but does not take account of the strategies and directions falling out of the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Statement of Planning Policy (DALSP). A future Planning scheme amendment will make changes to the Surf Coast Planning Scheme that is expected to remove the Spring Creek Future Residential Area and the northern investigation area. The Messmate Road Future Residential Area will be retained. The current policy as Clause 11.01-1L-02 *Torquay-Jan Juc* seeks to:

Preserve long term options west of Messmate Road up to the northern ridgeline, as indicated on the Torquay-Jan Juc framework plan in Clause 02.04, for:

- Employment generating uses on land identified as Future Employment.
- Low density residential use on land identified as Future Low Density Residential.
- Residential use on land identified as Future Residential.

Further planning of the Messmate Road Future Residential Area will need to consider the existing Framework Plan in the context of the DALSPD directions.

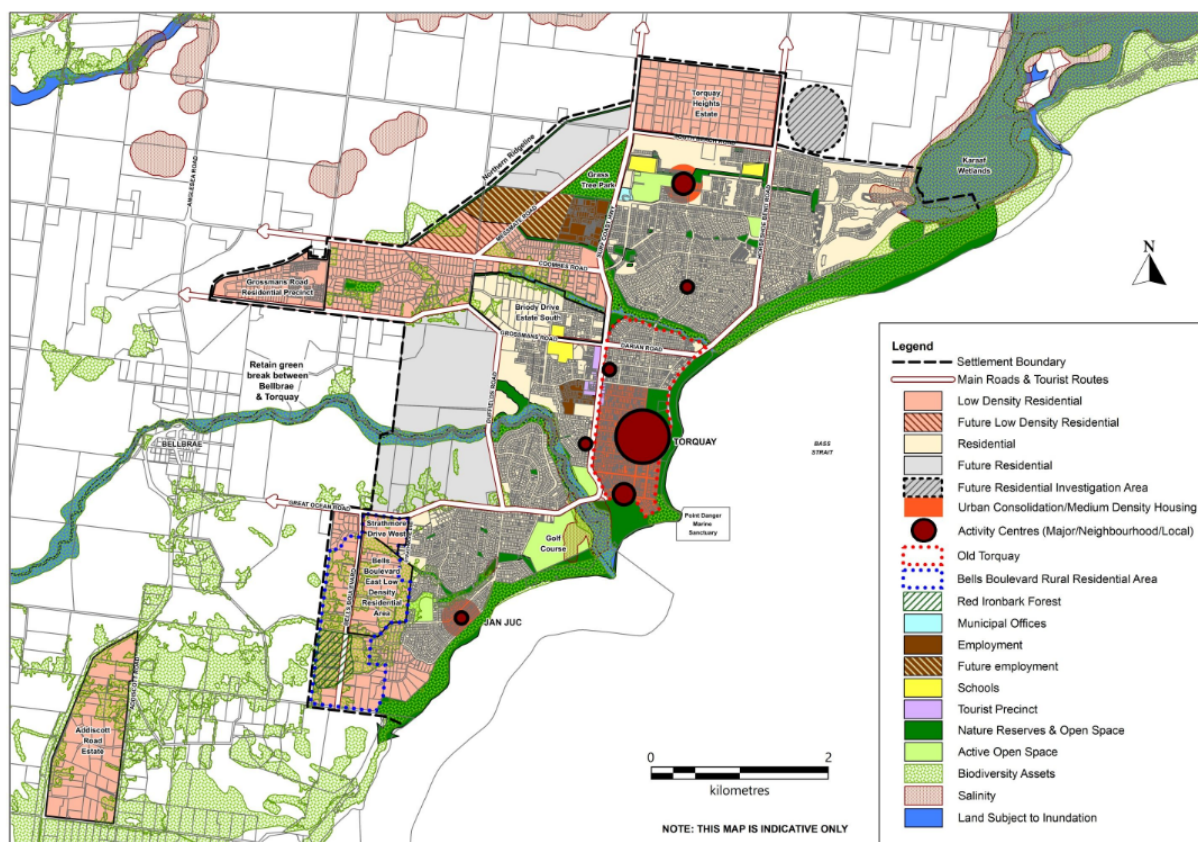
Torquay-Jan Juc provides a number of Activity Centres, with varying roles and functions. Shop-top apartments are encouraged in activity centres at an intensity and scale that is in keeping with the scale and character of the centre.

Torquay Town Centre is the major activity centre and is the primary centre for retail, supported by hospitality, office and residential use. Strengthening the role of the Torquay town centre as the major retail centre in Torquay-Jan Juc and the place where higher order retailing and major activity will be directed is a key strategy.

Clause 17.03-1L *Industrial Land Supply* seeks to:

Encourage land in Torquay-Jan Juc's West Coast Business Park to be used for a range of uses such as light industry, service industries, warehousing, trade supplies retail and restricted retail premises to cater for industrial services and local manufacturing.

Figure 6 - Torquay-Jan Juc Framework Plan



Source: Surf Coast Planning Scheme (Clause 02.04-3)

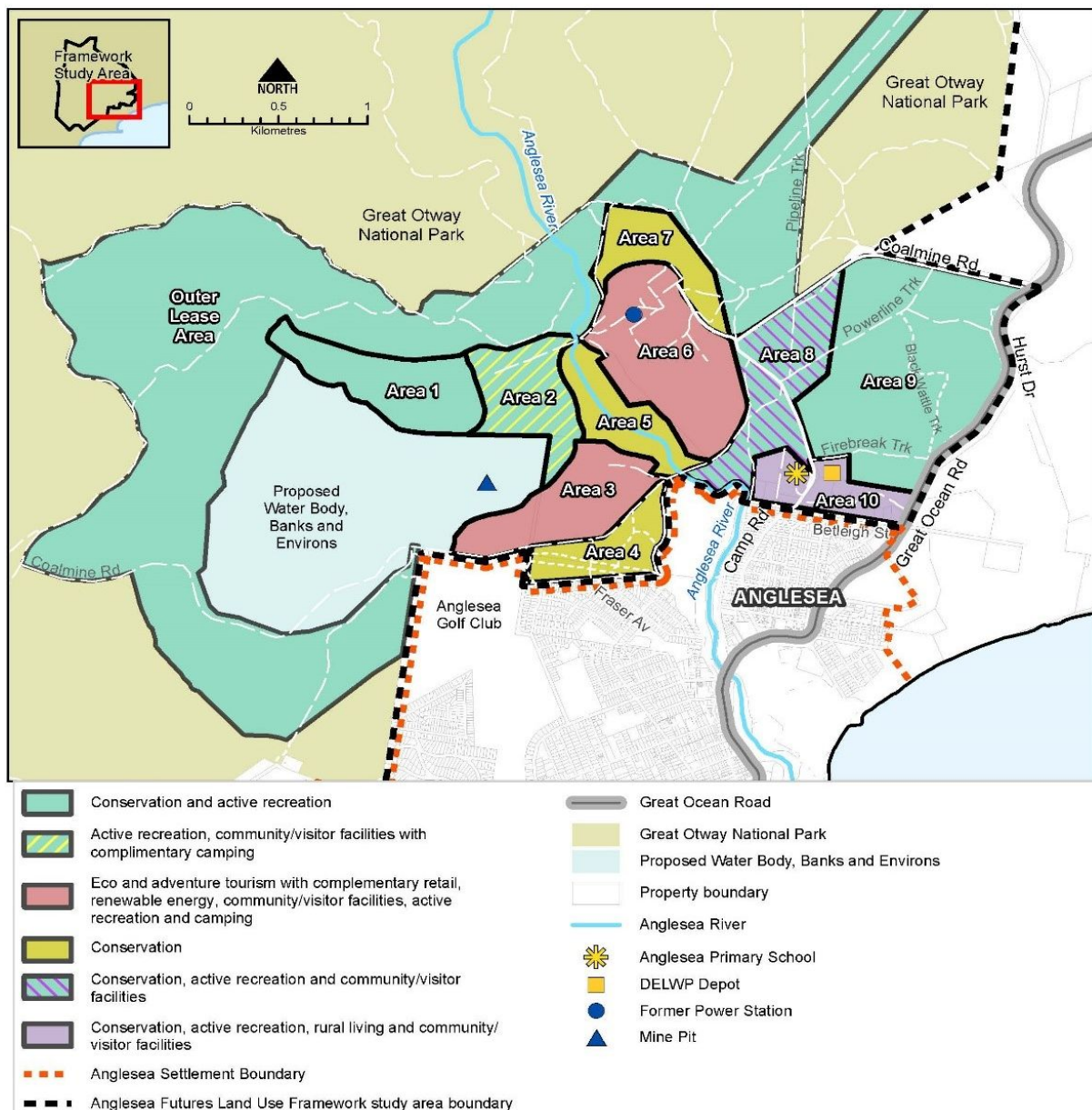
The Anglesea Northern Hinterland Plan (Clause 11.03-6L) implements the *Anglesea Futures Land Use Framework* (Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning, 2018), which relates to the Alcoa

Lease Land. This provides a plan to facilitate the transition of the former coal mine and power station into an attractive and accessible destination with a select mix of use and development in different areas whilst protecting and enhancing the biodiversity, environmental, cultural heritage, and landscape values of the area, including the Anglesea River.

Proposed uses include active recreation, eco/adventure tourism, community/visitor facilities and rural living. Rural living is encouraged in Area 10 and a key strategy is to design subdivisions to reflect the area's existing character and respect the landscape setting.

Implementation of this Framework is being led by the State Government, as would any changes proposed to it.

Figure 7 - Anglesea Northern Hinterland Plan



Source: Surf Coast Planning Scheme (Clause 11.03–6L)

Clause 16.01-3L provides direction for rural residential development which discourages the expansion of rural residential development outside of urban township boundaries and currently directs it to locations identified in the Framework Plans.

9.0 Other Strategies

9.1 Growing Winchelsea – Shaping Future Growth (2015)

Strong population growth in Winchelsea is already identified through the preparation of ‘*Growing Winchelsea – Shaping Future Growth 2015*’. This provides strategic land use directions to manage anticipated growth to 10,000 people by 2050. This is an aspirational target for Council to plan towards. It superseded the previous Winchelsea structure plan (which is now obsolete) and is currently the primary strategic document for Winchelsea.

Growing Winchelsea is a place making plan, designed to guide the way Winchelsea grows, as a designated growth node in the G21 Regional Growth Plan, heading towards 2050. The plan was prepared by Surf Coast Shire Council, in partnership with Regional Development Victoria and the Winchelsea community.

The strategic directions of *Growing Winchelsea* were implemented into the Surf Coast Planning Scheme through Amendment C120 in 2019 and this document is now a Background Document in the Planning Scheme. The existing Winchelsea Framework Plan reflects these directions.

Growing Winchelsea includes a Vision Statement that was prepared to ensure that changes influenced by future growth are informed by the values of the Winchelsea Community. The vision includes a series of ‘principles for growth’, based on the four main thematic areas of the Vision, which help to achieve the preferred future.

The four themes of the vision are:

- Celebrating the Barwon River
- Authentic Country Village
- Rich Cultural Heritage
- Activities for Young and Old

The *Growing Winchelsea* plan is set across two staged structure plans, with the first plan providing for growth over the next 10 years and the second plan looking more broadly beyond 10 years.

Estimates of population growth were provided from a base of 1600 in 2015 for both time periods. This estimated an additional 280-300 lots and 650 people over the 10 year period to 2025 resulting in 2,250 population. Beyond 10 years the growth rates estimated became more aspirational to achieve 10,000 by 2050.

9.1.1 10 Year Plan

Growing Winchelsea recommended that consideration be given to the rezoning of further land in the short term to provide further opportunities for residential growth in the town.

A key recommendation of the 10 year plan was to:

‘Investigate the feasibility of rezoning two areas of land, identified on the Growing Winchelsea 10 Year Plan as “Future residential”, as part of the planning scheme amendment required to implement the Growing Winchelsea strategy.

This is the land identified as the Short Term Residential Growth Area in the Planning Scheme. The land between Austin Street and Barwon Terrace (83 Barwon Terrace) was identified as a ‘Possible School Precinct’. The Planning Scheme directs that ‘Council will investigate the location of a possible school precinct in Winchelsea’ as further strategic work.

This land was identified for growth in the previous Structure Plan and is subject to an Outline Development Plan (see below).

Whilst the land is considered to be well located for residential development, the strategy also recognised that there are a number of constraints, such as sections of the land being subject to flooding, having significant biodiversity assets, being within an ‘Area of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity’ and the large number of small landholdings already developed with a single dwelling.

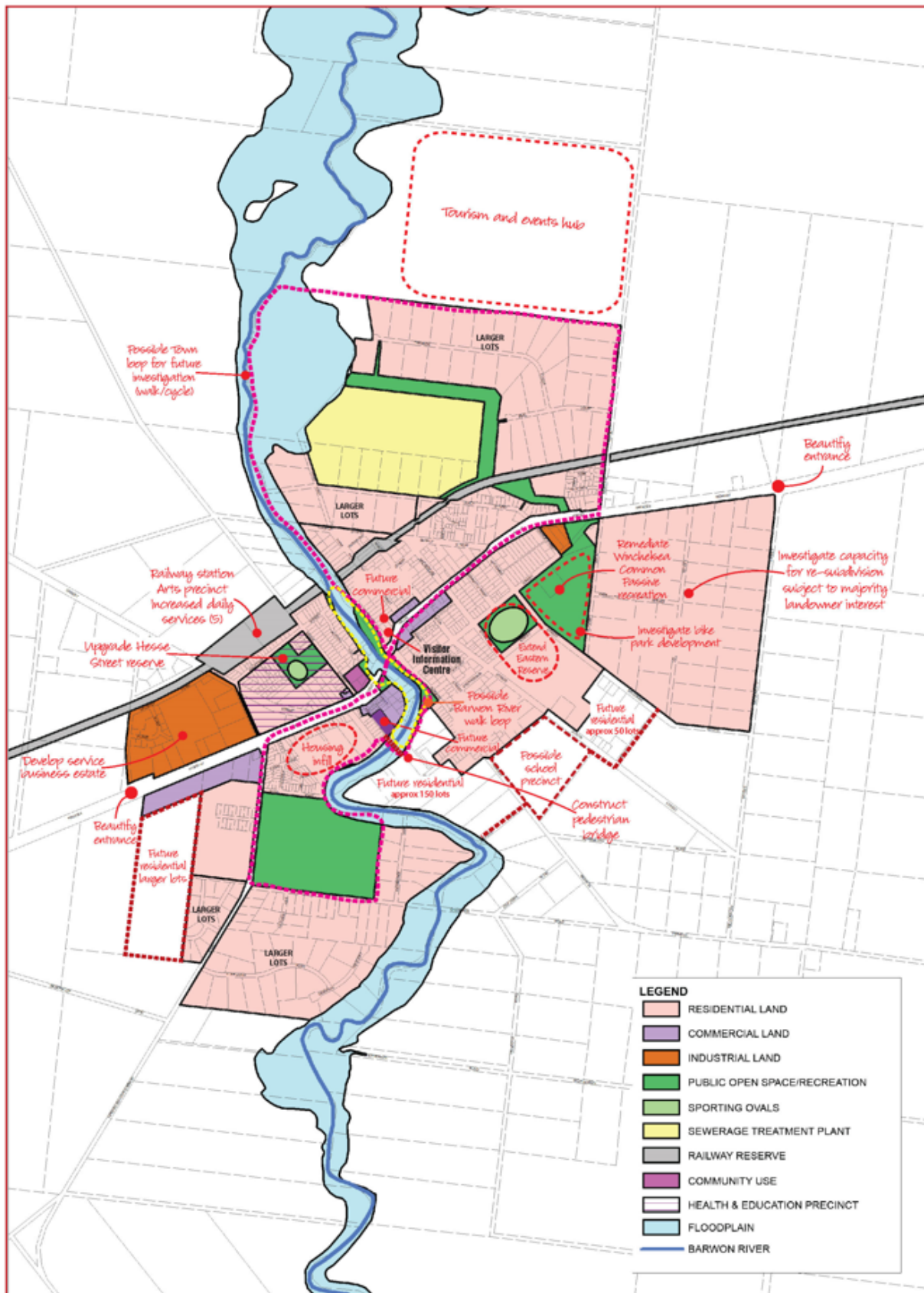
The land was not rezoned as part of the Planning Scheme Amendment to implement *Growing Winchelsea* and land in the Short-Term Growth Area remains in the Farming Zone and under that zone, cannot be further subdivided for residential development.

The Urban Futures Strategy considers the implications of these directions and recommendations relating to this land.

The 10-year plan also recommended the preparation of a Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) for land bounded by Main Street, Hesse Street, and the Barwon River in the Town Centre. This PSP has not been undertaken to date.

Growing Winchelsea also made other recommendations, particularly relating to community infrastructure. A number of these have been undertaken in recent years and have improved the connectivity of the town. This includes the installation of a pedestrian footbridge over the Barwon River at Hesse Street, which would link services in the Town Centre to the short term residential growth area. A river loop walk has also been completed to link the river north and south of the Princes Highway.

Figure 8 - Growing Winchelsea - 10 Year Plan



Source: Growing Winchelsea – Shaping Future Growth (2015), Surf Coast Shire

9.1.2 Beyond 10 Year Plan

As part of the *Growing Winchelsea* project the general preferred direction(s) for longer term future residential growth were investigated. A number of potential growth areas on the fringe of the existing township were identified.

The strategy considered options for an additional 3650 lots to 2050.

The strategy recommends that land in the south east is identified as the highest priority and preferred location for longer term future residential development investigations. This land is adjacent to the settlement boundary and short residential growth area. These were determined to be visually attractive areas and preferred areas from a servicing perspective. This land is identified on the Beyond 10 Year Plan as a Medium-Term Residential Growth Corridor.

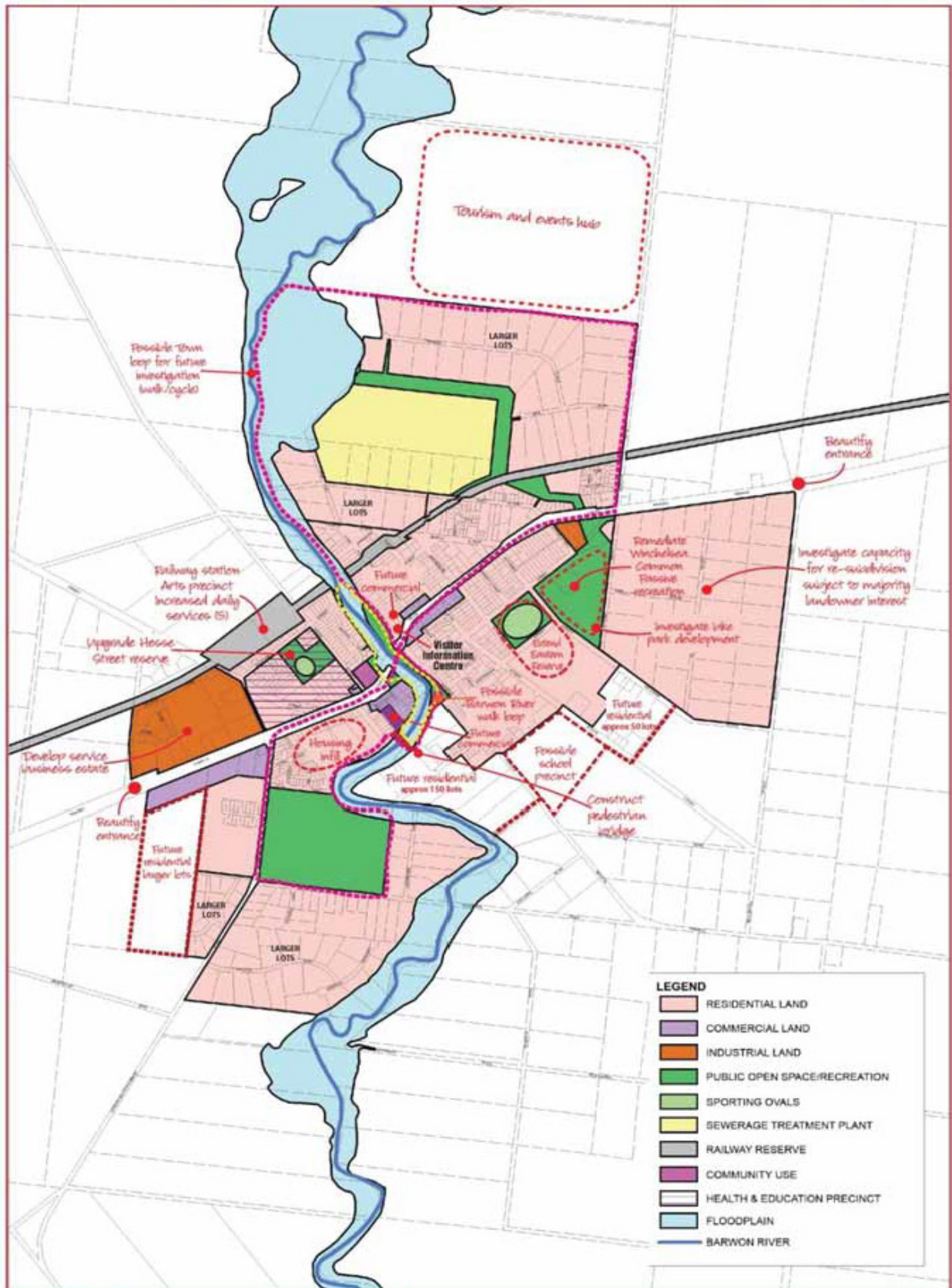
Land to the north east, opposite the Collins Street Estate on the northern side of the Princes Highway was identified for longer term Residential Growth, and as a lower priority, with the land south of the railway line being stage 2 and the land north, stage 3.

Other longer-term recommendations included to investigate the possibility of developing a new employment precinct north of the railway line.

There are also recommendations relating to commercial land including to investigate the need and feasibility of expanding the town centre along Hesse Street, identifying land on Austin Street as a 'possible commercial activity centre' and preparing a commercial trade analysis to determine longer term floorspace requirements.

The Urban Futures Strategy considers the implications of these recommendations and directions for the longer term growth of Winchelsea.

Figure 9 - Growing Winchelsea – Beyond 10 Year Plan



Source: Growing Winchelsea – Shaping Future Growth (2015), Surf Coast Shire

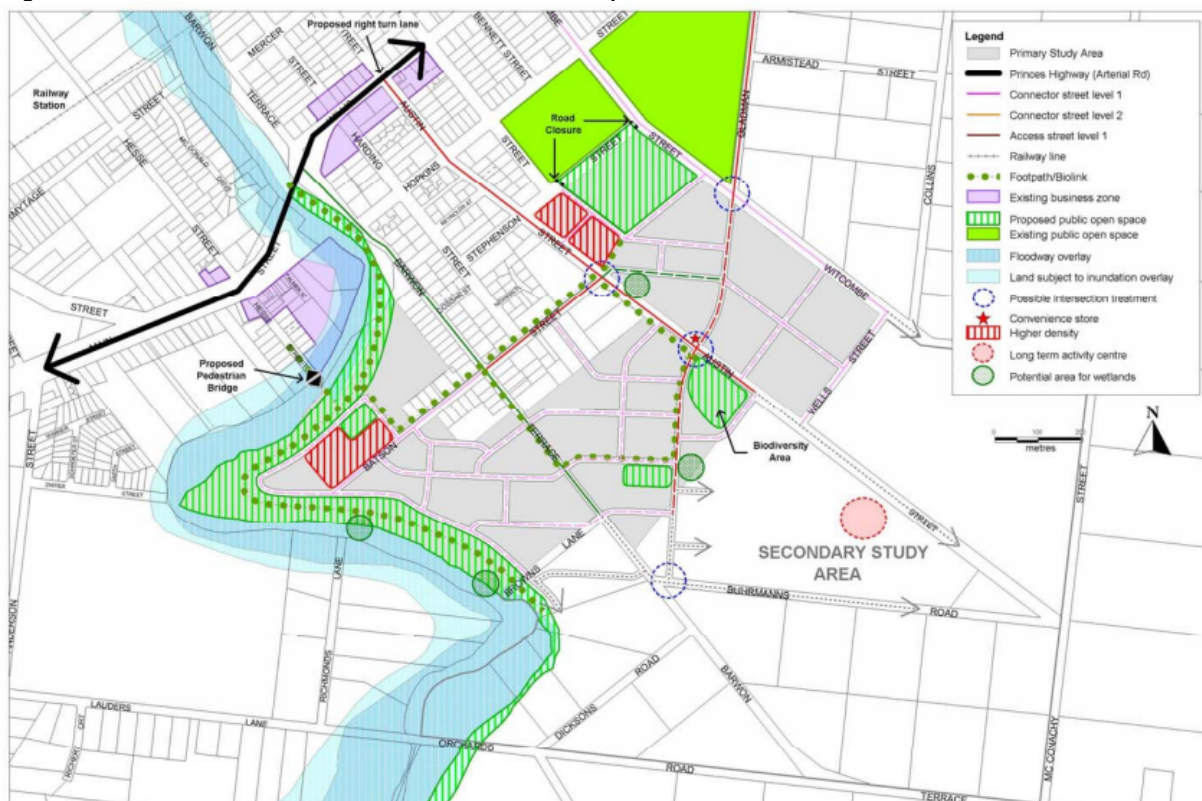
9.2 Winchelsea Growth Area Outline Development Plan (2011)

The Outline Development Plan (ODP) was adopted by Council in 2011 and is a Background Document in the Surf Coast Planning Scheme. It provides the vision and principles for how land should be developed in the growth area, and how and where services are planned to support development to enable the transition of non-urban land to land urban land. It also assists in integrating and coordinating development within a fragmented ownership precinct.

The adopted ODP focused on a 'primary study area' comprising the residential growth areas in the former Winchelsea Structure Plan 2021 (WSP), located at the southeastern area of Winchelsea. A secondary study area was identified to acknowledge the influence of the outlying long term growth corridor in the WSP.

The ODP arose from a recommendation in the WSP, the need to integrate and coordinate development within a fragmented ownership precinct and the need to provide more detailed direction for land development prior to the rezoning for residential purposes.

Figure 10 – Winchelsea Growth Area Outline Development Plan



Source: Winchelsea Growth Area Outline Development Plan (2011) - Surf Coast Shire

Specific features of the plan in the short-term growth area include:

- Two unencumbered open space areas.
- A higher density precinct adjacent to the Barwon River.
- A pathway network along the Barwon River) and a proposed pedestrian bridge over the Barwon River to Hesse Street from the eastern half of the growth area.

A north –south connector street linking Burhmans Road to Gladman Street.

- Four potential locations for wetlands to provide on-site detention and treatment of stormwater.
- A Biodiversity Area adjacent to Austin Street.

The ODP envisages a review of the document every 5 years. It is recognised that the document has not been reviewed since its adoption and that the document is now somewhat outdated.

There have been some significant changes since this time that would impact the implementation of the ODP, including changes to policy.

The ODP includes land at 125-135 Austin Street that has since been rezoned for residential development and has an approved development plan and subdivision permit. This will have implications for the development of the remaining land in the ODP area (the short term growth area) and achieving the outcomes envisaged in the ODP.

Any application to rezone land in the short-term growth area will need to consider the ODP in the context of these changes and recognise there may be limitations on its strategic direction for this area.

Figure 11 - Approved Development Plan – 135 Austin Street



Source: Surf Coast Shire

9.3 Torquay-Jan Juc Sustainable Futures 2040

The Sustainable Futures Plan Torquay-Jan Juc 2040 (SFP) adopted by council in 2014, is a high-level strategic document that aimed to provide clear policy direction for Torquay-Jan Juc's growth over a 30-year period. Centered around the five core values of 1) places for people; 2) natural environment; 3) built environment; 4) services and infrastructure; 5) a local economy, the SFP set a 30-year

population target of between 25,000-30,000 people and formed the basis for managing growth in the town.

The existing Torquay Framework is based on the directions in this document.

9.4 Hinterland Futures Strategy (May 2019)

The Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy (RHFS) was developed to provide a clear vision and high-level strategic direction for the Surf Coast Shire hinterland to vitalise the economy and ensure its long-term sustainability. A key vision is that the hinterland is a key contributor to the Surf Coast economy and renowned visitor destination by 2040. The RHFS highlights the importance of protecting high value agricultural land and the rural landscapes and environment in the hinterland. New uses and development should not result in an unreasonable loss of the productive capacity of agricultural land, or impact on the productivity of existing adjoining agricultural uses.

The RHFS identified areas suited to agribusiness, commercial and intensive farming, as well as tourism, which should be clustered around identified key nodes. This strategy seeks to protect the hinterland from inappropriate urban growth and residential development and will be a consideration in informing the UFS.

The RHFS has been adopted by Council and its directions have been implemented into the planning scheme.

9.5 Torquay Town Centre Urban Design Framework (2017)

The *Torquay Town Centre Urban Design Framework* (the Framework) is a guiding document designed to shape the future development of the commercial core of Torquay.

It establishes an agreed vision for Torquay's main Activity Centre (the Town Centre) to be realised over a period of up to 20 years and a number of key projects and priority actions as an impetus for change within the area. It also seeks to provide more explicit guidance for some of the key public and private spaces within the Town Centre which are key to the town's successful evolution. Notably, the document provides maximum building heights for different areas in the town centre with 10.5 metres (three storeys) being the maximum in specified locations. The intent of the document is for it to form the basis of future decision making as relates to planning and design matters within the Torquay Town Centre.

The Framework was adopted in December 2017 but has not been implemented into the Planning Scheme.

The Strategy considers implications for this Framework in the context of the DALSP (discussed below).

9.6 Torquay -Jan Juc Retail and Employment Land Strategy (2021)

The Torquay-Jan Juc Retail and Employment Land Strategy 2021 (RELS) recognises Torquay-Jan Juc's culture of relaxed coastal living, climate awareness, entrepreneurialism, and creativity and plans for the future of the town's employment centres to ensure their vitality and responsiveness to the needs of residents and visitors over a 15-year period.

The RELS aims to improve opportunities for local employment and the provision of services and further, seeks to preserve the surf culture and visitor economy, respect the primacy of the town centre, reposition the Baines Crescent area as an Enterprise Precinct, and protect the integrity of the area's most important industrial estate; the West Coast Business Park (WCBP).

The Torquay Town Centre is the traditional heart of Torquay and a Major Activity Centre supporting retail, hospitality, office, and residential uses. Despite being well positioned near the foreshore, the centre is performing poorly. The town centre will remain the primary retail centre for the town but will need to transition to a higher-density mixed-use environment that includes retail, office employment, residential housing and visitor accommodation, contemporary hospitality, and larger retailers.

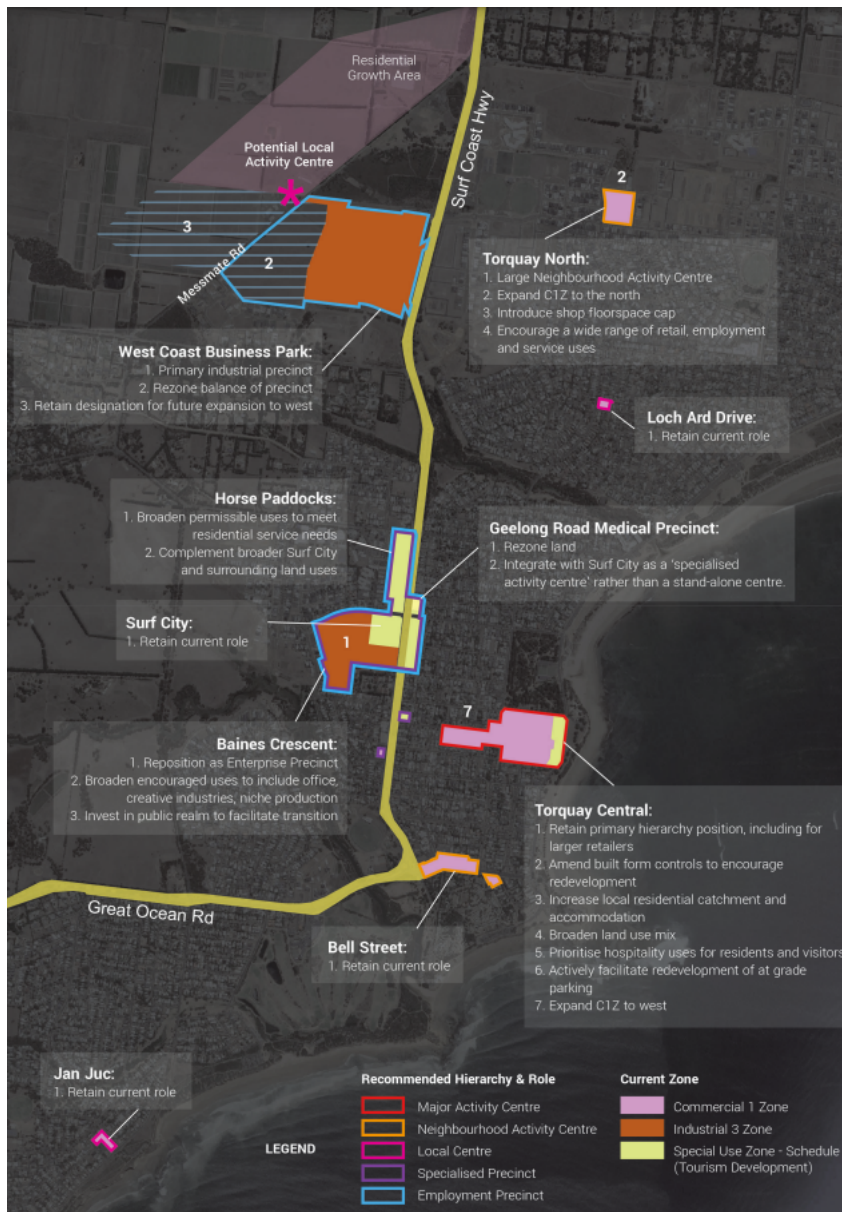
Surf City, Baines Crescent, and the various other nearby sections of land along the Surf Coast Highway occupy the most strategic location of employment land in Torquay-Jan Juc. Demand for population led services in Torquay-Jan Juc continues to increase and although tourism remains a vital specialisation of the town, facilitating growth in emerging industries such as niche production and manufacturing, creative industries, and professional services is an important opportunity.

To this end, the RELS recommends that the Baines Crescent area transition to an Enterprise Precinct where a variety of employment uses can co-exist and capitalise on the economic benefits of collaboration, diverse activity, infrastructure investment and place making, and that Surf City is repositioned to provide greater land use flexibility.

The RELS identifies that further land needs to be rezoned for industrial use, noting that any industrial uses seeking to relocate from the Baines Crescent area as it transitions to an Enterprise Precinct would add to the current demand. The RELS recommends rezoning the balance of the West Coast Business Park for industrial purposes thereby preventing any other land use from being contemplated and ensuring that the future Baines Crescent Enterprise Precinct can accommodate some smaller light industrial businesses that wish to co-locate with other businesses.

The RELS also recommends retaining the future employment land designation of the Messmate Road Growth Area in the Torquay-Jan Juc Framework Plan, the planning for which should consider the uptake and use of land in the West Coast Business Park, demand for non-industrial uses, access and interface matters, and the best location for a small Local Activity Centre designed to facilitate uses like convenience retail (eg. bakery, chemist, minor grocery), food, and the like to service the growth area residents.

Figure 12 - Recommended Hierarchy and Role of Activity Centres & Employment Precincts



Source: Torquay-Jan Juc Retail and Employment Land Strategy 2021 – Urban Enterprise/Surf Coast Shire

The RELS was adopted by Council in October 2021, but has not been implemented into the Planning Scheme. The Strategy considers the future policy implications of the RELS including any implications for its implementation.

9.7 Surf Coast Economic Development Strategy 2021-2031

The *Economic Development Strategy* (EDS) is focused on growing a more diverse and sustainable economy for the Surf Coast, one that strengthens its vibrant local places and businesses, and nurtures new industries servicing national and global markets.

The EDS is guided by the following vision:

The Surf Coast is prosperous and has shaped its own identity that successfully combines lifestyle, environment, business, and a strong sense of place.

It sets out the following goals:

- *Events that create a sense of place, community connection and thriving businesses*
- *Connected and inspiring Places*
- *Slow and purposeful tourism*
- *Our culture and identity is shared and celebrated*
- *Jobs for current and future generations*
- *An economy with a conscience*
- *A thriving, connected business network*
- *A destination of choice for emerging and innovative industries*

The EDS recognises that local jobs have increased, but many of the additional jobs are lower skill and part time. Many younger people of working age are leaving the Surf Coast as the career prospects are unclear. If we don't find ways to create new jobs in future, more people will need to travel outside of Surf Coast for work, which reduces their quality of life and forces our young people to leave in search of opportunity.

A diverse range of local jobs reduces the need to travel outside the region for work, sustains communities, attracts new families and provides more opportunities for young people to stay in their home towns. As the population of Surf Coast continues to grow there is a need to increase the number of local jobs to ensure the lifestyle that people now enjoy does not diminish in future.

Future population growth in the Surf Coast, will increase demand for services, generate additional jobs and increase floor space occupied by businesses and other service providers. The types of businesses that are stimulated the most by population growth include:

- Business services (accountants, lawyers, mortgage brokers, etc.)
- Medical and allied health (doctors, physios, dentists, osteos, psychologists, etc.)
- Community services

There will be some additional demand for industrial land and retail and food services.

Ensuring adequately zoned land to cater for local business scale up, job creation requirements in our townships and the evolving needs of our emerging industries and businesses is a key action to achieve jobs for current and future generations.

9.8 Surf Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Statement of Planning Policy (SPP)

In 2019 the State Government declared the Surf Coast Shire a Distinctive Area and Landscape (DAL) under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act). The declared area encompasses much of the coast and immediate hinterland in the north east of the shire and includes Torquay - Jan Juc and surrounding areas including Bellbrae, Mt Duneed, Connewarre and Breamlea.

The attributes that qualified the Surf Coast as a DAL include:

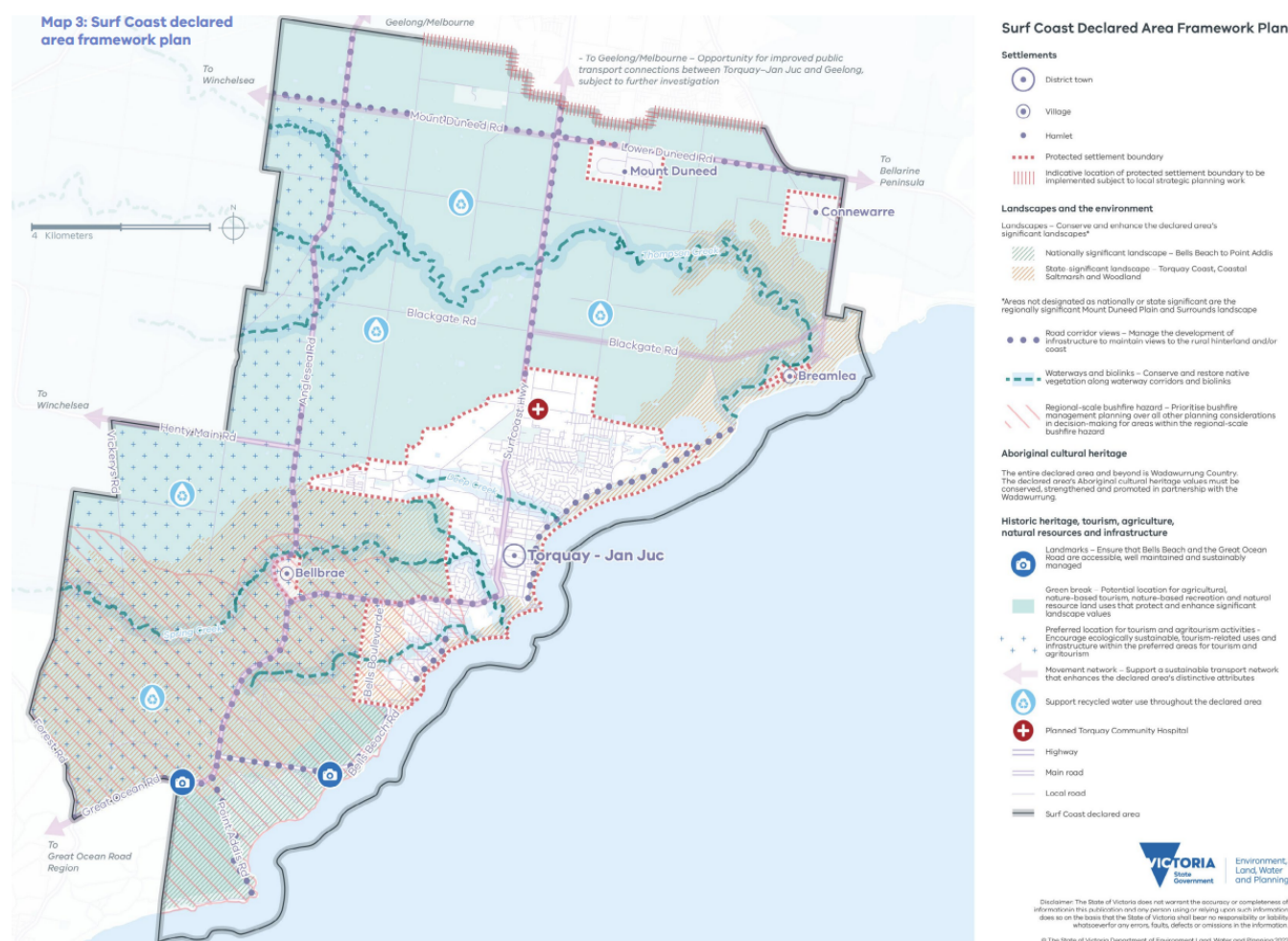
- Outstanding environmental significance
- Significant geographical features, including natural landforms
- Heritage and cultural significance
- Natural resources or productive land of significance

- Strategic infrastructure or built form of significance

A Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) was subsequently prepared to create a framework to guide future use and development of land within the declared area and ensure the protection and conversation of its distinctive attributes.

The SPP has a 50-year horizon and applies to all land in the declared area, including the town of Torquay-Jan Juc. The Surf Coast SPP is now operational and forms part of the Victoria Planning Provisions that guide land use and development decision-making in Victoria.

Figure 13 - Surf Coast Declared Area Framework Plan



Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Surf Coast Statement of Planning Policy, September 2022, State of Victoria, Melbourne

The SPP applies protected settlement boundaries to all the settlements within the declared area, including Torquay - Jan Juc, Bellbrae, Connawarre and Mount Duneed and removes both the Spring Creek Urban Growth Area (currently zoned Urban Growth Zone) and the Northeast Investigation Area from the potential for urban development.

The western settlement boundary of Torquay – Jan Juc will be moved from 1km west of Duffields Road to Duffields Road to the east, and the Northern Eastern Investigation Area will be deleted.

These changes are not yet reflected in the Torquay-Jan Juc Framework Plan in the Planning Scheme.

Any future change to the Torquay-Jan Juc protected settlement boundary would require the agreement of the State Government and Victorian Parliament.

Urban development is directed to a hierarchy of settlements, through designating areas for change and clearly defining protected settlement boundaries. Urban expansion is not allowed beyond these boundaries. The SPP also provides directions for growth within the protected settlement boundaries.

The following table shows the hierarchy designation — district town, village or hamlet — of all settlements within the declared area and their role, function and future for growth.

Figure 14 - Hierarchy of Surf Coast Declared Area Settlements

Settlement	Hierarchy designation	Role and function
Torquay–Jan Juc	District town: a large town providing a diversity of housing, services and employment to support local and regional communities and the visitor economy, which provides service functions to surrounding settlements and the hinterland.	Torquay–Jan Juc is the largest settlement in the declared area, and it will continue to provide housing and employment opportunities to support local and regional communities and the visitor economy. Infill and greenfield growth will occur in designated future settlement areas and substantial change areas.
Bellbrae, Breamlea	Village: a small town with limited services (such as a general store or post shop) that support the local community.	Bellbrae and Breamlea are small settlements servicing the needs of their local communities. They are designated for minimal change within their settlement boundaries with no further greenfield growth.
Mount Duneed and Connewarre	Hamlet: a small cluster of dwellings in a mainly rural area.	These settlements are low-density rural subdivisions with no services, and they are not designated for growth.

Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Surf Coast Statement of Planning Policy, September 2022, State of Victoria, Melbourne

The SPP indicates that:

‘urban development within Torquay–Jan Juc will be sustainably managed through a combination of infill and greenfield development within a protected settlement boundary, to safeguard the declared area’s green breaks, landscape significance, environment and biodiversity, Wadawurrung living cultural and historic heritage values.’

Within Torquay, the SPP directs development to activity centres, commercial and tourism precincts, substantial change areas and future urban areas, which will be linked through a sustainable movement network (see map below). Notably there is only one Future Urban Area on Messmate Road and one substantial change area around the Torquay Town Centre.

Future urban areas are areas within the protected settlement boundary identified as being potentially suitable for greenfield development. They will provide urban land uses including residential, employment, community infrastructure and eco-tourism. Development will be planned and designed in line with the Torquay–Jan Juc coastal character statement. A planning authority will not consider rezoning and/or permitting development in these areas until comprehensive planning and infrastructure assessment has been undertaken.

Areas designated for substantial residential change are the preferred locations for urban consolidation. These areas are located around the Torquay Town Centre, to promote walkability and connection and to provide access to jobs, services and facilities. The SPP states that urban consolidation in these areas will provide for a diversity of housing types.

The Torquay Town Centre will remain the primary activity centre for Torquay–Jan Juc, with potential for future expansion. It is a preferred location for additional tourism uses and infrastructure including accommodation as well as commercial uses and community services.

The creation of an enterprise precinct in the Baines Crescent area is encouraged by the SPP, as a place with diverse, coexisting employment uses.

The SPP requires development in Torquay–Jan Juc to be planned and designed to respond to the Torquay–Jan Juc coastal character statement.

The Torquay coastal character statement states that:

‘Mixed-use development with shop-top apartments and offices is supported in activity centres, and it is designed at a scale in keeping with the activity centre’s role and character. As the primary activity centre, the Torquay Town Centre is a vibrant, mixed-use commercial centre for retail, office, business, entertainment, tourism and community uses. Development helps consolidate fragmented areas of the activity centre and improve amenity and pedestrian connectivity. Building heights within the Torquay Town Centre will generally be two-to-three-storeys. Buildings of up to four storeys may occur in locations where development can be designed to transition sensitively to street edges, where it does not overshadow the public realm, and where long range views of the coast from existing areas can be maintained’

‘Development in substantial change areas is designed in a way that respects older-style beach houses and the neighbourhood character of ‘Old Torquay’. It maintains the predominant pattern of front and side setbacks that allow space to retain existing and plant more vegetation including gardens and canopy trees, to soften the built form and create spacious, leafy streetscapes.’

‘Development in future urban areas reflects Torquay–Jan Juc’s coastal character, with low-rise buildings set within well-landscaped gardens that reflect the surrounding landscape significance.’

The SPP directs that affordable and social housing will be provided close to services and community facilities.

The SPP recognises that motor vehicles are the main mode of transport in the declared area. Buses are the main public transport mode for residents and visitors. To help achieve the Victorian Government’s target of net-zero emissions by 2050, the declared area needs more sustainable transport infrastructure, particularly for public and active transport options (such as walking and safer cycling). Structure planning and urban renewal projects should provide opportunities for well-designed active transport infrastructure to fit in with the landscape character and connect to the existing transport network.

Torquay–Jan Juc is recognised as an important regional service centre and iconic tourist destination, and it needs adequate essential services and community infrastructure to continue to be so. This includes water, electricity, renewable energy, telecommunications and waste management infrastructure as well as schools, sporting facilities, libraries, health services and town centres. New infrastructure must be planned and existing infrastructure expanded in an environmentally responsible manner.

Key strategies include:

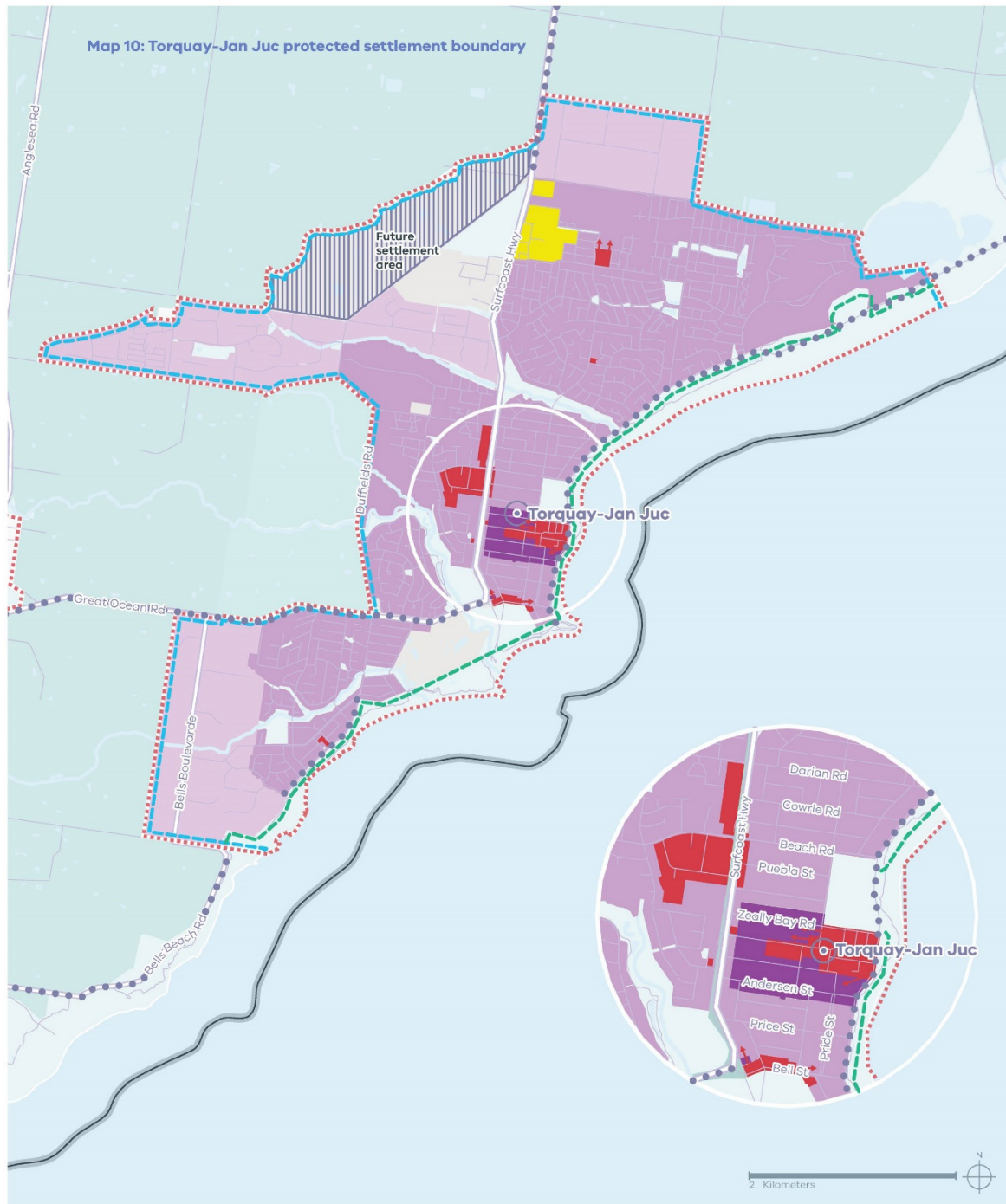
- Provide new infrastructure and/or upgrade existing infrastructure in sequence with development to meet the needs of communities, local businesses and tourists.

- Prioritise active transport modes (such as walking, cycling and public transport) and sustainable infrastructure (such as electric vehicle recharging stations and bicycle parking) to encourage their use by the community and visitors, help minimise greenhouse gas emissions and improve resilience to climate change impacts.
- Encourage active transport and mitigate the need for future car parking by providing safe, accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections between residential areas, activity centres, beaches and other visitor attractions.

The declared framework map identifies the opportunity for improved public transport connections between Torquay and Jan-Juc, and that this is subject to further investigations.

Future growth and development in the declared area must accord with the directions and strategies in the SPP and has been a key influence in preparing the Strategy.

Figure 15 - Torquay-Jan Juc Protected Settlement Boundary



Torquay-Jan Juc

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|-----------------|
| — Surf Coast declared area | ■ Township area | ■ Activity centre /commercial precinct | ■ Parks/reserve |
| ... Protected settlement boundary | — Minimise the visibility of the settlement from green breaks along the urban-rural interface | ■ Substantial change area | ● District town |
| ■ Green break | — Low-scale development along the foreshore interface | ■ Incremental change area | — Highway |
| ■ Water body | | ■ Minimal change area | — Main road |
| — River | ■ Future urban area | ■ Civic and community precinct | — Local road |
| ● ● Road corridor view | | — Opportunities for activity centre/commercial precinct expansion over time | |



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Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Surf Coast Statement of Planning Policy, September 2022, State of Victoria, Melbourne

9.9 Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020 & Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan

Existing regional policy in the Planning Scheme seeks to manage the sustainable development of the Great Ocean Road region by managing the growth of towns.

The Great Ocean Road and Environs Act 2020 recognises the importance of the Great Ocean Road (GOR) and its environs to the economic prosperity and liveability of Victoria, and as one living and integrated natural entity, for the purposes of protecting that area. The Act established the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA); and provides for the development, implementation and monitoring of an overarching strategic framework plan for the Great Ocean Road region.

The State Government is currently preparing the GOR Strategic Framework Plan which is expected to include a particular focus on the protection of landscapes visible from the GOR.

The Strategy recognises this emerging strategic plan and its potential to reinforce the importance of the area.

10. Key Drivers and Outcomes

10.1 Managing Bushfire Risks

State Planning Policy at *Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire Planning* sets out clear requirements and priorities for addressing bushfire risk in planning for urban growth and seeks to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfire through risk-based planning. The Policy requires that, when planning for land that is subject to a Bushfire Management Overlay or for land that is in a bushfire prone area, planning authorities, including Surf Coast Shire, are required to prioritise the protection of human life over all other policy considerations and to direct population growth and urban development to low risk locations where human life can be best protected from the effects of bushfire.

Most of the shire is within a bushfire prone area and much of the southern portion of the shire is covered by a Bushfire Management Overlay. This includes all of the coastal townships south of Jan Juc and significant areas around Deans Marsh. There are also smaller areas west and north of Torquay-Jan Juc, including areas close to Bellbrae, that are covered by the Bushfire Management Overlay.

To ensure that bushfire risk is properly considered as an input to the Urban Futures Strategy, council engaged a specialist bushfire planning consultant (Kevin Hazell Bushfire Planning) to prepare a municipal wide assessment of bushfire risk. This was prepared as an input to the Urban Futures Strategy project and provides an assessment of strategic bushfire hazards to enable settlement related bushfire policies in Clause 13.02-1S to be considered in future planning for urban growth.

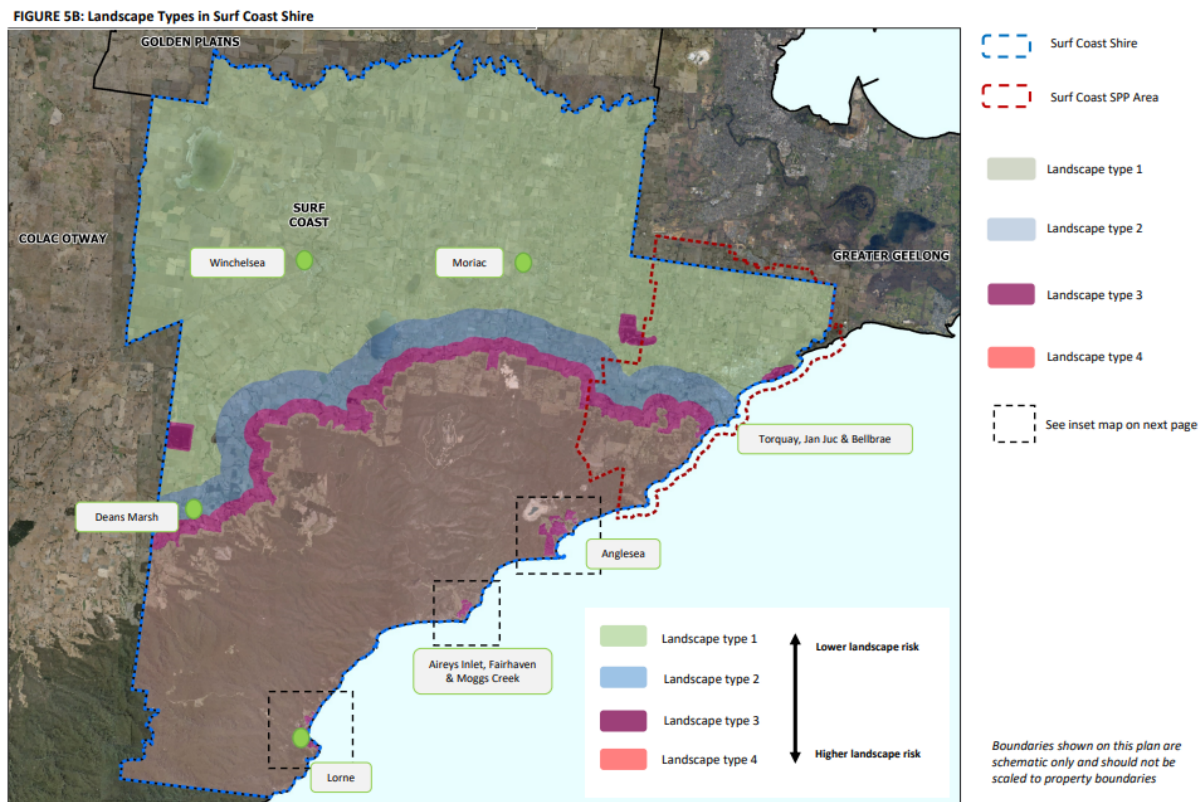
The Strategic Bushfire Assessment uses landscape types as a tool to assist in appreciating the relative risk between locations. Landscape types are applied to inform likely bushfire scenarios, the potential for neighbourhood scale destruction and the availability and access to safer areas.

Land within Surf Coast Shire has been classified into one of four landscape types with differing levels of bushfire risk. State policy directs that new residential development or new urban growth must be directed to low-risk locations (not negotiable); either Landscape Type 1 or 2.

From a bushfire risk perspective, Landscape type 1 areas would be suitable locations to direct growth and development as they are not exposed to large, landscape scale bushfires that generate extreme bushfire behaviour or the type of bushfires where neighbourhood scale destruction usually occurs. They are lower risk locations, especially when contemporary bushfire protection is also included in completed development.

Landscape Types 3 and 4 are deemed as high and extreme high bushfire risk locations and are considered unsuitable for further urban growth.

Figure 16 - Landscape Types in Surf Coast Shire



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Kevin Hazell BUSHFIRE PLANNING

Source: Kevin Hazell. Surf Coast Shire Strategic Bushfire Assessment, July 2023

The SPP identifies that much of the declared area is at risk from bushfire, and the south-western area which includes settlements (Bellbrae and the southwestern part of Torquay- Jan Juc) and the rural hinterland is at risk of regional-scale bushfire. As well as the risk to human life and property, there is an increasing likelihood of extreme bushfire events, which would further jeopardise the survival of threatened species in the declared area, other environmental values and Wadawurrung living cultural heritage sites. In areas at risk of a regional scale bushfire hazard, bushfire management planning should be prioritised over all other planning considerations in decision making.

10.2 Protecting Surf Coast's Unique and Valued Natural Environment and Landscapes, Biodiversity and Built Heritage

State Policy at *Clause 12 Environmental and Landscape Values* recognises that planning should help to protect the health of ecological systems and the biodiversity they support (including ecosystems,

habitats, species and genetic diversity) and conserve areas with identified environmental and landscape values.

The shire contains a diversity of natural assets, environments and landscapes, many of which are recognised as state and nationally significant. These include:

- The iconic coastal landscapes of the Great Ocean Road and southwest coast region, which is characterised by scenic coastal vistas and landscapes.
- Point Addis Marine National Park and the Point Danger and Eagle Rock Marine sanctuaries.
- The Anglesea Heathlands which are among the most biodiverse parts of Victoria.
- The forests of the Great Otway National Park.
- The varied and attractive landscapes of the Surf Coast hinterland including the Thompson Creek and Barrabool Hills.
- Rivers and Riparian Corridors, Waterways, Lakes, Creeks, and wetlands, including Lake Gherang, Wurdiboluc Reservoir, Lake Modewarre, Lake Murdeduke, Barwon River, Karaaf Wetlands, Thompson Creek, Painkalac Creek and Deep Creek.

The MPS recognises that 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.

The Shire supports many important biodiversity features including Creek corridors, heathlands, native grasslands, grassy woodlands and scattered mature native eucalyptus trees, as well as vegetation of local and state conservation significance, including a range of threatened flora and fauna. Remnant vegetation, including riparian vegetation in wetlands, has high ecological value for the habitat it provides to native and migratory fauna.

Policy 12.01-1L *Protection of biodiversity in Surf Coast* discourages extending settlements or intensifying development in locations containing significant biodiversity assets, unless these assets:

- Will not be fragmented or compromised.
- Will be incorporated into an open space network.

Some of these significant landscapes, environments and biodiversity assets are identified and recognised by relevant overlays in the Surf Coast Planning Scheme or by other state and commonwealth legislation.

Protection of waterways and waterbodies (including their environmental qualities) is a key objective in the Planning Scheme by undertaking measures to minimise the quantity and to retard the flow of stormwater run-off from developed areas (Clause 14.02-1S). The Marine and Coastal Policy 2020 is implemented through Clause 12.02-1S *Protection of the marine and coastal environment* and applies inland 5km from the High-Water mark. It seeks to maintain water quality and biodiversity in and adjacent to coastal estuaries, wetlands and waterways. A key strategy is to minimise direct, cumulative and synergistic effects on ecosystems and habitats.

The DALSPS prioritises the conservation of the declared area's water catchments to protect ecological, environmental and biodiversity attributes. It seeks to ensure that new development implements integrated water cycle management to restrict stormwater flows downstream to pre-development levels. It requires future growth to have regard to impact on the shire's waterways and catchments.

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. These places are currently recognised as significant at a state or local level and are protected by a Heritage Overlay at Clause 43.01 in the Planning Scheme. State significant places are listed on the Victoria Heritage Register.

The protection of environmental, landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets has informed the development of the Strategy.

10.3 Protection of Agricultural Land

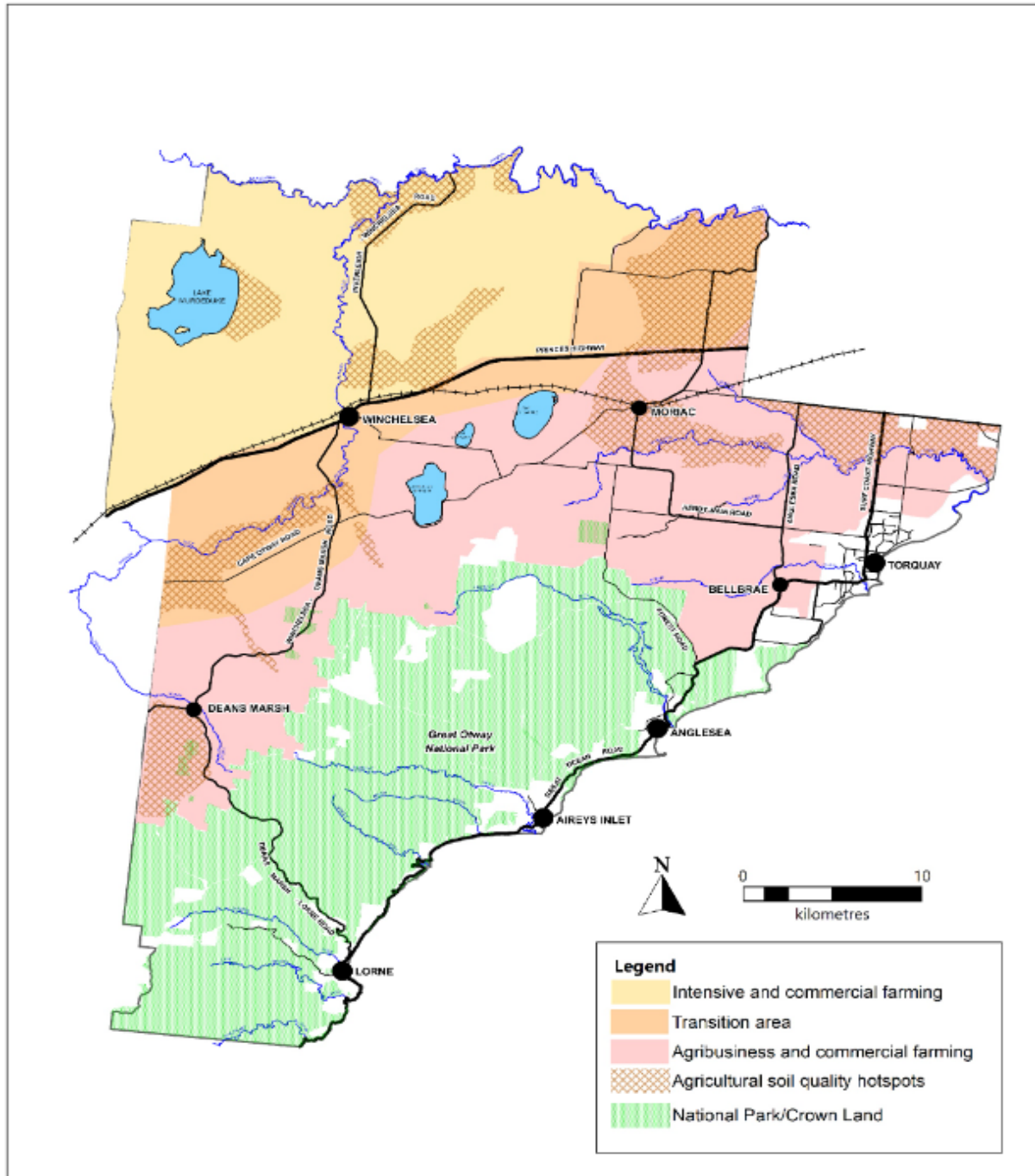
State policy seeks to protect the state's agricultural base by preserving productive farmland. A key strategy at Clause 14. 01-1S *Protection of Agricultural Land* is to protect strategically important agricultural and primary production land from incompatible uses.

The MPS recognises that increasing development pressure in rural areas, often associated with tourism unrelated to agriculture, hobby farming, rural residential development, urban intrusion and infrastructure development, is changing the rural landscape. A key direction is to protect the ability of future generations to productively farm the land and avoid the loss of agricultural productivity associated with land use conflicts, particularly between farming activities and non-farm related residential development.

The agricultural capability and current allotment and tenement sizes in the Winchelsea Plains and Barrabool Hills landscape precincts are recognised as conducive to agriculture and much land is still used for broadacre farming (Shown as Intensive and Commercial Farming on map below). There are also areas identified as Agricultural Soil Quality Hotspots in the hinterland areas.

The Strategy is informed by the need to protect productive agricultural land.

Figure 17 - Sustainable Agricultural Focus Map Area



Source: Surf Coast Planning Scheme

10.4 Other Environmental Risks & Climate Change

Clause 13.01-1S *Natural Hazards and Climate Change* states that planning should prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change and seek to minimise the impacts of natural hazards and adapt to the impacts of climate change through risk-based planning. A key strategy is to direct population growth and development to low-risk locations.

In 2019 Surf Coast Shire Council declared a climate emergency. Among other things, the declaration committed Council to consider climate change in future reviews of the Council Plan. A key strategy in the Council Plan is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit the impacts of climate change.

Surf Coast Shire and our broader region are already experiencing the impacts of climate change, and this is expected to become more noticeable over time. In the future, residents may experience some of the following effects of climate change:

- Temperature increase (a forecast 1.5 degree increase in average daily temperature by 2030).
- Bushfires – more severe fire weather and longer fire seasons.
- Heatwaves – increased frequency and intensity.
- Water scarcity.
- Ecosystem and biodiversity impacts – namely impacts on plants and animals due to severity of weather events.
- Health and wellbeing impacts – including heat related illnesses.

Surf Coast Shire, and especially its coastal fringe, is also subject to a number of environmental risks that are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. They include coastal erosion and inundation caused by storm surges linked to sea level rise and more severe weather events.

The State Government has mapped areas at particular risk of storm surge. In Surf Coast Shire, this relates primarily to areas of coastal wetland and creek valleys/ estuaries around Breamlea, Anglesea, Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven and Lorne. Coastal inundation caused by storm surges could potentially have impacts on the coastal townships and their environs. The extent of this risk depends upon the severity of sea level rise and extreme weather events resulting from ongoing climate change.

Earlier Council planning has meant that most of the areas potentially affected are already reserved and zoned as open spaces and often also covered by existing Flooding and Land Subject to Inundation Overlays. It is noted that in Anglesea and Aireys Inlet several properties and access roads to these properties have already been inundated under storm surge and climate change conditions.

The risk of coastal erosion is moderate to high along significant parts of coastal Surf Coast. While it may involve increased costs to maintain access and infrastructure, and possibly threaten particular properties it does not involve a major risk to the shire's coastal townships.

In both coastal and hinterland areas, there are also localised risks associated with riverine flooding. These risks may be significant for the particular areas affected and may affect the adequacy of existing stormwater and other infrastructure and planning for new infrastructure. However, they are not expected to impose a widespread constraint on urban development.

It is recognised that data may be updated in the future in respect of flooding, coastal inundation and erosion, and storm surge (and that not all the up-to-date data is implemented into the Surf Coast Planning Scheme).

The Strategy responds to the need to ensure that urban growth avoids the at-risk areas and to consider the most up to date and best available data when planning for future urban growth and development.

10.5 Environmentally Sustainable Development & Climate Resilience

Mitigating the impacts of climate change on urban areas and ensuring that urban areas have the 'resilience' to cope with changes in future conditions and needs, is a key consideration in growth planning. Planning for growth provides the opportunity to consider and apply more stringent design requirements responding to the above mentioned impacts.

Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) works to minimise resource use and impact on ecosystems, while improving the lives of those affected by it. To better manage increasing pressures on our natural resources, higher levels of population growth, and the effects of climate change, improvements to how environmental sustainability is incorporated into how we plan and design our built environment need to be made.

Sustainable development protects our environment, secures today's living standards and future proofs our communities against the impacts of climate change. Residential subdivision represents a significant opportunity to influence sustainability outcomes in the built environment, from how streets are designed to maximise solar access for future dwellings, through to the planning of open space and integration with transport networks.

The Victorian government is committed to improving the environmental performance and resilience of buildings in response to urban growth and a changing climate. State policy has recently been updated to help embed ESD into planning and decision making for new buildings. These changes are based on the following key principles:

- Make it easier to recycle.
- Cool new developments and our urban environment.
- Facilitate active and sustainable transport choices.
- Reduce exposure to air and noise pollution.
- Improve building energy efficiency and support the transition to a low emission future.
- Enhance the role of planning in stormwater management and efficient water usage.

The Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) are an independent alliance of Councils in Victoria and provide a forum for ideas on innovation and best practice in ESD with a focus on applying ESD principles to the built environment.

The Sustainable Subdivisions Framework (SSF) has also been prepared by CASBE which seeks to build resilient and liveable cities and towns, and ensure that our neighbourhoods are low carbon and climate resilient. It sets out a framework for measuring and achieving stronger sustainability outcomes in residential subdivisions and a series of sustainable built environment opportunities, which can be influenced through the development planning and subdivision planning processes. It identifies 7 themes or categories that can assist in creating sustainable subdivisions: site layout and liveability, streets and public realm, energy, ecology, integrated water management, urban heat, and circular economy.

The SSF describes Integrated Water Management (IWM) as a collaborative approach to the way we plan for and manage all elements of the water cycle. This includes managing and protecting the

health of waterways, wastewater management, alternative and potable water supply and stormwater management.

A key objective of Clause 19.03-3S *Integrated Water Management* is to sustainably manage water supply and demand, water resources, wastewater, drainage and stormwater through an integrated water management approach.

Optimised stormwater management objectives include incorporating Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) techniques into development to improve the quality of stormwater run-off and reduce impacts on water systems and water bodies, as well as reducing urban heat island effects including enhancing riparian vegetation (waterway health), drainage reserves adjacent to wetlands and protection of biodiversity and landscape features for improved amenity.

Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design (BSUD) is a nature positive approach to growth and development which not only seeks to protect existing biodiversity but also increases or enhances biodiversity value. Biodiversity is seen as an opportunity and a valued resource to be preserved and maximised at all stages of planning and design.

Retaining and providing canopy and significant trees are a key contributor to urban cooling, however, also benefit the overall biodiversity value of the site. Enhancement of biodiversity value objectives include promoting the creation of habitat corridors and movement of flora and fauna.

The Strategy considers the incorporation of ESD principles and features into planning for growth to support current and future needs.

10.6 Sustainable Growth – Infrastructure

Our Places and Spaces State of Play 2024 document is the first phase of developing an Integrated Social Infrastructure Framework (SIF) which will outline the needs of the community and identify investment priorities relating to social infrastructure in the municipality.

The document identifies social infrastructure and open space as relating to places and spaces of a communal, human or social nature that is required, by the different areas of the community, and progressively as the community grows. It recognises that social infrastructure is the fabric of our community and they are places that bring the community together. The provision of social infrastructure, in partnership with our community and key stakeholders, is essential for the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of our community.

The document acknowledges the challenges in delivering and maintaining infrastructure including significant population growth (amongst others). It also acknowledges that the quality, ease of access and experience of infrastructure varies for different types of social infrastructure, across the different places and particularly for vulnerable groups of people, in both the fastest growing suburbs and unique rural and coastal townships.

This initial document provides visibility of Council's existing commitments and priorities along with the data needed to develop the broader Framework. It consolidates known social infrastructure investment priorities. This will help the community understand what is currently planned in the places that they live and play.

It considers three strategic horizons that will set council up for the success in the planning, provision and investment of social infrastructure and open space. Horizon one (1-5 years) includes preparing and planning for growth in Winchelsea and Torquay and horizon two (5-10 years) includes delivering on growth planning.

The broader SIF, once completed, will provide Council and the community with a singular, consolidated view of the current social infrastructure priorities within the municipality. It will ensure

that the places and spaces are sustainably planned and delivered, where, when and how they are needed most.

The **G21 Regional Transport Strategy 2021-2041** provides a vision for 2041 that the region is connected by a sustainable transport system which supports thriving communities and is safe and accessible for all.

It sets the following 8 goals:

- increase public transport use and competitiveness with other transport modes.
- Increase use of active transport within and between local areas.
- Encourage more foot and bike traffic in centres.
- Reduce car dependency.
- Create destinations, linkages and corridors that people love to use and visit.
- Plan for a climate-neutral transport system.
- Build a transport system accessible for all.
- “Sweat” the road space - don’t build more roads unless necessary, explore other options.

A key recommendation is to provide region wide public transport services all day between towns. It identifies the railway between Colac and Geelong as an Improved Frequency Public Transport Corridor providing a minimum of 8 return services per day to create a more integrated city-region public transport network for the local workforce. It also identifies a 20-minute frequency public transport corridor between Torquay and Geelong and a rapid transit bus network on this route as a priority project.

Separated cycling facilities or quietways are recommended in towns and suburbs, and active transport and public transport on local streets and in town centres (with all the coastal towns, Moriac and Winchelsea identified).

The **Surf Coast Safer Cycling Strategy 2022-2027** has been developed to inform Council policy and approach to improving safety and access for cyclists within Surf Coast Shire. It is a critical link in Council’s Climate Emergency Response Plan 2021-2031 to promote active transport and embed climate considerations into road and pathway infrastructure planning. The vision is connecting people with places through an integrated, safe cycling network.

A key goal is to support a holistic, integrated approach to planning for cycling to facilitate the delivery of cycling infrastructure and improve cycling outcomes. The Safer Cycling Strategy aims to improve planning for cycling in new developments to ensure safe and appropriate infrastructure is delivered, which connects to an overall cycling network. Planning for appropriate cycling connections in new developments which connect to the existing strategic cycling network is critical to ensure a well-connected and integrated cycling network into the future. The Safer Cycling Strategy aims to plan, design and deliver new strategic cycling routes or upgrade the existing cycling network in a more integrated and holistic manner.

Relevant actions include:

- When planning for growth and new development consideration of the provision for cycling within and through the development to be incorporated into the planning process. This should include consideration of cycling connections to services, recreational spaces, key destinations and connect to the overall cycling network. This may occur at various stages in development planning, including but not limited to the preparation of Precinct Structure Plans, Structure Plans and Development Plans, and the consideration of planning permit applications including applications for subdivision.
- Consider provision of cycling infrastructure in township place-making/urban renewal projects.

The *Surf Coast Safer Cycling Strategy* can link to the Council Plan Strategies to make it easier for people to move around our towns and in nature without relying on cars, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit the impacts of climate change.

The **Pathways Strategy Review 2012** provides a review of the Pathways Strategy 2006 which provided a strategy to improve pathways throughout the Shire. The key requirement is to develop infrastructure in all communities that will connect the people in those communities with the other facilities and services. The Pathways Strategy identifies proposed priority pathway projects and identifies the following policy for pathways in new estates and developments.

Pathways in new estates and developments within the Surf Coast Shire will be planned, designed and implemented in the following manner:

- Adopt the principles of “walkability” in designing new estates or developments.
- Provide pathways as a basic requirement of the infrastructure for the development.
- Provide links with other pathways outside of the development.
- Provide permeability through the development and around the development.
- Implement pathways to the standards outlined in the Surf Coast Shire Pathways Strategy.
- Link to other key nodes of activity such as bus stops, shops, schools or recreational areas.
- Provide footpaths on at least one side of the road on all roads apart from courts.
- Provide safe pedestrian access within the development.
- Provide safe pedestrian access which connects outside of the estate or development including across roads.
- Provide pathways that are accessible to people with disabilities.
- That developers fund the planning, design and implementation of pathways within the development to the satisfaction of the Surf Coast Shire.
- Provide other associated infrastructure with pathways such as seating and resting areas.
- Design pathways that are complimentary and where appropriate, reflect the character of the area.

The strategy recognises the goals, recommendations and action in the above strategies and considers and supports the need to provide a connected and sustainable transport system when planning for urban growth.

10.7 Housing Diversity

State policy at Clause 16.01-1S *Housing Supply* seeks to facilitate well-located, integrated and diverse housing that meets community needs.

The following strategies are relevant:

- *Plan for growth areas to provide for a mix of housing types through a variety of lot sizes, including higher housing densities in and around activity centres.*
- *Ensure that an appropriate quantity, quality and type of housing is provided, including aged care facilities and other housing suitable for older people, supported accommodation for people with disability, rooming houses, student accommodation and social housing.*
- *Increase the proportion of housing in designated locations in established urban areas (including under-utilised urban land) and reduce the share of new dwellings in greenfield, fringe and dispersed development areas.*
- *Encourage higher density housing development on sites that are well located in relation to jobs, services and public transport.*
- *Identify opportunities for increased residential densities to help consolidate urban areas.*

- *Facilitate diverse housing that offers choice and meets changing household needs by widening housing diversity through a mix of housing types.*

A key strategic direction in the MPS is to:

- *Support a range of housing types, sizes and configurations to accommodate the future needs of the growing and changing population.*

Detached houses dominate the current housing mix in all towns within Surf Coast, comprising 93% of the total housing stock. Across the Surf Coast Shire, only 6% of housing stock is comprised of two bedrooms and less than 1% comprises one bedroom.

Historically, 80% of new housing has come from 'greenfield' development and, to date, these developments have also comprised largely of detached houses. There has also been relatively little variety in the size of housing lots created in recent greenfield estates both in Torquay and Winchelsea.

There will be a mismatch between supply of houses available and future need. This stems from the changes that are projected to the population to 2036 that have been forecast by VIF 2023. The percentage of the total population that is children (up to 19 years) is forecast to fall by around 5% (from 26% to 21%) between 2021 and 2036 while the percentage of those over 65 years of age is forecast to increase by around 8% (from 17% to 25%).

This will result in proportionally more households without children, as well as more older households in the municipality. In 2021, 33% of the population of the coastal towns was aged over 65; well above the Victorian average of 17% and above that of the towns of Winchelsea and Torquay. The highest proportional growth will be in the elderly (aged 80+), increasing from 4% of the population in 2021 to 8% in 2036, due to increasing life expectancy and ageing in place.

One and two person households are forecast to represent 68% of the household growth in Surf Coast to 2036, with these households growing by the largest amounts, and at the fastest rates, from 2021 and 2036. Households with children will represent 27% of the increase in households during this period.

Limited housing diversity has a number of adverse effects in that it:

- Restricts the choices available to households as their housing needs and preferences change (e.g. as they seek to enter the housing market for the first time or as they age).
- Reduces the availability of more affordable options as housing prices and rentals increase.
- Makes it more difficult to provide for the housing needs of essential and key workers and those on lower incomes.

Providing diversity promotes and optimises health and wellbeing, and participation in community and economic life.

The Strategy considers the need to facilitate a wider diversity of housing options as an important outcome for urban growth. This will be particularly important for those renting properties.

10.7.1 Future Homes

Future Homes is a State Government program applicable across Victoria, in areas considered capable of supporting gentle density increases. It has been created to enable gentle density increases

through high-quality development. Future Homes will deliver apartments that are better homes, better neighbours and better for the environment.

Gentle density is modest infill development making the most of existing urban land. It promotes lot consolidation and more efficient use of land in areas well connected to public transport and other services. Future Homes aims to provide highly resolved, considered and high quality architecturally designed responses to urban areas where modest increases in density are encouraged.

Future Homes permit applications can be made in a General Residential Zone if the site is:

- within 800 metres of a passenger train station, or
- within 800 metres of an identified activity centre outside of Metropolitan Melbourne.

Potential lots that may be suitable for Future Homes design have been mapped by the State Government and include significant areas in Winchelsea.

There are four sets of Future Homes designs available for purchase, each with a unique style, design, and layout. All designs are 3 storey apartment buildings and that can be adapted for different neighbourhoods and sites across Victoria.

Clause 53.24 of the Planning Scheme has sought to create a streamlined planning process for Future Homes applications.

10.8 Housing Affordability and Availability

State policy at Clause 16.01-2 *S Housing Affordability* seeks to deliver more affordable housing closer to jobs, transport and services. Key strategies include:

- *Ensuring land supply continues to be sufficient to meet demand.*
- *Increasing choice in housing type, tenure and cost to meet the needs of households as they move through life cycle changes and to support diverse communities.*
- *Promoting good housing and urban design to minimise negative environmental impacts and keep costs down for residents and the wider community.*
- *Encouraging a significant proportion of new development to be affordable for households on very low to moderate incomes.*

Surf Coast Shire, along with most growing local government areas in Australia, has seen substantial real increases in housing costs (both purchase and rental) and declines in housing affordability over recent years.

These increases have been caused by the following factors:

- Strong national and state population growth
- An additional boost to housing demand resulting from an extended period of relatively low interest rates and unemployment
- Housing policies (especially at the Commonwealth level) that have focussed on demand side subsidies
- A nation-wide shortfall in housing production

As a consequence, an increasing number of households are either experiencing 'housing stress' (mortgage payments or rents consuming an excessive percentage of household income) or having difficulty in finding housing that they can afford. This is especially a problem for those on fixed or

modest incomes, including essential workers, those seeking to enter the housing market for the first time and an increasing number of retirees.

This is compounded by high demand for short-term tourist accommodation and high vacancy dwelling rates in the coastal towns which has contributed to a lack of long-term housing availability. For renters there are very few options as a high proportion of landlords choose to let properties for short term stays, rather than long term occupancy,

Private rental vacancy rates dropped to below 1% during the pandemic and increased demand in the private rental market has squeezed out lower income and single wage households particularly in the coastal towns. There is little social housing available to meet this demand and allow households to stay in their established town. The proportion of moderate-high income renters (households earning more than \$140,000) grew from 8% in 1996 to 24% in 2021. Over the same period, private rental dwellings targeting low income households dropped from 60% in 1996 to just 13% in 2021 (rents up to \$266/week in 2021).

There are significant stocks of unoccupied dwellings across the shire. In 2021, there was a dwelling vacancy rate of 32% across the municipality. The rate varies significantly across the shire, with the coastal towns from Anglesea to Lorne experiencing the highest levels. Lorne has the highest vacancy rate in the shire with 69% of dwellings unoccupied, compared to the hinterland towns of Moriac and Winchelsea where vacancy rates are the lowest between 6% and 8%. Approximately 10% of total private dwellings are listed on short term rental accommodation platform Airbnb. The proportion of total dwellings listed is higher in the coastal towns and as high as 24% in Lorne.

Figure 17 - Vacancy rates in Surf Coast towns, 2011-2021

Towns	2011	2016	2021
Torquay	32%	29%	21%
Jan Juc	31%	31%	22%
Anglesea	67%	65%	57%
Airey's Inlet	70%	68%	59%
Fairhaven	82%	78%	69%
Lorne	74%	78%	69%
Winchelsea	11%	13%	8%
Bellbrae	14%	19%	17%
Moriac	5%	6%	6%
Surf Coast	44%	42%	32%
Victoria	11%	12%	11%

Source: ABS Censuses

Finding affordable accommodation is becoming an acute problem for younger and older age groups..

This is a key issue in the coastal towns is the resultant difficulty in attracting and retaining key essential workers. Workers cannot afford to live near their jobs and are unable to find somewhere to live due to a lack of affordable and available rental accommodation. They are either travelling greater distances to work or simply choosing to work elsewhere, putting local businesses and services in jeopardy, and leaving communities short on essential roles. Secure housing is out of reach not just for tourism and hospitality workers but people in traditionally higher paid roles including teachers, health

workers and emergency services personnel. There is a flow on effect in local sport clubs, community organisations and CFA and SES brigades, as new and younger members, can no longer live near enough to participate.

There is no current legislative or adopted policy definition of key workers in Australia. However, in recognition of the contribution that these workers make to the social fabric and economic life of communities, several 'key and essential worker' targeted programs have emerged. In 2019, an alliance of Great South Coast Councils defined 'key worker' as 'an employee who provides a vital service, especially in the essential services, health, or education sectors.'

Additionally, the importance that some industries hold for local and regional economies, saw the Great South Coast Councils definition of key workers expand to encompass a range of occupations that provide services to visitors/tourists including hospitality and retail, as well as agriculture and renewable energy, forestry and construction.

In May 2021, Surf Coast Shire Council declared a key worker accommodation crisis in recognition of how a lack of affordable accommodation was impacting on the economy and sustainability of local communities.

The *Affordable Housing Action Plan, May 2024* (the Action Plan) sets out actions that the Surf Coast Shire Council will take over the next two years to ease local impacts and contribute solutions towards addressing the broader housing challenge.

The Action Plan sets out a goal for affordable housing as:

'To enhance our capacity and the capacity of others to deliver safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing as part of planning and supporting healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities.'

A relevant key action is to *'build our capacity to optimise social and affordable housing outcomes through the delivery of placemaking projects.'*

Affordable Housing is defined under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as housing that is affordable, comprising no more than 30% of the income of low and moderate earning households.

There is a widely accepted understanding of affordable housing as housing provided with some degree of 'eligibility' and 'subsidy' usually set through government policy, rather housing on the open market for purchase or rent that is affordable for lower income earners.

Affordable housing is a broader concept that encompasses 'social housing', which itself is an umbrella term covering 'public housing' which is state owned and managed housing and 'community housing', which is housing provided by a registered housing association or community housing provider. Such housing developments can make a valuable contribution to providing affordable housing options for those in need.

Affordable housing is required when the private rental and home ownership market cannot meet housing need. Housing need is not accurately described as housing demand. Housing demand more accurately describes housing preferences. A mismatch in supply and demand contributes to unmet housing need.

The Action Plan notes that:

'Council recognise that we share the outcome we want – an increase in social and affordable housing- with many groups focused on the health, prosperity and sustainability of their

communities. We know that we have a minor role to play but that our ability to be facilitative and collaborative will make a difference.'

Council's Social Housing Policy (adopted August 2021) outlines a commitment to increase the provision of social housing within the municipality. The policy recognises that social housing provision is the domain of the Victorian Government (public housing) and the profit-for purpose and not-for profit sectors (community housing). Council's interest is in the effective functioning of local communities. The unavailability of social housing, as a subset of affordable housing, negatively impacts the functioning those communities.

The policy states that:

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to improving the availability of high quality social housing within the municipality via the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build program. Council is committed to exploring opportunities to promote social housing as a means of driving economic development, providing jobs and address disadvantage. Council recognises there is a shortfall of social housing across the shire and opportunities should be pursued in townships with the necessary facilities and public transport links being Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Jan Juc, Lorne, Torquay and Winchelsea.

Council will:

- *Consider housing affordability generally, and social housing in particular, across all facets of social and land use planning.*
- *Identify and consider the suitability of Council and other Government owned land for social housing initiatives.*
- *Seek to positively influence the provision of social housing in greenfield developments within the legal framework established by the Victorian Government.*

The Strategy considers the current affordability issues that the shire is experiencing and responds to the existing policies in this realm.

There are a number of other policy initiatives introduced by the State Government which aim to increase long term housing availability and housing affordability. The Housing Statement introduced the idea of a Short Stay Levy which would work with Short Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) platforms to add a 7.5% levy when renting an un-hosted property. The funds collected would be centrally held by Homes Victoria for the purpose of developing new social and affordable housing.

The UFS recognises the need to monitor the impacts of additional policy initiatives on housing supply and availability.