



Urban Futures Strategy

Background Context
Report

September 2023

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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Executive Summary

Why is an Urban Futures Strategy Needed?

Located just 100 kilometres from Melbourne and 20 kilometres from Geelong the Surf Coast Shire is both an area of outstanding environmental landscape importance and among the fastest growing local government areas in Victoria. Most of the growth in population and housing in Surf Coast has been concentrated in Torquay/Jan Juc which, along with Winchelsea in the hinterland, have been the nominated areas for urban growth in Surf Coast Shire.

The growth of the other coastal townships has been and will remain constrained by extreme bushfire risks and growing recognition of the importance of conserving the region's iconic landscape, environment and cultural values.

Looking forward there are, increasingly tight, limits to the ongoing growth of all the Shire's coastal townships including Torquay/Jan Juc.

The Urban Futures Strategy will re-examine population growth and future housing needs in this context. The following questions will need to be answered:

1. What level of population growth should be accommodated in the Surf Coast Shire?
2. What are the options for accommodating this growth, e.g. new subdivisions, higher densities, other?
3. Which locations are suitable for additional growth?

The Urban Futures Strategy will provide a new growth framework for the Surf Coast Shire to guide the provision of future residential land supply and new housing development.

This Background Context report contains information to inform the community discussions that will contribute to development of the Urban Futures Strategy. It summarises the environmental values, risks and challenges that will constrain the options available for future urban growth; sets out the ways in which State Government policies and requirements will feed into and, to some extent limit local choices; provides some basic information on past and forecast population and housing growth; and provides a township-by-township summary of current planning for, and constraints on, future urban growth.

What constrains the growth potential of the coastal townships?

All of the coastal townships in Surf Coast are subject to particular local constraints on their potential future growth. In part these constraints flow from the Shire's unique landscape and environment. In part they are a result of the extreme bushfire risks that are associated with those landscapes and environments. This section of the report provides an overview of the most significant constraints.

The Shire contains a diversity of state and nationally significant environments and landscapes. This includes:

- the iconic coastal landscapes of the Great Ocean Road;
- the Anglesea Heathlands which are among the most biodiverse parts of Victoria;
- the forests of the Great Otway National Park; and
- the varied and attractive landscapes of the Surf Coast hinterland.

The recently approved Surf Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape (DAL) Statement of Planning Policy recognises the importance of the north-eastern area of the Surf Coast in terms of its combination of First Nations Cultural Heritage, biodiversity and outstanding landscapes. The DAL project placed protected settlement boundaries around Torquay/Jan Juc, Bellbrae, Connewarre and Mount Duneed. The approval of State parliament is required before any change can be made to any of the protected settlement boundaries.

Following the 2020 passing of the Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act, the State Government commenced work on a Strategic Framework Plan (the Plan) for the Great Ocean Road (GOR) region. The Plan is expected to influence future development in the designated, 'GOR Scenic Landscape Area'. This may include all or parts of Anglesea, Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven and Lorne.

Anglesea, Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven and Lorne also lie within an area of extreme bushfire risk. It is neither appropriate nor permitted by State policy, to direct additional housing and population growth to areas facing extreme bushfire risk.

There is also strong support from the wider community for protecting the coastal landscapes and preserving valued township character.

These circumstances mean that Surf Coast Shire must look at alternatives to the current growth framework which relies heavily on the outward expansion of Torquay / Jan Juc to meet future housing needs.

How much housing growth needs to be planned for?

It is important to recognise that past growth rates, and current forecasts, do not necessarily provide the best guide as to how much future housing demand and urban growth needs to be planned for in Surf Coast Shire.

Past growth was not significantly constrained by the type of 'protected settlement boundaries' that have recently been introduced in the Surf Coast DAL area (and that may be introduced in future for the other coastal settlements in Surf Coast Shire). Until recently forecasts of future growth would also have been heavily influenced by past growth trends.

Looking forward, the Surf Coast Shire is forecast to continue to see strong population growth. The recently released Victoria in Future 2023 (VIF2023) population forecasts indicate that the State Government anticipates the Shire's population to grow from an estimated 37,620 in 2022 to over 45,000 by 2036. This is significantly below the growth rates actually achieved over the last thirty years.

With continued strong growth forecast for both Melbourne and Greater Geelong, the VIF2023 population forecasts may turn out to be an underestimate of future population growth and housing demand in Surf Coast. On the other hand, it is at least possible that an increasingly limited supply of additional housing in Torquay-Jan Juc and other coastal townships could see a reduction in population growth rates below those in current official forecasts.

Dwelling projections that were prepared for Surf Coast Council by consultants REMPLAN forecast growth of an additional 10,731 additional dwellings between 2021 and 2041.

Almost 70% of the forecast increase in dwelling numbers (almost an additional 7,400 dwellings) was expected to be in Torquay/Jan Juc. Subsequent changes in planning for Torquay/Jan Juc (including the DAL protected settlement boundary) mean that there is no longer the capacity for that much additional housing development.

Other coastal locations were forecast to see much less growth. This ranged from nearly 500 additional dwellings over twenty years in the Anglesea district to less than 60 additional dwellings in the Lorne district.

Away from the coast, Winchelsea and environs were forecast to see more than 2,000 additional dwellings, Moriac & Barrabool district almost 130 additional dwellings, and Deans Marsh just 40 additional dwellings over the twenty years.

As part of preparation of the Urban Futures Strategy, the Shire will review population and dwelling forecasts for Surf Coast.

What are the options for accommodating this growth?

Given that the capacity for additional 'greenfield' subdivision in Surf Coast's coastal townships is limited, the Urban Futures Strategy will need to address how best to provide for future housing needs. This might involve a mix of approaches including some or all of the following options:

- some decrease in average lot sizes in new 'greenfield' developments;
- a limited increase in housing densities in appropriate locations within established parts of townships; and
- revised levels of growth for Surf Coast's townships.

Market pressures to keep down the price of 'greenfield' lots is likely to drive an ongoing fall in the size of residential lots in new subdivisions. This trend is already very clear in Melbourne and Geelong growth areas.

The changing housing needs and preferences of some Surf Coast residents may also result in an increasing demand for smaller, medium to higher density, housing. For example, as a result of the population ageing and an increase in the number of single person or two person households it is likely that there will be more demand for town houses, apartments and specialised retirement/aged housing.

As the capacity for additional housing in coastal areas is used up, and housing in such locations becomes more expensive, there is also likely to be a growing demand for housing in hinterland areas that are still within reasonable distance to jobs, facilities and services in larger centres (including those in Geelong).

Community involvement in the development of the Urban Futures Strategy provides an opportunity to properly consider, and develop strategies to manage, the potential impacts of these options.

Initial observations about growth capacity

As part of the preparation of this Background Context report Spatial Economics has summarised the existing provisions in the Surf Coast Planning Scheme, reviewed recent residential development trends and estimated the capacity for additional 'greenfield' urban growth in each of the Shire's townships (see pages 47 to 88 of this report). These location by location conclusions are summarised below.

The coastal townships

Torquay/Jan Juc

Torquay/Jan Juc has been Surf Coast Shire's major focus for growth (83% of all residential subdivision activity over the five years from 2017/18 to 2021/22).

Residential lot construction has averaged 310 per annum. Of this total 77% was urban 'greenfield' (i.e. new residential subdivisions at normal suburban densities), 12% involved the re-subdivision of existing lots within the established urban area and 11% was in areas zoned Low Density Residential.

Dwelling construction has been equally strong – an average annual growth of 385 dwellings.

Currently Torquay-Jan Juc has the largest supply of undeveloped greenfield residential land in the Surf Coast Shire – an undeveloped capacity of around 2,400 lots. Of this supply two thirds (1,600 lots) are already zoned for residential development. The balance is identified in the planning scheme for future urban development.

The DAL 'protected settlement boundary' limits the capacity for longer term housing growth. Over time this will result in a decrease in Torquay/Jan Juc's share of total new housing provision in the Surf Coast Shire.

Bellbrae

There has been minimal residential subdivision activity in Bellbrae over the last five years and there is no significant capacity for additional residential subdivisions.

From 2016 to 2021 a total of ten dwellings were constructed on existing vacant lots. Some small further increase in dwelling numbers may be possible.

As with Torquay-Jan Juc the DAL 'protected settlement boundary' limits the capacity for longer term housing growth in Bellbrae.

Anglesea

There has been minimal (averaging just three lots per annum) residential subdivision activity in Anglesea over the last five years and the township has no significant undeveloped residential land stocks.

Sites for future housing development will essentially come only from the re-subdivision of existing allotments within the established urban area.

The Great Otway National Park and fire risk limit the capacity for additional growth of the township.

The former Alcoa lease land will primarily be managed for a combination of conservation and 'bush tourism' purposes. The Anglesea settlement boundary will not change.

Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven-Moggs Creek-Eastern View

Over the last five financial years an average of five additional residential lots were constructed per year in the Aireys Inlet/Fairhaven/Moggs Creek/Eastern View area.

There is very limited potential for additional housing development within these townships. There are no significant undeveloped residential land stocks and, as with Anglesea, any sites for future housing development will come only from the re-subdivision of existing allotments within the established urban area.

As with Anglesea, the Great Otway National Park and fire risk limit the capacity for additional growth of the township. The Shire is strongly committed to containing future development within the existing township boundaries.

Lorne

Lorne has very limited capacity for future growth and the town has no significant undeveloped residential land stocks. There has been virtually no residential subdivision activity in Lorne since 2018/19.

Land for future housing development will essentially be sourced from the re-subdivision of existing allotments within the established urban area.

The Great Otway National Park effectively surrounds the township and extreme bushfire risk limits further urban growth. As with Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven, the Shire is strongly committed to containing future development within the existing township boundary.

Hinterland Townships

Winchelsea

Over recent years Winchelsea has seen significant residential subdivision and housing construction activity both to the south and the west of the township. Winchelsea is likely to continue to see strong housing growth.

From 2016 to 2021 there were on average 37 additional dwellings constructed per year.

Over the last five financial years an average of 42 residential lots were created per year. Of this total, 57% was construction of greenfield housing estates, 28% involved the re-subdivision of existing lots within the established urban area, and 15% the creation of larger lots in areas zoned Low Density Residential.

Winchelsea has significant stocks of undeveloped residential land (an estimated potential for around 725 additional lots). Of this potential future supply, 220 lots are currently zoned for development at normal suburban densities and 74 lots are zoned for low density residential development. An additional 430 lots are currently unzoned but identified in the planning scheme for future urban residential development.

Moriac

Moriac has limited short to medium term growth capacity due to the lack of reticulated sewerage infrastructure.

Since 2020/21 a total of 56 residential lots have been constructed, all of which were zoned Low Density Residential. A total of 31 dwellings were constructed within the township from 2016 to 2021.

The supply of undeveloped residential land within the settlement boundary is limited and minimum lots sizes are large enough to provide for onsite treatment and disposal of effluent. There are very few existing vacant residential lots.

Provision of a reticulated sewer system would require a scale of development (between 600 to 800 lots) that is inconsistent with community sentiments regarding future growth. This is not supported by existing planning policy.

Moriac's attractive townscape and surrounding environs, together with its location close to both Geelong and Torquay-Jan Juc, is likely to ensure an ongoing demand for an increase in land supply.

Deans Marsh

The Surf Coast Planning Scheme does not identify Deans Marsh for significant growth. Deans Marsh has seen no residential lot construction over the last five financial years and has very limited potential for future growth.

There are a small number of undeveloped residential lots in Deans Marsh. This provides capacity for approximately 30 additional dwellings.

The lack of reticulated services and limited demand mean that only slow and very limited new housing construction is likely. Deans Marsh will remain a small rural village.

1 Surf Coast Shire - Planning for the urban future of a state and nationally significant region

1.1 The Surf Coast Shire – A unique and special environment

Located just 100 kilometres from Melbourne and 20 kilometres from Geelong the Surf Coast Shire is both an area of outstanding environmental and landscape importance and among the fastest growing local government areas in Victoria. The Shire includes a diversity of state and nationally significant environments and landscapes within its 1,560 square kilometres. Most notably this includes:

- the iconic coastal landscapes of the Great Ocean Road;
- the Anglesea Heathlands which are among the most biodiverse parts of Victoria;
- the forests of the Great Otway National Park; and
- the varied and attractive landscapes of the Surf Coast hinterland.

The coastal landscape of the Great Ocean Road is one of Australia's most celebrated landscapes and a place of great significance in terms of both First Nations living culture and post-settlement heritage. The Road's significance is recognised on both the Victorian and Australian heritage registers. The region is also among Australia's most visited tourist areas.

The recently approved **Surf Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape** (DAL) Statement of Planning Policy recognises the unique importance of the northern most part of the Surf Coast's coastal environs in terms of its combination of First Nations Cultural Heritage, biodiversity and outstanding landscapes.

The DAL affects land in Wadawurrung Country. It recognises that: *"The coastal areas from Point Impossible to Point Addis overflow with Wadawurrung history and living cultural heritage". It also notes that: "There are numerous sites along the declared areas coastline with evidence of long-term habitation in the form of living spaces and large shell middens". Behind the coast the Statement observes that: "Inland landscapes and waterways including Spring Creek, Thompson Creek, Deep Creek, Jan Juc Creek and other, unnamed waterways provided access to food and shelter as well as connections to the rest of Wadawurrung Country."*

In terms of biodiversity, the DAL Statement of Planning Policy notes that: *"The declared area's marine parks and rugged coastal cliffs, wide-open beaches and densely vegetated wetlands make its biodiversity and environment variable, dynamic and unique."* It also states that: *"The many coastal reserves including the Karaaf Wetlands, Breamlea Flora and Fauna Reserve and Point Impossible have high biodiversity values and are home to many unique species."*

In relation to the area's landscape value, the Statement of Planning policy says that the area: *"is renowned for its significant landscapes, which have evolved over millennia. It has stunning coastlines and diverse coastal landforms, the features of which include high cliffs, dramatic headlands, estuaries, wetlands, dunes and iconic beaches"*. The Statement recognises the Bells Beach to Port Addis landscape as being of national significance. Away from the coast it highlights *"... woodlands, saltmarshes, volcanic plains and the sense of rural openness between settlements ..."* as among the declared area's significant landscape values.

An area of particular biodiversity significance. In the surrounds of Torquay-Jan Juc there are stands of the Bellarine Yellow Gum. This species is found only in parts of the Bellarine peninsula and at Torquay-Jan Juc. Its rarity was an important factor in consideration of possible development in the valley of Spring Creek.

Slightly further south the **Anglesea Heathlands** is one of the most biodiverse areas of Victoria and for this reason is listed on the Register of the National Estate. After a long campaign by local and state conservation groups, it was announced in 2017 that the heathlands would be incorporated into the Great Otway National Park.

In its relatively small area, the heathlands conserve more than 700 plant species of which two (the Anglesea grevillea and the Anglesea slender sun orchid) are found nowhere else. The heathlands also contain more than 100 species of native orchids making it one of the most orchid-rich areas of Australia.

The Anglesea Heath Conservation Position Paper prepared by Parks Victoria notes that: *"It accounts for one quarter of Victoria's plant species, of which 20 are threatened at the state level and 8 are threatened at*

the national level. It also provides habitat for 29 recorded mammal species and more than 100 native bird species.” The Position Paper points out that: “Heathlands are particularly sensitive to disturbance and are unlikely to recover from significant impacts. Appropriate use is therefore a priority to ensure the heathlands biodiversity and cultural values are both protected and celebrated.”

Further south, the northernmost portion of the **Great Otway National Park** takes up a significant part of the Surf Coast Shire. In total the Park covers more than 110,000 hectares and protects what is among the most significant and valued environments in Victoria. The Park contains a diverse range of flora and fauna and is a critical area for biodiversity.

Within Surf Coast Shire the Park includes areas of impressive coastal landscape with forested hills extending down to the sea shore, rugged coastal cliffs, sandy beaches and coastal rock platforms. The Otway Ranges within this northern part of the Park includes steep ridges, deep fern filled valleys with tall eucalypt forests, mossy creeks and waterfalls. In the area surrounding Lorne alone there are more than 10 waterfalls including the Erskine, Henderson, Upper and Lower Kalimna, Phantom and Sheoak Falls.

The Great Otway National Park is not only an environmental asset but also an important reason for the continuing success of the tourism industry within Surf Coast. The Park’s extensive walking trails, picnic and camping areas, along with the area’s coastal landscapes and beaches, attract growing numbers of visitors to the region.

The importance of the Otway Ranges and the wider Great Ocean Road region’s landscape, environment and Aboriginal and post-settlement heritage to Victoria has recently been formally recognised by State parliament passing the Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act. The Act prioritises landscape and environment protection in the management of sustainable ongoing development.

Much of the area in the western part of Surf Coast Surf Coast Shire is the Country of the Eastern Maar. There are many cultural values throughout Country but little mapping has occurred. Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to ensuring the Urban Futures Strategy will consider and respect Traditional Owner perspectives, culture and knowledge.

The Surf Coast Shire, and especially its coastal region, contains areas of great living cultural significance to the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung communities. The

significance of these areas needs to be recognised in the preparation of the Shire’s Urban Futures Strategy.

The **Surf Coast hinterland** is more open with much of the area being modified volcanic plains and grassy woodland. While its environment has been altered more by European settlement it contains attractive landscapes and areas of environmental significance. Winchelsea and its environs contain numerous important heritage buildings including the Barwon park and Ingleby homesteads as well as the scenic and environmentally significant Barwon River corridor. The Surf Coast’s portion of the Barrabool Hills is also listed as significant by the National Trust.

In summary, the Surf Coast Shire contains some of the State’s most valued environments and landscapes. This special character is what attracts increasing numbers of both residents and visitors to the Shire. It also creates a particular challenge, and responsibility, for the Shire’s community and Council in planning for future urban development.

1.2 Why an Urban Futures Strategy for Surf Coast Shire

Surf Coast Shire has been among the fastest growing regional areas in Victoria. Its exceptional environment and landscape, liveability and closeness to the expanding population centres of Geelong and Melbourne has made it an increasingly popular location for people to live, maintain a holiday home or visit on day trips. This has resulted in the number of dwellings in the Shire continuing to increase – over the last five years by over 2,000 and by 6,800 over the last two decades.

Most of the growth in population and housing in Surf Coast has been concentrated in Torquay/Jan Juc. Torquay/Jan Juc’s population increased by nearly 190%, from 8,000 persons to 23,000 persons, between the 2001 and 2021 censuses. Inevitably however there are limits to the ongoing growth of the Shire’s coastal townships.

Lorne, Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven and Anglesea all have very limited capacity for further growth. They are surrounded by areas of high environmental and landscape value and are subject to bushfire risks that are becoming more extreme as a result of climate change.

Torquay-Jan Juc also has limits on its future growth. It sits within landscapes that are variously of national, state or regional significance and has surrounding areas of very high environmental and Aboriginal heritage value.

Across all (both coastal and hinterland) Surf Coast townships, ongoing climate change will also involve challenges in providing for future urban development. For example, more extreme rainfall events will test, and may exceed, the capacity of some existing stormwater systems and limit the potential for infill development or intensification of existing urban uses.

There is also strong community support for limiting the scale of future development to help maintain the unique coastal character and liveability of the townships and wider region. Importantly the State Government's declaration of the Surf Coast 'Distinctive Area and Landscape' (DAL) means that any future change to the Torquay-Jan Juc township boundary would require the agreement of the State Government and Victorian Parliament. While the population of Torquay-Jan Juc will continue to grow for some years its' rate of growth is likely to slow markedly.

At the same time the Shire is forecast to see continuing population growth. The most recent population projections by REMPlan suggest that the population of Surf Coast is forecast to increase by 18,600 people from 2021 to 2041 – an average annualised growth rate of 2.0%. These projections were prepared prior to approval of the protected settlement boundaries imposed by the Surf Coast DAL Statement of Planning Policy. They therefore do not fully recognise the constraints on future urban growth and will need to be updated. Whatever the outcome of such updating it seems clear that there will be significant ongoing demand for additional housing in Surf Coast Shire.

The question therefore becomes where and how can Surf Coast's future housing needs be best provided for? The preparation of an Urban Futures Strategy is intended to address this key issue.

1.3 Community input to deciding Surf Coast's urban future

Council is commencing a focussed process of consultation with the Surf Coast community on the objectives for and issues that need to be addressed in determining the Shire's urban future. This process will take account of the known opportunities for and constraints on future urban development within the Shire.

The preparation of this Background Context report is intended to provide a sound factual basis for these community conversations.

1.4 Information contained in this report

This Background Context report contains information to inform community discussions. It:

- briefly discusses the challenges of planning in an area of such environmental and landscape significance;
- sets out some of the particular environmental risks and challenges facing particularly the Shire's coastal townships and their environs;
- discusses the strengthening of community support for protecting the Shire's environment, landscapes and the character of its townships;
- outlines recent State Government initiatives that impact Surf Coast's future options for urban growth;
- provides some basic information on past and forecast population and housing growth; and
- provides a township-by-township summary of planning for, and constraints on, future urban development.

2.0 A Shire facing complex environmental risks and challenges

Planning for Surf Coast Shire's urban future is complicated both by a range of environmental risks, challenges and constraints but also by relatively high rates of population and housing growth. This section of the report focusses on some of the key environmental risks and constraints. The ongoing impact of climate change will exacerbate the risks. Collectively they severely limit options for future urban development especially in the Shire's coastal areas and townships.

The principal risk is the growing bushfire danger which impacts and limits the scope for additional urban growth in coastal areas south of Jan Juc as well as in the more southerly parts of the Shire's hinterland. Coastal erosion and the risk of storm surges/ inundation due to rising sea levels together with more localised problems of riverine flooding and acid-sulphate soils are much more localised constraints on development.

The key challenge is to ensure that development does not detract from the environmental and landscape values that make the Surf Coast such a special and desirable place to live, work and relax. In relation to the sensitive coastal environments the State Government is now taking the lead (via the Surf Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape declaration and the passage of the Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act) in addressing this challenge. These measures are discussed in detail in section 4.0 of this report.

2.1 Bushfire risk

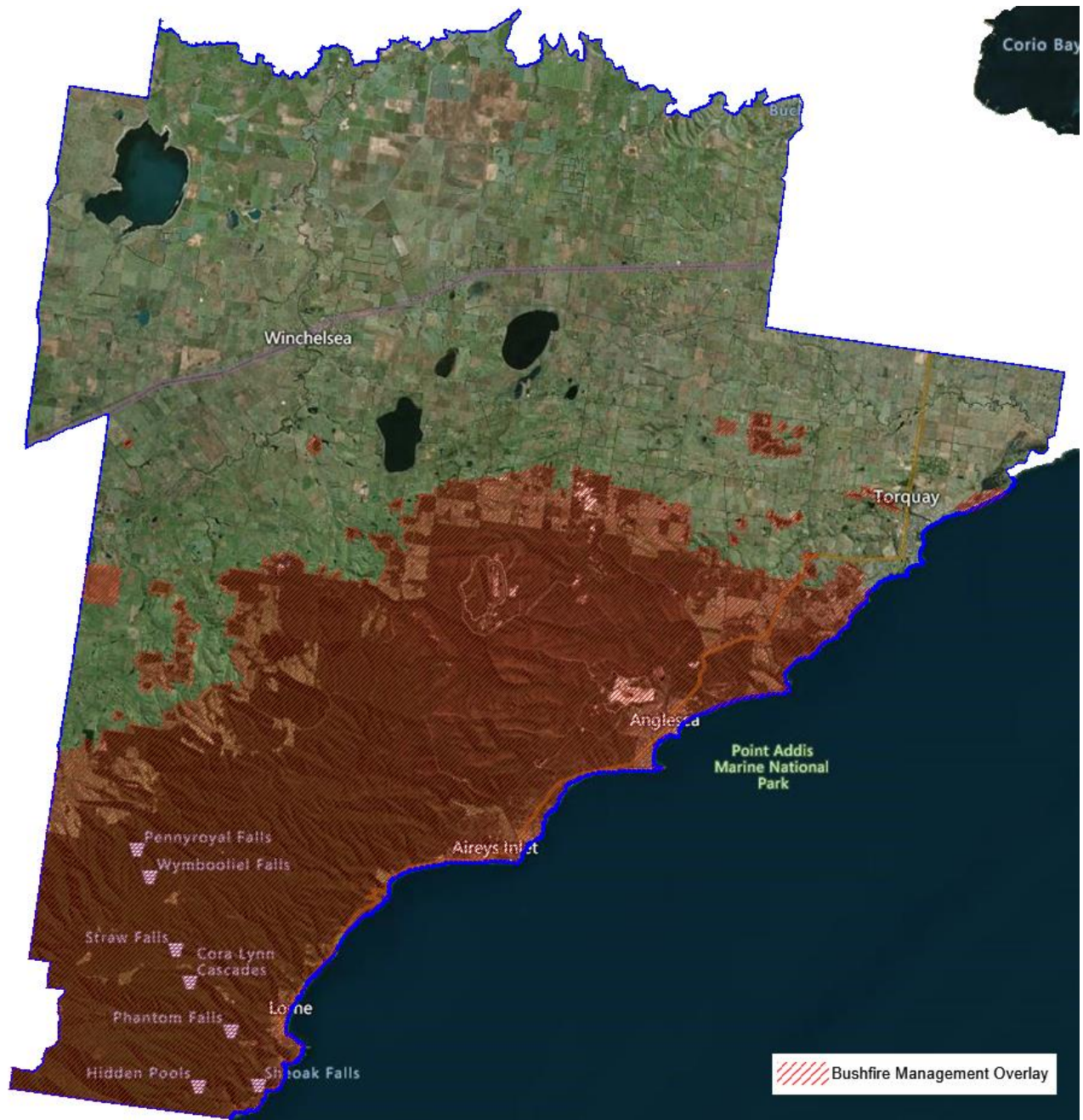
The more heavily vegetated coastal and Otway Ranges portions of the Surf Coast Shire are subject to extreme bushfire risk with the potential for catastrophic threats to both lives and property. The increasing impact of climate change will only exacerbate this risk. It severely limits options for future urban growth within the Shire.

To ensure that this threat is properly considered the Shire engaged a specialist bushfire planning consultant (Kevin Hazell Bushfire Planning) to prepare a municipal wide assessment of bushfire risks as an input to settlement planning. That assessment is being publicly released to accompany this Background Context Report. Key conclusions and recommendations from the Assessment are set out in the following paragraphs. Those seeking more detailed information should consult the full assessment report.

State Planning Policy sets out clear requirements and priorities for addressing bushfire risk in planning for urban growth. The Policy requires that, when planning for land that is subject to a Bushfire Management Overlay or that is in a bushfire prone area, planning authorities (i.e. the Shire) is 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, which are covered by the Bushfire Management Overlay.

Image 1: Bushfire Management Overlay - Surf Coast



Source: Victorian State Government. Data Vic, Vicmap Planning – Planning Scheme Zone Overlay Polygon

State Policy also requires that, in areas of biodiversity conservation value (such as the Otway Ranges) bushfire risks must be managed without unacceptable biodiversity impacts by discouraging urban growth.

As noted in the Surf Coast's Municipal Planning Strategy (c02.03-3): "the Otway Ranges and Coast Precinct is one of the most bushfire prone areas in the State. Forested land presents a bushfire risk to the

hinterland towns of Deans Marsh and Bellbrae and the coastal towns of Anglesea through to Lorne and the western edge of Jan Juc. Landscapes in high bushfire risk areas are visually pleasing and are often sought after for use and development, including for tourism. However, the extent of required bushfire protection measures to safeguard these can adversely impact landscape and neighbourhood character and vegetation cover that should be protected."

Fire risk is particularly severe in the eastern and north-west/western part of the Otway Ranges, where the Lowland Forests and Heathy Woodlands are generally drier than the Otway's rainforests and wet forests. The steep slopes of the Otway Ranges can also increase the intensity and speed of spread of bushfires.

The Strategic Bushfire Assessment report commissioned by Council notes that "Settlements to the north and east of the Otway Ranges but influenced by bushfire within it are consistently assessed as extreme risks." This includes areas such as Deans Marsh and Bambra and the smaller coastal settlements such as Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View. For the larger townships such as Lorne, Aireys Inlet and Anglesea those areas which are closest to bushland are also assessed as being at extreme risk.

The report classifies land within Surf Coast into one of four landscape types with differing levels of bushfire risk:

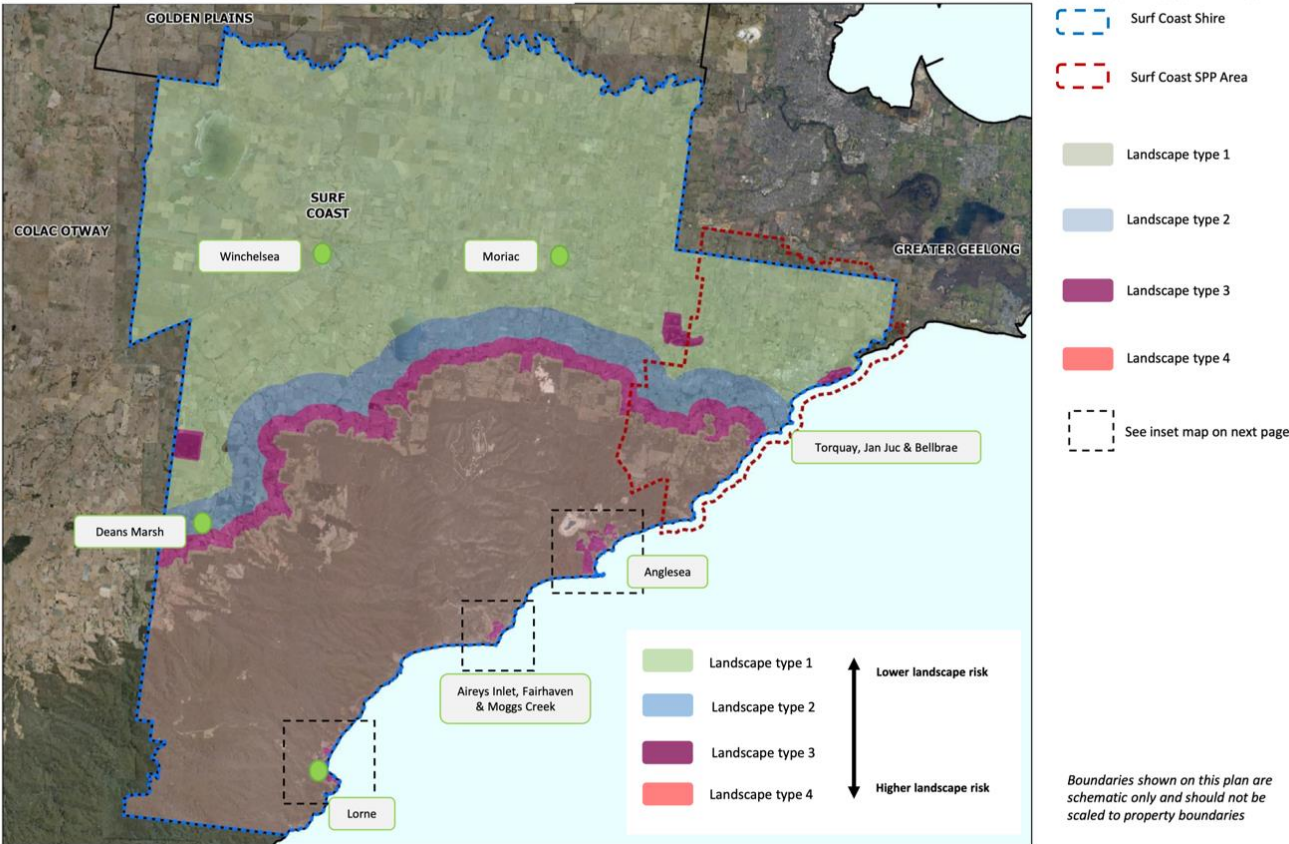
- landscape type 1 is characterised by grasslands and low threat vegetation where extreme bushfire behaviour is assessed as being 'not possible'. In this landscape type there is unlikely to be neighbourhood scale destruction and there is very likely to be immediate access to a place that provides shelter from bushfires;
- landscape type 2 involves a somewhat higher bushfire risk but where bushfires can only approach from one direction and land is able to be managed in a way that results in a minimum fuel condition and where ready access is available to a location that provides shelter from bushfires;
- landscape type 3 includes areas where the type and extent of vegetation may result in neighbourhood-scale destruction and where land cannot be managed in a way that results in a minimum bushfire fuel load. In these areas bushfires can approach from more than one direction and there is not certain access to a place of bushfire refuge; and
- landscape type 4 is characterised by extreme bushfire risk. In such areas bushfires may have hours or days to develop before impacting urban areas and evacuation options are limited or not available. From a bushfire risk perspective urban growth would be generally directed to areas that are characterised as landscape types 1 and 2.

Urban growth would not be supported in areas of landscape type 3 which are considered to be "*high risk locations where neighbourhood scale destruction is to be expected*" in the event of a major bushfire.

Landscape type 4 applies to areas of greatest risk of major property damage and loss of life and is considered unsuitable for additional urban growth.

The different landscape types are mapped in the Strategic Bushfire Assessment report. In summary, from a purely bushfire risk management perspective, the report identifies the northernmost parts of the Shire as most suitable for additional urban development. This includes parts of Torquay-Jan Juc and the hinterland areas around Winchelsea and Moriac. The Shire's other coastal townships are all in landscape types 3 or 4 where it is not considered appropriate to make more land available for urban growth.

Image 2: Landscape types and associated bushfire risk - Surf Coast



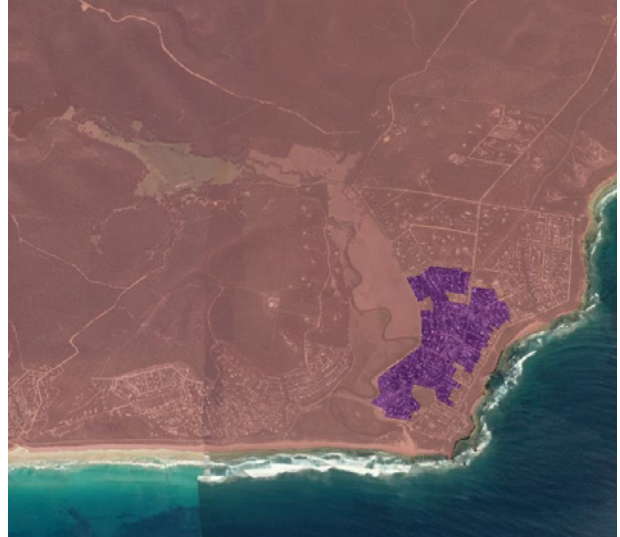
Source: Kevin Hazell. Surf Coast Shire Strategic Bushfire Assessment.

Image 3: Landscape Types and Associated Bushfire Risk – Selected Townships

Lorne



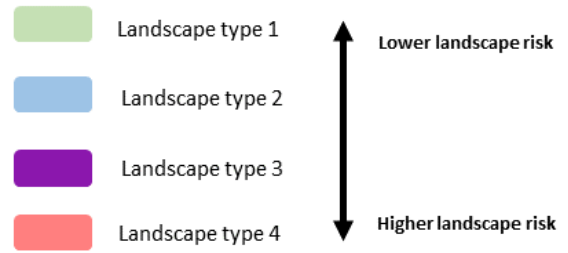
Aireys Inlet/Fairhaven



Anglesea



Legend



Source: Kevin Hazell. Surf Coast Shire Strategic Bushfire Assessment Report

2.2 Risks associated with coastal erosion, storm surges and riverine flooding

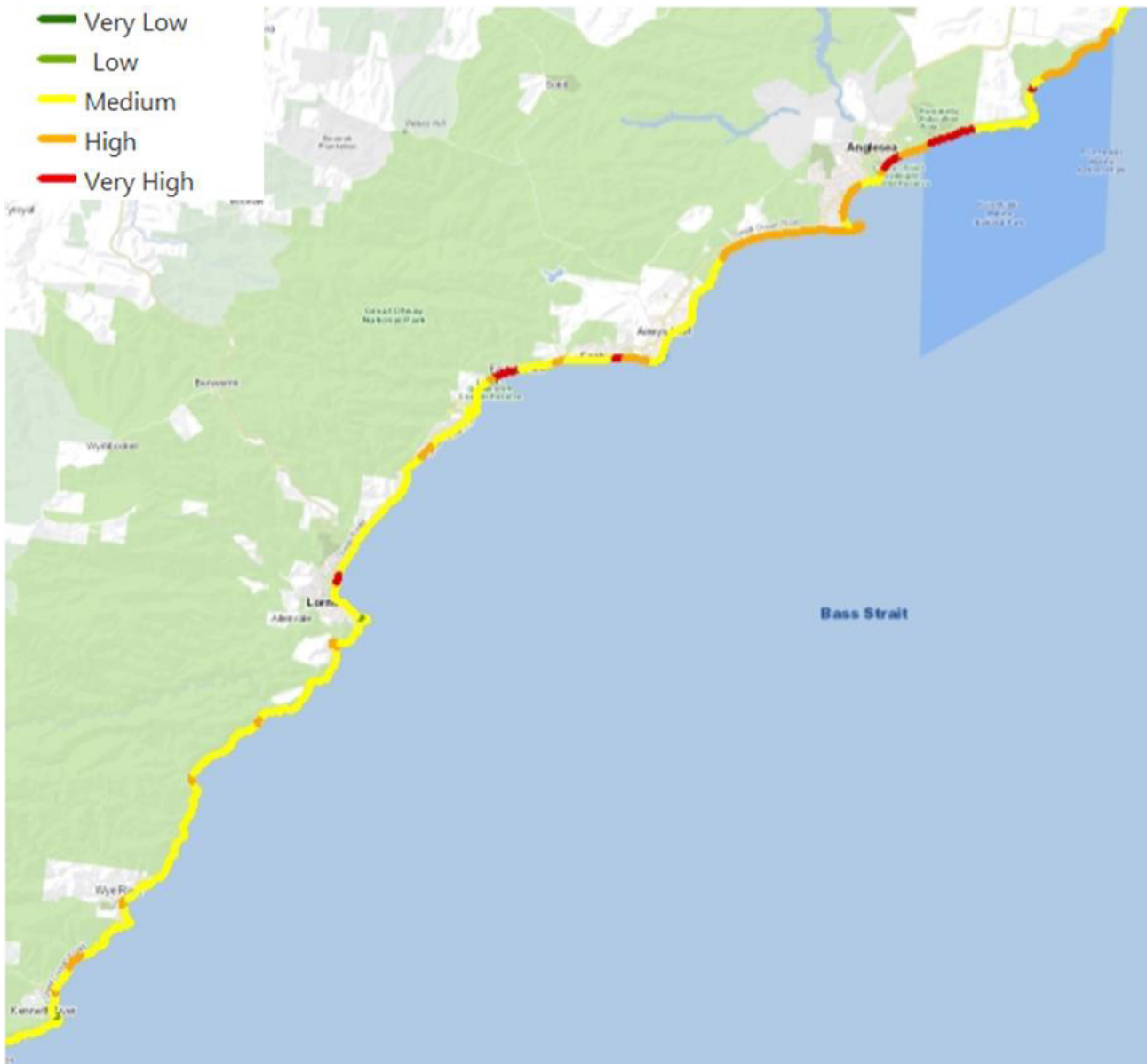
Surf Coast Shire, and especially its coastal fringe, is also subject to a number of other environmental risks that are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. They include coastal erosion and inundation caused by storm surges linked to sea level rise and more severe weather events.

Both in 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 effect both the adequacy of existing stormwater infrastructure and planning for new

infrastructure. However, they are not expected to impose a widespread constraint on urban development.

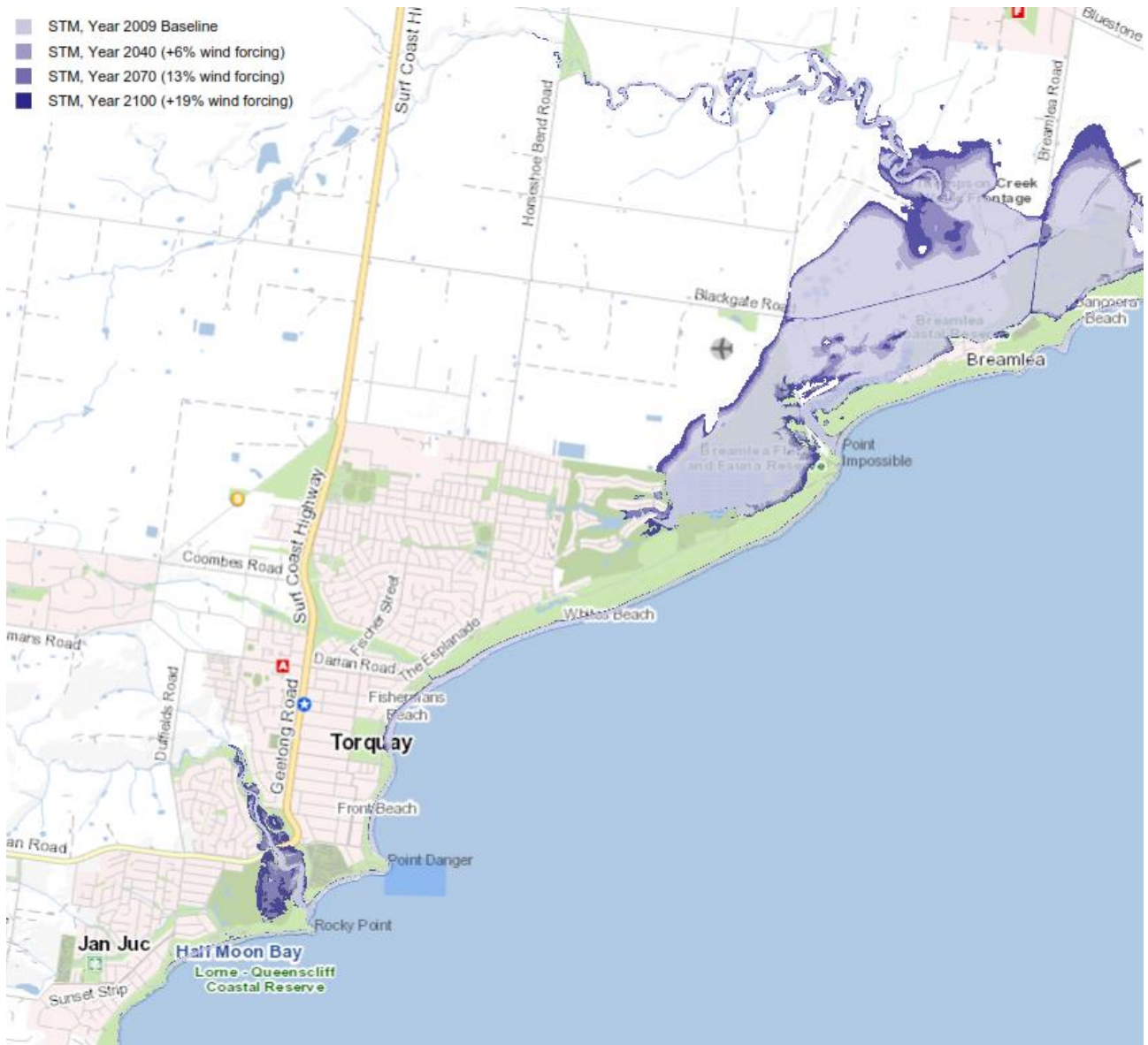
As shown on the map below, the risk of coastal erosion is moderate to high along significant parts of coastal Surf Coast. Its impact has already been felt along parts of the Great Ocean Road. While it may involve increased costs to maintain access and infrastructure, and possibly threaten particular properties it does not involve a major risk to the Shire's coastal townships. It should be noted that this assessment is based upon the best available data at the time of writing this report and it may need to be reviewed if new data identifies further risks.

Image 4: Coastal Erosion Vulnerability Risk – Surf Coast



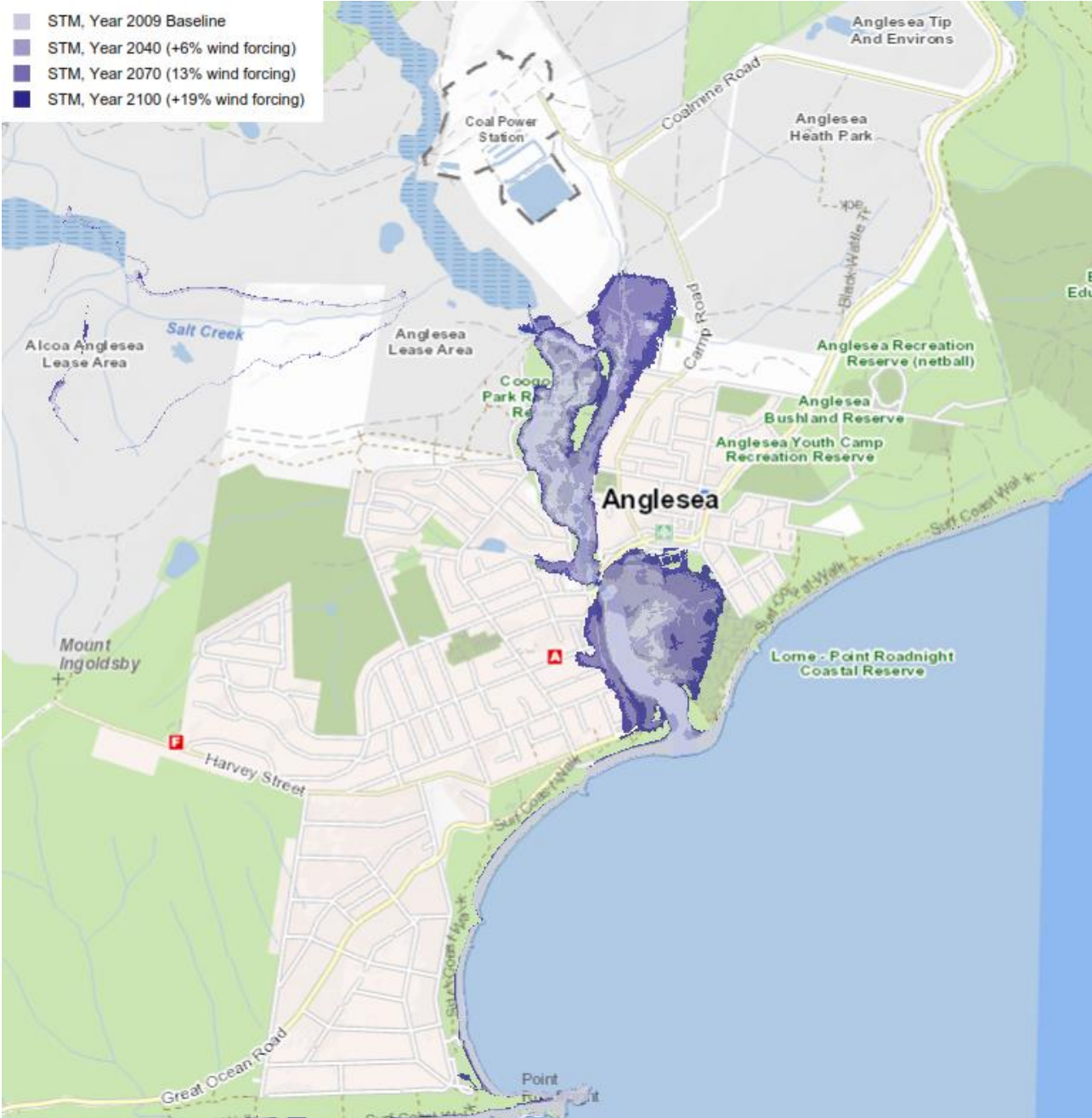
Source: Victorian State Government. CoastKit.

Image 5a: Storm Surge and Sea Level Rise Risk – Breamlea/Torquay



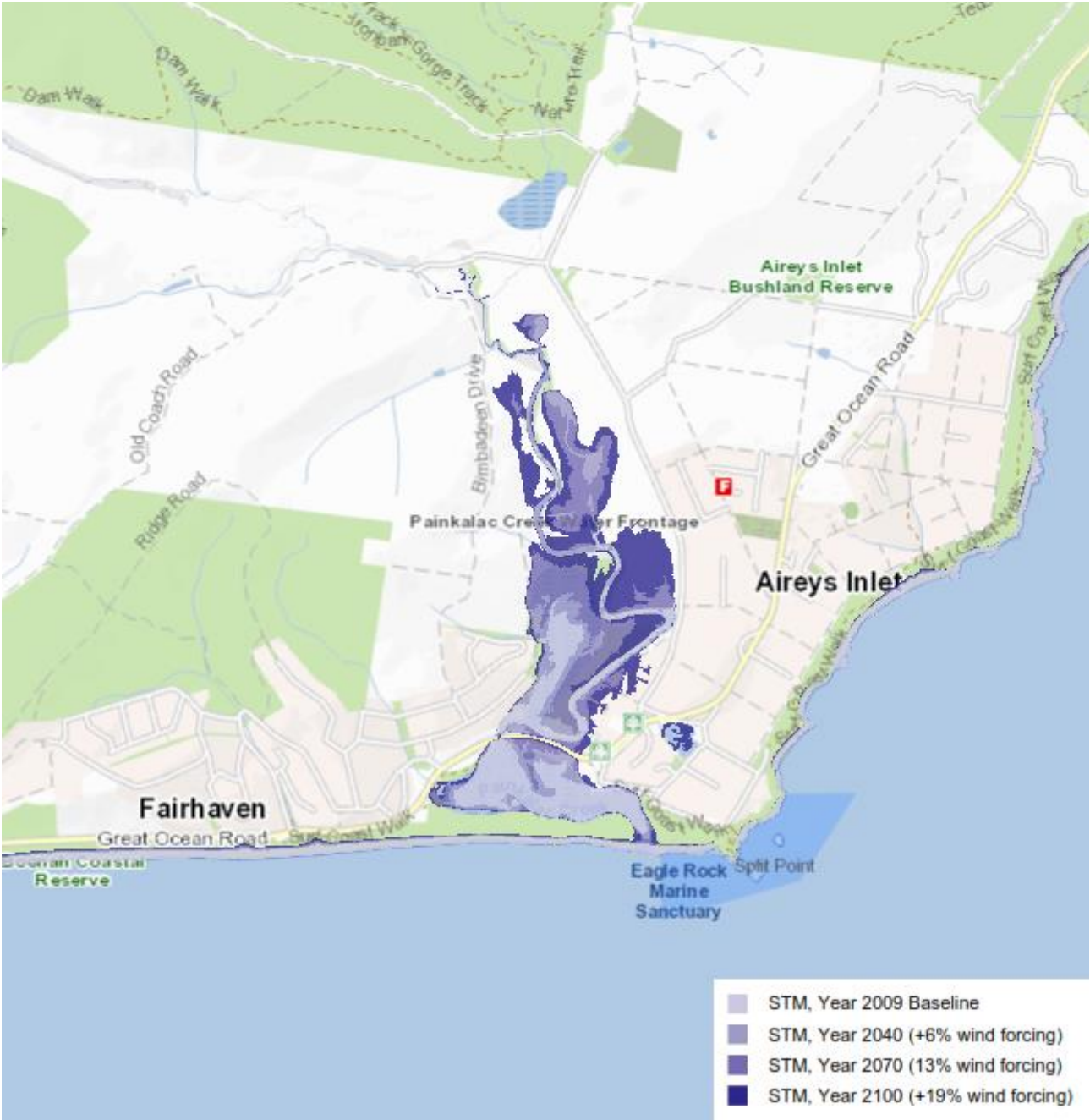
Source: Victorian State Government. CoastKit.

Image 5b: Storm Surge and Sea Level Rise Risk – Anglesea



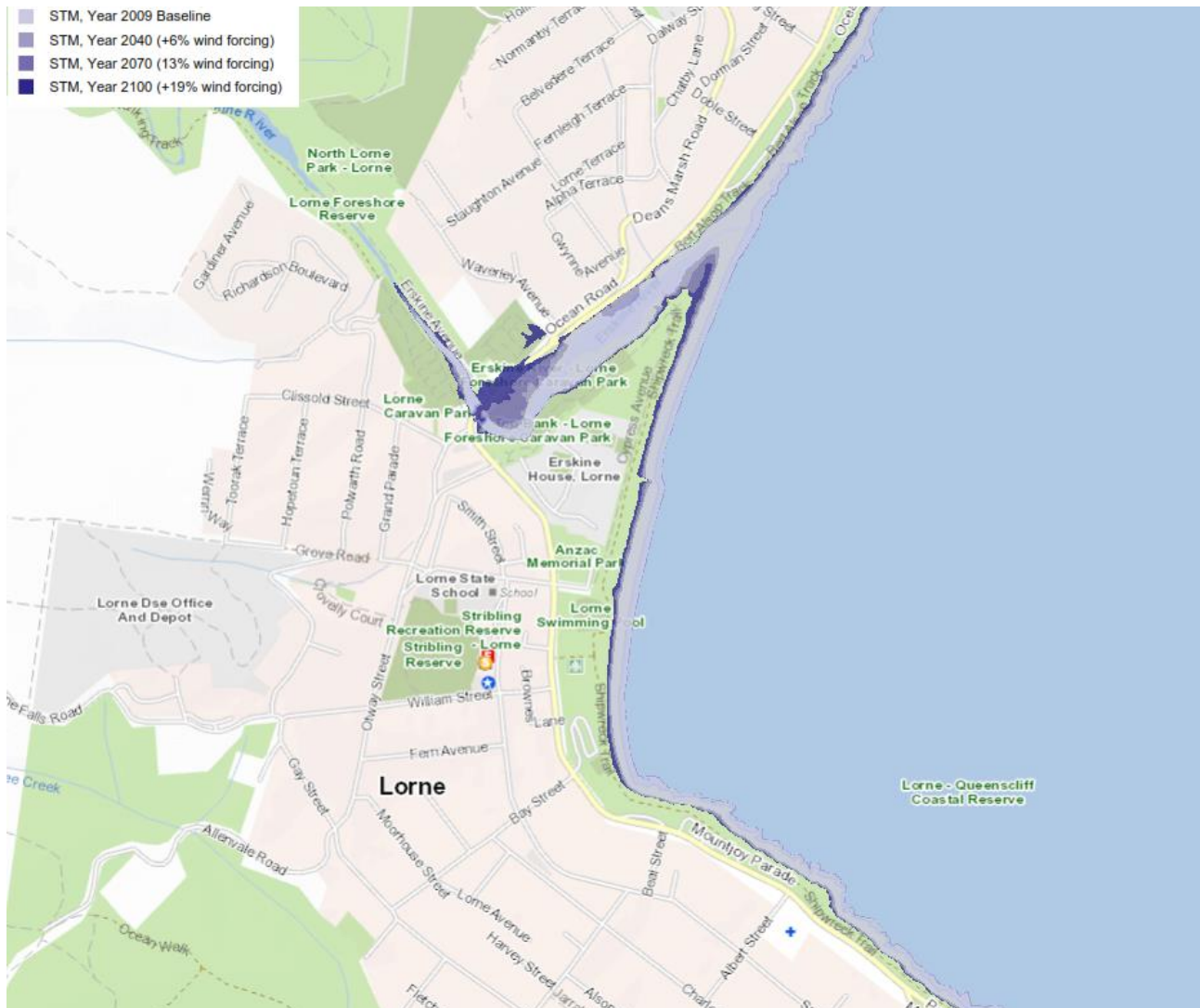
Source: Victorian State Government. CoastKit.

Image 5c: Storm Surge and Sea Level Rise Risk – Aireys Inlet/Fairhaven



Source: Victorian State Government. CoastKit.

Image 5d: Storm Surge and Sea Level Rise Risk – Lorne



Source: Victorian State Government. CoastKit.

Coastal inundation caused by storm surges could potentially have greater impacts on the coastal townships and their environs. The extent of this risk, of course, depends upon the severity of sea level rise and extreme weather events resulting from ongoing climate change.

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 as shown on the images below. Fortunately, 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. Based upon current expectations of the likely extent of sea level rise, very few developed areas are expected to be at risk.

2.3 Environment and landscape protection

Managing the potential impacts of additional urban development on the natural environment, biodiversity and significant landscapes is another major challenge in preparing Surf Coast's Urban Futures Strategy. It is a growing cause of concern both for the local and wider Victorian communities. As with many other risks and challenges, the potential impacts of and constraints on, future urban development are greatest in the coastal parts of the Shire.

Over recent years, the need to minimise and manage such impacts has triggered major interventions by State Government in planning for the future of the Shire's coastal areas. As noted later in this report, these interventions are reflected in the declaration of the Surf Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape, the passing of the Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act and strengthening of State Policy relating to the

removal of native vegetation. The environmental, heritage and landscape values that gave rise to these State interventions, and the impact of the interventions for the future of Surf Coast's coastal towns is discussed in detail in section 4.0 of this report.

3.0 Increasing community focus on environment and landscape protection

Over the years there has been growing local and regional, as well as state, recognition of the importance of protecting the unique environmental, landscape, cultural and heritage assets of the coastal and natural areas of Surf Coast Shire. There has also been increasing recognition of First Nations living culture, heritage and continuing links to the land.

3.1 Growing community commitment

Over recent years, and partly in response to the increasing pressures of rapid population growth and urban development, the extent of local commitment to environment protection has grown and become more broadly held. There is now very wide community support for steps to better protect Surf Coast's natural environment, landscapes and the unique character of its townships.

Most recently this has been reflected in results of the Council's 2021 Community Engagement program which fed into the preparation of a Community Vision for the future of Surf Coast.

The People Place Future report made it clear that the Surf Coast's connections to nature and the protection of the Shire's unique towns and neighbourhoods rank very highly among the values and concerns of Surf Coast residents. 'Protecting and enhancing the natural environment' and 'managing growth in a sustainable way' were the top two attributes that residents nominated in describing the characteristics of the community they want to live in.

These values are reflected in the Community Vision for Surf Coast Shire:

"From the hinterland to the coast, from the first peoples to the children of the future, we are an active, diverse community that lives creatively to value, protect and enhance the natural environment and our unique neighbourhoods. We will leave the Surf Coast better than we found it."

This broad Community Vision is supported by ten more detailed Community Principles. The first two of the Community Principles are focussed specifically on environmental and landscape protection and management of the pressures of inappropriate growth that could result in degrading of the special character of the Surf Coast's environs and townships.

Principle 1 emphasises the importance of action to *"Protect, conserve and restore our natural environment."*

It states that "Protection, conservation and restoration of the environment should drive decision making processes now and into the future" and that: *"We value, preserve and prioritise our unique natural features and cultural heritage sites, hinterland, waterways and coast. The community works collaboratively with council, relevant agencies and government to ensure that outcomes protect, improve and restore the natural environment and are not compromised."*

Principle 2 focusses on *"Planning for Growth"*.

It says that: *"(we) Understand that our population will increase but this should not be at the detrimental expense of our unique neighbourhoods or the natural environment."*

In summary there is no doubt that managing urban development in a way that protects the Shire's unique landscape, environment, heritage and townships is a high priority for the Surf Coast community.

3.2 Growing recognition of First Nations' Cultural Values, Heritage and links to Country

At a State level, the Victorian Government has developed the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-26 to help embed the voices and priorities of Aboriginal communities at a local government level.

The Strategy recommends actions for Local Governments, the Victorian Government and Aboriginal communities that progress Aboriginal self-determination and Reconciliation. It was developed to support alignment of the Local Government sector with the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023, the Victorian Treaty process, the Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan and the work of the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

Among other things, the Strategy seeks to ensure Aboriginal cultural values, voices, knowledge and rights are embedded into local councils' work, moving beyond achieving compliance with relevant legislation.

As part of the Council Plan 2021-25, Surf Coast Shire Council aims to ensure 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.

Council is actively engaging with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation about the Urban Futures Strategy. As the Registered Aboriginal Parties within the Surf Coast Shire area, these Traditional Owner groups have responsibilities under the Aboriginal Heritage Act for managing and protecting Country. It is recognised that urban development is one of the biggest threats to the health of Country and Cultural Heritage. It is essential to listen to, respect and understand cultural values across Country to ensure residential growth does no further harm to these values.

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation

The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party with the statutory authority for the management of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Values across an area that stretches west from the Painkalac Creek at Airey's 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. Eastern Maar also recognises members who have a familiar connection with the former Framlingham Aboriginal Mission Station.

The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation has developed a Country Plan, 'Meerreengeeye ngakeepoorryeeyt'. The Country Plan includes the following vision:

"We look to a future in which we have secured our rightful place in society and on Country. A future where Eastern Maar citizens are a free people, proud of our heritage and our achievements. Where we are respected as the Traditional Owners of our lands and waters, living in harmony with the rest of society.

Our culture matters. Our Country matters. And in the modern world we live in, financial independence also matters. In our future, we will have built up our economic independence, but not at the expense of our culture or our values. We will remain true to who we are and we will continue to care for the Country that has looked after us for tens of thousands of years.

What we do now is not for ourselves but for our kids, and for their kids. Our people are passing on and there will be nothing left for future generations if we don't set it in train now. We want our kids to have it easier, and not have to put up with the discrimination that we faced. We want to create opportunity, not welfare; and harmony, not racism.

Through our native title business, we are being given a chance to have our interests properly recognised. We need to lift our heads and not be weighed down by 'sorry for me'. Now is the time to expand our minds, acknowledge the experience of our Elders and set new horizons for our children.

We started out as a free People, and we look towards a future where we are free again. We are the Eastern Maar nation; and we are proud."

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party 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. It also includes the regional cities of Geelong and Ballarat.

The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party that represents the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners. Caring for Country, including land, sky and waters and continual cultural practices are core to the identity of the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners.

The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation has developed a Country Plan, 'Paleert Tjaara Dja'. The Country Plan includes the following vision:

*"All people working together to make
Wadawurrung Country and Culture Strong"*

The Plan says:

"Wadawurrung Country Plan is our collective dream and direction for the future of our people and Country. It tells the story of what is important to us, and what we need to do about it. It will be a guide for building upon our cultural heritage management work and progressing our broader Caring for Country aspirations.

The plan will also help us strengthen our people's cultural knowledge and education to be able to develop our land and sea management program, pursuing purchases, access and co-management arrangements for Country. This can provide our people and future generations a foundation for protecting our culture and Country and have culturally appropriate social, cultural and economic development opportunities.

The plan will help guide our Treaty, Traditional Owner Settlement Act and Native Title negotiations, and our conversations with government, and other partners."

4.0 Growing State commitment to protecting the Otway Ranges and the environment of the Great Ocean Road region

Over the last two decades or more, there has also been increasing State-wide and Government recognition of the importance of protecting, and managing growing development pressures on, the landscape and environmental values of the Great Ocean Road/Otway Ranges region.

4.1 Great Ocean Road regional strategy

One of the early steps in this increasing State involvement was the 2004 release of the Land Use and Transport Strategy for the Great Ocean Road Region. The Strategy covered an area that stretched from the Surf Coast to Warrnambool and from the coast and the Great Ocean Road inland to the Princes Highway.

The Strategy recognised that not properly managing growth would result in a range of problems including environmental damage, increased fire risks, reduced visitor satisfaction and the loss of valued township character through inappropriate development. It sought to balance four key directions. They were to:

- identify and protect significant landscapes and care for the environment particularly the coastal areas and the regions extensive public lands;
- manage the growth of towns and direct urban growth to townships (including Torquay and Winchelsea) where it could best be accommodated while limiting growth elsewhere;
- improve access and transport including upgrading the Great Ocean Road and key north-south routes; and
- encourage sustainable tourism and resource use.

The Strategy was supplemented by a regional Landscape Assessment Study that, among other things, produced a 'Municipal Toolkit' for each local government area within the region. This document was designed to assist Councils in protecting landscape character through their local planning schemes.

4.2 Creation of Great Otway National Park

In 2005 increasing community and Government recognition of the importance of protecting the environment and landscape of the Otway Ranges culminated in the creation of the Great Otway National Park. This upgraded the level of protection of public lands in the area. The National Park incorporated the existing Otway National Park, several State Parks, areas of the Otway State Forest and a number of other reserves to create a national park of over 100,000 hectares.

The Great Otway National Park protects some of the State's most significant areas of biodiversity, along with significant areas of Aboriginal Cultural Value and critical parts of the iconic landscape along the Great Ocean Road. It is among Victoria's most visited and valued national parks and a key resource for the region's tourism industry.

In 2018, following the closure of the Alcoa coal mine and power station on leased Crown land at Anglesea, an additional 6,500 hectares of the Anglesea Heathlands were incorporated into the Great Otway National Park. This area includes a quarter of all Victoria's plant species including more than 100 orchid species (making it one of the most orchid rich areas in Australia). It protects twenty species of flora that are rare or threatened at a state level and eight that are rare or threatened at a national level.

From the point of view of the urban future of Surf Coast Shire the Great Otway National Park effectively 'hems in' Lorne, Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven, and Anglesea and permanently constrains their potential for additional urban growth.

4.3 Great Ocean Road Taskforce

In a further recognition of the increasing importance of protecting and enhancing the landscape and environment of the Great Ocean Road region, the Victorian Government in 2017 established the Great Ocean Road Taskforce to undertake an independent assessment of the management of the Great Ocean Road region. The Taskforce included representatives of the region's traditional owners, tourism and coastal managers as well as local government.

The Taskforce released an issues paper on Governance of the Great Ocean Road Region in March 2018 and a Final Report in August 2018. These reports emphasised the:

- State significance of the region and its iconic coastal landscapes;
- “priceless cultural, scientific, historic and economic value” of the environments and landscapes of Great Ocean Road region;
- wide community support for greater effort to protect and enhance the natural landscape and environment of the region; and
- need for a more integrated, far-sighted, State led approach to planning and management of the public lands, landscape and environment of the region.

The Co-Chairs report recommended:

- recognition of the national significance of the Great Ocean Road and its iconic coastal landscapes;
- a statutory requirement to develop a long-term (50 year+) shared vision and strategic framework plan for the Great Ocean Road region;
- development of planning guidelines to accompany the strategic framework plan to provide clear direction regarding appropriate land uses and development design standards for the region; and
- establishment of a new statutory authority (the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority) to manage the region’s coastal Crown lands and marine parks.

In its response to the Taskforce Report the State committed to:

- “Legislation to protect the Great Ocean Road, its land and seascapes as one integrated and living entity”;
- a new marine and coastal parks authority;
- a new overarching planning framework “to provide future direction to the region”; and
- “A better planning approval process with an independent expert advisory committee that streamlines planning approvals for appropriate development and stops inappropriate proposals in their early stages.”

In essence the Government response to the Taskforce report was a clear statement of the importance of protecting the region’s environment and landscapes and of the need to take a longer-term and region-wide approach to planning and management of the region’s coastal areas.

4.4 Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act

More recently, 2020 saw the passage of the Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act. The Act covers the full length of the Great Ocean Road and not just the areas within Surf Coast Shire. However, its passage will undoubtedly have significant implications for future development in the coastal parts of the Shire.

The Act recognises the State significance of, and need to better protect and manage, the Great Ocean Road and its environs. This is reflected in the stated purpose of the Act to: “recognise the importance of the Great Ocean Road and its environs to the economic prosperity and liveability of Victoria, and as one living and integrated natural entity, for the purpose of protecting that area.”

Among other things, the Act:

- provides for declaration of the Great Ocean Road Region (which incorporates parts of Surf Coast, Colac Otway, Corangamite and Moyne Shires and Warrnambool City Council);
- requires the preparation of a Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan to ensure the protection of the state significant environs of the Great Ocean Road. The preparation of the Plan has commenced; and
- provides for the separate declaration of a Great Ocean Road ‘scenic landscape area’.

The Act defines the extent of land that can be included in the declared ‘scenic landscape area’. This includes (but is not limited to) “land and water between the coastline and the Great Ocean Road” together with land that is “within the viewshed (i.e. able to be seen from) the Great Ocean Road, the coastline or the Great Ocean Walk”. While the exact boundaries of the declared area are not yet determined, the intent and wording of the Act means that much of the area between the coastline and the ridgeline of the Otway Ranges could potentially be included within the declared ‘scenic landscape area’.

In the Surf Coast Shire this may mean that parts of Anglesea, Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven and Lorne would be within the declared area. Portions of Torquay-Jan Juc could also be included within the declared 'scenic landscape area'.

The declaration of a 'scenic landscape area' will require ratification from parliament for any amendment if it is inconsistent with the Strategic Framework Plan, changes settlement boundaries set by the SFP or seeks to subdivide land outside those settlement boundaries into more lots or smaller lots.

The Strategic Framework Plan will set long-term objectives for the Great Ocean Road region together with a 50-year vision statement for the region. Among other things, the Plan is required to:

- recognise, protect and promote Aboriginal tangible and intangible values and other cultural and heritage values;
- prioritise preservation of the ecological and landscape integrity of marine and coastal environments in the region; and
- include a framework for decision-making in relation to the future use and sustainable development of land in the region.

Importantly for Surf Coast's Urban Futures Strategy, the Strategic Framework Plan can designate settlement boundaries within the scenic landscapes area as protected 'Great Ocean Road settlement boundaries.' Following such a designation any future settlement boundary change would be a matter for the State Government and Parliament, not Council, to decide.

The Act also enables the Minister to specify as binding on 'responsible entities' - including the Surf Coast Shire Council - any part of the Strategic Framework Plan that relates to the declared scenic landscapes area. That is the Council would not be able to make decisions or take actions that are inconsistent with the relevant provisions of the Strategic Framework Plan.

The draft Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan is being prepared by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action. The Department and Surf Coast Shire are working collaboratively to ensure consistency between the Strategic Framework Plan and the Shire's Urban Futures Strategy.

In summary the Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act:

- recognises the coastal areas of Surf Coast Shire (along with equivalent areas in the other Shires in the Great Ocean Road region) as being of significance to the wider Victorian community, environment and economy;
- requires that priority be given to protecting the long-term ecological and landscape integrity of environments within the Great Ocean Road region;
- requires ratification from parliament for any Planning Scheme amendment in the scenic landscapes area if it is inconsistent with the SFP;
- enables the State to designate settlement boundaries for townships in the Great Ocean Road scenic landscapes area; and
- encourages further development where it can be judged to be environmentally sustainable.

Both the 'strategic framework plan' and the 'scenic landscape area' will review the policy and controls that protect scenic landscapes, which may have implications for future development in Anglesea, Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven and Lorne.

4.5 Surf Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape Declaration and Statement of Planning Policy

Victoria's Planning and Environment Act provides for the declaration of 'distinctive areas and landscapes' (DAL's) where this is necessary to protect the areas unique features and enhance conservation of its habitats, ecosystems and biodiversity. The objectives of this part of the Act are:

- a) to recognise the importance of distinctive areas and landscapes to the people of Victoria and to protect and conserve the unique features and special characteristics of those areas and landscapes;
- b) to enhance the conservation of the environment in declared areas including the unique habitats, ecosystems and biodiversity of declared areas;
- c) to enable the integration of policy development, implementation and decision-making for declared areas under Statements of Planning Policy; and
- d) to recognise the connection and stewardship of traditional owners in relation to land in declared areas.

Before an area can be declared the Minister must be satisfied that it fulfills the majority of criteria that include outstanding environmental significance, significant landforms, areas of heritage and cultural significance and natural resources or productive land of significance. The area must also be under significant threat of land use change or development that would threaten these values.

Four such areas have now been declared in Victoria. In addition to the Surf Coast, they are the Bellarine Peninsula, Bass Coast and Macedon Ranges. All are areas of high environmental and landscape value that were potentially under threat from ongoing development pressures driven in large part by the

continued growth in the population of Melbourne.

The State Government declared part of Surf Coast as a DAL in September 2019. In October 2022 a final Statement of Planning Policy was approved detailing the environmental, heritage and landscape values of the DAL area and setting out proposed measures to protect the declared area from inappropriate development.

The declared Surf Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape encompasses much of the coast and immediate hinterland in the north of Surf Coast Shire. It includes Torquay-Jan Juc, Bellbrae, Breamlea, Connewarre and Mount Duneed. The boundaries of the declared area are shown on the image below.

Image 6: Declared Area – Surf Coast



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

The Surf Coast declaration came after a detailed assessment of the area's landscape and environmental values by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. The Department's reasons for concluding that the area warranted declaration are set out in its August 2019 DAL Assessment report. They include the area's:

Environmental significance including creeks, wetlands, saltmarshes, woodlands and beaches which provide habitat for numerous state and nationally threatened species.

The assessment particularly highlighted:

- the nationally significant Point Addis Marine National Park and Point Danger Marine Sanctuary;
- areas of coastal Moonah Woodlands along the Point Addis, Jan Juc and Torquay coast;
- the importance of the Karaaf Wetlands and Breamlea Flora and Fauna Reserve in providing habitat for migratory birds including the critically endangered, Orange-Bellied Parrot;
- the estuaries and saltmarsh habitats of Thompson, Deep and Spring Creeks and the role of the creeks in linking coastal and inland habits; and
- significant areas of remnant vegetation west of Torquay-Jan Juc.

Natural landforms including substantial areas of national or state significance particularly along the coastline. The assessment particularly highlighted:

- the nationally significant cliff, bay and beach landscape of Bells Beach and the adjoining areas of cliffs, bay, beach and sandhills to its north;
- the Point Addis landscape;
- the regionally significant open landscape, including the Thompson Valley, located between Torquay and Geelong's Armstrong Creek growth area; and
- the green break between Torquay-Jan Juc and Bellbrae that contributes to the broader landscape character of the area, together with areas of flatland that are highly visible from the Surf Coast Highway and the Great Ocean Road.

Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Significance including in particular:

- coastal areas from Point Impossible to Point Addis that have cultural, social and spiritual significance associated with their past use in trading,

gatherings and ceremonies. This area also contains numerous shellfish middens;

- Spring Creek and Thompsons Creek which provided important food resources, living spaces and opportunities for shell collection; and
- the Karaaf Wetland which was a key breeding site for fish and shellfish used by Wadawurrung people.

Areas of post-contact heritage significance including:

- the Great Ocean Road which was constructed by over 3,000 ex-soldiers and is a permanent memorial to those who served in the World War 1;
- Bells Beach which is internationally known as the venue for major surfing contests and is closely tied to the growth of surfing and surfing related businesses. In addition, the Torquay Surf Life Saving Club was the first to be established in Victoria; and
- A number of shipwrecks along the coast (and the likelihood that wreck related artifacts will exist along the shoreline) which should, as far as practical, be protected against ongoing damage.

The Statement of Planning Policy for the Surf Coast DAL sets out a 50 year vision for the declared area, along with a framework plan and statements of policy and proposed implementation actions across nine key 'policy domains'. A commitment has been made that the Vision and the overall Statement of Planning Policy will be reviewed in ten years' time.

Managing the future of the settlements within the declared area is one of these key policy domains.

The Vision broadly sets out the desired outcome for the declared area and includes high level goals for each of the 'policy domains'. Key elements of the Vision and goals for the various policy domains are set out below:

"By 2070, our vision for the Surf Coast declared area is that the Wadawurrung, governments, public land managers, businesses, residents and visitors work together to ensure the declared area's unique values and distinctive attributes — the things people love about the area are conserved, protected and enhanced and are not degraded over time."

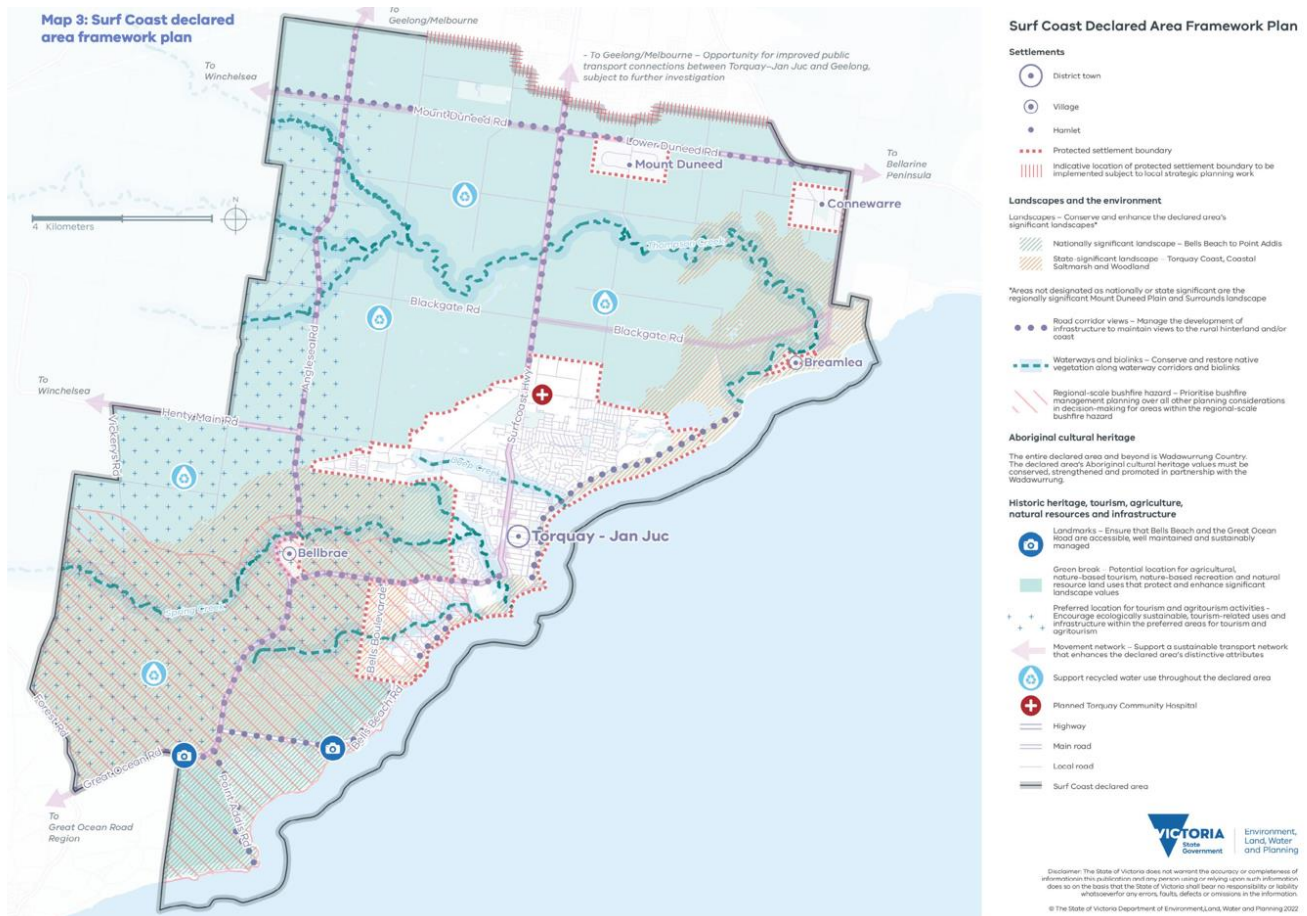
The vision statement makes the following statements/ sets the following goals for the 2070 outcomes for each of the 'policy domains':

- Aboriginal culture and heritage - *"Wadawurrung traditional and living knowledge, culture and practices inform land and water planning and management decisions to better protect the declared area's distinctive attributes."*
- Environment and biodiversity - *"We have conserved and restored the area's unique ecosystems and biodiversity and have provided habitat for endangered and threatened species. Distinctive places (such as Point Addis Marine National Park, Karaaf Wetlands, Breamlea Flora and Fauna Reserve and other coastal reserves) are flourishing."*
- Landscapes - *"We have protected and enhanced the declared area's significant landscapes: the dramatic coastal settings, woodlands, wetlands and rural vistas between settlements."*
- Environmental resilience - *"The declared area has adapted to, and communities have mitigated the environmental risks associated with, climate change and natural hazards including rising sea levels, coastal erosion, polluted run-off and bushfires."*
- Coast and waterways - *"We prioritise the maintenance of healthy waterways and coastal environments important to the declared area."*
- Heritage - *"We respect and celebrate our historic heritage sites (such as Bells Beach and the nationally heritage-listed Great Ocean Road)."*
- Tourism, agriculture and natural resources - *"The declared area's distinctive cultural heritage, environment, historic heritage and landscapes support our prosperous, growing economy"* and
- In relation to Settlements, and particularly Torquay-Jan Juc, it says - *"Torquay–Jan Juc is a vibrant, cohesive regional service centre that supports the needs of residents, workers and visitors. Development is sympathetic to the coastal and hinterland landscape setting."*

A key component of the Statement of Planning Policy is the framework plan (below) which: *"spatially represent(s) the vision that seeks to encourage long-term sustainable development within the declared area, identifying areas for protection and conservation and for potential change subject to planning processes."*

It should be noted that settlement boundaries defined in the Surf Coast DAL Statement of Planning Policy will

Image 7: Declared Areas Framework Plan – Surf Coast



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

not be affected by the Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan. More generally it is also important to note that, where the areas of the two plans overlap, the provisions of the Great Ocean Road strategic framework plan must be consistent with the Surf Coast DAL Statement of Planning Policy.

The Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) now forms part of the State Planning Provisions in the Surf Coast Planning Scheme and a planning scheme amendment/s must now be prepared by the Victorian Minister for Planning to give effect to the SPP. It becomes the key high-level document guiding ongoing planning and management of development

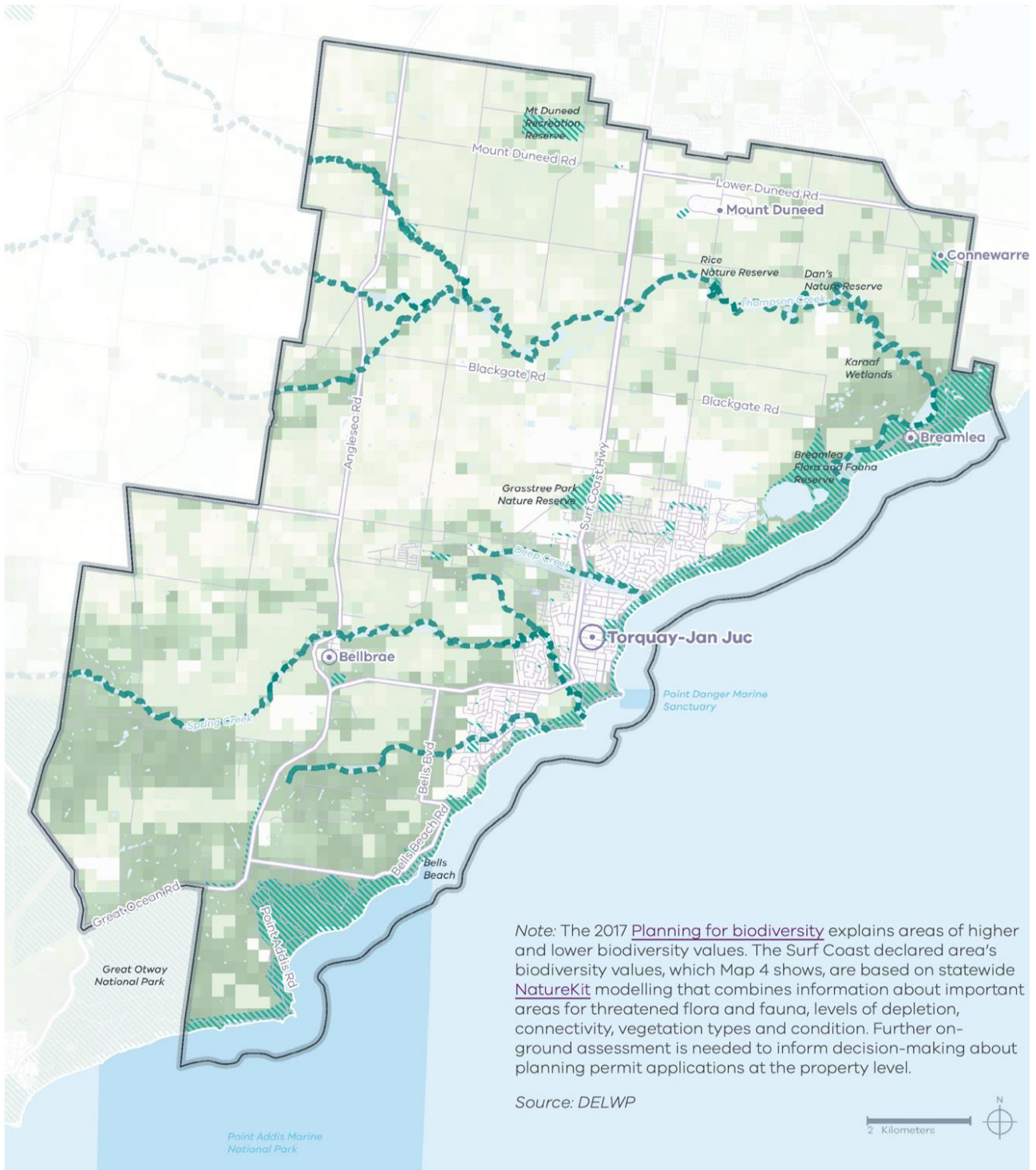
within the declared area.

The objectives set for each of the 'policy domains' are binding on relevant public bodies (including Surf Coast Council and infrastructure agencies) and future decision making by such bodies must also 'have regard to' the strategies set out for each policy domain.

Images identifying areas of significant biodiversity and landscape value (below) form part of the Statement of Planning Policy. These values will clearly be central considerations in all future planning decisions affecting the declared DAL area.

Image 9: Areas of Landscape Significance – Surf Coast

Image 8: Significant Biodiversity Areas – Surf Coast



Significant Biodiversity Areas

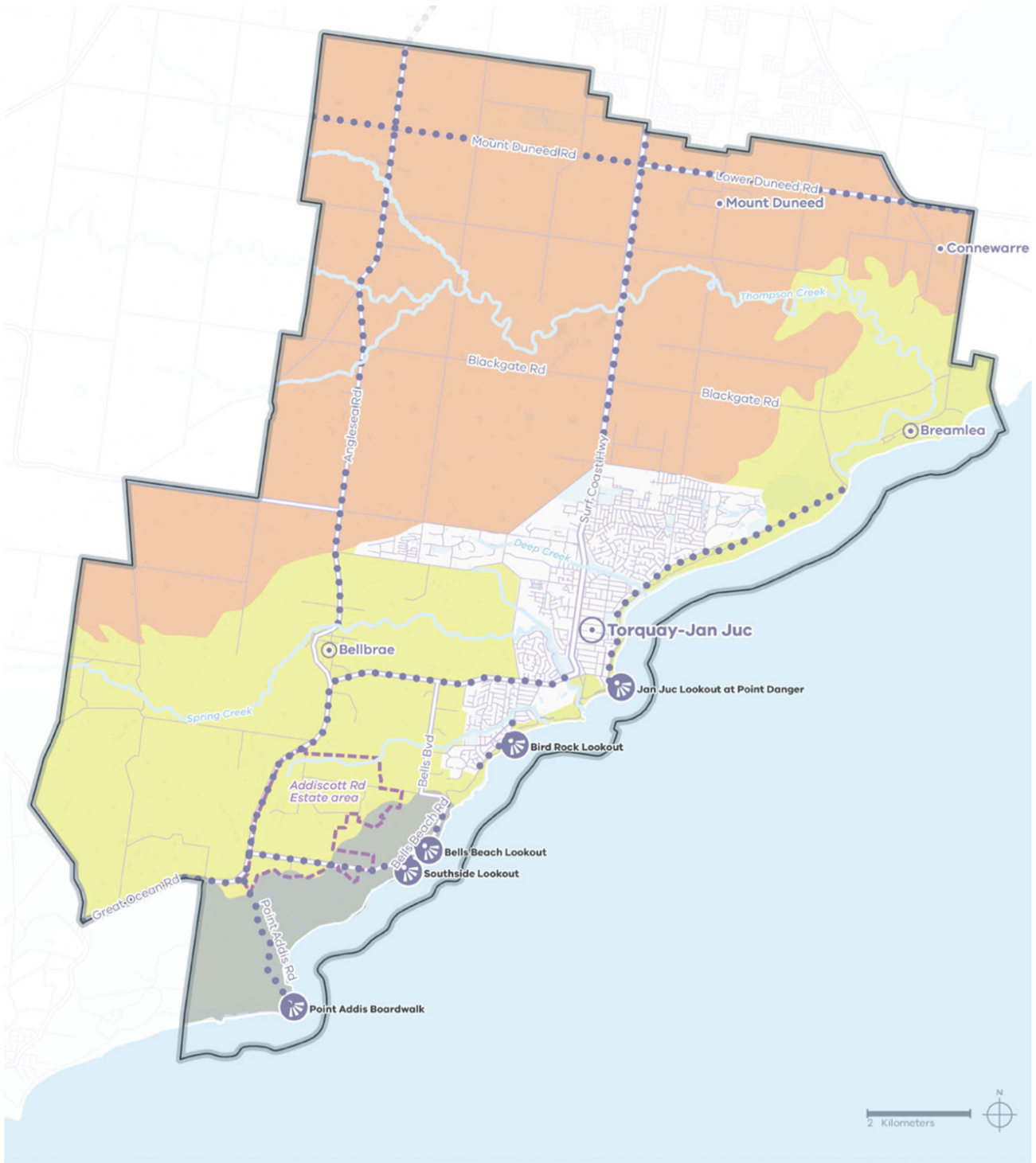
- Surf Coast declared area
- Waterways and biolinks
- Biodiversity values – Darker green areas have a higher biodiversity value
- Marine national park
- District town
- Village
- Hamlet
- Highway
- Water body
- River



Disclaimer: The State of Victoria does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of information in this publication and any person using or relying upon such information does so at their own risk.

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

Image 9: Areas of Landscape Significance – Surf Coast



Areas of Landscape Significance

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|------------|
| Surf Coast declared area | Viewing location | Main road |
| Nationally significant landscape – Bells Beach to Point Addis | Road corridor views | Local road |
| State-significant landscape – Torquay Coast, Coastal Saltmarsh and Woodland | District town | Water body |
| Regionally significant landscape – Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds | Village | River |
| | Hamlet | |
| | Highway | |



Disclaimer: The State of Victoria does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of information in this publication and any person using or relying upon such information does so on the basis that the State of Victoria shall bear no responsibility or liability whatsoever for any errors, faults, defects or omissions in the information.
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Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Surf Coast Statement of Planning Policy. State of Victoria, Melbourne.

Of even greater significance for the preparation of Surf Coast's Urban Futures Strategy is the discussion of the settlement hierarchy and the 'protected settlement boundaries' which form a key part of the framework plan. The framework plan incorporates settlement boundaries for Torquay-Jan Juc, Bellbrae, Breamlea, Connewarre and Mt Duneed.

These 'protected settlement boundaries' can only be changed with the concurrence of the Minister for Planning and any proposed change would also require ratification by both houses of Parliament.

Given this requirement, together with the overall focus of the DAL legislation and Statement of Planning Policy, it is unlikely that there will be any future expansion to settlement boundaries within the DAL area.

Image 10: Protected Settlement Boundary – Torquay/Jan Juc

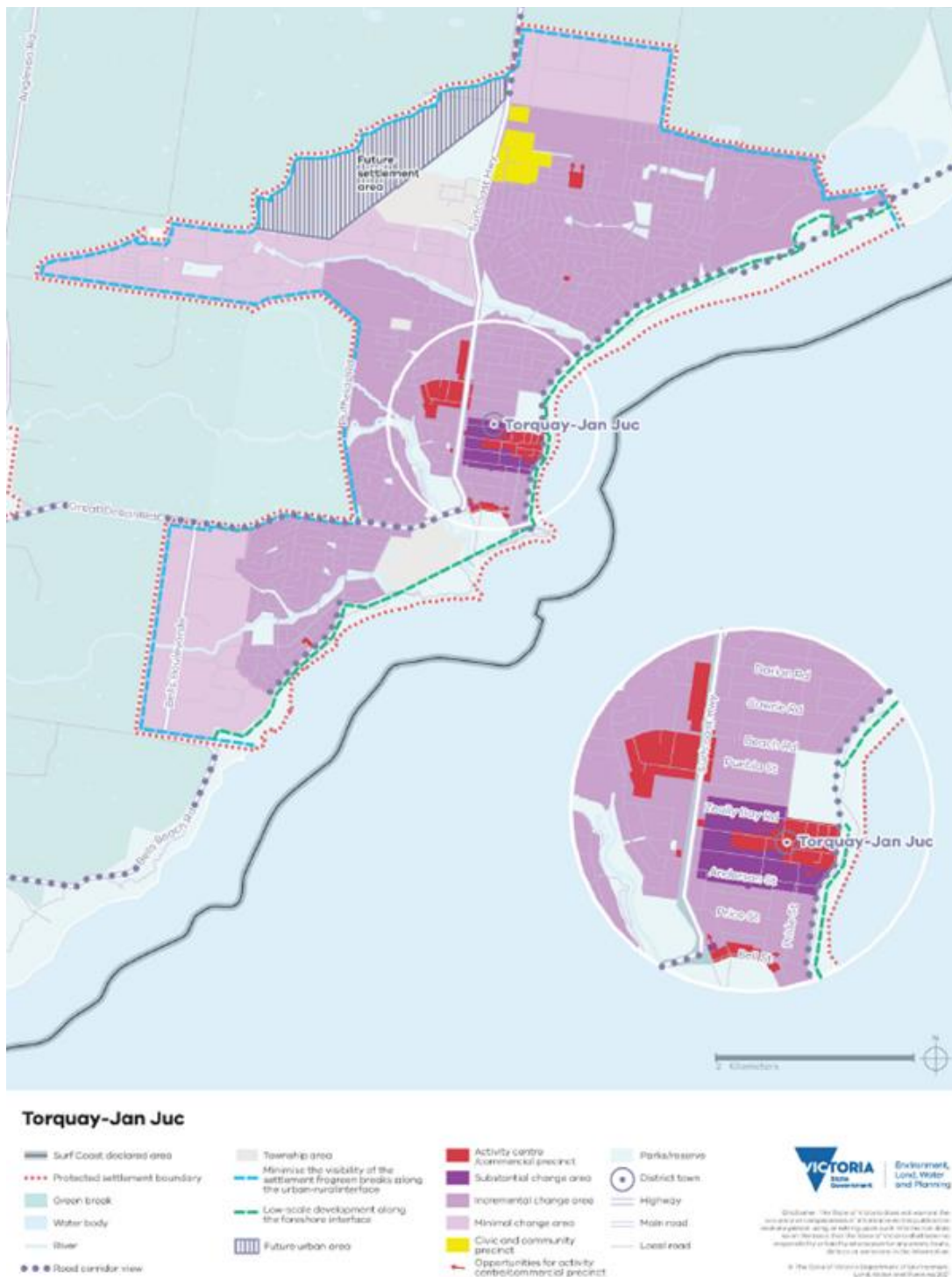


Image 11: Protected Settlement Boundary – Other Townships



5 Population and housing growth

Surf Coast Shire has seen strong ongoing population growth for at least the last thirty years. The most recent published data, for 30th June 2022, shows that growth continuing. The extent of this growth is shown in the table below.

Table 1 : Estimated Resident Population, Surf Coast Shire, 1991-2022

Year	Population
1991	15,560
2001	20,556
2011	26,666
2016	30,465
2021	37,623
2022	38,610

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Estimated Resident Population

What is particularly relevant to preparation of an Urban Futures Strategy for Surf Coast is that the population of the Shire has consistently grown at a faster rate than that of the larger nearby cities (Geelong and Melbourne) that have been the source of most of the rapid Surf Coast population growth.

Table 2 : Comparative Annual Population Growth Rates, 1991-2022

	Surf Coast	Greater Geelong	Greater Melbourne	Victoria	Australia
1991-2001	2.8%	0.6%	0.9%	0.8%	1.1%
2001-2011	2.6%	1.2%	1.8%	1.5%	1.5%
2011-2016	2.7%	2.1%	2.5%	2.2%	1.6%
2016-2018	3.9%	2.7%	2.0%	1.9%	1.6
2018-2019	4.7%	2.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2
2019-2020	5.2%	2.0%	-1.6%	-0.9%	0.1
2021-2022	2.6%	2.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Estimated Resident Population

Less than one fifth of Surf Coast's population growth is due to natural increase (the surplus of births over deaths) in the local population. By far the most important source of growth (60%+) has been net internal migration from other areas of Australia - in particular from the affluent inner and middle ring suburbs of Melbourne and, to a much lesser extent, from the City of Greater Geelong (which over recent years has seen more people move from than to Surf Coast). Overseas migration has also been a consistent, although much smaller, source of population growth.

These trends are shown in the following tables.

Table 3 : Components of population Change, Surf Coast, 2016-2021

Estimated Resident Population (2016)	30,465
Natural increase (births minus deaths)	903
Net Internal Migration	4,332
Net Overseas Migration	578
Intercensal Error*	1,445
Estimated Resident Population (2022)	37,623
Population change, 2016-21	7,158
Population Growth Rate, 2016-21	23.5%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Estimated Resident Population

*Intercensal error is the difference between the preliminary 2021 population estimate based on the 2016 census and the revised estimate using the 2021 census

Table 4 : Main sources of people moving to Surf Coast (2016-2021)

	To Surf Coast	From Surf Coast	Net
Port Phillip	402	67	335
Yarra	360	50	310
Boroondara	331	44	287
Wyndham	327	51	276
Moreland	355	90	265
Moonee Valley	282	35	247
Hobsons Bay	265	42	223
Darebin	270	61	209
Melbourne	293	92	201
Banyule	210	10	200
Maribyrnong	219	23	196
Stonnington	251	65	186
Ballarat	246	82	164
Bayside	181	20	161
Melton	145	14	131
Whitehorse	145	17	128
Hume	138	25	113
Glen Eira	139	31	108

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Population and Housing Census

Table 5 : Main Net Losses from Surf Coast, 2016-2021

	To Surf Coast	From Surf Coast	Net
Greater Geelong	2,341	2,457	-116
Colac Otway	131	245	-114

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Population and Housing Census

These growth trends are not surprising given Surf Coast's combination of a particularly attractive environment and lifestyle, relatively more affordable housing and the ability to access jobs and services in Geelong and Melbourne. Similar growth patterns are seen in many other attractive peri-urban locations within a 100-kilometre distance of Melbourne.

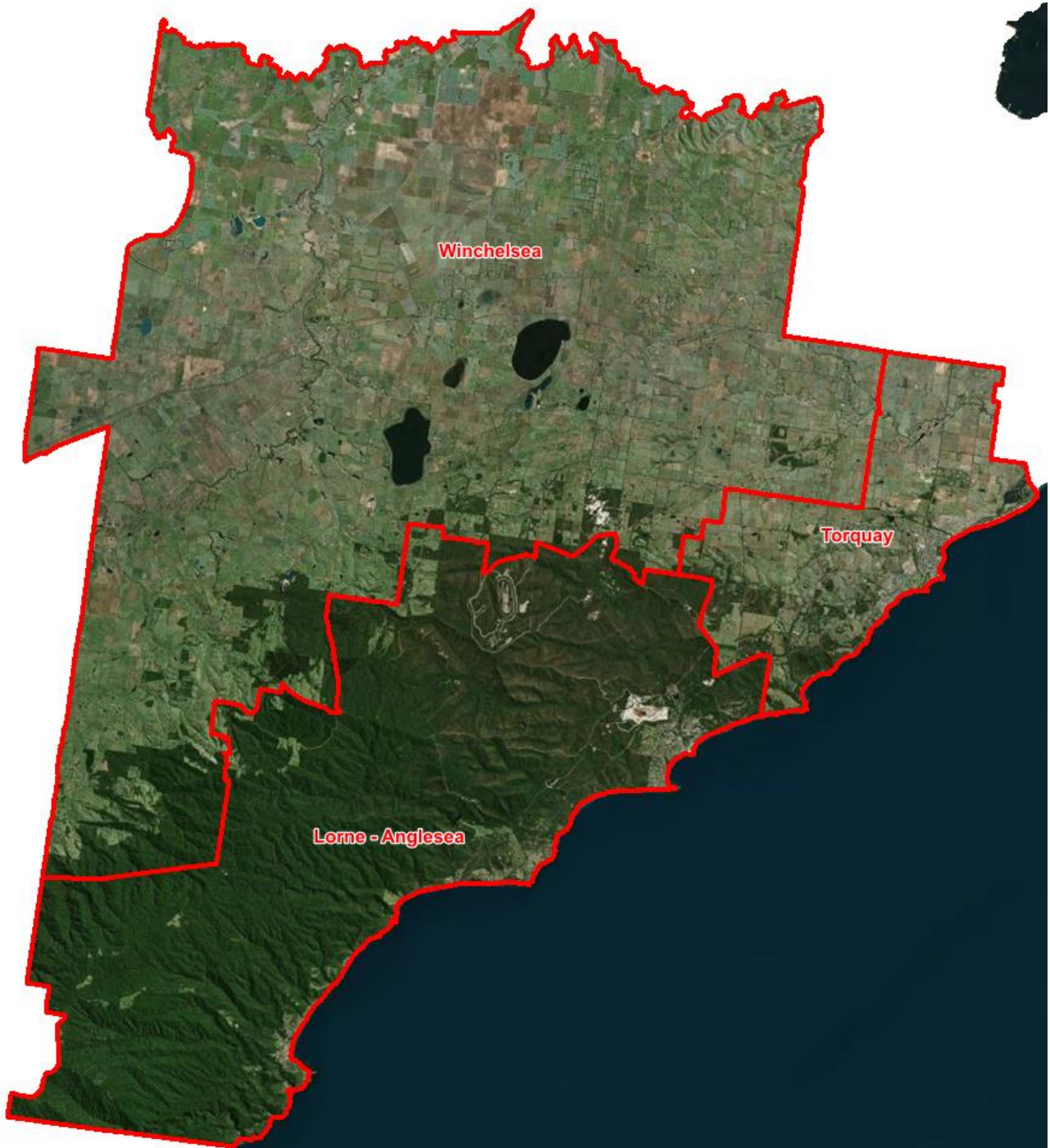
The Torquay-Jan Juc SA2 area has overwhelmingly been the location of most population growth within Surf Coast. The boundaries of the Torquay SA2 are shown on the image below. In addition to Torquay-Jan Juc townships it encompasses the localities/settlements of Bellbrae and Bells Beach.

Table 6 : Population growth in Surf Coast's SA2s

	Winchelsea	Lorne - Anglesea	Torquay
2001	5,418	4,748	10,225
2006	5,508	4,799	11,758
2011	5,788	5,151	15,497
2016	5,824	5,261	19,131
2021	6,582	6,189	24,617
2022	6,663	6,267	25,419
2001-2022	1,245	1,519	15,194

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Estimated Resident Population

Image 12: Australian Bureau of Statistics SA2 Boundaries – Surf Coast



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

In summary the strong ongoing population growth of Melbourne, driven in turn by high levels of net overseas migration (of which up to a third is to Melbourne), has been the key driver of even stronger ongoing population growth rates in Surf Coast. To date that population growth has been largely concentrated in Torquay-Jan Juc. This is not surprising given both the State and the Shire's planning policies nominate Torquay as a key growth centre, and the area's accessibility from both Geelong and Melbourne.

Looking forward, the Surf Coast Shire is forecast to continue to see strong population growth. The State Government (VIF 2019) expects the Shire's population to grow to over 45,000 by 2036. It is important to note that this forecast assumes an average annual growth rate of 1.9% between 2018 and 2036. This is significantly below the growth rates actually achieved over the last thirty years.

With continued strong growth forecast for both Melbourne and Greater Geelong, the VIF forecasts may turn out to be an underestimate of future population growth and housing demand in Surf Coast. On the other hand, it is at least possible that an increasingly limited supply of additional housing in Torquay-Jan Juc and other coastal townships could see a reduction in population growth rates below those in current official forecasts.

Dwelling Stock and Growth

As measured in 2021 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Housing and Population Census, there were approximately 20,600 residential dwellings in the Surf Coast Shire. Of which 11,000 were located in the Torquay SA2, 6,700 in the Lorne-Anglesea SA2 and 2,700 in the Winchelsea SA2.

As measured from 2011 to 2021 residential dwellings increased on an average annual basis by 400 – equating to a 4.4% annualised growth rate. Dwelling growth was concentrated within the Torquay SA2 – equating to 82% of the municipality's growth in residential dwellings.

Dwelling Projections

Dwelling projections that were prepared for Surf Coast Council by consultants REMPLAN forecast dwelling growth by location within the Shire over the two decades from 2021 to 2041; these projections did not account for a protected settlement boundary around Torquay – Jan Juc. In total the forecast was for an additional 10,731 additional dwellings.

Almost 70% of the forecast increase in dwelling numbers (almost an additional 7,400 dwellings) was expected to be in Torquay/Jan Juc. Winchelsea and environs were forecast to see more than 2,000 additional dwellings.

Most of the balance of the dwelling growth was forecast to be in Anglesea district (nearly 500 additional dwellings over the twenty years), Aireys Inlet district (almost 280 additional dwellings), Bellbrae district (slightly over 200 additional dwellings), and Moriac & Barrabool district (almost 130 additional dwellings). Lorne district was forecast to see less than 60 additional dwellings and Deans Marsh just 40 additional dwellings over the twenty years.

6 Changing and emerging housing needs

In planning for future housing and urban development in Surf Coast it is important not just to think about the total number of additional dwellings required to house future residents. It is also necessary to consider how the housing needs of the Shire's existing population are likely to change and how planning should respond to potential changes in the housing market.

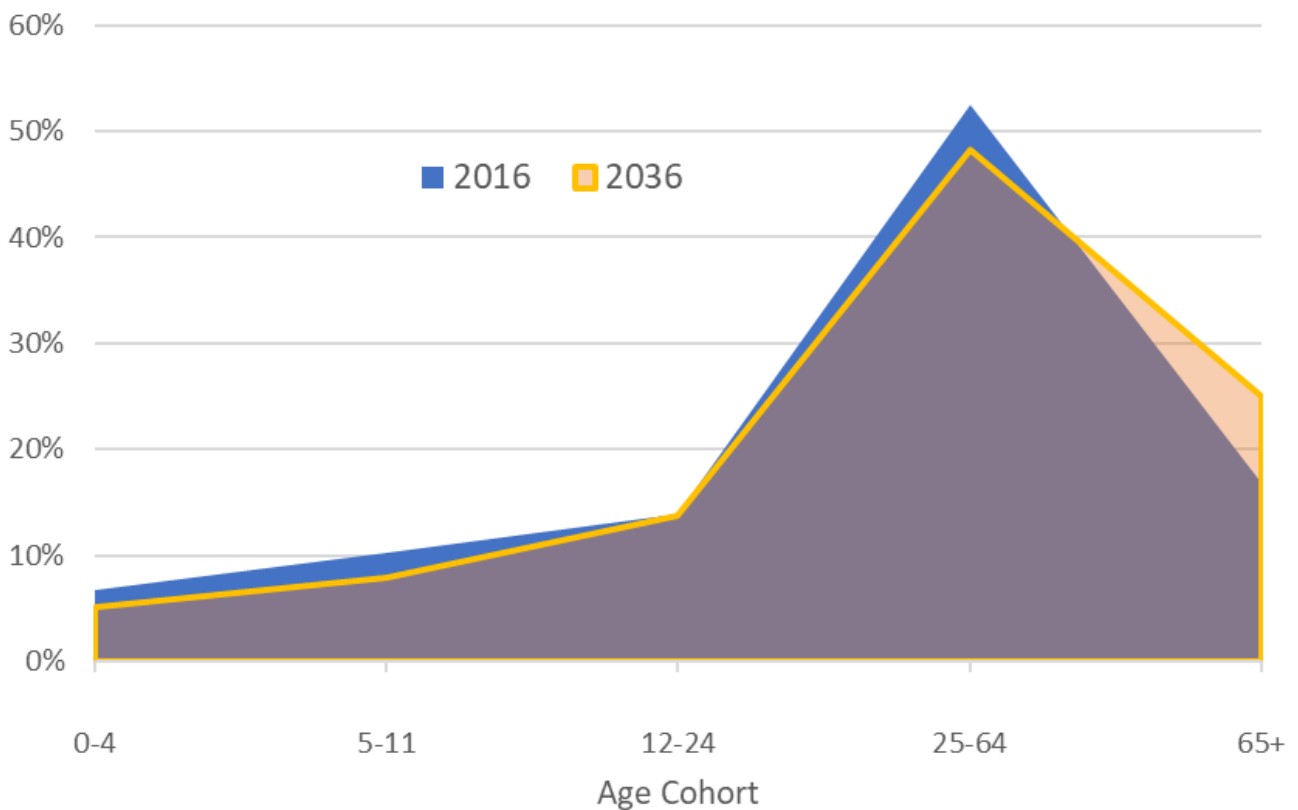
In the context of preparation of an Urban Futures Strategy there are a number of such key issues that need to be addressed. These are briefly outlined below.

How the changing housing needs of an ageing population can best be met

The age profile of the Surf Coast population is changing and will continue to change in future. The percentage of the total population that is younger children (up to 11 years) is forecast to fall by around 4% (from 17% to 13%) between 2016 and 2036 while the percentage of those over 65 years of age is forecast to increase by around 8% (from 17% to 25%). That is a forecast increase of almost 6,300 aged 65 or older.

The forecast change in the age profile is shown in the graph below.

Graph 1: Historic and Forecast Age distribution – Surf Coast



Source: Victoria in Future, 2019

Proportionally there will be fewer households with young children, proportionally more households without children, and a lot more older households will mean that the mix of housing types in Surf Coast will need to change. There will likely need to be more smaller dwellings (town houses and apartments) and more special purpose aged accommodation (retirement villages and nursing homes). The Shire's planning policies already make some provision for these changing needs. The Urban Futures Strategy will need to ensure that this provision is adequate.

How planned changes in housing supply may affect housing prices and how the ongoing need for affordable housing can best be addressed

Rising house prices and declining affordability is a known issue in the Surf Coast Shire and is a growing problem across Victoria and Australia. Increases in both the cost of purchasing housing and the cost of renting are putting more households under financial stress.

Surf Coast Shire is not immune from these trends. In fact, these trends are often greater in tourist areas such as Surf Coast where the demand for short-term rentals is high and can be more profitable for investors than long-term rentals. Any solution will require action by the Commonwealth and State Governments and not just the Surf Coast Council and community.

However, there are some particular aspects of the housing affordability issue that do need to be addressed in preparing a Surf Coast Urban Futures Strategy. In particular:

- It is likely that the unavoidable limits on additional housing supply in the coastal townships will add to upward pressure on house prices and rents. This would be a particular problem for those existing residents who do not already own, or are purchasing, their homes as well as for locals entering the housing market for the first time
- Increasing housing costs also make it more difficult to attract and retain essential workers and those filling lower paid jobs in the tourism sector. This poses a potential threat to both local services and the economy.
- There may therefore be a need for the Urban Futures Strategy to identify options the Council could consider to further encourage the provision of more social/community housing in the coastal townships.

- Even if provision can be made for some additional affordable and social housing in the coastal townships, there is likely to be an increase in the numbers of people who have to look outside the coastal townships to find more affordable housing.
- This would mean more people commuting to jobs in Surf Coast's coastal townships either from parts of Greater Geelong or from hinterland towns.
- The purchase or rental of housing in the City of Greater Geelong might seem an obvious solution for those facing problems in affording housing in Surf Coast's coastal towns. However, Geelong is facing its own population growth and housing affordability issues and may not be able to fulfill all of the future affordable housing needs of those who work or want to live in or close to the Surf Coast.
- The provision of additional housing in the hinterland will likely therefore need to be a growing part of the solution to providing for the Shire's future needs for affordable housing. At present the only hinterland town identified for significant future housing growth is Winchelsea. The Urban Futures Strategy may need to consider if there is justification for providing other options to meet part of the future need for more affordable housing.

How future changes in demand for holiday homes and short-term tourist accommodation may impact Surf Coast's coastal townships

Surf Coast Shire's dwelling vacancy rate is three to four times the State average. Vacancy rates are not surprisingly highest in the coastal towns where there are many second or holiday homes. In contrast the townships in the Shire's hinterland had vacancy rates that are much closer to the average for Victoria.

Housing vacancy rates in Surf Coast were lower than usual at the time the 2021 census was undertaken. This is most likely because some absentee owners moved out of Melbourne to their holiday homes, at least on a temporary basis, while Melbourne was in Covid lockdown. The largest decline in vacant dwellings was in the coastal towns (Lorne, Anglesea and Aireys Inlet) which had the highest vacancy rates at the time of the previous census in 2016.

These trends are shown in the following table.

Table 7: Dwelling Vacancy Rates – Selected Locations

Settlements	2011	2016	2021
Torquay	32%	29%	21%
Jan Juc	31%	31%	22%
Anglesea	67%	65%	57%
Aireys 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% ^S

Source: ABS censuses

At present it is unclear if vacancy rates in the coastal towns have returned to their pre-Covid levels or if more people have moved permanently out of Melbourne.

Future trends in terms of vacancy rates are also uncertain.

On the one hand it is at least possible that the continued growth in Melbourne's population will generate substantial additional demand for holiday homes and for short-term visitor accommodation. With limits on the number of additional dwellings that can be accommodated in the coastal towns this could result in a further increase in vacancy rates especially in Lorne, Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven and Anglesea.

On the other hand, the ageing of Melbourne's population could see more people retiring permanently to their Surf Coast holiday homes, with a resulting decrease in vacancy rates.

This makes it difficult to be sure of the future relationship between population and housing requirements (which will vary between townships and over time). It also reinforces the need to focus on vacancy rates as an important issue for the coastal townships. High vacancy rates change and reduce the range of facilities and services that can viably be provided in the coastal townships. It may also have an effect on community cohesion. On the other hand, a decrease in vacancy rates may place pressure on aspects of local infrastructure capacity and services.

7 A place by place overview of current planning provisions & constraints

The following section of this report sets out current Council planning policies for, and constraints on, future development of each of the major urban centres within Surf Coast Shire. The purpose is to provide a clear and succinct summary of how much additional housing growth can be accommodated in each centre and in what form based on the current planning framework. This information is essential background to ongoing discussions about how Surf Coast can best accommodate ongoing population and housing growth.

It begins by highlighting the role envisaged for each centre in the Shire's Municipal Planning Strategy, sets out the provisions of the strategic plan for the centre, refers to key constraints on ongoing development and then summarises the estimated capacity for additional housing development within the centre. The discussion starts with the coastal centres (Torquay-Jan Juc, Bellbrae, Anglesea, Airey's Inlet/Fairhaven/Moggs Creek; and Lorne) and then discusses current planning for the hinterland centres (Winchelsea, Moriac and Deans Marsh).

7.1 Torquay-Jan Juc

Torquay-Jan Juc is one of only two (along with Winchelsea) towns in Surf Coast Shire designated in both regional and local planning as locations for substantial urban growth. Torquay-Jan Juc has been the location of most of Surf Coast's population and housing growth over the last two decades – seeing almost 15,000 growth in population and 5,500 additional dwellings constructed over this period. This compares to growth of only 1,200 people and 560 dwellings in Winchelsea over the same period. In effect, for the last two decades, planning for additional development in Torquay-Jan Juc has been the core element of Surf Coast's urban growth strategy.

In light of the approval of the DAL SPP, this will change substantially over the period covered by Surf Coast's proposed Urban Futures Strategy. While there is still scope for some additional 'greenfield' housing growth in Torquay-Jan Juc this capacity is limited and can no longer be relied upon to meet most of Surf Coast's future housing needs. Recent tightening of State planning policies (in the Statement of Planning Policy for the Surf Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscape

area) means that there is little likelihood of a future change to the Torquay-Jan Juc protected settlement boundary.

While there may be some capacity for infill development and denser housing forms in more established parts of Torquay this is not at a scale that will be able to replace the future decline in greenfield housing development.

The following section outlines current planning for, and constraints on, future housing growth in Torquay-Jan Juc.

Strategic Planning for Torquay-Jan Juc

The most recent Surf Coast Shire strategic plan to guide development in Torquay-Jan Juc is the 'Sustainable Futures Plan Torquay-Jan Juc 2040' adopted by Surf Coast Council in mid-2014. The 2014 Sustainable Futures Plan provided for the growth of Torquay-Jan Juc to a population of 25,000 to 30,000 people over the ensuing thirty years. That level of planned growth was consistent with State Government population forecasts for the Shire. This Plan has effectively now been superseded by the provisions of the Surf Coast DAL Statement of Planning Policy.

The intent of the 2014 Plan has since been substantially modified by subsequent Planning Scheme amendments that have reduced the extent of Torquay's growth areas (particularly in the Spring Creek valley) and by the State Governments introduction of the Surf Coast DAL Statement of Planning policy.

The Sustainable Futures Plan:

- confirmed the town boundary of Torquay-Jan Juc and emphasised the importance of maintaining the non-urban breaks between Torquay-Jan Juc, Bellbrae and the Armstrong Creek growth area in the City of Greater Geelong;
- made provision for 'greenfield' development in a number of identified growth areas in North and Central Torquay and Jan Juc;
- Identified Torquay North as the location for the largest proposed growth;

- also made provision for new development in Central Torquay and Jan Juc including up to 1 kilometre west of Duffields Road in the Spring Creek valley;
- recognised the potential for the redevelopment of some existing sites in the Central Torquay and Jan Juc neighbourhoods. The Plan noted that such 'urban infill' areas might accommodate up to 1,500 people by 2030;
- provided for a potential future public transport corridor from Armstrong Creek to Torquay North;
- identified the foreshore, creek lines and key areas of natural bush as priorities for protection; and
- made provision for employment growth particularly in the West Coast Business Park in Torquay North and ongoing growth in tourism precincts. The Plan recognised that Armstrong Creek and Geelong would be a key source of employment and higher order retailing and services for the future residents of Torquay-Jan Juc.

The Plan is shown schematically on the following image.

Image 13: Sustainable Futures Torquay Jan-Juc 2040



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2014. Sustainable Futures Plan Torquay-Jan Juc 2040

Surf Coast DAL Statement of Planning Policy

Key provisions of Council's Sustainable Futures Plan for Torquay-Jan Juc have subsequently been reinforced by the 2019 declaration of the northern part of Surf Coast Shire as a Distinctive Area and Landscape. The declaration recognised the outstanding environmental, landscape and both Aboriginal and more recent heritage values of the area around Torquay-Jan Juc. The State Government approved and gazetted a final Statement of Planning Policy for the declared area in October 2022.

As set out earlier in this report the DAL Statement of Planning Policy set out objectives and strategies for the management of future land use and development in the declared area. The objectives are binding on all responsible public authorities including the Surf Coast Council. The Council and other relevant authorities must 'have regard' to (i.e., are generally expected to follow) the strategies set out in the Statement of Planning Policy.

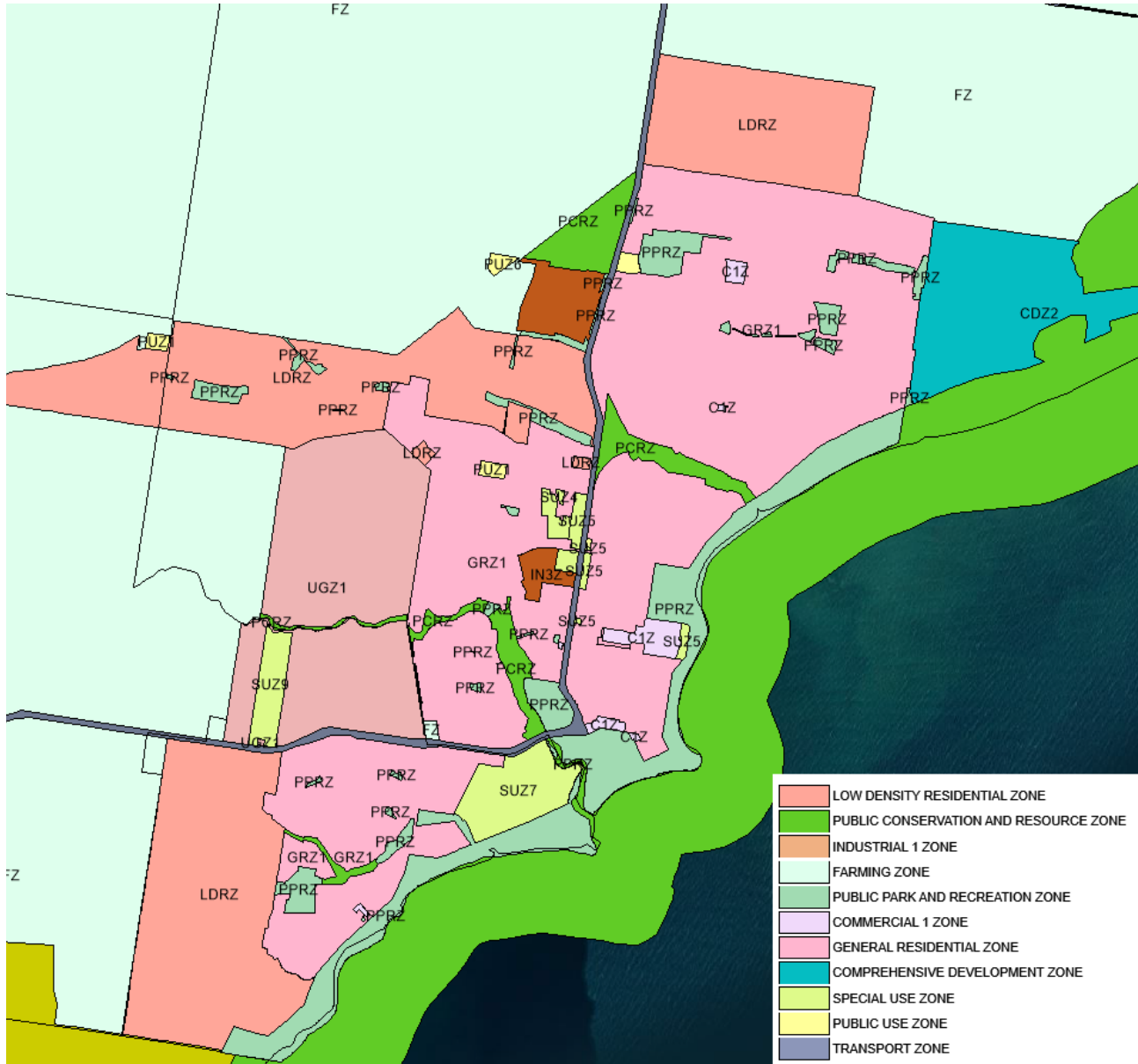
Among other things the Statement of Planning Policy:

- gave the Torquay-Jan Juc, Bellbrae, Mt Duneed and Connewarre settlement boundaries the status of 'protected settlement boundaries'. This means that in future these boundaries can only be amended with the agreement of the Minister for Planning and the approval of both houses of State Parliament;
- excluded the Urban Growth Zone land in Spring Creek and the possible Torquay North East development area from the protected settlement boundary;
- required future urban areas within the Torquay-Jan Juc settlement boundary to be planned and designed in line with the Torquay-Jan Juc coastal character statement (which was included in the Statement of Planning policy), to respect the landscape significance of surrounding areas and to avoid development on ridgelines and other high points that would impinge on the landscape;
- identified areas for minimal, incremental and substantial change. In particular the area around the Torquay Town Centre is designated for urban consolidation to provide additional housing supply in a variety of forms;
- identified the hinterland areas surrounding Torquay-Jan Juc as variously being of national, state or regional significance and needing to be protected from inappropriate development;
- recognised the regional bushfire hazard in the area south west of Torquay-Jan Juc and prioritised planning for bushfire protection over all other considerations in this area;
- reinforced the importance of protecting from development the foreshore, wetlands and the creek valleys connecting the coast to the more heavily vegetated hinterland; and
- proposed restricting rural residential development outside the town boundaries to protect rural land uses and the landscape.

Current Planning Scheme Provisions

The current zoning for Torquay-Jan Juc is shown on the map below.

Image 14: Land Use Zoning – Torquay and Jan-Juc



Source: Victorian State Government. Data Vic, Vicmap Planning – Planning Scheme Zone Polygon

In summary most of the urban area is zoned General Residential with a Comprehensive Development Zone covering the Sands estate to the northeast and areas of Low Density Residential zoning on the north, north-western and southern edges of the township. To the west of Torquay Central the area both north and south of Spring Creek is currently Urban Growth Zone but is proposed for rezoning in line with the provisions of the DAL Statement of Planning policy .

Torquay Central east of the Great Ocean Road and Jan Juc are both covered by a Significant Landscape Overlay which identifies the existing vegetation cover, and its role in screening/softening the appearance of buildings, as a key element of the local landscape. The Overlay specifies that a permit is required for the removal or lopping of significant vegetation and sets out criteria for deciding such applications.

Almost all of the established areas of Torquay North, Torquay Central and Jan Juc are also subject to Design and Development Overlay (DDO). There are separate DDO schedules for the immediate foreshore area (the 'Coastal Boulevards'), the Torquay Town Centre, the Boston Road Residential Precinct, Jan Juc, 'Old South Torquay', the strip of land along the Great Ocean Road through Torquay Central, the residential areas of Torquay Central and Torquay North to the east of the Great Ocean Road, etc. Areas that are still being developed are controlled by detailed Development Plan Overlays.

The detail of the DDO schedules vary according to the character of the area they cover and may change in future as part of the ongoing implementation of the DAL Statement of Planning Policy. For example, much of the foreshore strip of Torquay-Jan Juc is subject to the 'Coastal Boulevards' DDO schedule which, among other things:

- sets clear objectives for the design of structures fronting the foreshore (including complementing the coastal landscape, minimising the visual impact of development when viewed from public areas, encouraging the retention and replanting of native vegetation, and providing for buildings along the boulevards to share views of the foreshore and significant landscape features);
- specifies maximum heights together with minimum setbacks and site coverage for buildings; and
- sets out decision making criteria for developments within the area covered by the DDO.

Environmental Significance Overlays protect the Spring Creek and Thompson Creek corridors, together with the Karaaf Wetlands adjacent to Breamlea, while the Wetlands and parts of the Thompson Creek corridor are also identified in Overlays as subject to flooding or inundation.

A substantial area west of Jan Juc is identified (in a Bushfire Management Overlay) as being subject to bushfire risk as are a smaller area to the west of Torquay North and the area of coastal vegetation adjacent to The Sands, Torquay.

In Summary – Surf Coast's major focus for growth but declining future capacity

Over the last five financial years (2017/18 to 2021/22) Torquay-Jan Juc was the location of 83% of all residential subdivision activity across Surf Coast Shire. Residential lot construction has averaged 310 per

annum. Of this total 77% was urban 'greenfield' (i.e. new residential subdivisions at normal suburban densities), 12% involved the re-subdivision of existing lots within the established urban area and 11% was in areas zoned Low Density Residential.

Dwelling construction has been equally strong – an average annual growth of 385 dwellings (4.3% per annum).

Currently Torquay-Jan Juc has the largest supply of undeveloped residential land across the Surf Coast Shire – an undeveloped capacity of around 2,400 lots. Of this supply two thirds (1,600 lots) are already zoned for residential development. The balance is identified in the planning scheme for future urban development.

7.2 Bellbrae

The Surf Coast Planning Scheme emphasises the importance of maintaining the open landscape between Bellbrae and Torquay/Jan Juc and seeks to preserve and enhance Bellbrae village's rural, historic and bush character. Minimal additional growth is proposed for Bellbrae.

Land Use Constraints

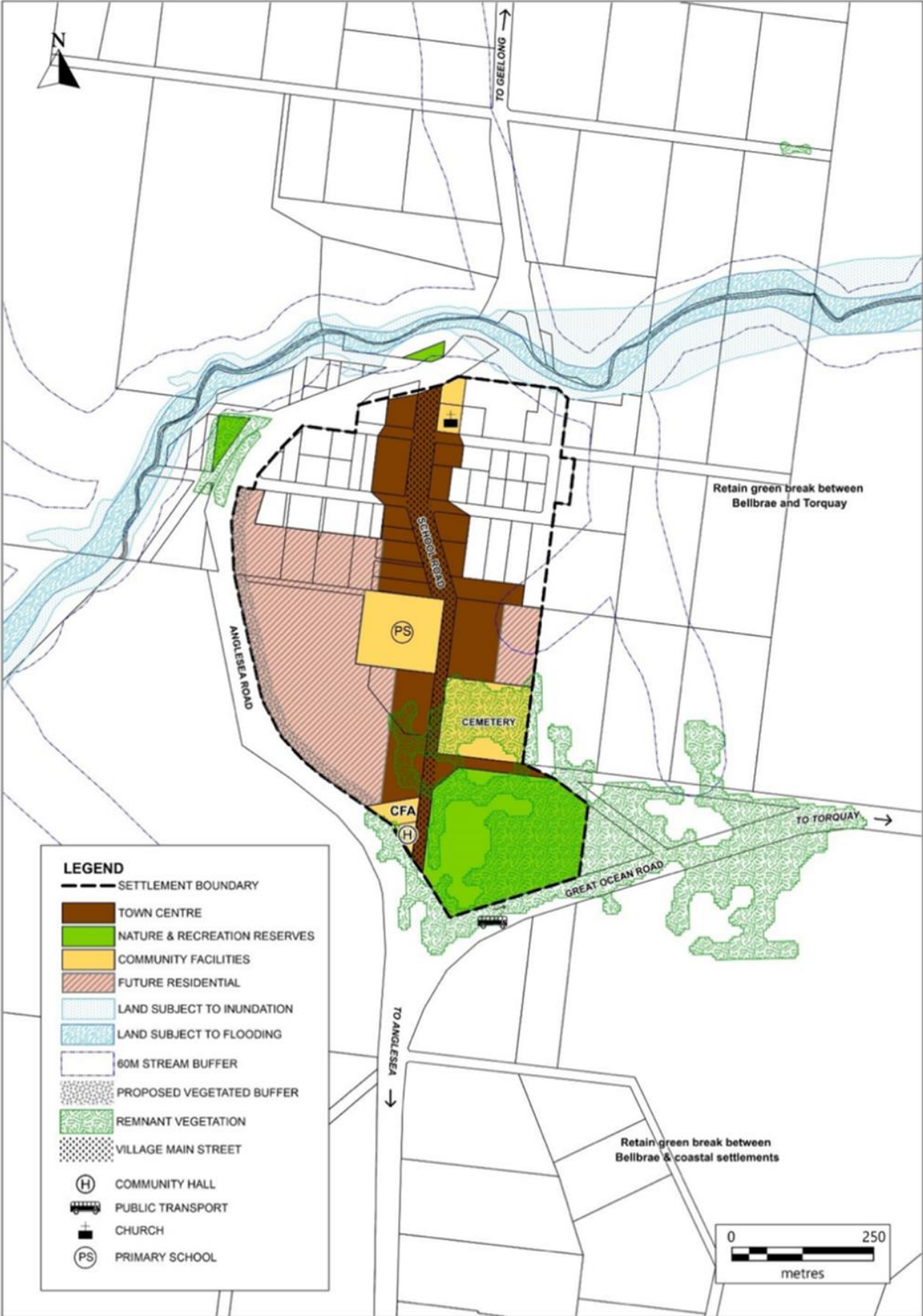
The Surf Coast DAL Statement of Planning Policy establishes a protected settlement boundary for the village of Bellbrae. Any future change to this settlement boundary would require the approval of the State Government and Parliament.

The Anglesea Road provides an effective barrier to any expansion of the township to the west. The village is surrounded by Farm Zone land and there is an area of significant native vegetation (subject to a vegetation protection Overlay) to the south and an area covered by a Significant Landscape Overlay to the north. There are also areas both to the immediate south and somewhat north of the village that are subject to Bushfire Management Overlays.

Bellbrae Framework Plan

The Bellbrae Framework Plan incorporated in the Planning Scheme and the (below) provides for limited infill residential development in the future residential areas east and west of the town centre along School Road which it is proposed should be enhanced as the main street of the village.

Image 15: Bellbrae Framework Plan



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2010. Bellbrae Structure Plan

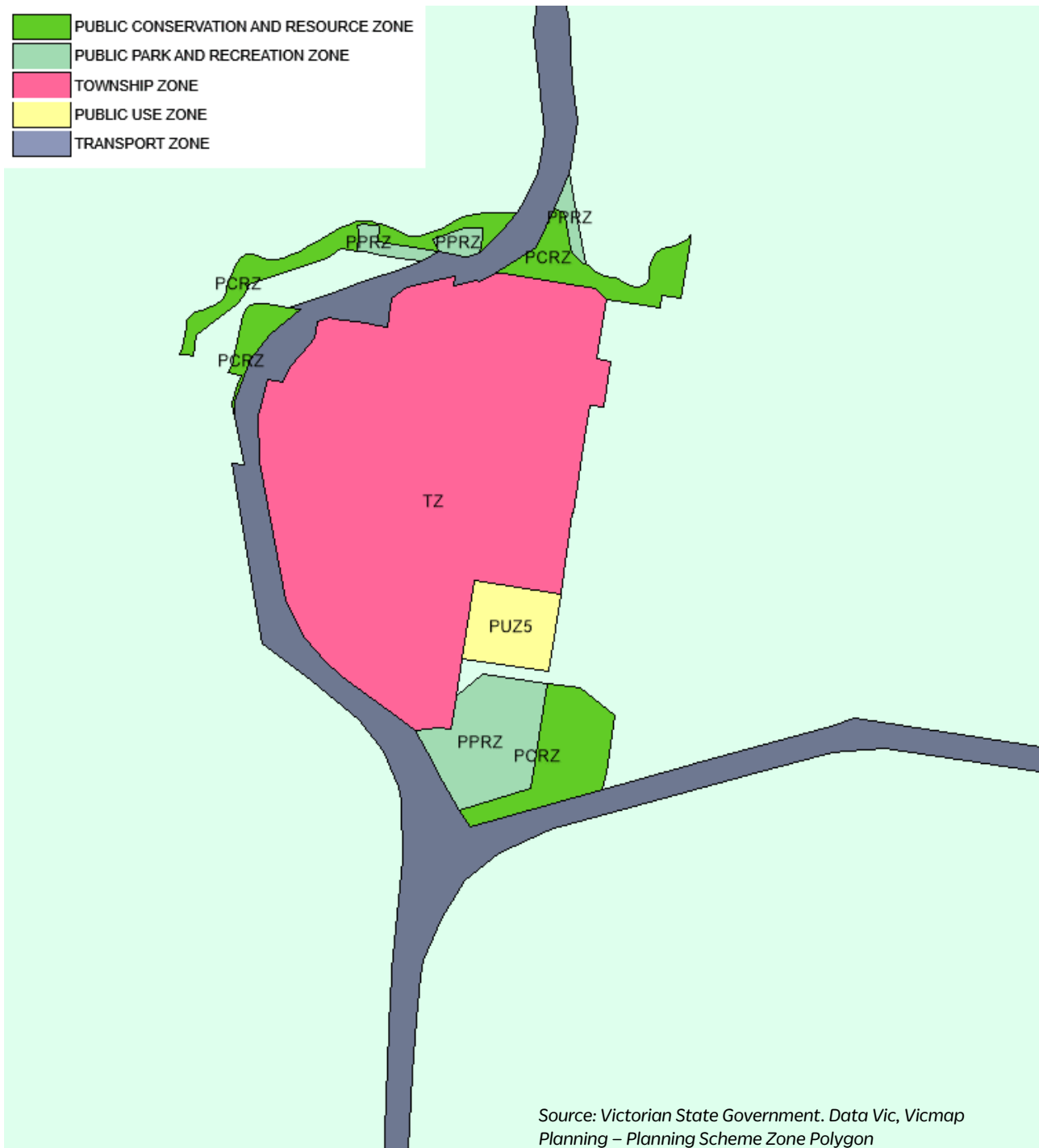
Current Planning Scheme Provisions

The whole of Bellbrae is covered by Township zoning and by a village specific, Design and Development Overlay (DDO 24). The Overlay seeks to ‘*protect and enhance the historic, village character of Bellbrae*’ and to consolidate the location of community facilities and local services along School Road with the aim of reinforcing its role as the village’s ‘main street’. The DDO also sets minimum lot sizes for the village.

To the north of the village the Spring Creek corridor is zoned Public Conservation and Resource zone and is covered by Environmental Significance Overlay. North of the Spring Creek corridor is a substantial area of significant landscape, while south of Bellbrae is an area of significant, and protected, vegetation.

The zoning and overlays are shown on the following image.

Image 16: Land Use Zoning – Bellbrae



In Summary – no capacity for significant additional growth

There has been minimal residential subdivision activity in Bellbrae over the last five years. However, from 2016 to 2021 a total of ten dwellings were constructed on existing vacant lots. There is no substantial capacity for further residential development .

7.3 Anglesea

Land Use Constraints

As can be seen on the map below, public reserves, most notably the Great Otway National Park, and coastal and Anglesea River open spaces effectively surround much of the Anglesea township and limits the scope for any future expansion of the township. In addition, the substantial area of land formerly leased to Alcoa has been found to not be suitable for urban development and is instead proposed to be used for a combination of conservation, eco/active tourism and community uses (a fuller discussion of planning for the former Alcoa site is set out later in this section).

Most other areas close to Anglesea, but which are not within public reserves, are principally zoned Rural Conservation. Because of high bushfire risks and

significant environmental values these areas have very limited potential for future housing development and are not expected to be considered as possible extensions to the Anglesea township.

In summary the Anglesea township is effectively ‘hemmed in’ by protected land of high conservation value, the coastline and constraints. It is therefore not envisaged that there will be any future change to the existing Anglesea settlement boundary.

Anglesea Structure Plan

The Anglesea Structure Plan was adopted by Council in January 2012. The Structure Plan gives effect to the community vision that Anglesea should “... remain a small coastal village that Will be a place which achieves a balance between the built environment and nature, celebrating and protecting its natural setting with the surrounding bush, heathland and ocean an integral part of the town.”

In line with this community view the Structure Plan proposed to maintain the town’s village atmosphere with only low density, environmentally sustainable design and development while protecting the natural coastal setting and bush environment.

Image 17: Parks and Reserves - Anglesea



Source: Victorian State Government. Data Vic, Parks and Reserves

Only very limited population and housing growth was envisaged by the plan – population was forecast to grow by only 155 persons between 2011 and 2031 with the number of dwellings forecast to grow by about 30 per year or 290 over the twenty-year period. The higher growth in dwellings than population reflected a gradual decrease in the forecast size of households.

The Structure Plan proposed no change to the town boundary and stated that: *“Given Anglesea is not a designated growth node in State and local policy it should not be expected that additional land outside the town boundaries will be rezoned for residential development.”* However, the Plan did envisage that: *“Through the effective use of existing vacant lots, infill development and redevelopment of larger sites a potential residential lot supply of around 780 lots could be realised.”* This was seen as adequate to provide for forecast housing growth for more than 25 years.

While anticipating very limited annual growth in dwelling numbers the Structure Plan did note that: *“Anglesea’s housing mix does not match its current and forecast demographic profile. Traditional family households of couples with children are decreasing, and the number of people living alone, couples without children and single parents is increasing”* and that: *“Options need to be available to allow local older people, who currently own a large single detached house, to relocate within their own community and age in place”*.

In this context The Structure Plan suggested that: *“there is an opportunity to encourage the construction of compact, well-designed dwellings or modest low-rise unit/apartment/townhouse style living in the central areas of Anglesea (generally within a 400metre walking distance of retail and community centres) to increase housing diversity.”* It also noted that *“Other types of residential accommodation, including retirement villages and residential aged care facilities, will also be encouraged.”*

The Structure Plan set out a number of key directions for future planning and development. These were to:

1. Reinforce the existing settlement boundary to protect environmentally significant land surrounding the township and to retain buffers to Alcoa. Encourage appropriate infill development and redevelopment of larger sites within the town boundaries;
2. Protect and enhance the natural, landscape and cultural values of the river, coast, heath and bush environment to maintain the unique attractive setting of Anglesea;
3. Protect and enhance Anglesea’s valued non-suburban coastal/bush village character by ensuring development responds to and enhances the preferred town character and applies sustainable design principles;
4. Provide a diverse range of accommodation and housing options for all residents, including increased housing diversity in the central areas of Anglesea within walking distance (400m) of the Town Centre and other existing activity centres;
5. Reinforce the primary role of the Camp Road Shopping Centre as the retail/commercial focal point of Anglesea, providing for a viable and attractive town centre with a diverse range of retail and commercial activities, adequate car parking, good pedestrian and bicycle access and opportunities for incremental growth;
6. Support a vibrant and sustainable local tourist industry by encouraging tourist accommodation, tourist-related retailing and other activities in the Tourist Activity Precincts at Diggers parade and Four Kings and to a lesser extent on other land fronting the Great Ocean Road opposite the River; and opportunities for sensitively designed, low scaled tourist accommodation and facilities elsewhere, including nature and adventure based activities which add to the diversification of the tourism offer;
7. Consolidate the industrial estate within its existing confines and rezone industrial zoned Crown land at the eastern end of the estate to Public Conservation and Resource Zone having regard to its environmental values and Crown land status;
8. Maintain a range of appropriate community and recreation services and facilities which meet community needs, including active and passive open space, facilities for older persons and youth, and safe pedestrian and bicycle linkages between facilities;
9. Consolidate and develop the McMillan Street community precinct as a multifunctional hub and develop site appropriate community hubs at the Carnival Site/Lions Park, Riverbank, Coogoorah Park and Point Roadknight;

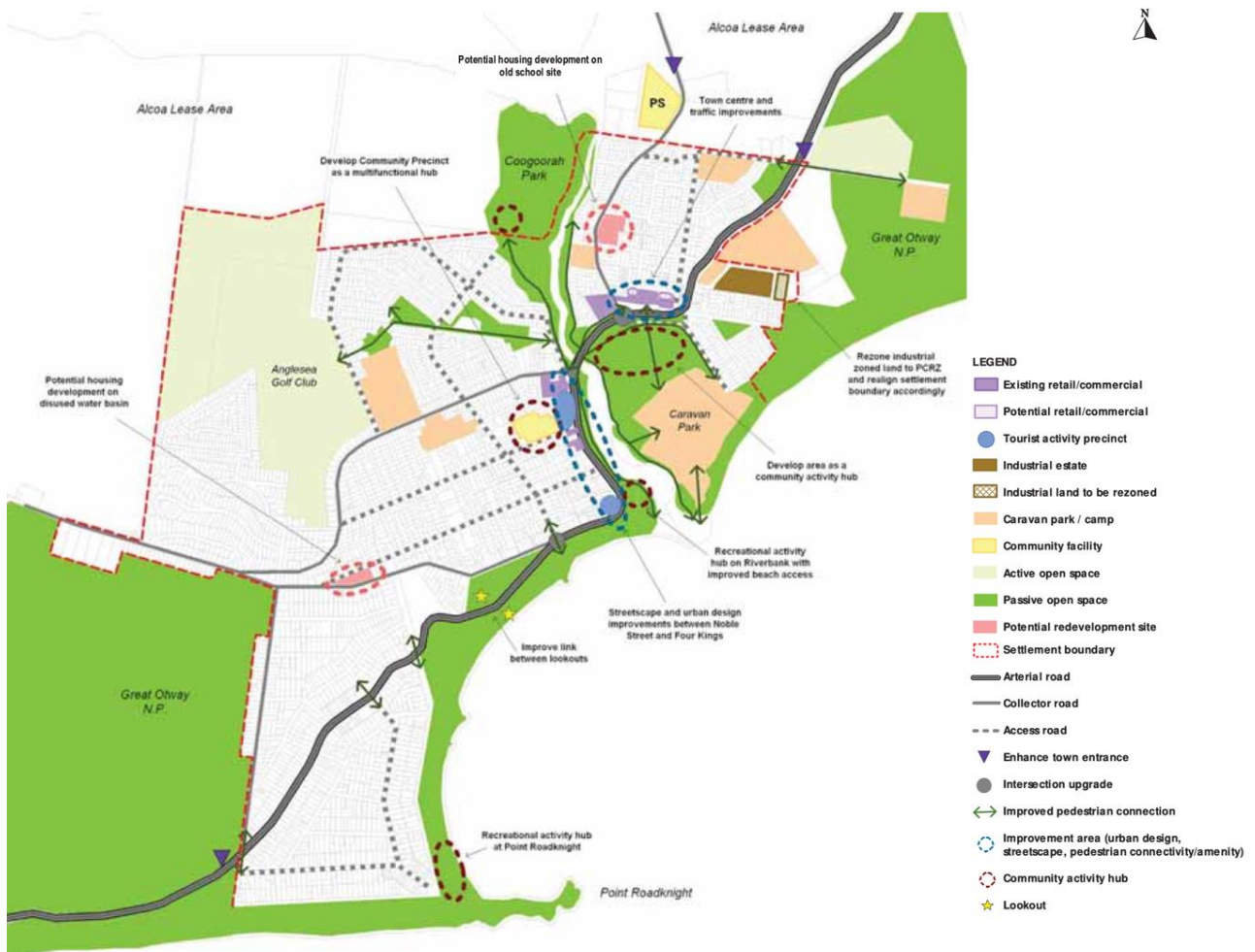
10. Improve traffic movement through the town and provide sustainable transport choices, including public/community transport and opportunities for walking and cycling, with improved crossing of the Great Ocean Road;

11. Develop appropriate mitigation and adaption strategies to respond to the impacts of climate change; and

12. Reduce and manage the risks of environmental hazards (bushfire, flooding, erosion, CASS, salinity).

The Structure Plan is shown below.

Image 18: Anglesea Structure Plan



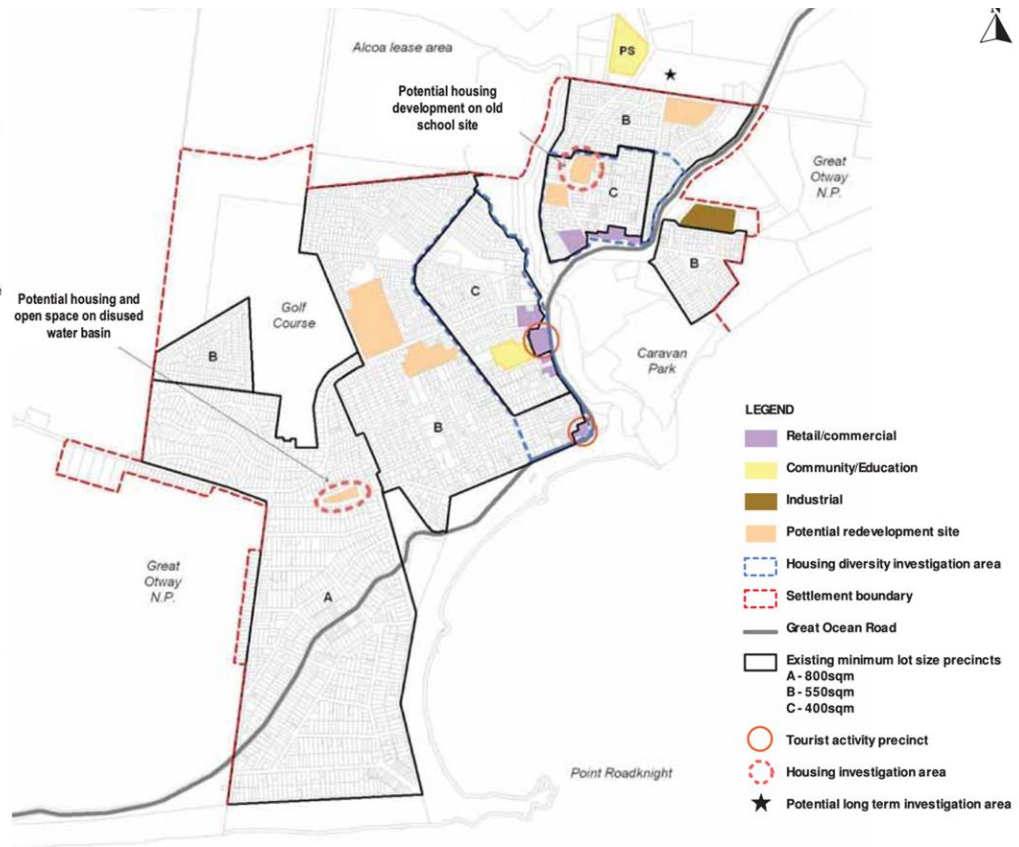
Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2012. Anglesea Structure Plan

The key opportunities for future development envisaged by the Structure Plan are highlighted in the image below.

Image 19: Responsible Growth and Development – Anglesea Structure Plan

Key directions

1. Reinforce the existing settlement boundary and avoid encroachment of urban development into surrounding environmentally significant land.
2. Protect and enhance Anglesea's valued non-suburban coastal/bush character.
3. Retain buffers to Alcoa mine and power station.
4. Encourage increased housing diversity in the central areas of Anglesea. Consider minimum lot size, built form, housing types, landscaping and open space, and incentives/tools to deliver the desired outcome.
5. Investigate opportunities for an integrated housing development on the former primary school site on Camp Road.
6. Encourage appropriate infill development and redevelopment of larger sites.
7. Maintain minimum lot size precincts.
8. Promote medium density development and tourist-related retail and accommodation in the tourist activity precincts at Four Kings and Diggers Parade that respects Anglesea's character and the amenity of surrounding properties.
9. Investigate long term options for residential development of land north of Beteleigh Street.



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2012. Anglesea Structure Plan

Current Planning Scheme Provisions

The great majority of Anglesea township (see map below) is zoned General Residential with small areas of Rural Conservation Zoning on the northern edges of the township adjacent to the former Alcoa lease area. The town centre is separately zoned Special Use and subject to a Design and Development Overlay which controls the form and scale of development.

The whole of Anglesea township is covered by a Bushfire Management Overlay, and virtually the whole

town (excluding a small area in the north) by a Significant Landscape Overlay. The Anglesea River environs, which is in public ownership and zoned Public Park and Recreation, is subject to a number of planning overlays including an Environment Significance Overlay, Floodway and Land Subject to Inundation Overlays, and, in part, also a Salinity Management Overlay. The land Subject to Inundation and Salinity Management Overlays impact, in whole or in part, a small number of residentially zoned lots close to the Anglesea River open spaces.

Image 20: Land Use Zoning - Anglesea



Source: Victorian State Government. Data Vic, Vicmap Planning – Planning Scheme Zone Polygon

Alcoa lease site

At the time the Structure Plan was prepared the future of the approximately 7,000 hectares area leased to Alcoa in 1961 for mine and powerplant development had not been finally resolved.

Much attention has subsequently been paid to planning for this key area on the outskirts of Anglesea and much of the area of the Alcoa lease has been incorporated into the Great Otway National Park.

In October 2018 the State Government released the Anglesea Futures Land Use Framework. The Framework was prepared to address the opportunities for environmental improvements and very limited tourism related development that resulted from the closure of the Alcoa mine and power station. The proposed uses detailed in the final Framework document had been modified, following public consultation, to reduce the type and intensity of proposed future uses. The Framework set out a range

of proposed land uses but did not itself rezone land, approve particular forms of future development or change the Anglesea township boundary.

The Land Use Framework focussed its attention on ten key areas or precincts adjacent to Anglesea township and the former mine pit (see map below). By far the greatest part of this study area, including the Anglesea River environs, was proposed to be either retained for conservation uses or, where there had been more past disturbance/loss of biodiversity values, rehabilitated and used for a combination of conservation together with eco and/or adventure tourism, camping and some community uses.

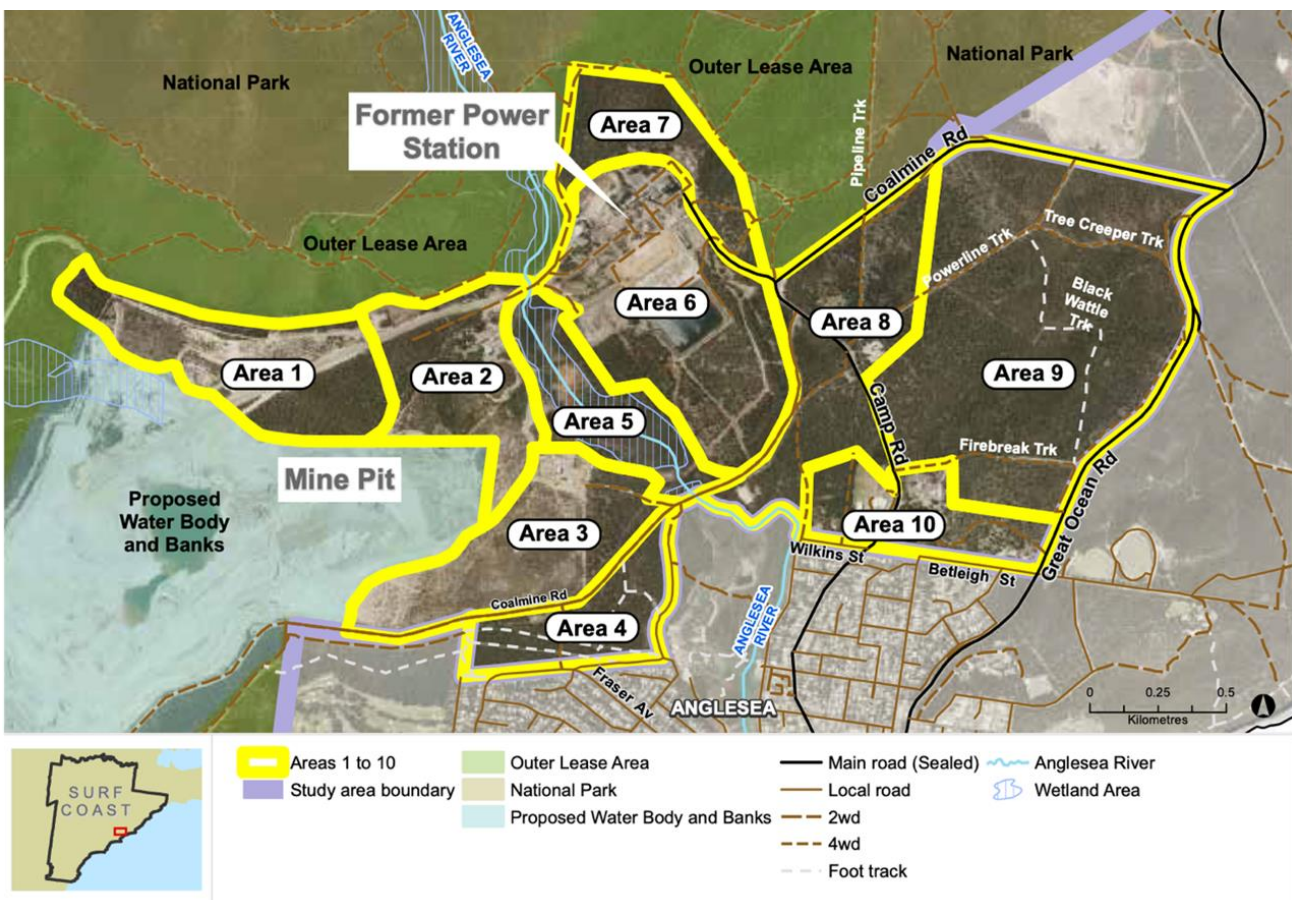
The Land Use Framework noted that one of the areas immediately adjacent to the Anglesea settlement boundary (Area 10) is mainly privately owned and already includes a small number of rural living properties together with the Anglesea Primary School and the local DELWP (now DEECA) office and depot.

The Framework envisaged limited additional rural living development for this area together with non-residential uses focussed on active recreation and conservation. The proposal for additional rural living use has subsequently been wound back after consideration of a number of factors including bushfire risk.

The only other area (Area 4) abutting the Anglesea settlement boundary contains remnant vegetation of high biodiversity value including rare flora and fauna species. It is therefore proposed that the area see minimal change and be set aside for conservation purposes.

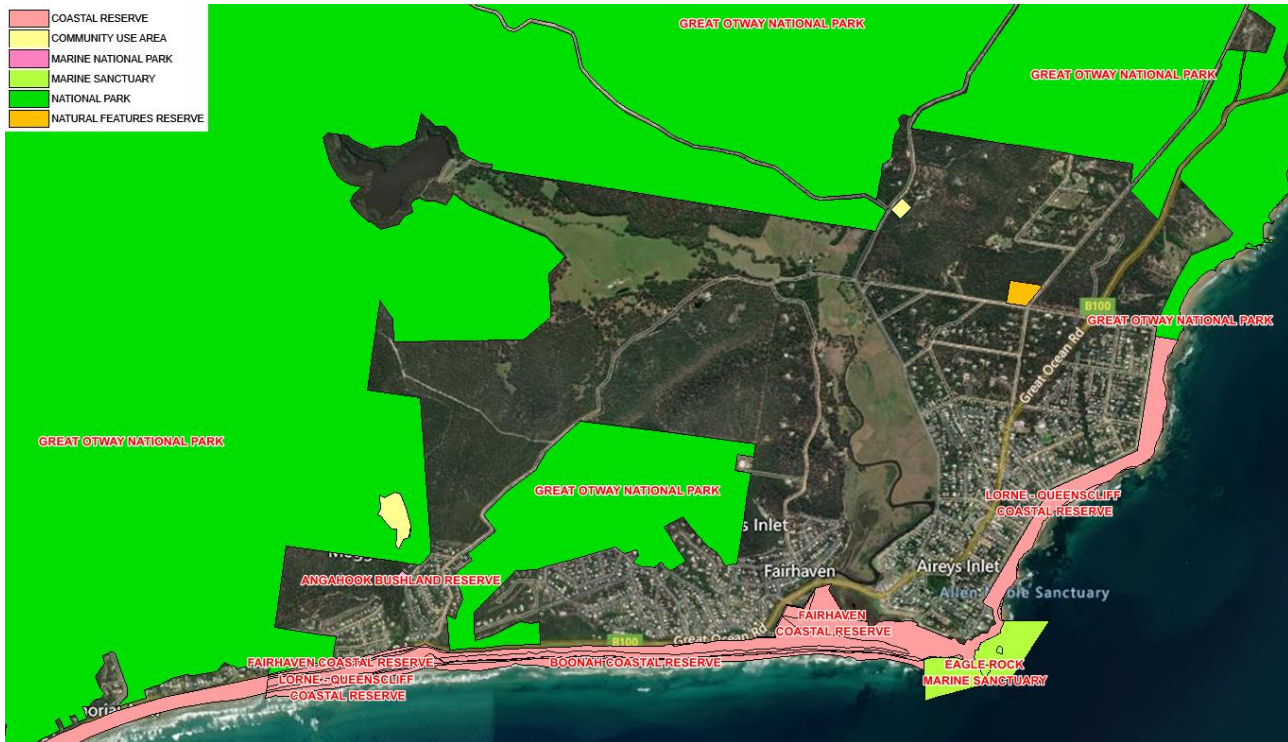
In summary it is now proposed that the former Alcoa lease land will primarily be managed for a combination of conservation and 'bush tourism' purposes. The area will not be used for urban purposes and the Anglesea settlement boundary will not change.

Image 21: Land Use Framework - Alcoa Lease Site



Source: The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2018. Anglesea Futures Land Use Framework.

Image 22: Parks and Reserves – Aireys Inlet/Fairhaven/Moggs Creek/Eastern View



Source: Victorian State Government. Data Vic, Parks and Reserves.

In Summary – very limited recent development and capacity for future growth

There has been minimal residential subdivision activity in Anglesea over the last five years – averaging just three lots per annum. Anglesea has no significant undeveloped residential land stocks and sites for future housing development will essentially come only from the re-subdivision of existing allotments within the established urban area.

7.4 Airey’s Inlet/Fairhaven/Moggs Creek/ Eastern View

The cluster of small coastal settlements from Airey’s Inlet in the north to Moggs Creek and Eastern View stretch along some eight kilometres of Coastline. At its widest this coastal strip extends just over one a half kilometres inland while in Eastern View it is just one allotment deep.

Collectively these towns and villages have a population of around 1,400 and have seen little urban growth over the last two decades.

Land Use Constraints

The closely linked settlements of Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View effectively form an urban enclave set within the natural forest

environment of the Great Otway National Park (see image below).

Private land that is zoned Rural Conservation separates much of the settlement boundaries of the main townships from the National Park. This land retains significant tree cover and planning policies seek to maintain this bushland character as an important part of the landscape setting for the townships.

The Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Structure Plan (discussed in detail below) states that: “The larger parcels of private land surrounding the towns however serve as a buffer between the residential areas and the National Park and have significant conservation value, extremely high bushfire risk and limited access to infrastructure.” As a result: “The Structure Plan aims to preserve the integrity of the hinterland by strongly discouraging uses and developments that area likely to have an adverse impact on the environmental values of the hinterland and abutting National Park.”

As a result of their bushland setting these townships are all subject to extreme bushfire risk. The 2015 Structure Plan states that: “The Aireys Inlet district is one of the highest risk locations in Victoria”. While the recently completed Strategic Bushfire Assessment classifies all of the areas surrounding the townships as being in the highest fire risk landscape type with only

the parts of Aireys Inlet that are furthest from bushland areas being classified as having a somewhat lower risk rating. All of the townships and surrounding rural conservation zones are covered by a Bushfire Management Overlay in the Planning Scheme.

Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Structure Plan

The Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Structure Plan was publicly released in November 2015. The intent of the Structure Plan was “to guide future land use and development to ensure the low-key coastal character, natural values and distinct qualities of the towns are preserved and enhanced for current and future generations of residents and visitors.”

The Structure Plan noted that the settlements covered by the Plan were not expected to play any significant role in absorbing the Shire’s and region’s population growth and that both of the relevant State strategic plans (the 2004 Great Ocean Road Land use and Transport Strategy and the 2014 Victorian Coastal Strategy) defined Aireys Inlet as a ‘coastal settlement’ where the character of the town should be respected.

The Plan gave the highest priority to protecting the environment within which the settlements were placed. It noted that: “The natural environment of Aireys Inlet to Eastern View is widely recognised as its most significant asset. The beaches, coastal reserves, waterways and wetlands, marine environments, conservation and nature reserves, heathlands and indigenous tree cover all contribute to the district’s attractiveness, identity, liveability and sense of place”.

It listed some of the many species of flora and fauna found in the areas and emphasised that: “Protecting this environment is critical to preserving the biodiversity and maintaining the natural values enjoyed by many residents and visitors.” It also highlighted the role of the Painkalac Creek wetlands and floodplain as a dominant feature in the local landscape and proposed to “protect the open landscape character and natural values of the Painkalac Creek valley.”

The Structure Plan noted that “Residential development within the settlement boundaries is guided by a suite of planning overlays that were introduced in 2006 to give effect to the recommendations of the Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Neighbourhood Character Study and Vegetation Assessment (Surf Coast Shire, 2004)”. These include the Neighbourhood Character Overlay Schedule 1 (NCO1), Design and Development Overlay Schedule 10 (DDO10) and Environmental Significance Overlay

Schedule 4 (ESO4). In summary, the overlays aim to:

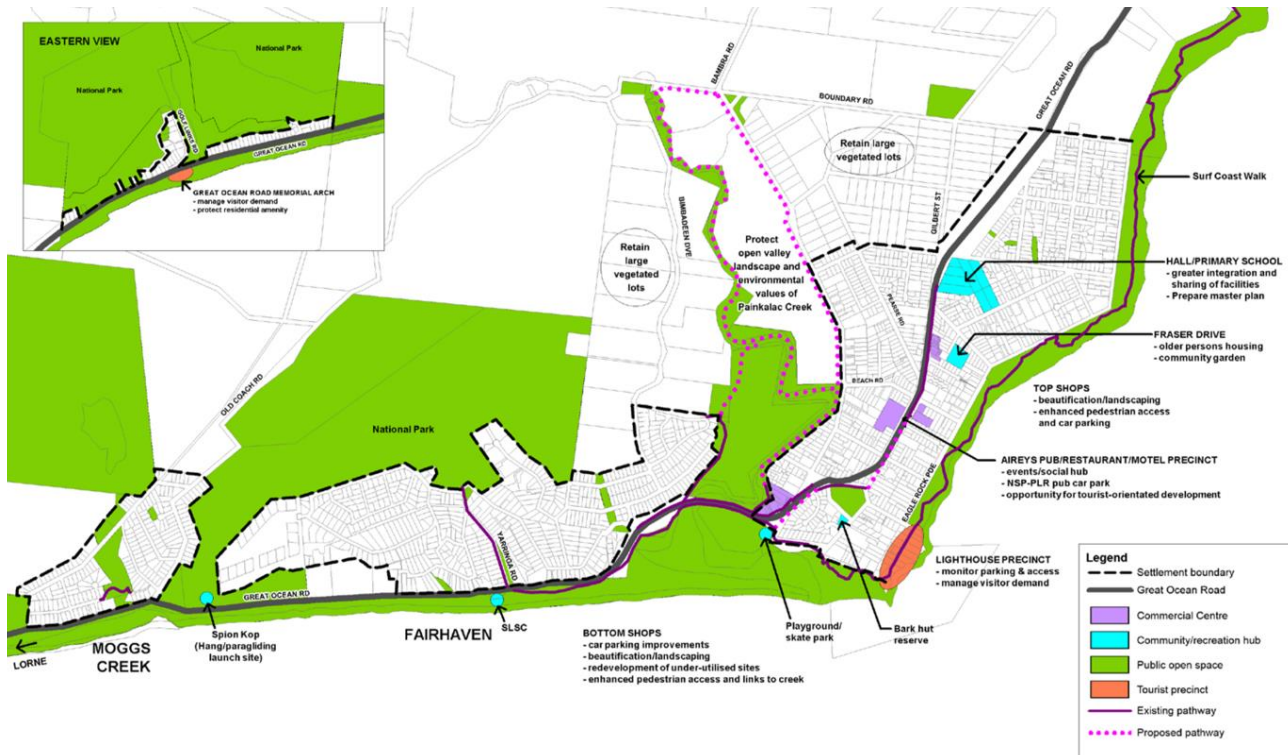
- control the design, siting, scale and height of buildings through the application of varied ResCode standards to ensure sufficient space is provided around buildings to retain vegetation or provide opportunities for the planting of vegetation, and to ensure buildings are not visually prominent due to their scale or height;
- control fencing by requiring a permit for all fencing other than post and wire to reinforce the generally open, unfenced character of the townships;
- control subdivision through the application of minimum lot sizes to ensure lots are large enough to retain or plant vegetation and to accommodate dwellings that meet the neighbourhood character objectives; and
- control vegetation removal to avoid or minimise the loss of vegetation, and to require replanting where vegetation is removed.

Combined the overlays seek to protect the town’s distinct low scale, low density, vegetated coastal character as defined by the Neighbourhood Character Study.

The Structure Plan set out a number of key directions and in particular to:

- contain the townships within their existing settlement boundaries to protect the surrounding environmentally significant land and retain buffers to the Great Otway National Park;
- protect and enhance the environmental assets within and surrounding the towns to maintain the area’s natural beauty and attractive setting;
- protect and enhance the small scale, low-key, informal, non-suburban, vegetated coastal village character of the towns;
- facilitate modest infill development within the defined settlement boundaries that is sensitive to the vegetated coastal landscape setting of the towns;
- encourage the provision of a diverse range of accommodation and housing options, in particular well designed compact low maintenance dwellings suitable for older residents within walking distance of community and commercial facilities; and
- contain commercial development within the existing boundaries of the top and bottom shops.

Image 23: Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Structure Plan, 2015



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2015. Aireys Inlet to Eastern View: Planning for the Future.

The intent of the Plan and the key directions were reflected in the map incorporated in the Structure Plan.

Among the list of key implementation actions set out in the Structure Plan were to:

- continue to apply minimum lot sizes and restrictive development controls, within the settlement boundaries, 'to protect the character of the towns; and
- continue to include private land outside the settlement boundaries within the Rural Conservation Zone and "discourage any use and development that would compromise the natural values or increase bushfire risk."

Current Planning Scheme Provisions

After noting that Torquay-Jan Juc and Winchelsea are the only towns within the Shire with capacity to accommodate substantial growth the Settlement clause (02.03-1) of the Surf Coast Planning Scheme states that: "Other towns are limited in opportunities to grow due to various physical, environmental or infrastructure constraints."

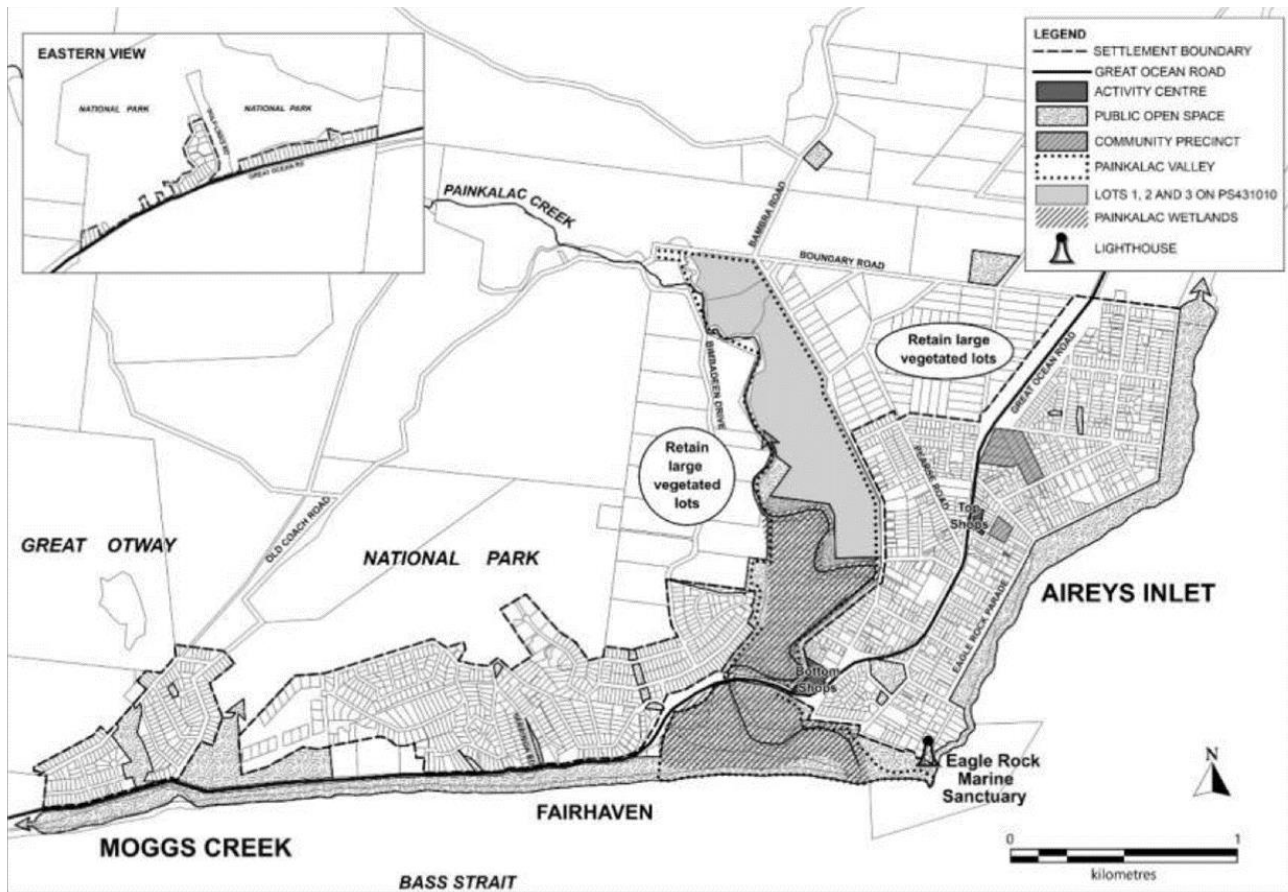
Specifically in relation to these townships the scheme says that:

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

The Planning Scheme incorporates a framework plan (below) for the Aireys Inlet to Eastern View area that reflects the policies and strategies set out in the 2015 Structure Plan.

Most of the residential areas within the settlement boundaries of the townships are zoned General Residential. The only exceptions are small areas in Fairhaven that are zoned Low Density Residential. As outlined in the discussion of key provision of the 2015 Structure Plan there are substantial areas of land outside the settlement boundaries that are zoned Rural Conservation. These areas surround much of Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven and Moggs Creek. All of the lots in Eastern View are zoned Rural Conservation.

Image 24: Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Framework Plan



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2015. Aireys Inlet to Eastern View: Planning for the Future.

The whole of the Aireys Inlet to Eastern View areas is covered by a Bushfire Management Overlay and decisions on any future development in the townships will be guided by the importance of and capacity to mitigate bushfire risk.

Almost all of the residentially zoned land within the townships is subject to Environment Significance Overlays (ESO 4 and 5) and the Planning Scheme notes that:

“The protection of indigenous vegetation is intrinsic to the character and beauty of the coastal settlements and is highly valued by the community and visitors alike. All remnant vegetation is significant and removal should be avoided with a focus on removing weed species or exotics over natives in conjunction with reducing risks to persons and property from bushfire.”

As a result, there are restrictions on the removal of native vegetation. Rural Conservation lots in Eastern View are covered by a Significant Landscape Overlay.

Much of the land within the townships is also covered by a Design and Development Overlay that is intended to maintain the seaside village character of the townships.

In Summary – very limited recent development and capacity for future growth

Over the last five financial years an average of only five additional residential lots were constructed in the Aireys Inlet/Fairhaven/Moggs Creek/Eastern View area.

There is very limited potential for additional housing development within these townships. There are no significant undeveloped residential land stocks and, as with Anglesea, any sites for future housing development will come only from the re-subdivision of existing allotments within the established urban area.

The Shire is strongly committed to containing future development within the existing township boundaries.

7.5 Lorne

Lorne is the most southerly of the coastal townships in Surf Coast. It has a relatively small permanent population (less than 1,400) but because of its outstanding coastal and bushland setting Lorne is one of Victoria's most favoured holiday and tourism destinations. At the peak of the summer holiday season its population can swell to closer to 15,000.

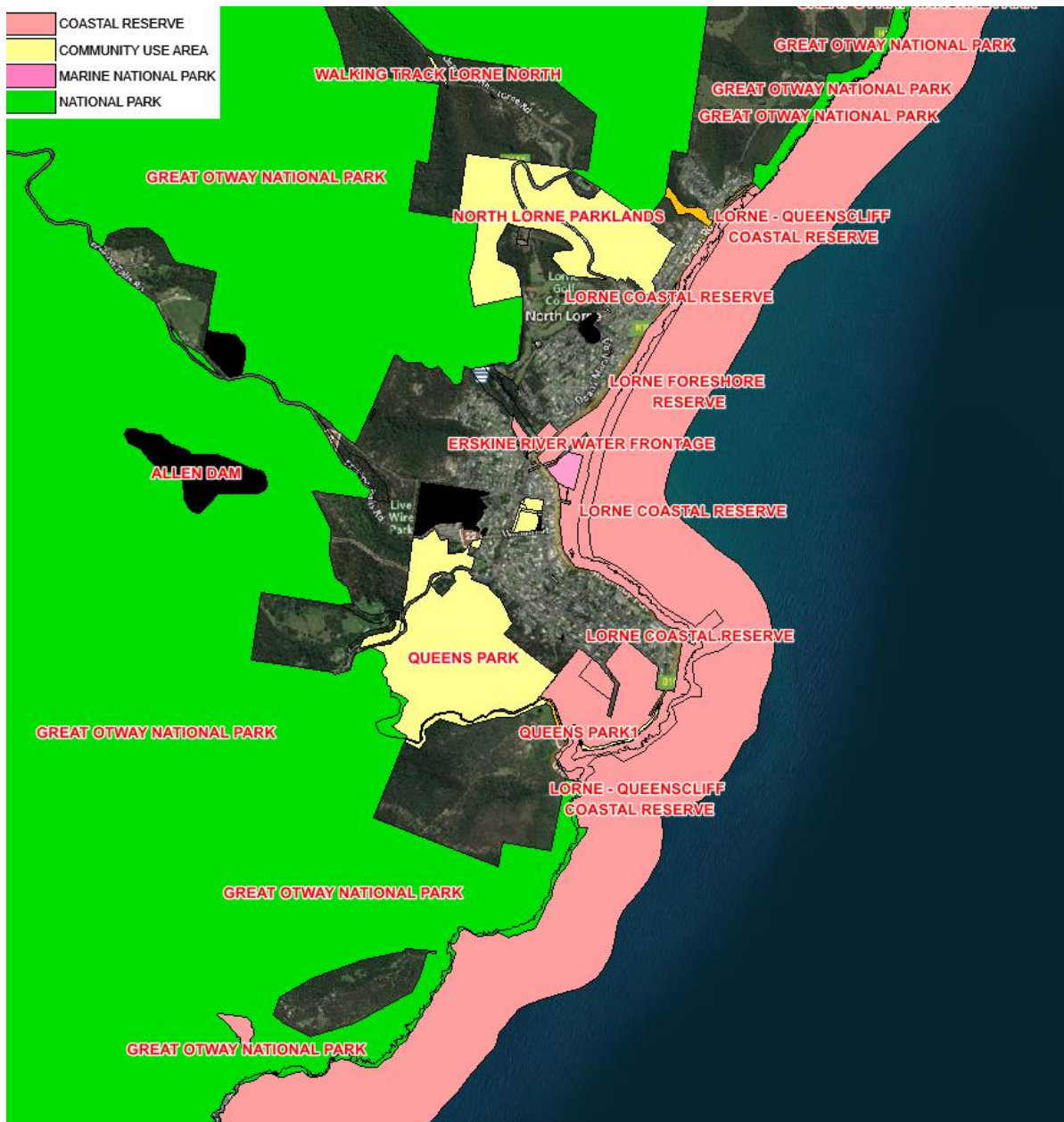
Lorne is effectively 'hemmed in' by the Great Otway National Park, has limited external access via the Great Ocean Road and the Deans Marsh Road and is an area of extreme bushfire risk. Because of these factors

Lorne is not expected to grow significantly in terms of either resident population or housing numbers.

Land Use Constraints

Lorne's potential for future development is very severely constrained by steep terrain, the surrounding Great Otway National Park and coastal reserves, the high environmental and landscape values both within and adjacent to the township, the associated extreme bushfire risk and the limited scope both to mitigate such risks and to provide emergency evacuation options for the town.

Image 25: Parks and Reserves – Lorne



Source: Victorian State Government. Data Vic, Parks and Reserves.

Structure Planning

The most recently completed Strategy Plan for Lorne dates back to early 2004. It replaced the 1991 Lorne Strategy Plan that instituted a policy of 'urban containment' for Lorne. It was supplemented by a detailed Neighbourhood Character Study released in late 2006.

The 2004 Strategy Plan Review re-emphasised that the reserves surrounding Lorne (now consolidated into the Great Otway National Park) effectively limit any outward growth of Lorne. It proposed limited additional development, and diversifying of housing stock, within the existing township boundary and introduced detailed neighbourhood character and vegetation protection policies.

In summary past strategic planning for Lorne reflected the following principles:

- future growth is constrained by the Great Otway National Park, highly significant remnant vegetation and extreme bushfire risk proving barriers to the expansion of the town;
- development should therefore be contained within Lorne's defined settlement boundary;

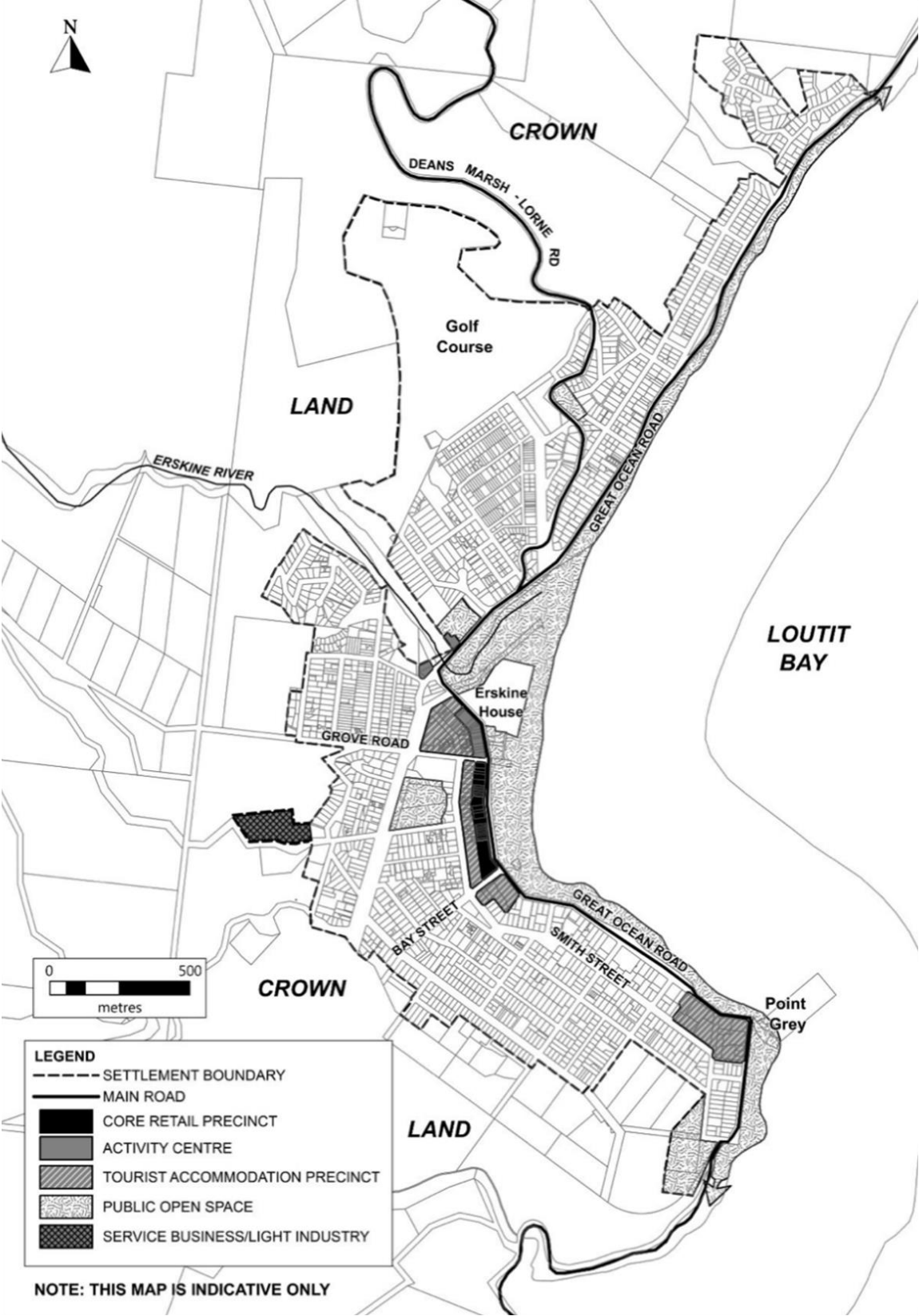
- larger parcels of private land surrounding the town serve as a buffer between the town and the National Park. These areas are at extreme bushfire risk and intensification of development is to be avoided;
- the towns character centres on its indigenous vegetation cover and the dominance of the vegetation over the built form. Conserving, enhancing and reinstating the preferred character of a tall canopied treed setting with recessive buildings is therefore a priority; and
- higher density housing and tourist accommodation should be focussed within the Tourist Accommodation Precincts along Smith Street and at the eastern end of Point Grey. Greater housing diversity and smaller dwellings should be encouraged within comfortable walking distance of Lorne's commercial area.

The Surf Coast Council commissioned a number of studies (a 2019 Bushfire Risk Assessment and a 2018 Economic Assessment) as an input to an update of the Strategy but has postponed further work on the update pending the finalisation of the draft Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan by the State Government.

Current Planning Scheme Provisions

The Lorne Framework Plan included in the Planning Scheme is shown below.

Image 26: Lorne Framework Plan



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2023. Surf Coast Planning Scheme.

All of the residential land within the Lorne town boundary is zoned General Residential (see zoning image below) and covered by Neighbourhood Character (NCO2) and Design and Development (DDO 12) Overlays. Virtually the whole of the township is also subject to a Significant Landscape Overlay. In effect this requires that any proposed development is consistent with the following principles:

- encourages building scale and forms that are consistent with the coastal and bushland character of Lorne;
- limits site coverage to provide space for bushfire management requirements while also enabling reasonable retention or reinstatement of native vegetation cover in a manner that avoids increasing bushfire risks;
- preserves and enhances native vegetation and particularly the tall tree cover that is characteristic of Lorne;
- limits building heights and requires development to sit below ridgelines so as to maintain the vegetated amphitheatre vista of Lorne from the foreshore and Great Ocean Road; and
- allows for smaller lots and dwellings in the areas closest to the town centre.

The Tourist precinct close to the Great Ocean Road and foreshore allows for higher density and more 'urban' forms of development.

An Environmental Significance Overlay protects the Erskine River corridor.

The few areas of private land outside the town boundary are zoned Rural Conservation and are subject to controls designed to maintain the natural environment and restrict intensification of development outside the township boundary.

The whole of Lorne and its environs are covered by a Bushfire Management Overlay and are areas of extreme bushfire risk.

In Summary - very limited capacity for future growth

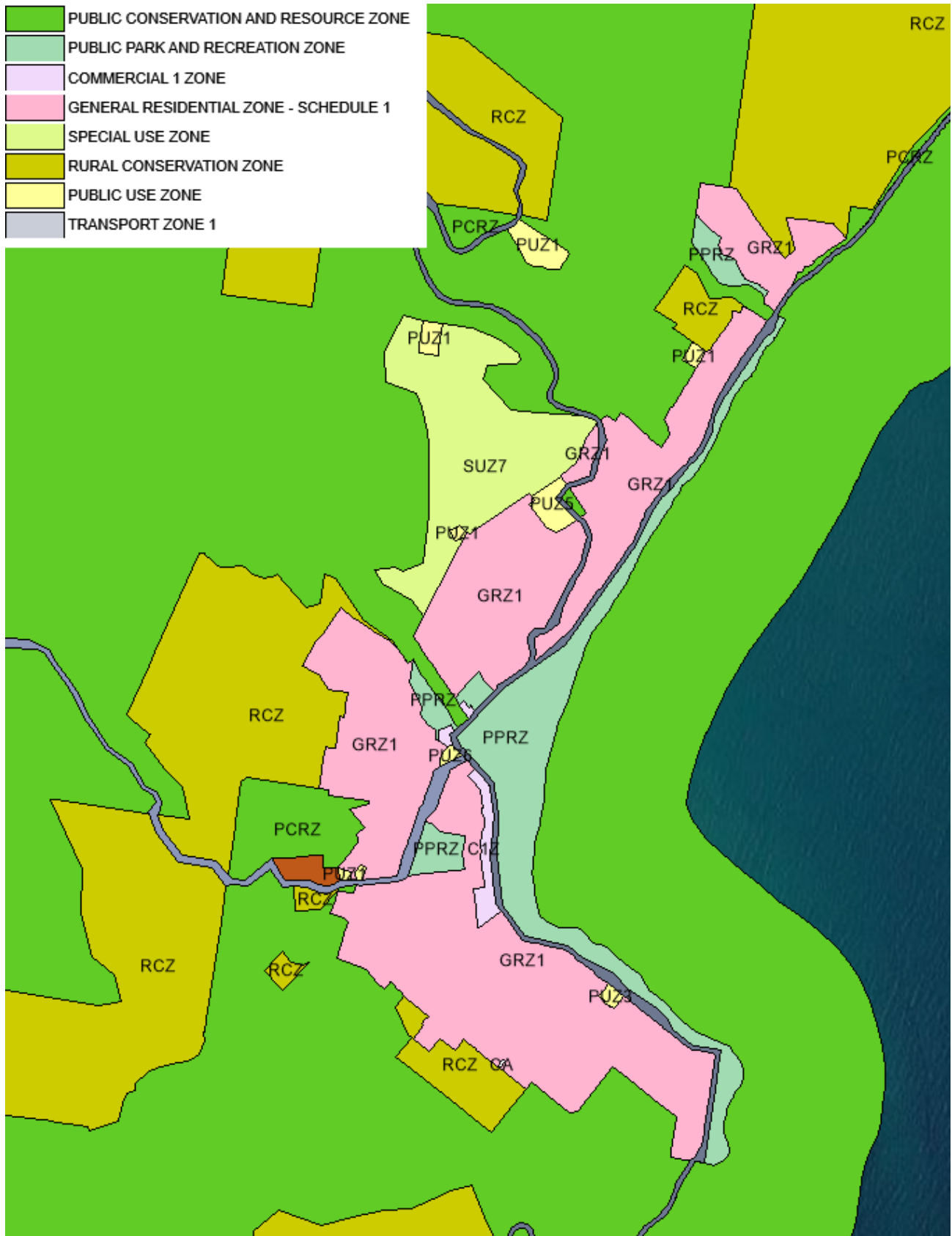
There has been virtually no residential subdivision activity in Lorne since 2018/19 and the town has no significant undeveloped residential land stocks. Land for future housing development will essentially be only sourced from the re-subdivision of existing allotments within the established urban area.

7.6 Planning for Surf Coast's hinterland

Given the constraints on Surf Coast's coastal townships, it's likely that in the future, there will be reduced focus on growth in these locations. This section of the report outlines the Shire's existing policy for the hinterland together with the specific planning strategies for Winchelsea and the smaller hinterland townships.

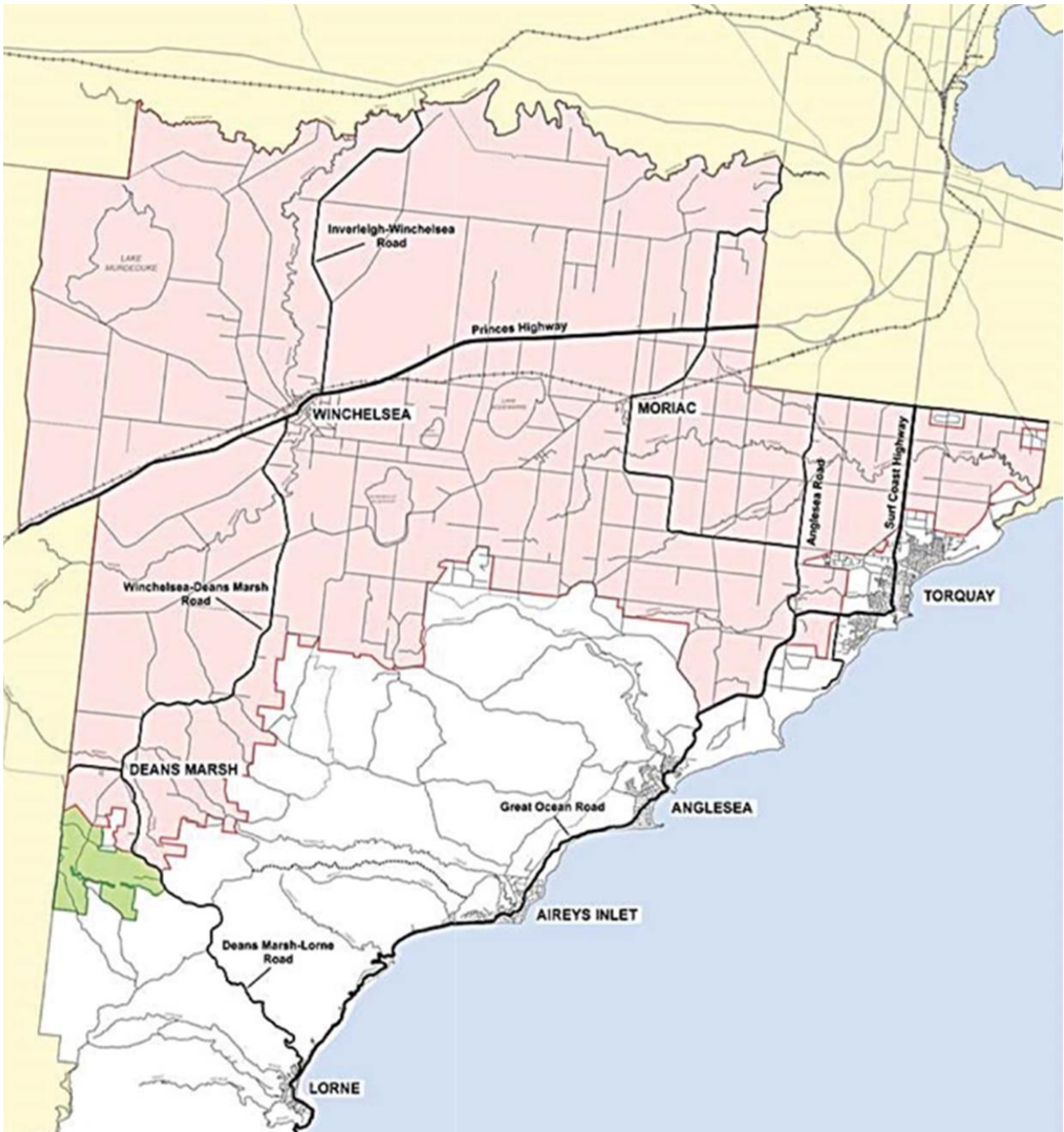
The most recent statement of planning strategies for hinterland areas of Surf Coast is the Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy adopted by Council in May 2019. This was both an economic development and planning strategy which focussed on the Shire's rural areas which total over 1,000 square kilometres and make up approximately 60% of the Shire's total area. These areas are mainly zoned either Farming Zone or Rural Conservation Zone.

Image 27: Land Use Zoning – Lorne



Source: Victorian State Government. Data Vic, Vicmap Planning – Planning Scheme Zone Polygon

Image 28: Hinterland Study Area – Surf Coast



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2019. Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy.

The Strategy characterises this hinterland area as having: *“a diverse character, with productive agriculture and rural land, tourism businesses, rural townships, rolling hills, waterways, native vegetation and scenic landscapes all forming a rich and valued environ.”*

The hinterland is also an important cultural landscape for the Shire’s Aboriginal population and the Strategy acknowledges the need to factor these values into planning for the future of the hinterland.

The purpose of the Strategy was to provide guidance for future planning and investment with the intention of both:

- increasing the contribution of primary production and agri-tourism to the Shire’s economy; while also
- maintaining key hinterland environmental and landscape values.

There are separate structure plans (outlined later in this section) for the hinterland townships. The Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy acknowledges that pressures for development and expansion of hinterland townships, together with demand for lifestyle properties and hobby farms in rural areas, will need to be carefully managed in order to minimise

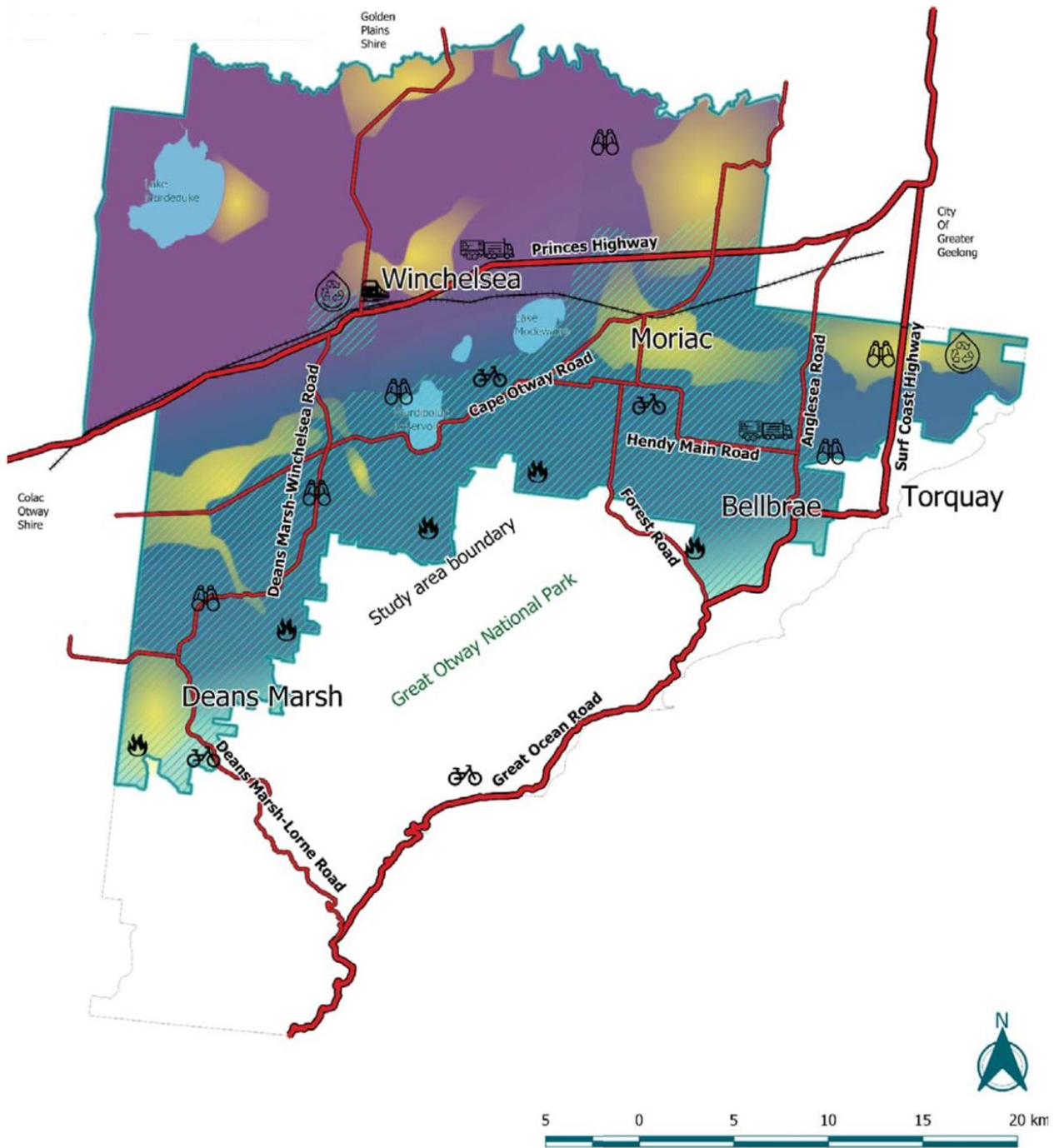
adverse impacts on the agricultural economy.

The Strategy has five key objectives. They are to:

- elevate the value of the environment and rural landscapes as the defining feature of the hinterland and the hinterlands significance to the local economy;
- encourage innovative agricultural and other business that display sustainable land management practices;
- stimulate agritourism to enhance the Surf Coast as a visitor destination;
- support tourism activities which complement the landscape, agricultural and environmental values of the Surf Coast Shire; and
- secure enabling infrastructure (particularly road and recycled water supply) to deliver the vision and objectives of the Strategy.

The Strategy divides the hinterland into three ‘strategic focus areas’. These areas are seen as having a particular focus on intensive commercial farming; agribusiness and commercial farming; or tourism. These areas are shown conceptually on the image below.

Image 29: Indicative Strategic Focus Areas – Strategic Framework, Hinterland Study



Strategic focus areas

- Intensive and commercial farming
- Agribusiness and commercial farming
- Well suited to tourism activities
- Hinterland Futures study area
- Surf Coast Shire boundary
- Lakes
- Highways
- Main roads
- Railway
- Agricultural soil quality hotspots

Icons

- Access to key transport roads
- Access to rail transport
- Access to recycled water
- High impact bushfire zone
- High value scenic vista area
- Key cycle route

Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2019. Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy.

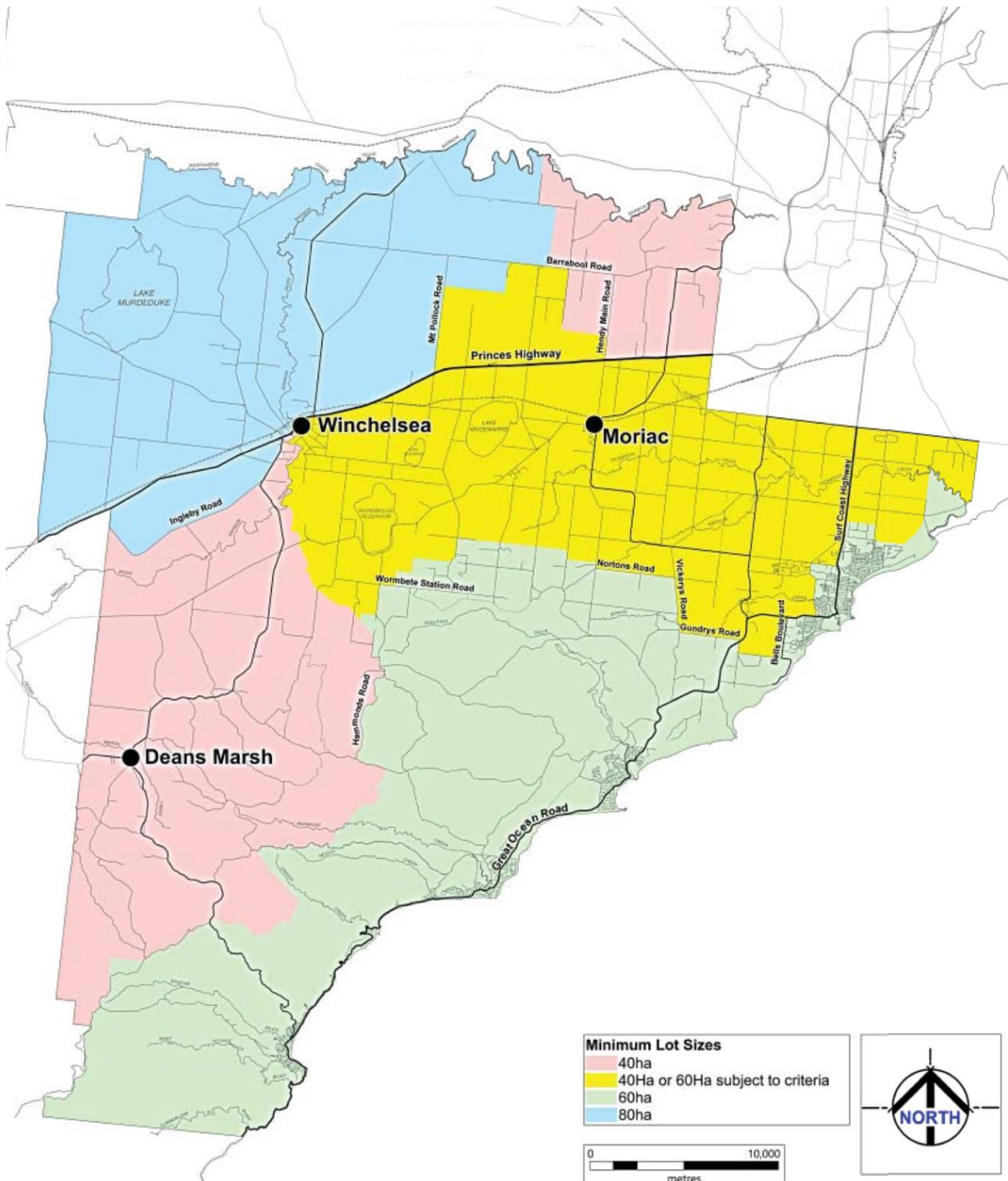
In terms of planning for Surf Coast Shire’s urban future the principal implications of the Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy are that it reinforces the importance of protecting rural land uses, and the rural landscape, from urban intrusion by:

- strengthening town boundaries, and maintain the green breaks between townships, so as to contain

urban growth and protect the Shires agricultural and environmental assets from pressures associated with urban growth; and

- restricting pressures for subdivision of rural land through application of a policy on minimum lot sizes (see map below) across the hinterland.

Image 30: Minimum Lot Sizes – Rural Lands, Surf Coast



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2019. Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy.

7.7 Winchelsea

Winchelsea is the largest town in the Surf Coast hinterland and one of only two towns (along with Torquay-Jan Juc) urban centres in Surf Coast Shire that is identified for substantial growth in both regional (the 2013 G21 Regional Growth Plan) and Surf Coast strategic plans.

The township is located in open farmland on the banks of the Barwon River, just over 35 kilometres by road to both Torquay and Geelong and is on the Geelong to Warrnambool rail line. The River and the Princes Highway effectively divide the township into four quadrants with differing mixes of land uses and somewhat differing characters.

Winchelsea had a population of just under 1,600 in 2011, close to 2,000 in 2016 and almost 2,500 in 2021. The town has seen steady growth with significant new housing development over recent years. Council's Growing Winchelsea strategy (see below) noted that the town had seen annual population growth averaging 2.2% between 2006 and 20011 and concluded that: *"it is likely that (future) growth will occur at a similar, and potentially greater rate, than is currently the case."* The G21 regional strategy contained an aspirational target for Winchelsea to grow to 10,00 people by 2050.

Apart from other sources of growth, the continuing strong forecast growth of Geelong, along with its accessibility via both the both the Princes Highway and the railway, is likely to see significant 'spillover' housing demand in Winchelsea. Winchelsea residents also have access to jobs in Colac. With access to a growing range of jobs, an attractive environment and key community facilities such as the Winchelsea hospital the town will clearly have a key role in Surf Coast's Urban Futures Strategy.

Land Use Constraints

Much of the surrounding environs have previously been cleared for farming and are not classified as high bushfire risk. The Barwon River has a well incised channel and does not impose a widespread risk of inundation. The town and its surrounds have an historic character and a number of sites of cultural, heritage and environmental significance. Before planning for future growth proceeds it will be important to properly understand these values and take them into account.

Growing Winchelsea strategy

The Growing Winchelsea strategy was designed to guide the towns growth towards the 2050 aspirational population set in the G21 plan. To provide for this growth it set out:

- a vision for Winchelsea's future;
- principles to guide growth;
- a 10 year Structure Plan;
- a framework for growth beyond this initial 10 years; and
- a number of proposed projects designed to enhance the centre of the town.

The vision agreed for the township saw Winchelsea as: *"...a welcoming and thriving township with a rich cultural heritage and country village feel. The residents of Winchelsea (will) benefit from a full range of activities and access to learning, employment, civic and cultural experiences, whilst living in a place that has a strong connection to the beautiful Barwon River and rural hinterland."*

The vision was supported by a focus on celebrating the Barwon River, maintaining an authentic country village identity; celebrating the towns cultural heritage, and providing a range of community facilities and services for all residents. The principles established to guide future growth were related to these four key 'themes'.

For example, in relation to the Barwon River the principles proposed to:

- enhance, and where appropriate, provide access to, the Barwon River and surrounding environs so that it can be enjoyed by all both now and into the future;
- link and connect development in each of the four quadrants of town, with the Barwon River as a focal point (the village 'heart'); and
- improve awareness and visibility of the Barwon River environs to encourage its active use by residents and visitors.

Other principles for managing future growth included:

- basing development on Council endorsed plans and strategies within defined urban boundaries;
- avoiding land use conflicts by clear delineation of zones/precincts and establishing buffer zones as appropriate;
- supporting retail development that adds to a 'village high street' type experience;
- requiring future neighbourhoods to be well connected to the existing township and to contribute in a positive way to Winchelsea's rural character;
- ensuring design elements in new subdivisions contribute to the country feel of Winchelsea (e.g. some wide streets, open spaces, space for gardens);
- protecting and promoting Winchelsea's significant historic buildings and assets and, where possible, restoring elements of Winchelsea's heritage;
- respecting and complementing the heritage feel of the town in commercial areas (including street furniture and lighting); and
- providing a network of safe and sustainable pathways to link key community assets, public spaces and recreation areas and to provide good pedestrian access through developments.

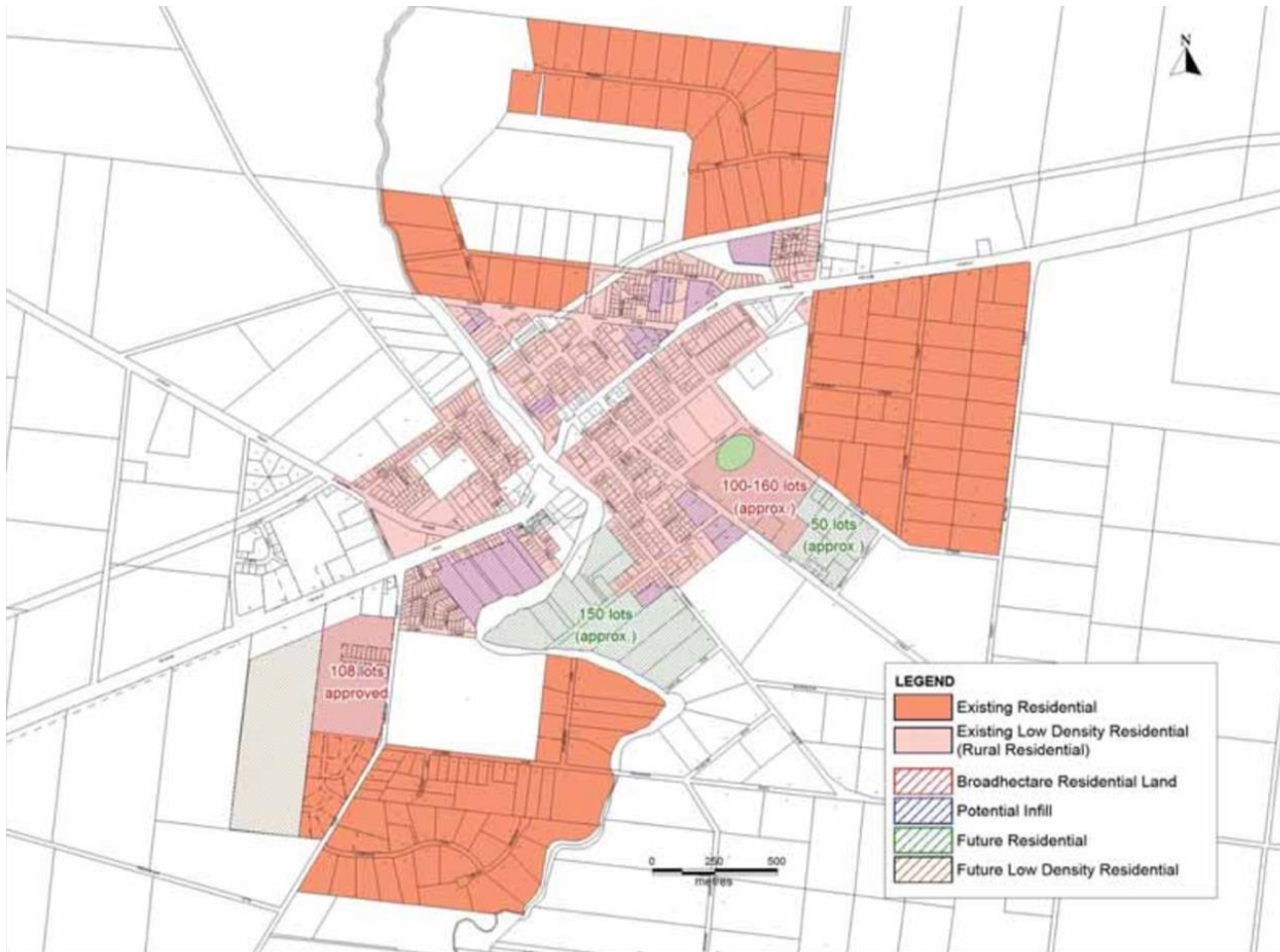
For planning purposes *Growing Winchelsea* assumed an ongoing acceleration in growth rates over the period from 2015 to 2050. It noted that the assumed growth rate over the first ten years of the planning period (2015-2025) was: "... a little higher than Winchelsea has experienced to date but are considered achievable if public policy continues to direct growth to the town with matching investment to service the growth." The estimated 10 year growth rate of just under 4% was: "... higher than that experienced generally by small towns but is not as high as towns that have recently experienced particularly high growth such as Torquay and Bannockburn (7-8% between 2006-2011)."

Population growth at these suggested (to 2025) and then aspirational (2025-2050) rates imply an annual need for construction of new housing rising from just over 20 per year to 35 a year by 2025, 57 a year by 2030, over a 100 per year by 2040 and over 250 a year by 2050. It is important to recognise that, beyond 2025, these numbers were not forecasts but a reflection of the G21 aspirational target for growth.

Between 2016 and 2021 the actual number of new dwellings constructed averaged 37 per year. This suggests that to date actual growth has been in line with the targets set in *Growing Winchelsea*.

Growing Winchelsea identified a number of land supply options to meet potential housing needs to 2025.

Image 31: Potential Options for Residential Land Supply – 10- years, Growing Winchelsea



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2015. Growing Winchelsea: Shaping Future Growth.

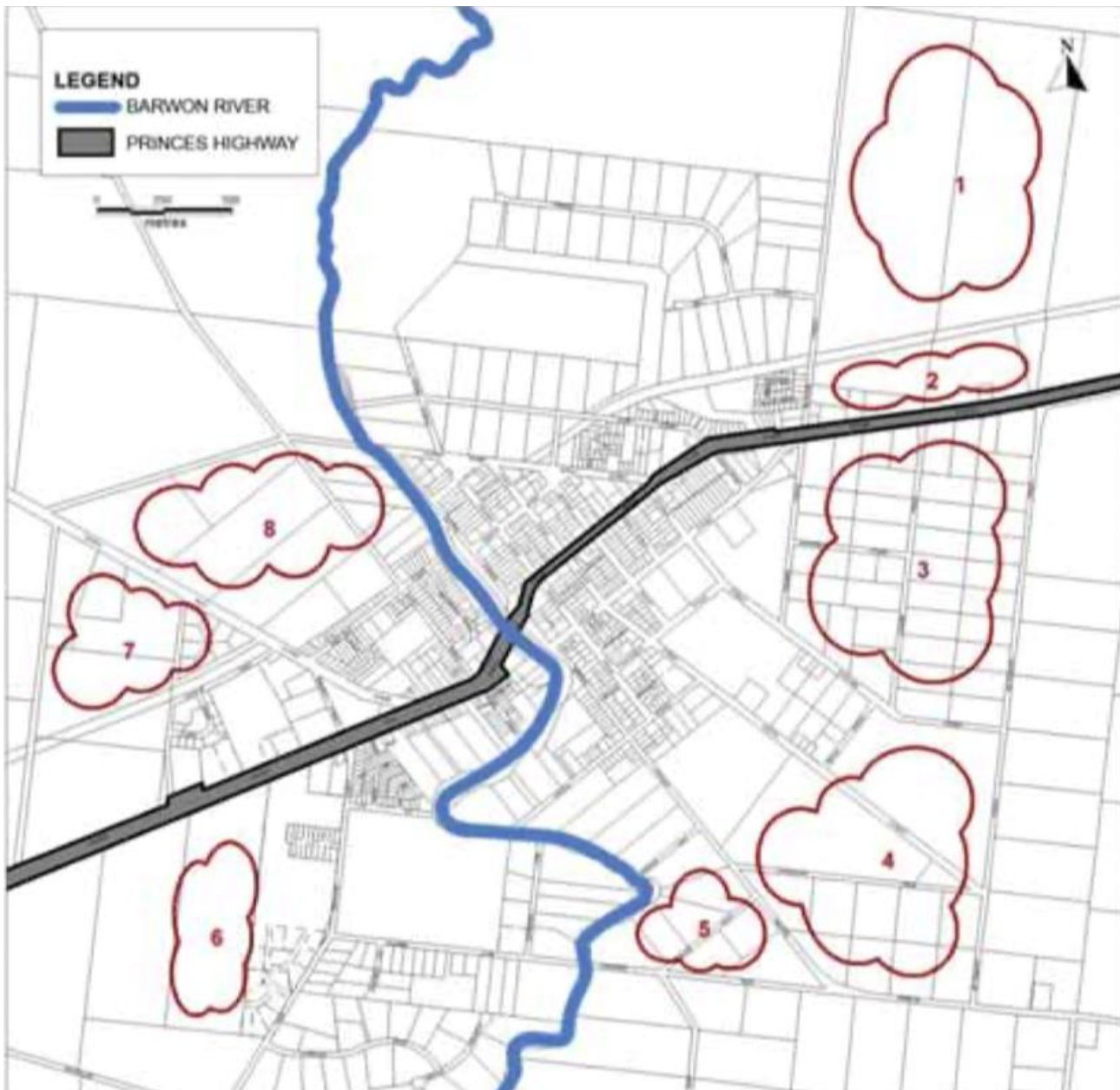
The bulk of the land identified for this shorter-term growth was already zoned for urban development.

Beyond the initial 10 years a number of potential long term future growth areas were identified for further evaluation. All of these options were assessed as involving low bushfire risk although a number of the options either contained significant environmental assets or were potentially impacted in part by flooding of the Barwon River. All of the areas identified were judged to be capable of being serviced with stormwater drainage, sewerage, water supply, electricity, gas and telecommunications infrastructure. Growth at the scale being planned for would require a significant upgrade of the towns water reclamation plant but Barwon Water had indicated that they would develop a strategy to provide for anticipated growth.

Based upon a number of criteria Growing Winchelsea identified areas 4 and 5 as the highest priority for longer term growth, with areas 1 and 2 being considered somewhat lower priorities. Area 6 was assessed as a possible option for lower density 'rural residential' style development while development of area 3 was seen as more potentially problematic and areas 7 and 8 were not considered to be preferred options for future residential development but could possibly have potential as a longer-term employment precinct.

In summary the main areas identified for future growth (see the map below) were to the east of the Barwon River, with scope for lower density development to the southwest of the existing township and potential future employment development in the north-west quadrant.

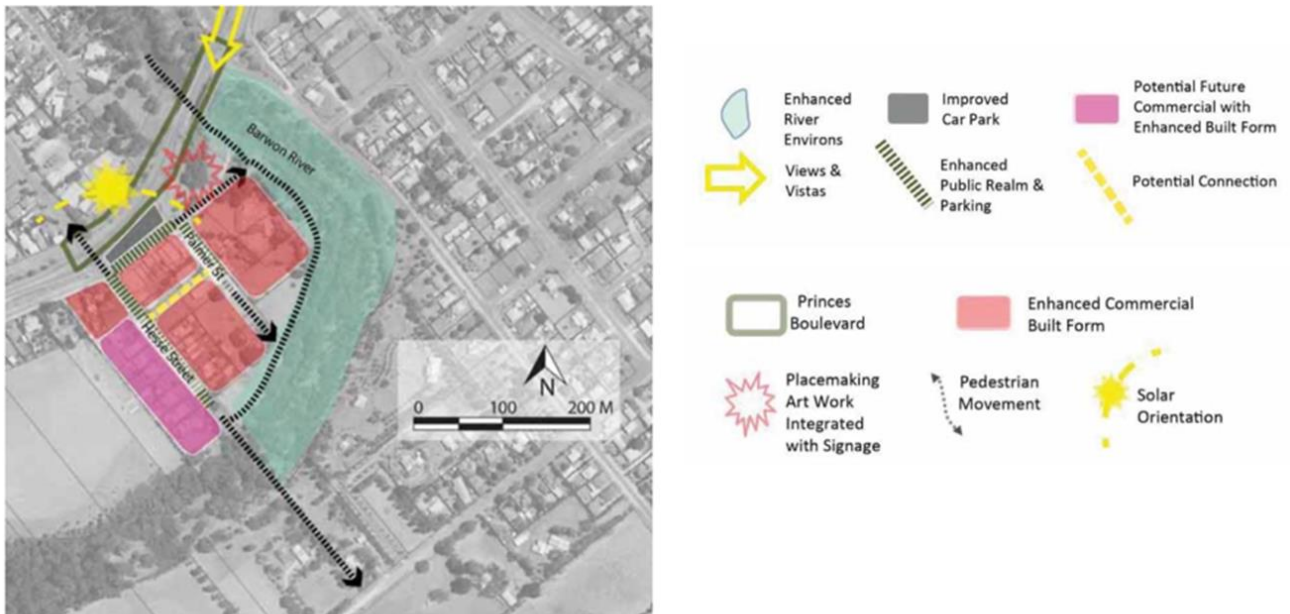
Image 32: Potential Long Term Future Growth Areas – Growing Winchelsea



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2015. *Growing Winchelsea: Shaping Future Growth*.

The Growing Winchelsea strategy included proposals to grow the town centre and better link it to the Barwon River environs.

Image 33: Town Centre Opportunities Plan – Winchelsea Commercial Town Centre Issues Report, 2014



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2015. Growing Winchelsea: Shaping Future Growth.

It also incorporated a ‘Growth Area Outline Development Plan’ (below) that brought together proposals for growth and enhancement of the central part of the township. A pedestrian bridge has since been constructed south of Hesse Street providing a direct active transport link between the south east residential area and the town centre.

Image 34: Winchelsea Growth Area Outline Development Plan



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2015. Growing Winchelsea: Shaping Future Growth.

The Plan noted that it was likely to be very difficult to accommodate a full line supermarket in the existing town centre and that a separate site may therefore need to be identified in the longer term. The strategy proposed some minor rezoning for commercial uses to reinforce an existing business precinct fronting the Highway east of the Barwon River.

In terms of future provision for employment growth the Growing Winchelsea strategy identified, subject to additional investigations, an area north west of the Winchelsea railway station as a potential employment precinct. The proposed precinct is separated from Winchelsea's main existing industrial zone by the railway line. It was seen as appropriate because it was somewhat separated from existing and proposed residential development but still readily accessible from the town centre.

Image 35: Possible Future Employment Precinct – Growing Winchelsea



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2015. *Growing Winchelsea: Shaping Future Growth*.

Current Planning Scheme Provisions

The current zoning map for Winchelsea is shown below. In summary the townships existing residential areas are zoned General Residential. The areas designated for medium term growth are mainly zoned Low Density Residential.

There are areas of Commercial Zone in the town centre and north and south of the Princes Highway east of the Barwon River. The main Industrial Zone is between the Highway and railway on the western edge of

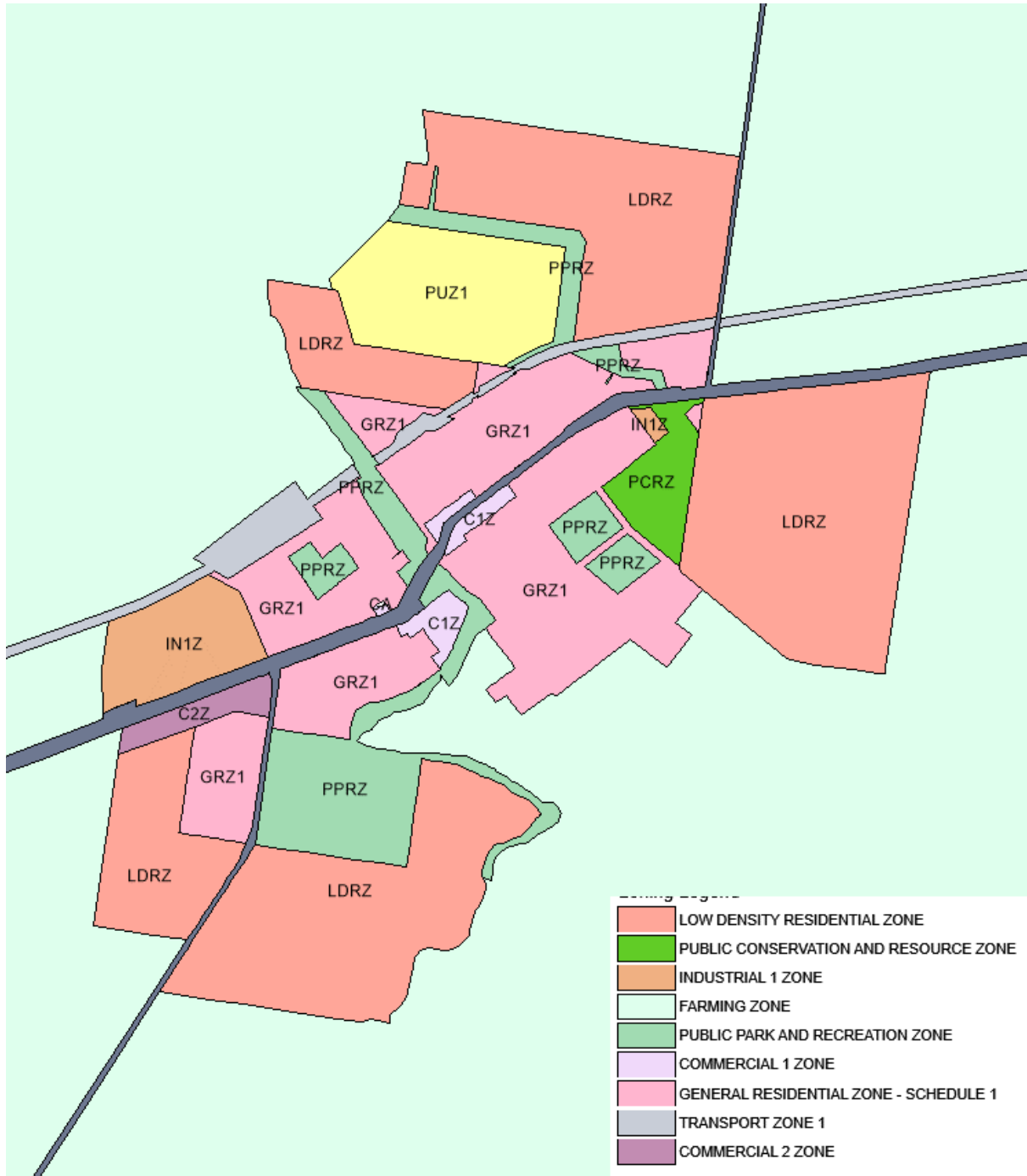
Winchelsea while there is a much smaller industrial area south of the Highway in the east.

To control the appearance of development and help maintain the historic character of Winchelsea there are Design and Development Overlays covering properties that front the Princes Highway. There are also a large number of individual properties in the central areas of Winchelsea that are covered by Heritage Overlays.

The Barwon River corridor is protected by an Environmental Significance Overlay. The river corridor is also covered by a Flood Overlay. Because of the incised nature of the Barwon River within Winchelsea, only small additional areas within the township are subject to a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay. There are areas north and south of the township that are subject to a Salinity Management Overlay.

only small additional areas within the township are subject to a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay. There are areas north and south of the township that are subject to a Salinity Management Overlay.

Image 36: Land Use Zoning - Winchelsea



Source: Victorian State Government. Data Vic, Vicmap Planning – Planning Scheme Zone Polygon

In summary - Strong housing growth is likely to continue

Over recent years Winchelsea has seen significant residential subdivision and housing construction activity both to the south and the east of the township. From 2016 to 2021 there was on an average annual basis 37 dwellings constructed.

Over the last five financial years an average of 42 residential lots were constructed per year. Of this total 57% was construction of greenfield housing estates, 28% involved the re-subdivision of existing lots within the established urban area, and 15% the creation of larger lots in areas zoned Low Density Residential.

Winchelsea has significant stocks of undeveloped residential land (an estimated potential for around 725 additional lots). Of this potential future supply, 220 lots are currently zoned for development at normal suburban densities and 74 lots are already zoned for low density residential development.) An additional 430 lots are currently unzoned but identified in the planning scheme for future urban residential development.

7.8 Other hinterland townships

7.8.1 Moriac

Moriac is a small rural township with a population of less than 1,000 located immediately south of the Geelong-Warrnambool rail line and a little more than half-hours drive from both Geelong and Torquay-Jan Juc. Most residents travel to the larger centres for work. The surrounding areas are regarded as having significant agricultural and landscape value.

Moriac township is not sewerred and is not identified as a location for significant urban growth in current Surf Coast and regional planning. The Surf Coast Planning Scheme does however identify Moriac as having some potential for future rural residential development.

Land Use Constraints

Moriac is in an area of low bushfire risk and is predominately bordered by open farming land. Successive structure plans have emphasised the importance of containing the settlement within the one catchment area and as such, the outward expansion of the town is limited by a combination of built and natural features including the convergence of the Salt Creek and the Geelong-Warrnambool Railway line to the west, the Thompson Creek to the south and Ravens Creek to the east.

There are relatively small areas along creek lines both north and south of the township which are subject to inundation and an area north-east of the township that is covered by a salinity management overlay.

Moriac Structure Plan

The 2010 Moriac Structure Plan was intended to guide development in the township over a 10 to 15 year period. The Plan noted that a shortage of residential land had resulted in a fall off of housing development within the township.

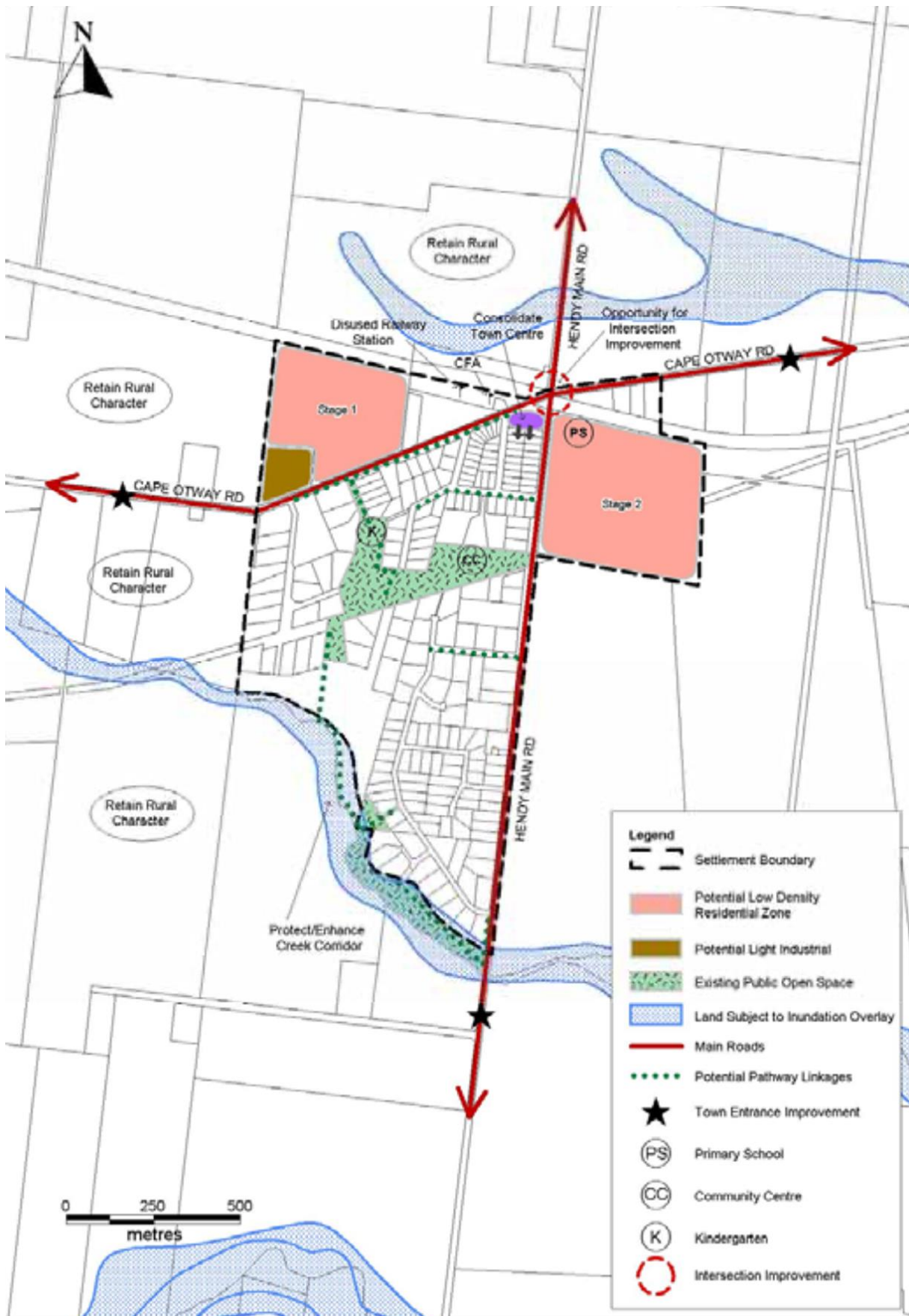
The Structure Plan envisaged modest short to medium term growth. It concluded that there were opportunities to consolidate some short-term residential growth within the existing township. It also pointed to a: *“need to preserve longer term growth options for the township in the event of (the future) availability of sewerage and other infrastructure”* and noted that the duplication of the Princess Highway could result in more pressure for growth in the medium to longer term.

The Moriac Structure Plan sets out a number of principles, together with a set of proposed key directions, to guide ongoing planning. The principles were to:

- protect the rural character of Moriac as a small settlement located within a rural setting;
- maintain a compact township form and avoid linear sprawl of the township;
- direct future residential expansion away from sensitive environmental areas;
- ensure all new township growth areas are undertaken in a sustainable and staged manner;
- provide for suitable lot sizes that reflects the standards for the containment and treatment of waste water; and
- maintain flexibility for future sustainable growth to occur.

The structure plan is shown below. Areas 1 and 2 identified for growth in the 2010 Moriac Structure Plan have been rezoned.

Image 37: Moriac Structure Plan



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2010. Moriac Structure Plan.

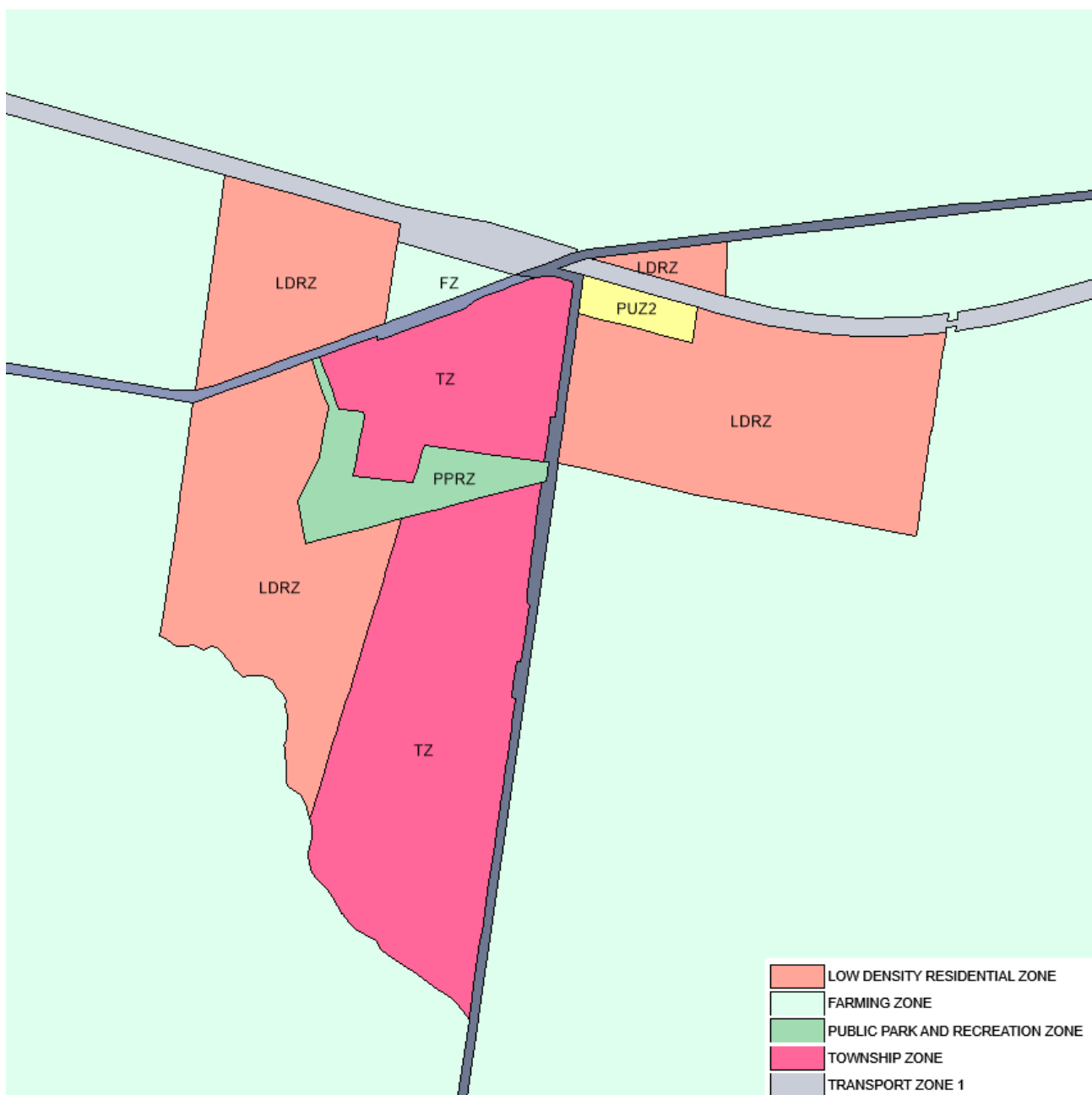
In 2022 Surf Coast Shire Council commenced development of a new Moriac Structure Plan that will provide a strategic framework to guide land use and development decisions for the next 10 years. The Plan seeks to ensure that future incremental growth is responsive to the constraints of the landscape and respectful of the rural character of the town.

Current Planning Scheme Provisions

The Surf Coast Planning Scheme notes that Moriac is a small rural town with a majority of residents commuting elsewhere for employment opportunities, but (choosing) to live in the township for (its) rural residential lifestyle. The Scheme includes a Moriac Framework Plan (below) that reflects the conclusions and directions set out in the 2010 Structure Plan.

Land within the township is zoned in part Township and in part Low Density Residential.

Image 38: Land Use Zoning - Moriac



Source: Victorian State Government. Data Vic, Vicmap Planning – Planning Scheme Zone Polygon

In summary - Limited short to medium term growth capacity

Since 2020/21 a total of 56 residential lots have been constructed, all of which were zoned Low Density Residential. A total of 31 dwellings were constructed within the township from 2016 to 2021.

The lack of reticulated sewerage infrastructure has resulted in restrictions on the short to medium term growth of the Moriac township. The supply of undeveloped residential land within the settlement boundary is limited, minimum lots sizes are large to provide for onsite treatment and disposal of effluent, and there are very few existing vacant residential lots.

High level investigations into the feasibility of reticulated sewer infrastructure reveal that the number of additional homes required to justify investment represents a scale of development that is inconsistent with community sentiments regarding future growth, and is not supported by existing planning policy.

Moriac's attractive townscape and surrounding environs, together with its location close to both Geelong and Torquay-Jan Juc, is likely to ensure an ongoing demand for an increase in land supply. The Moriac Structure Plan 2023 will provide a contemporary framework for considering future growth.

7.8.2 Deans Marsh

Deans Marsh is a small, slow growing, village of just a few hundred people located in the foothills of the Otway Ranges. It is just under 25 kilometres south of Winchelsea and a similar distance north-west of Lorne. It has traditionally been a farming community. Deans Marsh does not have a reticulated water and sewerage services and is not identified for significant housing growth in either regional or Surf Coast Shire planning strategies.

Land Use Constraints

Deans Marsh's growth is constrained both by the fact that it is not (and cannot economically be) connected to a reticulated sewerage system and by its location close to high bushfire risk areas of forested land on the north-western edge of the Otway Ranges.

Immediately north of Deans March is an area subject to flooding while both north and south of the village are areas covered by salinity management overlays. There are also substantial areas of rural Conservation land between Deans Marsh and the Great Otway National Park.

Deans Marsh Structure Plan

In 2008 Surf Coast Shire adopted a Structure Plan intended to guide planning for Deans Marsh until at least 2021. The Structure Plan looked at the village itself and the surrounding hinterland area. In preparing the Structure Plan Council aimed to :

- maximise the efficient use of available land for residential development;
- preserve the scenic qualities and undeveloped character of the surrounding hinterland; and
- support the growth and development of a sustainable community.

Preparation of the Structure Plan included review of the appropriateness of the township boundary and the potential impact of rural residential development in the areas around the township.

The investigations undertaken for preparation of the Structure Plan concluded that housing development in Deans Marsh was likely to continue at a slow rate (a little over one additional dwelling per year) over the period being planned for. Existing vacant lots within the village, including a number of larger lots with potential for future subdivision, were more than sufficient to allow for the forecast scale of housing growth. In total it was calculated that the village had sufficient land to provide for up to 50 years of forecast housing demand.

The Structure Plan proposed to:

- realign the township boundary to include all existing residential lots and lots containing public utilities abutting the town;
- contain all future residential development within this redefined township boundary;
- apply the Township Zone to all potential residential land within the township along with the adoption of a Restructure Overlay designed to make clear which existing lots were too small to accommodate a separate dwelling given the need to treat and retain sewerage effluent on site;
- make it clear that there was no reason to promote rural residential development outside the township boundary even though this had been contemplated in an earlier Deans Marsh strategy; and
- rezone land of high environmental value abutting the Great Otway National Park from Framing Zone to Rural Conservation Zone.

The Plan included a Framework map (below) that made clear the Council's intentions regarding ongoing township development.

Image 39: Deans Marsh Framework Plan



Source: Surf Coast Shire, 2021. Deans Marsh Framework Map.

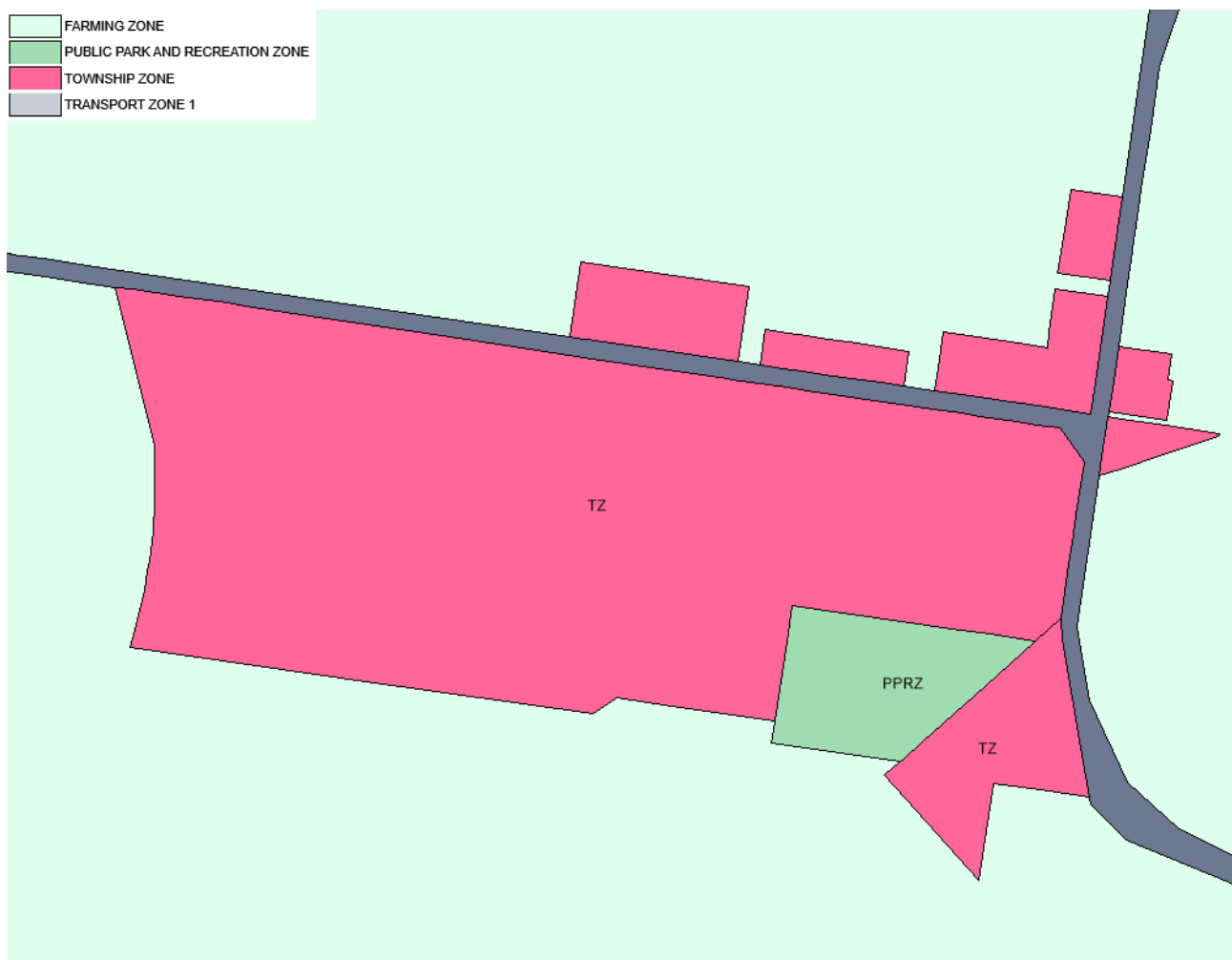
Current Planning Scheme Provisions

In line with the recommendations of the 2008 Structure Plan the entirety of Deans Marsh is now covered by the Township Zone with the surrounding area being within the Farming Zone.

The township is also covered by a Design and Development overlay (DDO 18).

Some small lots are covered by a Restructure Overlay that requires lot amalgamation to enable adequate effluent disposal before a dwelling can be developed. Small areas of the township are also covered by Salinity Management or Land Subject to inundation overlays but these do not significantly affect the potential for additional housing development.

Image 40: Land Use Zones - Deans Marsh



Source: Victorian State Government. Data Vic, Vicmap Planning – Planning Scheme Zone Polygon

In summary – very limited potential for future growth

There are currently limited undeveloped residential land stocks in Deans Marsh, approximating an additional lot/dwelling capacity of around 30.

There has been no residential lot construction activity as measured over the last five financial years. There were four dwellings constructed from 2016 to 2021.

The Surf Coast planning scheme does not identify Deans Marsh for significant growth. Both the lack of reticulated services and limited demand indicate that only slow, and very limited, growth is likely. Deans Marsh will remain a rural village.

8 Reimagining Surf Coasts' urban future

A Changing Urban Future

Surf Coast has been among the fastest growing regional Local Government Areas in Victoria. Its growth has been driven by its very attractive coastal environment together with its closeness to the growing populations of both the City of Greater Geelong and the Melbourne metropolitan area. By far the major part of Surf Coast's population and housing growth has been concentrated in Torquay-Jan Juc. In total Torquay-Jan Juc have seen population growth of 15,000 and construction of over 5,500 additional dwellings over the two decades from 2001 to 2021. This highly focussed growth reflects the severe constraints on development in the other coastal townships within Surf Coast Shire.

Over many years there has been an increasing focus on the importance of environmental and landscape protection in the Shire's coastal areas. That has now culminated in the passage of the Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020, the proclamation of the Surf Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape in the northern coastal part of the Shire, together with work currently underway on preparation of a Strategic Framework Plan for the Great Ocean Road region. The tragic experience of bushfires has also heightened awareness of the risks to life and property associated with urban development in the heavily vegetated coastal parts of Surf Coast Shire.

Collectively these factors impose severe and continuing constraints on future urban growth within Surf Coast's coastal townships.

Surf Coast Shire is now approaching a historic tipping point. The remaining 'greenfield' land within the Torquay-Jan Juc boundary has capacity to accommodate around 2,400 additional dwellings. At recent development rates this is equivalent to around eight years of development of new greenfield housing estates. The capacity for intensification of housing development within Torquay-Jan Juc and Surf Coast's other coastal townships is also limited – in some cases by bushfire and other risks and more generally by the community desire to protect the low key, coastal character of the townships.

Looking forward, consideration will need to be given to how much growth can be accommodated and where this growth should be directed.

The limitation on future housing development in Torquay-Jan Juc and the other coastal townships will give rise to new issues. Most notably, the potential for additional pressure on already declining housing affordability and the need to find new ways of accommodating the housing needs of essential workers and of an ageing population. Increasing numbers of workers are likely to have to commute to jobs in the coastal towns from locations either in the Surf Coast Hinterland or adjacent urban areas in the City of Greater Geelong.

It is also likely that there will be changes in the rate and source of urban growth within Surf Coast Shire in the future. Much of the Shire's population growth over the last two decades or more has been attracted from the inner and middle suburbs of Melbourne by the liveability of highly attractive, and relatively affordable, coastal townships. While hinterland locations such as Winchelsea and Moriac are also attractive and relatively affordable, they are not likely to be such a strong draw for households wanting to move from Melbourne to a sea change location. Instead, more of the future housing demand is likely to come from people working in the City of Greater Geelong and seeking an alternative to the housing available in that City's growth areas and urban renewal locations. Equally, for some people, housing in Geelong's Armstrong Creek growth area may be seen as an acceptable alternative to living in Torquay.

This suggests that future growth rates may be more uncertain and it will certainly be necessary to consider how current forecasts of population growth and housing needs may need to be revised as part of the preparation of Surf Coast's Urban Futures Strategy.