

Preliminary EES Information Sheet for Existing Conditions

Land Use and Planning

Introduction

This document provides a summary of the existing land use and planning conditions identified for the Western Renewables Link area of interest (AOI). Identifying the existing land use and planning conditions within the AOI is an important step towards understanding the potential impacts, interactions and considerations for the project.



The existing land use and planning arrangements have been identified by qualified, independent technical specialists and include planning policy, zones, overlays, future land use planning initiatives, current land use activities, identification of public land, areas of natural environment and existing and proposed infrastructure. A review of GIS aerial imagery and cadastre information, planning schemes, location visits and a review of stakeholder and community feedback was undertaken, and relevant legislation, policy and guidelines have been considered. Further investigations are being undertaken to gather more information, where required, about potential project impacts. The findings will be updated and included in the land use and planning impact assessment for the Environment Effects Statement (EES).

Community and stakeholder feedback

The community has provided important input about existing conditions including:

- Importance of agricultural land use.
- Future development plans in growth areas.
- Competing land uses including horticulture in the peri-urban fringe, rural residential lifestyle properties, extractive resources and tourism.
- Importance of maintaining native vegetation and natural landscapes.
- Highlighting areas of potential visual and other amenity impacts.
- How properties are used and accessed.
- Location of dwellings and other infrastructure.

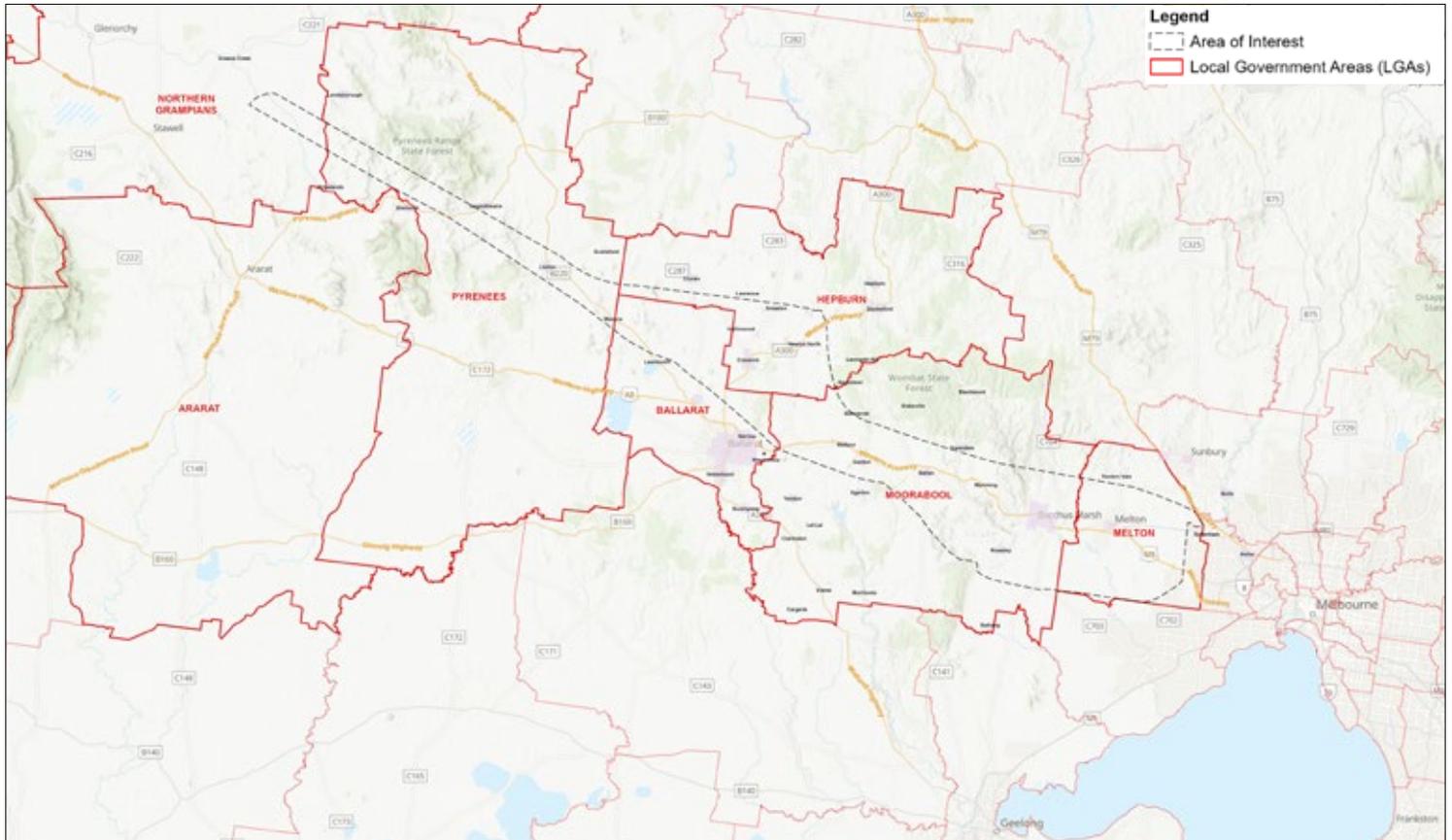
Planning schemes

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* provides the framework for land use and development in Victoria. Each municipality within Victoria prepares and administers a planning scheme in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The Western Renewables Link area of interest is located on land within the following six local government areas (LGAs):

- Shire of Northern Grampians
- Shire of Pyrenees
- City of Ballarat
- Shire of Hepburn
- Shire of Moorabool
- City of Melton

The construction and operation of the Western Renewables Link is subject to a range of planning controls under each of the planning schemes for the municipalities affected by the project. The planning schemes provide strategic direction for land use and govern regulatory approval.



Local Government Areas (Data sources: VMADMIN_LGA_POLYGON, DELWP, 2021; VMPLAN_PLAN_ZONE, DELWP, 2022)

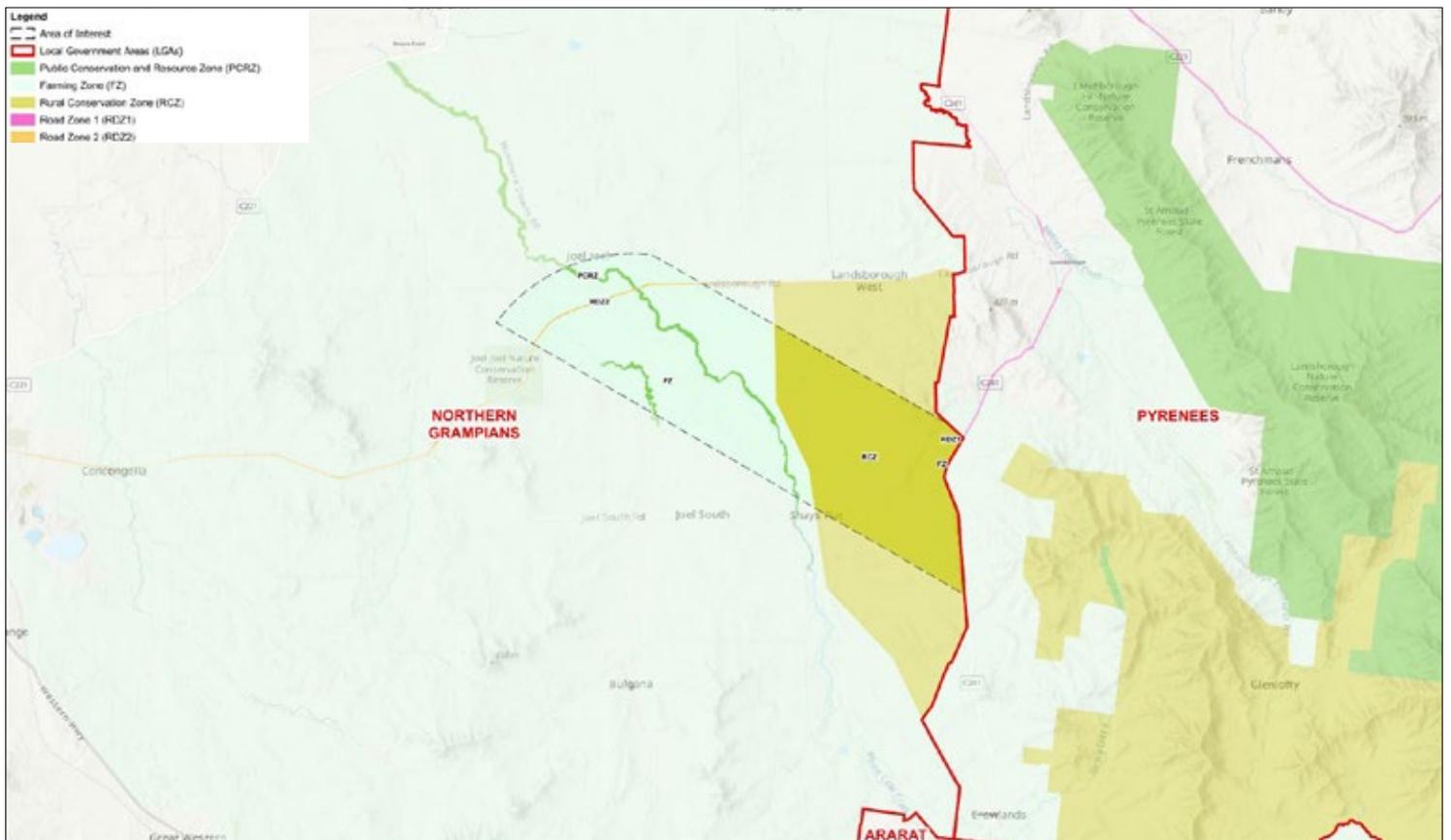
Land use	Description
Agriculture	<p>Agriculture is the dominant land use across the majority of the project AOI and includes cropping, grazing, intensive animal husbandry, horticulture and high-quality food production. The prominent industry sectors include wool, lamb and beef production, grain, potato growing, viticulture and olive growing. The need to protect agricultural land is recognised in strategic plans, regional growth plans and Municipal Strategic Statements.</p> <p>The area to the west of Ballarat and into the Wimmera contains productive broadacre cropping and grazing land. Potato growing is region specific based on soil type and irrigation infrastructure, and is found in the north, northeast and east of Ballarat, including the McCain production area. The area east of Ballarat is identified as a high quality and versatile farming area including potato growing and horticulture. Areas around Bacchus Marsh are identified as providing opportunities for further development in horticulture within the Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District and for developing supporting agricultural industries.</p> <p>Substantial areas of the project AOI are in the Farming Zone which aims to ensure the retention of productive agricultural land. Dwellings associated with agricultural land are located throughout the AOI and are generally characterised as low-density single detached dwellings on larger rural lot sizes. Dwellings on agricultural land are primarily located in the Farming Zone or Rural Conservation Zone.</p> <p>You can read more about agriculture in the EES Information Sheet available on the Western Renewables Link website.</p>

Land use	Description
Forestry	<p>A number of areas of timber production are located in AOI, providing timber for sustainable forestry from plantations. These areas also provide biodiversity and landscape conservation, protection of water catchments and provide opportunities for recreation.</p> <p>You can read more about forestry in the EES Information Sheet available on the Western Renewables Link website.</p>
Natural environment, state parks and reserves	<p>The project AOI includes natural environment areas which provide varying degrees of ecological, environmental and recreational value to the community e.g., Lerderderg State Park, Werribee Gorge State Park, Long Forest Flora and Fauna Nature Reserve and Wombat State Forest. This includes natural systems with a diverse range of native vegetation and animal habitat and significant landscapes that provide scenic qualities. These natural features and areas for recreation are important for tourism throughout the region.</p> <p>Bushland includes vegetated areas which may feature native vegetation however are not designated as protected areas, while public conservation areas have a high level of policy protection reflecting a particular conservation or ecological significance. Roadside corridors also include important areas of native vegetation.</p> <p>The AOI includes a number of Significant Landscape Overlays. For example, Mount Bolton, a unique granite outcrop area which provides a unique range of habitat not widely represented in the region, and landscape features and sites with the Hepburn LGA which are an important visual element of the area. There are also Significant Landscape Overlays protecting the natural scenic qualities of the hilltops and ridgelines around the township of Bacchus Marsh and the volcanic hills and cones in the City of Melton.</p> <p>The AOI contains many rivers, creeks and water frontages managed by DELWP, and the relevant catchment management authority. Some areas in the AOI are proclaimed water catchment areas. Rivers and creeks provide water for human consumption, farming and industry; provide healthy landscapes for recreation and tourism; and support habitat for animals and vegetation. Large areas of the AOI are subject to an Environmental Significance Overlay which relates to the protection of water supply throughout the area.</p> <p>You can read more about biodiversity, visual and landscape, and surface water and groundwater in the respective EES Information Sheets available on the Western Renewables Link website.</p>
Residential, community, services and utilities	<p>Dwellings are distributed across the AOI with higher density clusters in greater numbers in Ballarat, Hepburn, Moorabool and Melton. Ballarat is a key regional centre within the AOI, with close links to Creswick. The peri-urban towns of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan, and metropolitan Melton within the Urban Growth Boundary, are key growth areas and provide housing options with proximity to Melbourne. Land within the Urban Growth Boundary and to the south of Bacchus Marsh and around Melton is to be developed under Precinct Structure Plans which cover large areas identified for future community, commercial and residential land use. Some dwellings on the periphery of Bacchus Marsh are located in the Rural Living Zone and some dwellings located in Melton are in the Green Wedge Zone. Large areas of the AOI are subject to a Bushfire Management Overlay.</p> <p>You can read more about bushfire overlays in the EES Information Sheet available on the Western Renewables Link website.</p> <p>Community infrastructure is located throughout the AOI and includes private and public passive and active recreational land, schools and cemeteries, for example the Goldfields Track Rail Trail from Newlyn to Rocklyn, and the Bald Hills active recreation precinct in Moorabool LGA.</p> <p>Land is also used or set aside for utility-based services (plant and distribution systems), including water treatment plants, pipelines and water storages, for example the Waubra Water Treatment Plant (just outside Waubra).</p>
Industrial and infrastructure	<p>Industrial land use supports employment and is often clustered around key arterial road transport networks. Infrastructure within the AOI includes transport infrastructure, renewable energy generation facilities and transmission infrastructure.</p> <p>Agricultural land supports associated rural industries, such as food processing, abattoirs, shearing, irrigation supplies and stock feed producers.</p> <p>Extractive industries (sand and gravel quarries) are prominent around Bacchus Marsh where transport infrastructure to Ballarat and Melbourne is accessible. These include Boral Bacchus Marsh Quarries, Hanson Australia Bacchus Marsh Quarry and a private quarry located east of Myrningong. There are also natural resource and extractive industries in Pyrenees and Ballarat LGAs and the AOI includes a number of Extractive Industry Interest Areas.</p> <p>The project is located within the Western Victoria Renewable Energy Zone. Wind farms are located across the area and several existing transmission lines run through the AOI.</p> <p>The region has the advantage of established transport networks in road and rail with good access to regional centres and Melbourne. There are railway lines with associated development restrictions that run through the AOI. There are also several aerodromes within the AOI.</p> <p>You can read more about aviation and geology and contaminated land in the respective EES Information Sheets available on the Western Renewables Link website.</p>

Shire of Northern Grampians

A small section at the western most point of the AOI near Bulgana intersects the Northern Grampians LGA within the Wimmera Southern Mallee region. Agriculture is the primary land use in this LGA, with land used for grazing and crop production including soft wood plantations. The Wimmera River Reserve and Six Mile Creek Reserve are recognised as important for water catchment and environmental purposes. Northern Grampians Shire Council identified the Wimmera River and its frontage as being vital in regard to water quality and platypus habitat. The Wimmera Southern Mallee regional growth plan supports opportunities for renewable energy generation and expansion of energy supply infrastructure, where feasible. Wind farms in the area include Bulgana Wind Farm and Ararat Wind Farm.

Planning Scheme	Zones	Overlays
Northern Grampians	Farming Zone	Bushfire Management Overlay
	Public Conservation and Resource Zone	Floodway Overlay
	Road Zone	Rural Conservation Zone
	Rural Conservation Zone	Land Subject to Inundation Overlay



Shire of Northern Grampians Planning Zones (Data sources: VMADMIN_LGA_POLYGON, DELWP, 2021; VMPLAN_PLAN_ZONE, DELWP, 2022)

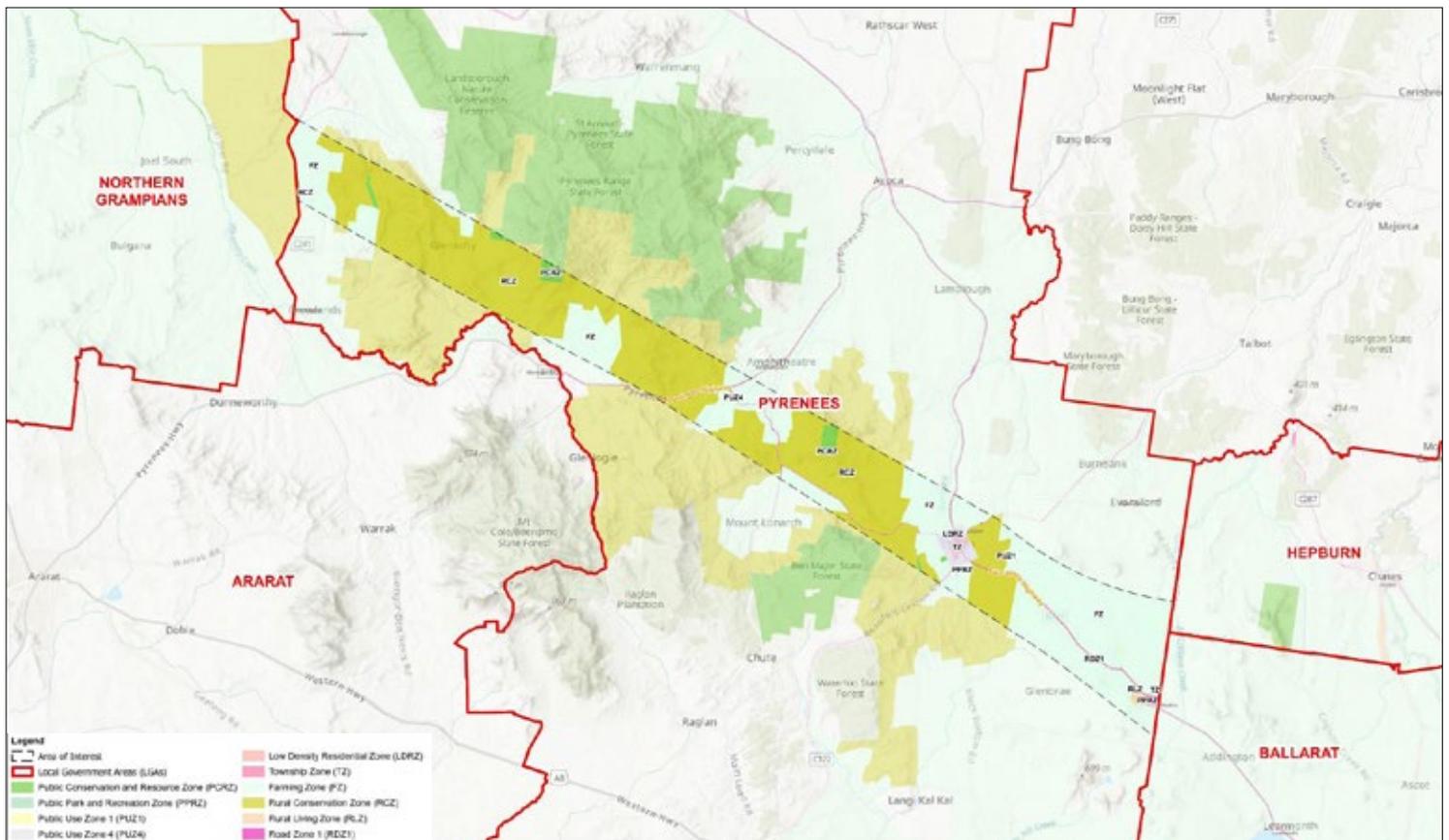
Shire of Pyrenees

The AOI runs through the Pyrenees LGA from west of Glenlofty to Waubra. The Shire Council identifies that the area is renowned for wool production, that grape growing and wine production is a key asset in the LGA, and identified horse breeding as an agricultural industry within the area. Commercial forestry including large-scale plantations occur in the LGA including south of Lexton and north of Waubra.

Ben More Bushland Reserve is covered by a Rural Conservation Zone and the Lexton Bushland Reserve contains native vegetation. Land east of Lexton is almost entirely within a Water Supply Protection Area supporting a number of water reservoirs for the local towns and agricultural areas and the area is protected by Environmental Significance Overlays. These areas are a primary source of domestic water supply for townships and surrounding farms.

Wind farms in this area include Waubra Wind Farm, Crowlands Wind Farm and Stockyard Hill Wind Farm. The Carisbrook to Horsham gas pipeline crosses the AOI near Amphitheatre. The Pyrenees, Sunraysia and Midland Highways are identified as significant roads providing access to other parts of the region and state in the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan. The Mildura Railway line is a key east-west transport asset for the central highlands, providing links across the region to major centres.

Planning Scheme	Zones	Overlays
Pyrenees	Farming Zone	Bushfire Management Overlay
	Low Density Residential Zone	Design and Development Overlay
	Public Conservation and Resource Zone	Environmental Audit Overlay
	Public Park and Recreation Zone	Environmental Significance Overlay
	Public Use Zone	Heritage Overlay
	Road Zone	Restructure Overlay
	Rural Conservation Zone	Vegetation Protection Overlay
	Rural Living Zone	
	Township Zone	



Shire of Pyrenees Planning Zones (Data sources: VMADMIN_LGA_POLYGON, DELWP, 2021; VMPLAN_PLAN_ZONE, DELWP, 2022)

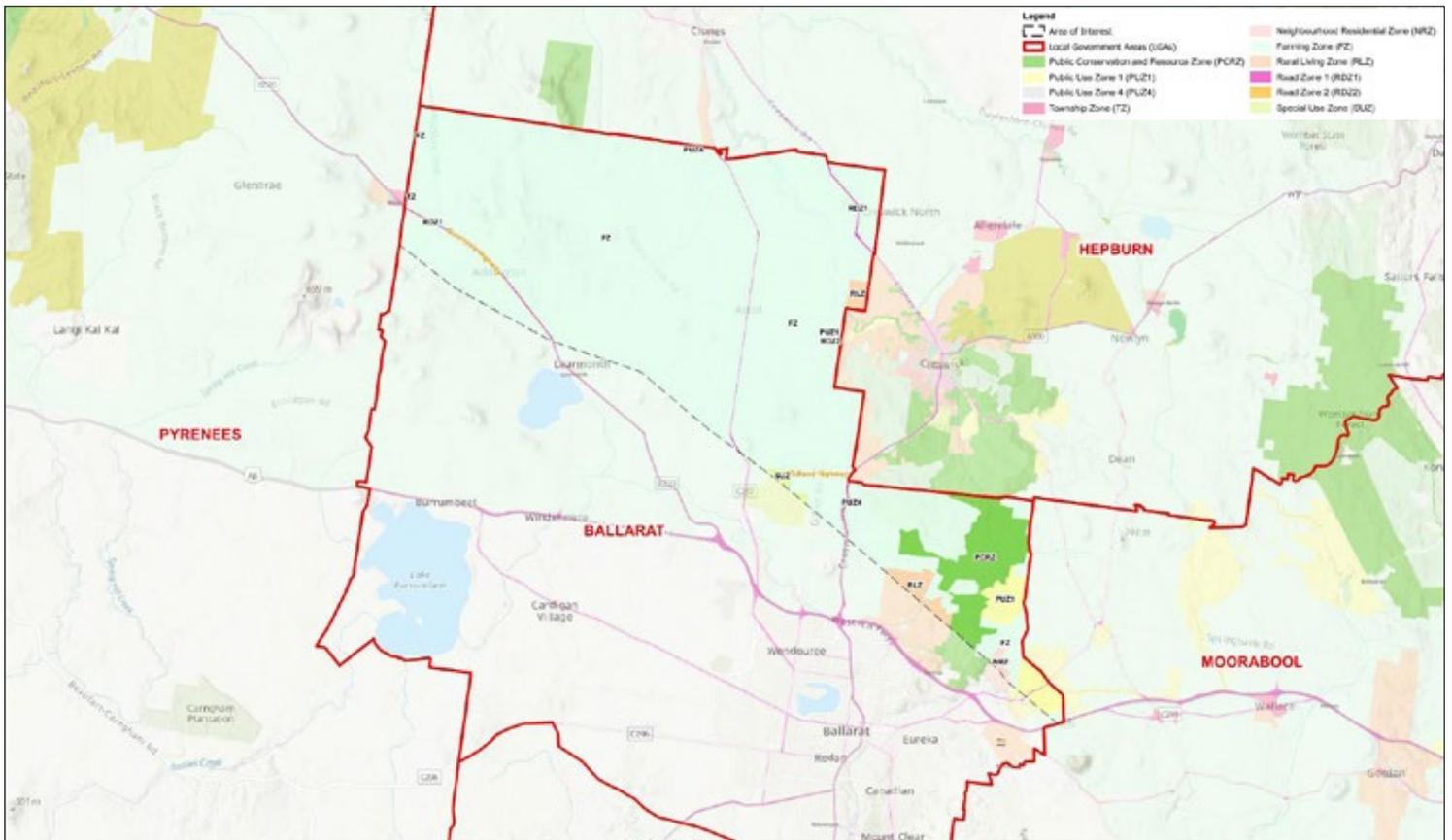
City of Ballarat

The AOI runs across the north of the City of Ballarat LGA. Ballarat is the largest town in the area and influences development and growth in its hinterland. The region is experiencing population growth in an environment with significant landscapes, agricultural, waterway and other environmental assets.

Potato growing plays an important economic role in the region. McCains is identified as a significant food producer that sources produce from within the region and has been identified as a large financial contributor to the agricultural industry and region. Broadacre grazing supports the wool, sheep and beef industry. The thoroughbred and harness racing industry also provides employment.

The Western Highway is a key east-west transport asset, the Midland Highway runs north-south connecting Ballarat to the towns of Creswick, Springmount, Newlyn and Blampied, and the Sunraysia Highway runs from Learmonth to Lexton. Gong Gong Reservoir and White Swan Reservoir are covered by Environmental Significance Overlays for the protection of water catchment areas.

Planning Scheme	Zones	Overlays
Ballarat	Farming Zone	Bushfire Management Overlay
	Neighbourhood Residential Zone	Design and Development Overlay
	Public Conservation and Resource Zone	Environmental Significance Overlay
	Public Use Zone	Floodway Overlay
	Road Zone	Heritage Overlay
	Rural Living Zone	Land Subject to Inundation Overlay
	Special Use Zone	Public Acquisition Overlay
		Significant Landscape Overlay
		Specific Controls Overlay



City of Ballarat Planning Zones (Data sources: VMADMIN_LGA_POLYGON, DELWP, 2021; VMPLAN_PLAN_ZONE, DELWP, 2022)

Shire of Hepburn

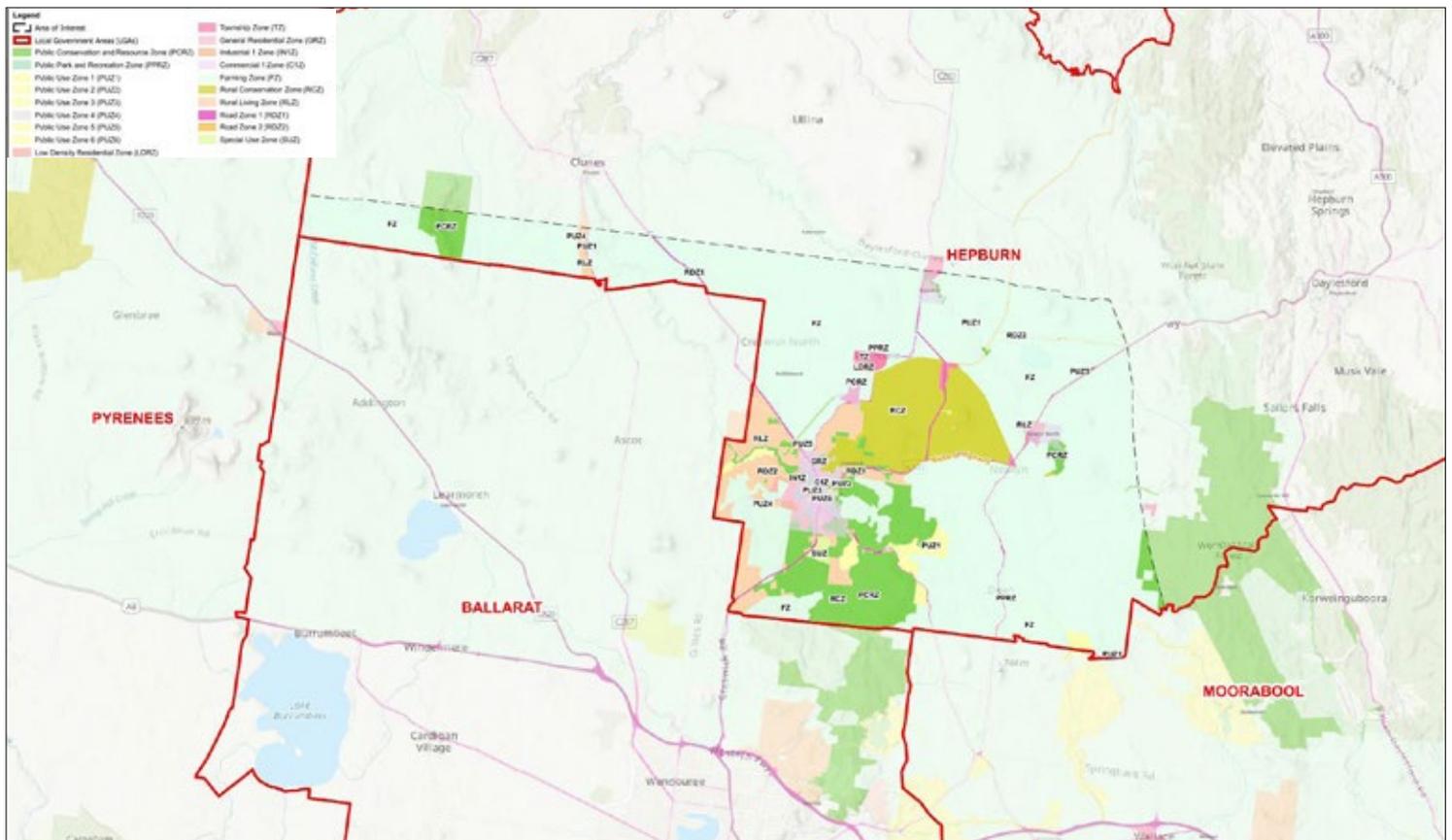
The AOI runs across the south of the Hepburn LGA. Hepburn Shire Council identified the agricultural land within the AOI as some of the most significant in the shire due to the volcanic soil, especially for broadacre farming and potato growing. Potato growing is a key agriculture industry in the LGA.

Creswick provides retail services and access to services such as medical centres, hospitals and education facilities and important community and recreational facilities. Local heritage and environmental features in the Hepburn LGA provide benefits through tourism and intrinsic local value. Creswick Regional Park, Hepburn Lagoon and Newlyn Reservoir are covered by a Rural Conservation Zone and have significant ecological, heritage, landscape, recreational and tourism values. Heritage buildings and features north of Creswick and around Newlyn have been identified, including those related to the historic goldfields. The Goldfields Track and the Mount Prospect Cemetery in Newlyn North were identified by the Shire Council as important community facilities.

Areas of Significant Landscape Overlay have been applied to maintain the visual significance of woodlands and grasslands, peaks and hilltops, and of ridges and escarpments, and to protect these areas from intrusive development. Mount Beckworth Scenic Reserve and Bullarook Creek Streamside Reserve include areas of native vegetation. The Mount Beckworth Scenic Reserve is subject to a Heritage Overlay. The Clunes Plantation and DELWP Plantation are located in the Mount Beckworth Scenic Reserve.

Hepburn Lagoon is a key water storage for the Loddon Basin, managed by Goulburn-Murray Rural Water Corporation. The Newlyn Reservoir is subject to an Environmental Significance Overlay for catchment protection.

Planning Scheme	Zones	Overlays
Hepburn	Commercial Zone	Bushfire Management Overlay
	Farming Zone	Development Plan Overlay
	General Residential Zone	Environmental Significance Overlay
	Industrial Zone	Erosion Management Overlay
	Low Density Residential Zone	Heritage Overlay
	Public Conservation and Resource Zone	Land Subject to Inundation Overlay
	Public Park and Recreation Zone	Significant Landscape Overlay
	Public Use Zone	Vegetation Protection Overlay
	Road Zone	
	Rural Conservation Zone	
	Rural Living Zone	
	Special Use Zone	
	Township Zone	



Shire of Hepburn Planning Zones (Data sources: VMADMIN_LGA_POLYGON, DELWP, 2021; VMPLAN_PLAN_ZONE, DELWP, 2022)

Shire of Moorabool

The towns of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan have been identified as key commercial and residential growth areas. Development of Bacchus Marsh is constrained, particularly to the east where the Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District is located. The Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District is identified as a significant farming area and is subject to major flood inundation from the Lerderderg River. The Maddingley Waste and Resource Recovery Hub to the south-east and sand and gravel quarries to the north-east around Darley and Coimadai also restrict further development at Bacchus Marsh.

There are a number of Precinct Structure Plans within the Shire of Moorabool which aim to address the housing and employment demands from population growth, and direct planning zone and overlay changes. The Bacchus Marsh Urban Growth Framework identifies the following areas for growth:

- Merrimu Residential Growth Precinct.
- Parwan Employment Growth Precinct.
- Parwan Station Residential and Commercial Precinct.
- Hopetoun Park North Residential Expansion Area.

Some land to the south of Ballan has also been identified for further investigation for residential land use.

Moorabool Council consider the scenic rural environment to be integral to the municipality. The proposed Wombat-Lerderderg National Park is located in the north of the AOI in the Public Conservation and Resource Zone and crown land managed by Parks Victoria. Significant Landscape Overlays exist to protect the natural scenic qualities in the area, including views and vistas around Bacchus Marsh from the visual impact of development and the scenic hilltops and ridgelines to the west of Darley and significant views and vistas to these natural features.

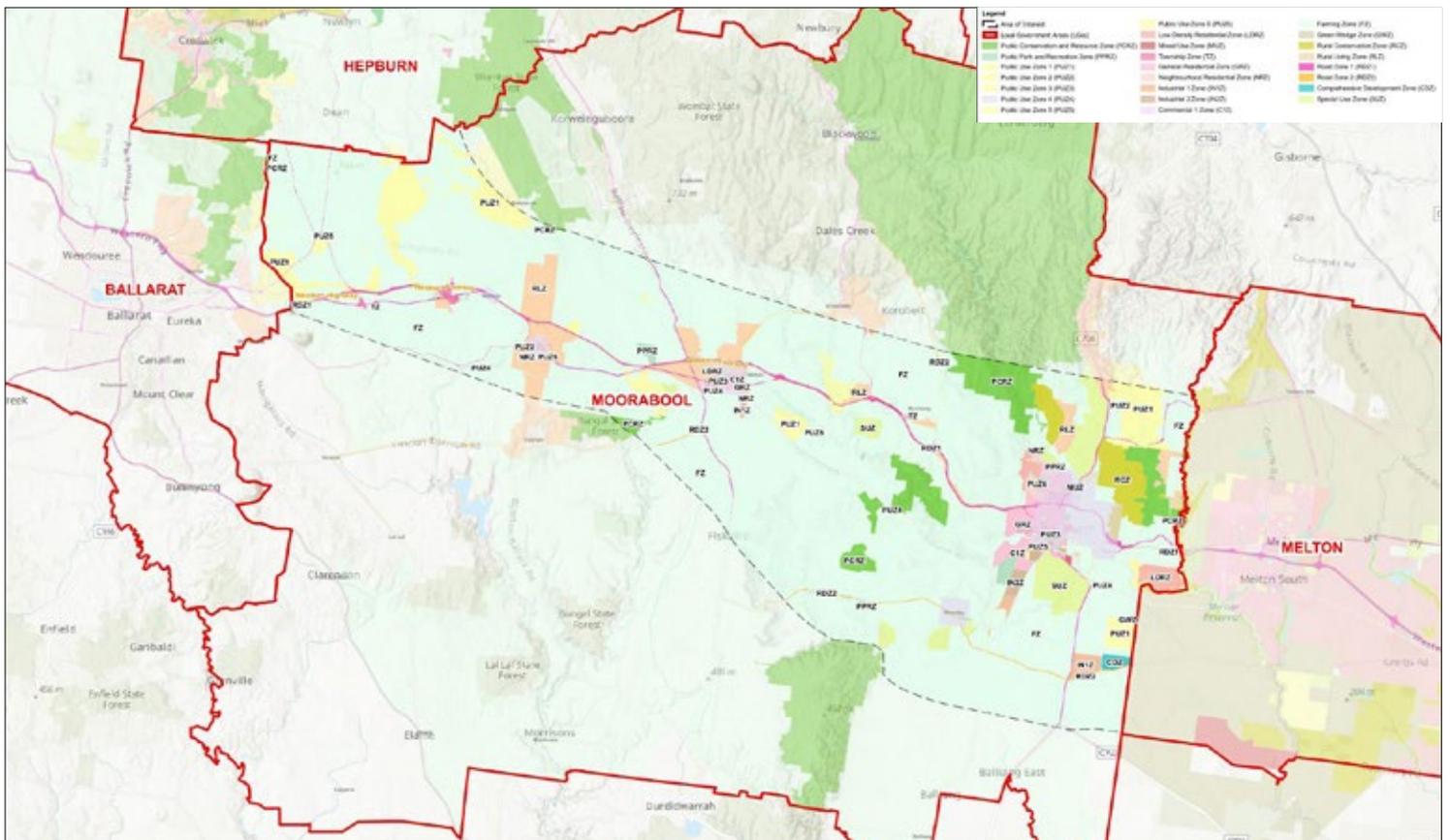
An active recreation precinct for residents and visitors is currently being developed at Bald Hills. There has been a long-term focus on creating biolinks throughout the upper Werribee Catchment since 2004. Land is also subject to proclaimed water catchment areas and supports reservoirs such as Merrimu Reservoir, Pykes Creek Reservoir, Moorabool Reservoir, Wilson Reservoir and Dean Reservoir. These areas are also protected by Environmental Significance Overlays.

Planning for an eastern bypass road link around Bacchus Marsh is being undertaken and is expected to impact this area. The Moorabool Wind Farm is located in the Moorabool LGA.

Planning Scheme	Zones	Overlays
Moorabool	Commercial Zone	Airport Environs Overlay
	Comprehensive Development Zone	Bushfire Management Overlay
	Farming Zone	Design and Development Overlay
	General Residential Zone	Development Plan Overlay
	Industrial Zone	Environmental Audit Overlay
	Low Density Residential Zone	Environmental Significance Overlay
	Mixed Use Zone	Heritage Overlay
	Neighbourhood Residential Zone	Public Acquisition Overlay
	Public Conservation and Resource Zone	Restructure Overlay
	Public Park and Recreation Zone	Significant Landscape Overlay
	Public Use Zone	Specific Controls Overlay
	Road Zone	
	Rural Conservation Zone	
	Rural Living Zone	
Special Use Zone		
Township Zone		



View from Telford Park, across Darley towards the Lerderberg Ranges



Shire of Moorabool Planning Zones (Data sources: VMADMIN_LGA_POLYGON, DELWP, 2021; VMPLAN_PLAN_ZONE, DELWP, 2022)

Considerations for the project

A range of considerations have been identified by the technical specialists for investigation and management which will be addressed in the land use and planning impact assessment including:

- Potential for the project to affect current and future land use and development, i.e., agriculture, forestry, residential, parks and reserves.
- Consistency with existing and future planning objectives, policies and planning scheme provisions.
- Impact on amenity of inhabitants or operators on the land due to location of infrastructure.
- Temporary land access changes, causing disruption to operations, community connections or property security concerns including biosecurity.
- Impact of project infrastructure on physical character of the area due to visual impact, e.g. rural character.
- Potential impact on land use due to easement and land acquisition to facilitate the project.

Next steps

- Ongoing landholder, community and stakeholder consultation.
- Finalise the land use and planning impact assessment, including mitigation and management measures to minimise potential impacts. The impact assessment will inform the project design and be published as part of the EES. The EES will be an important source of information about potential project impacts for the community, landholders, decision-makers and as part of the approvals process.
- The project requires planning approval under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* through planning scheme amendment to the Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Ballarat, Hepburn, Moorabool and Melton planning schemes, which require consideration by the Minister for Planning at the same time the EES is being considered. A draft planning scheme amendment will be included in the EES for public viewing and comment.



Glossary

Definitions adapted from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and apply to all local government areas discussed. More information is available at www.planning.vic.gov.au/guide-home/using-victorias-planning-system.

Planning Scheme - A planning scheme controls land use and development within a municipal district. It contains state and local planning policies, zones and overlays and other provisions that affect how land can be used and developed.

Zones - A planning scheme uses zones to designate land for particular uses, such as residential, industrial or business. A zone will have its own purpose and set of requirements.

Overlay - Each overlay addresses a single issue or related set of issues (such as bushfire management, floodway or rural conservation). The requirements of an overlay apply in addition to the requirements of the zone. Not all land is affected by an overlay, but where more than one issue applies to a parcel of land, multiple overlays can be used.



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