



THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD REGION  
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY

**plān i 'sphēre** [ // urban strategy planners ]

PRECINCT PACKAGE

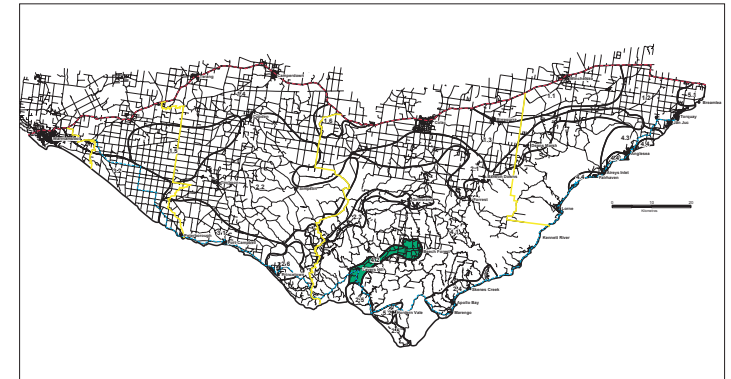
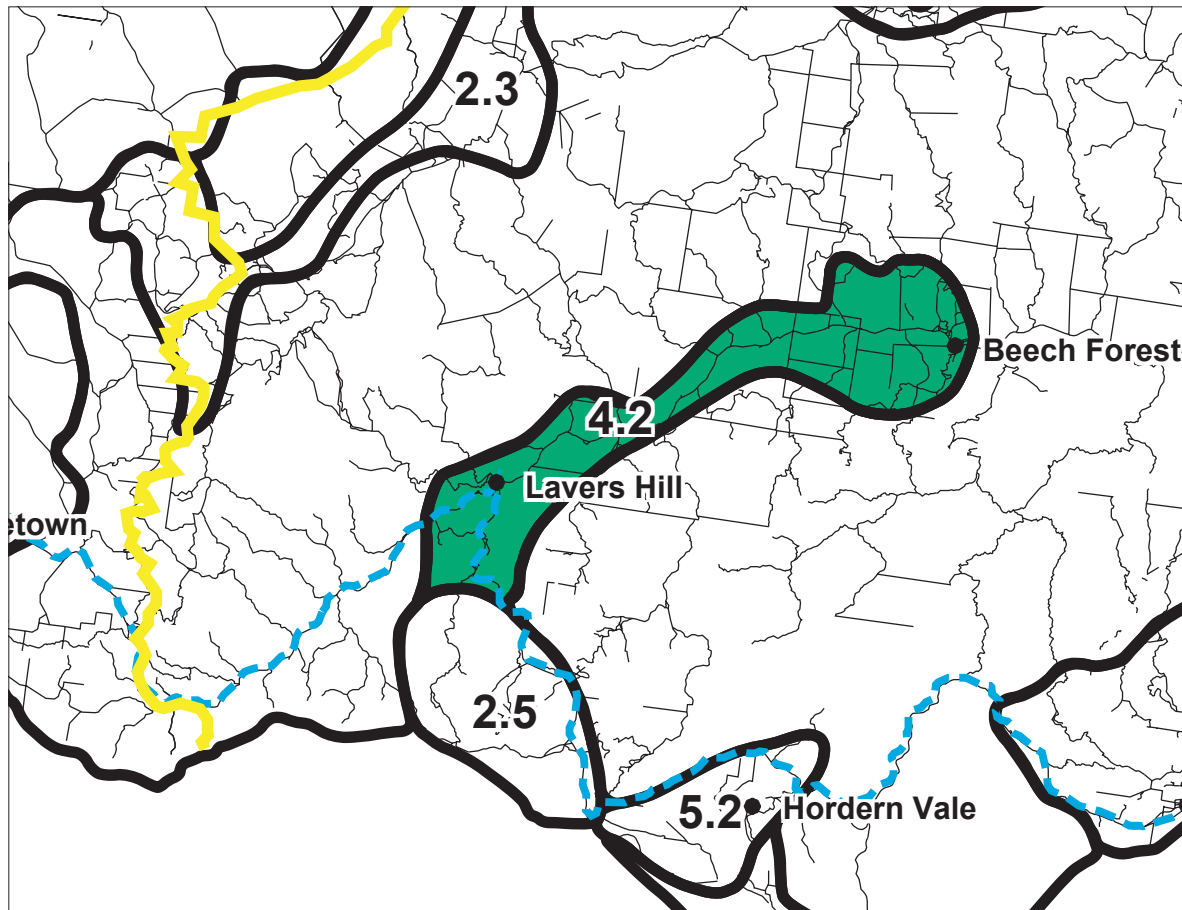
PRECINCT 4.2 | CLEARED UPLANDS AND HILLTOPS

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT | SEPTEMBER 2003



# LOCALITY MAP

PRECINCT 4.2 | CLEARED UPLANDS AND HILLTOPS



**Legend**

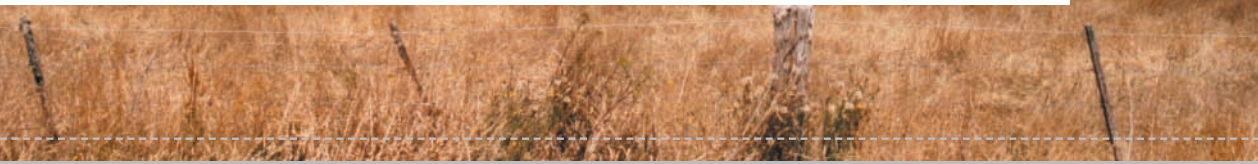
- This Precinct
- Great Ocean Road
- Princes Highway (Northern Study Boundary)
- Municipal boundary

**Landscape Character Types and Precincts**

- 1.1 - 1.6 Western Plains, Cones and Lakes
- 2.1 - 2.6 Otway Foothills, Valleys and Uplands
- 3.1 - 3.2 Western Coastal Cliffs
- 4.1 - 4.4 Otway Forests and Coast
- 5.1 - 5.2 Localised Flatlands

# PRECINCT QUALITIES AND OBJECTIVES

PRECINCT 4.2 | CLEARED UPLANDS AND HILLTOPS



## PRECINCT DESCRIPTION

Precinct 4.2 covers the long ridge that extends from Lavers Hill to Beech Forest. The Colac - Lavers Hill Road meanders along the ridge top, providing elevation above the surrounding landscape and long-range views over the Otway Ranges. Immediate views are of lush agricultural slopes, with some forested reserves and timber plantations. A lack of built form generally, but particularly adjacent to the road corridor, provides a sense of clear, uncluttered openness, with the sides of the ridge top sloping steeply down to the valleys below.

## DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES

The Otway Forests and Coast landscape character type consists of the main area of the Otway Ranges and coast, containing large areas of dense, tall forest cover in hilly terrain, extending to the sea with high, rugged cliffs in places. In some coastal locations the vegetation is sparser and smaller in scale. This landscape character type also includes areas of plantation timber and clearings set among the forest.

Within this landscape character type, precinct 4.2 is distinctive for its openness and spaciousness, and long range views to the Otway Ranges. The sense of floating above the landscape when travelling along the ridgeline is a unique experience in the region.

A full explanation of the level of significance attributed to the landscape character is contained in the Regional Toolkit.



## KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Openness
- Elevation above the landscape
- Long distance views across the forest
- Spaciousness
- Indigenous planting emphasising features

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The sense of spaciousness and openness in the precinct should be protected, particularly from the main road corridor. This could be achieved through the appropriate siting of buildings and structures to avoid clutter and enclosure.

## LANDSCAPE OBJECTIVES

- To increase the use of indigenous vegetation to emphasise landscape features.
- To ensure that buildings and structures do not clutter the landscape or dominate the outlook from the ridge top road corridor.
- To protect long range views to the Otway Ranges from the ridge top.
- To improve the outlook from main road corridors by minimising the visibility of commercial timber plantations.



# PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

## PRECINCT 4.2 | CLEARED UPLANDS AND HILLTOPS

LANDSCAPE ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
VEGETATION	To increase the use of indigenous vegetation to emphasise landscape features.	Retain existing indigenous and native trees and understorey wherever possible and provide for the planting of new indigenous vegetation, particularly to emphasise landform features.	<i>Lack of indigenous vegetation, particularly in or adjacent to landform features.</i>
HEIGHT AND DESIGN	To ensure that buildings and structures do not clutter the landscape or dominate the outlook from the ridge top road corridor. To protect long range views to the Otway Ranges from the ridge top.	Keep development below the dominant tree canopy height. Locate development sparsely in the landscape, maximising space available between buildings and structures for retention and planting of vegetation. Utilise materials and colours that complement those that occur naturally in the landscape, with consideration as to how the materials will weather over time. Set buildings back substantial distances from the Colac-Lavers Hill Road wherever possible.	<i>Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy height. Visually dominant building forms. Loss of openness.</i>
TIMBER PLANTATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE	To improve the outlook from main road corridors by minimising the visibility of commercial timber plantations and large buildings and structures.	Screen commercial timber plantations that are located adjacent to Category 1 Roads with a 20 metre wide (minimum) indigenous or native vegetation buffer, including understorey. Locate and screen large buildings and structures (eg very large sheds, high tension transmission lines and associated cleared easements etc) to minimise their visibility from Category 1 Roads and key viewing locations.	<i>Visibility of timber plantations from main road corridors. Landscape 'scarring'. Highly visible infrastructure.</i>
TOWNSHIPS AND SETTLEMENTS	To maintain the dominance of the natural landscape from main road corridors outside townships.	Ensure townships have a definite visual edge, delineating the boundary between urban development and the natural landscape beyond. Locate signage away from entrances and exits to townships wherever possible.	<i>Ribbon development. Unclear edges to townships. Signage clutter at entrances and exits to townships.</i>

# PRECINCT LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

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ABOVE | Pine plantations in the landscape



ABOVE | Dense, native roadside vegetation

## EDGES

The following 'landscape edges' exist within the precinct:

- Intersection of topographical / landscape edges: Cleared ridge with forested slopes below
- Edges of townships abutting the natural landscape
- Edge created by the road corridor through the landscape
- Plantation edges

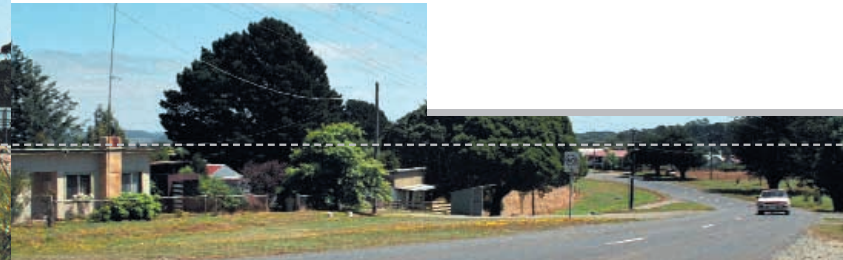
## CORRIDORS

The following, taken from field survey notes, is a sequence description of the journey from Ferguson to Lavers Hill on Colac – Lavers Hill Road:

... From pine and native forest - Ferguson high elevation – cleared with blackwood and bush - some potatoes among pasture for dairy herd - pass through stretches of vegetation and cleared paddocks along ridge - extensive long distant views - Weeaprounah - massive tree trunk in paddock - Lavers Hill - entry views are marred by poor design of service buildings, signs and siting on steep slopes...



ABOVE | Tourism accommodation in Lavers Hill



ABOVE | Simple timber dwellings along the roadside

There are two townships within the precinct: Lavers Hill and Beech Forest.

## LAVERS HILL

Lavers Hill is located on a ridge at the intersection of three roads. Development at the junction consists mostly of motel style accommodation, kiosks and tea rooms and associated tourism signage. Residential development is located further out from the junction, in a ribbon formation along the roads. In contrast to development at the intersection, the residential dwellings are set among vegetation, and partially screened. Expansive views are available from the town to the forested slopes below.

## BEECH FOREST

Beech Forest is settled on a cleared ridge top and is surrounded by forested slopes. Old weatherboard houses are ribboned along the roadside, which follows the ridgeline. Forestry services and mobile telephone towers are dominant features of the landscape.



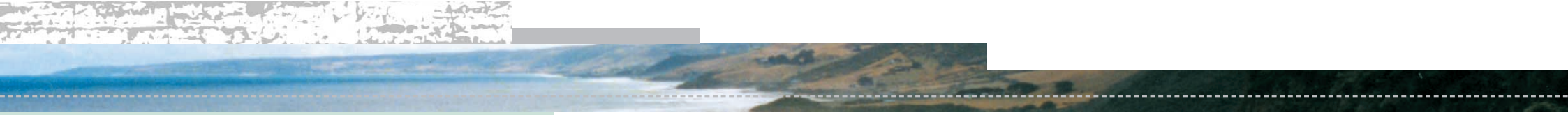


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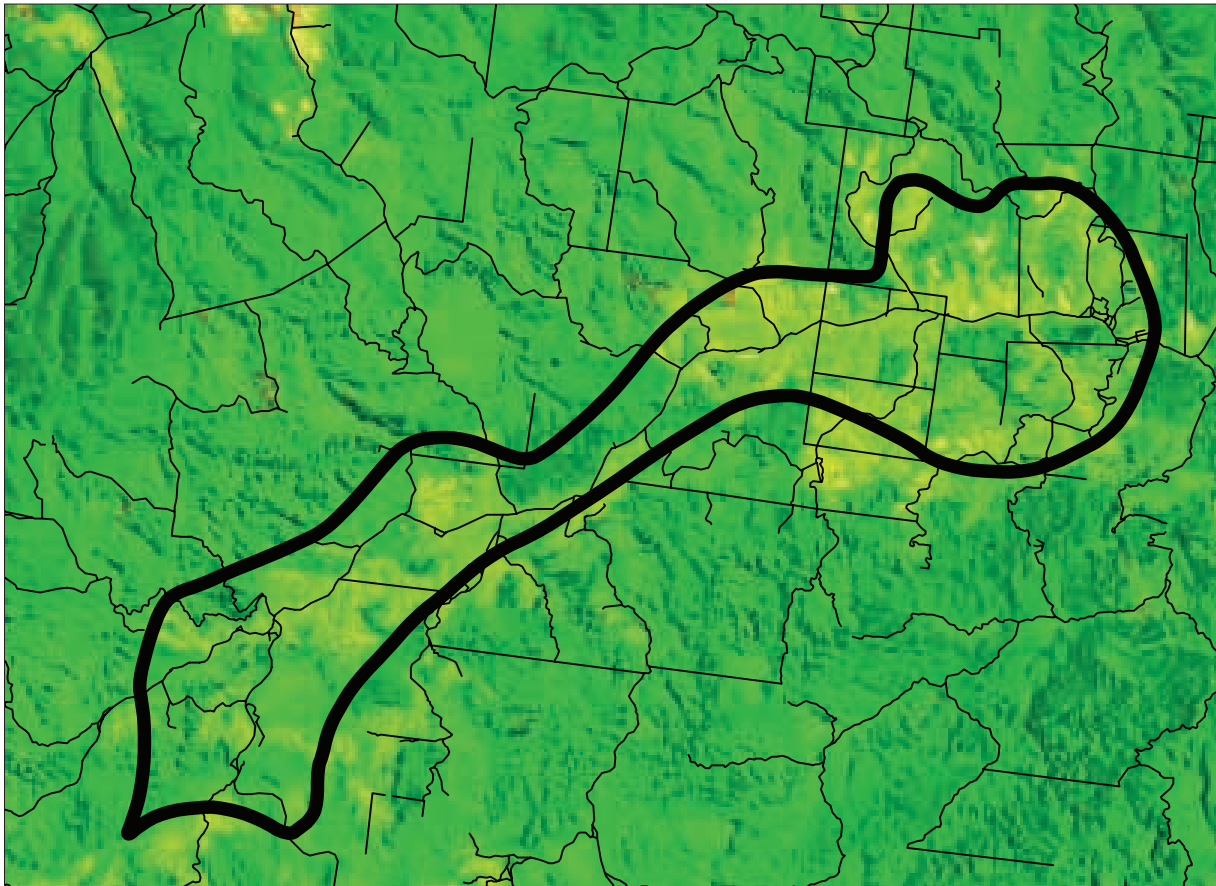
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PRECINCT ANALYSIS  
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## PRECINCT ANALYSIS MAPS

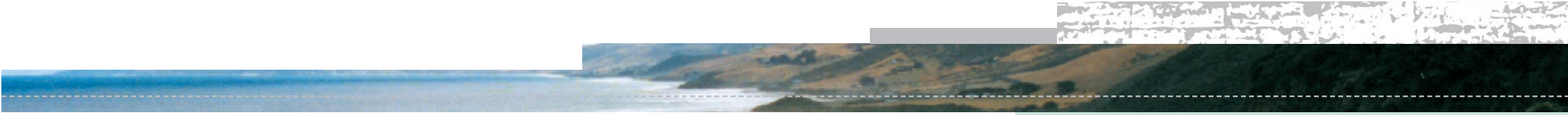
PRECINCT 4.2 | CLEARED UPLANDS AND HILLTOPS



### SATELLITE PHOTO

The satellite photo reveals the heavily forested Otway Ranges with its many steep ridges and valleys.

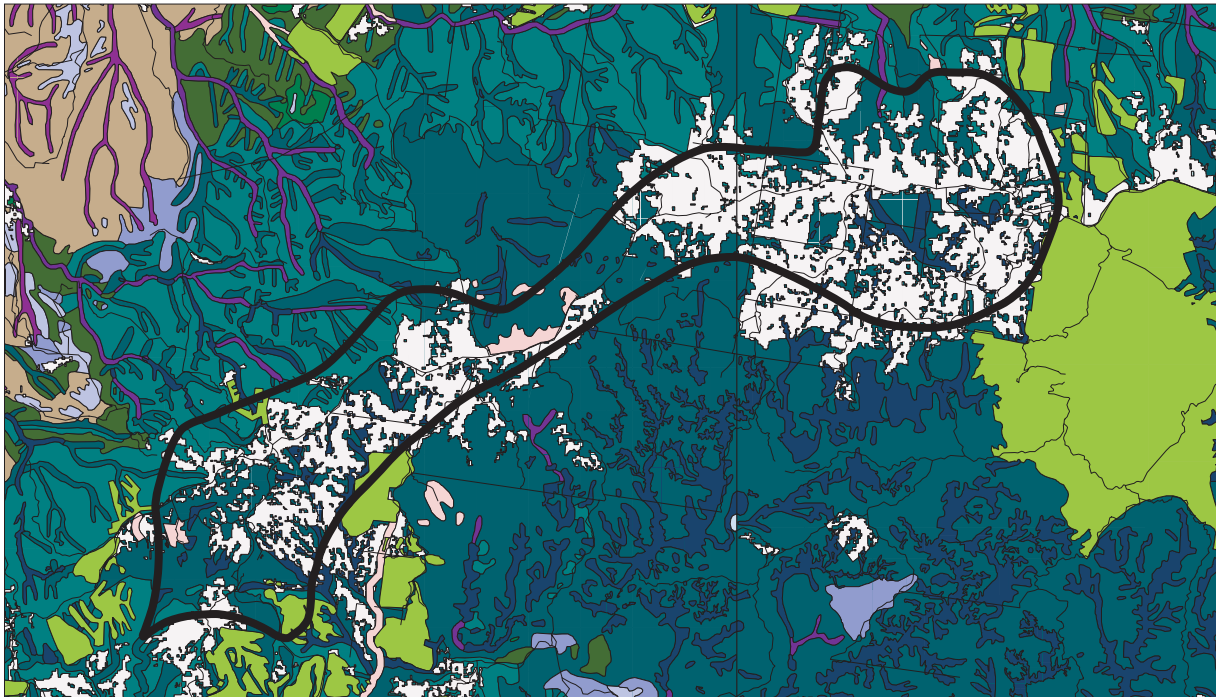




## CONTOUR MAP

The contour map highlights steepness of the complex hill and valley systems of the Otway Ranges.





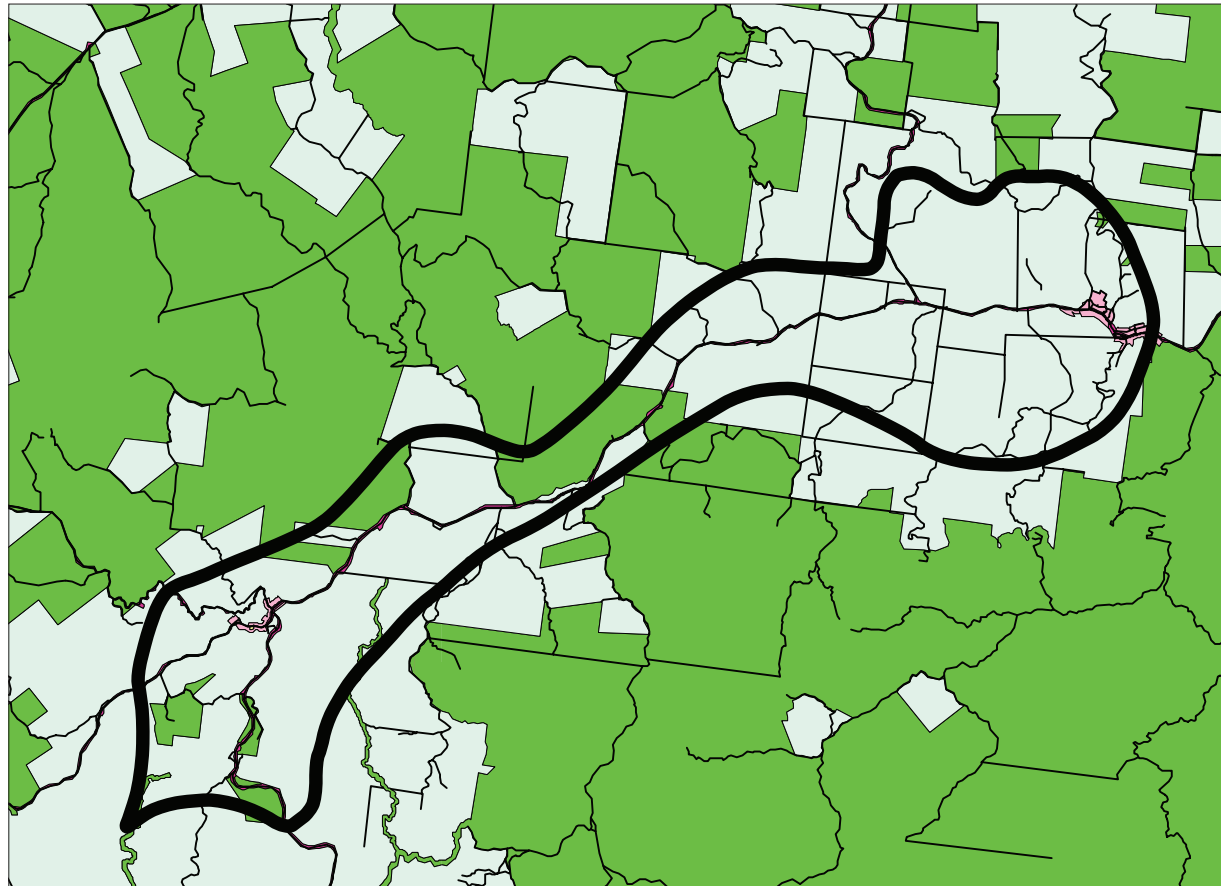
## ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES

The Ecological Vegetation Classes map indicates that a large proportion of the precinct is private land with no tree cover, fingers of Wet Forest, Cool Temperate Rainforest and Shrubby Wet Forest follow tributaries and permeate the cleared land.

### Vegetation Classes











□ Aquatic Herbland	□ Damp Heath Scrub	□ Lowland Forest	□ Riparian Woodland / Escarpment Shrubland
□ Aquatic Herbland/Plains Sedgy Wetland Mosaic	□ Damp Heath Scrub/Heathy Woodland Complex	□ Mangrove Shrubland	□ Sand Heathland
□ Bird Colony Shrubland	□ Damp Heathland / Damp Heathy Woodland	□ Not assessed to date - Formerly Not Applicable/	□ Scoria Cone Woodland
□ Calcarenite Dune Woodland	□ Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland	□ Not Within Victoria	□ Seasonally-inundated Sub-saline Herbland
□ Cane Grass-Lignum Halophyllic Herbland	□ Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland /	□ Permanent Saline	□ Sedgy Riparian Woodland
□ Cinder Cone Woodland	□ Damp Heathland / Damp Heathy Woodland	□ Plains Brackish Sedgy Wetland	□ Shallow Freshwater Marsh
□ Clay Heathland	□ Deep Freshwater Marsh	□ Plains Freshwater Sedgy Wetland	□ Shrubby Dry Forest
□ Cleared Severely Disturbed	□ Estuarine Wetland	□ Plains Grassland	□ Shrubby Foothill Forest
□ Coast Gully Thicket	□ Floodplain Riparian Woodland	□ Plains Grassland/Plains Grassy Woodland Mosaic	□ Shrubby Wet Forest
□ Coastal Dune Scrub	□ Freshwater Meadow	□ Plains Grassy Wetland	□ Stony Rises Herb-rich Woodland
□ Coastal Dune Scrub Mosaic	□ Grassy Dry Forest	□ Plains Grassy Woodland	□ Stony Knoll Shrubland / Plains Grassy Woodland /
□ Coastal Headland Scrub	□ Grassy Forest	□ Plains Sedgy Wetland	□ Plains Grassy Wetland
□ Coastal Headland Scrub/	□ Grassy Woodland	□ Plains Swampy Woodland	□ Swamp Scrub
□ Headland Coastal Tussock Grassland Mosaic	□ Healthy Woodland	□ Plantation (undelinead)	□ Swamp Scrub / Aquatic Herbland
□ Coastal Landfill / Sand Accretion	□ Healthy Woodland/Sand Heath Mosaic	□ Private Land No Tree Cover	□ Swampy Riparian Woodland
□ Coastal Saltmarsh	□ Herb-rich Foothill Forest	□ Reed Swamp	□ Water Body - Natural or man made
□ Coastal Tussock Grassland	□ Herb-rich Foothill Forest/	□ Riparian Forest	□ Wet Forest
□ Cool Temperate Rainforest	□ Shrubby Foothill Forest Complex	□ Riparian Scrub Complex	□ Wet Heathland
□ Creeklime Grassy Woodland	□ Lignum Wetland	□ Riparian Woodland	□ Wet Sands Thicket

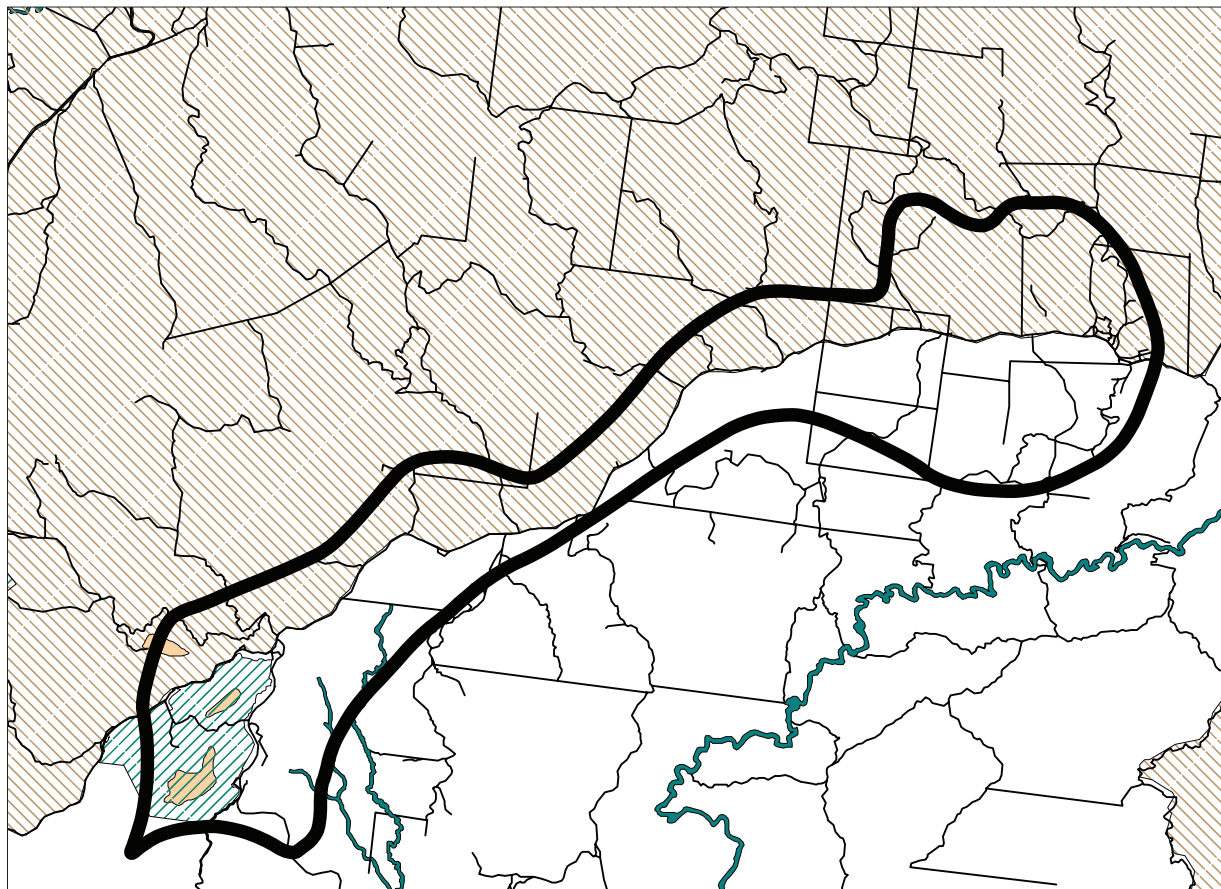




## ZONING MAP






The precinct includes mostly Rural Zoned land with Public Conservation and Resource zoning on the fringes. The townships include Residential and Low Density Residential zones.

Zones	
	ERZ
	LDRZ
	PCRZ
	PPRZ
	PUZ
	R1Z
	RDZ1
	RUZ
	SUZ1
	TZ



## RELEVANT OVERLAYS MAP

The overlays relevant to landscape character include the Significant Landscape Overlay which applies to the northern part of the precinct and aims to protect and enhance the landscape character of Otway Ranges Foothills, the volcanic cones, lava flows and other sites of geological significance. Several Environmental Significance Overlays apply, which aim to protect Lakes, Wetlands and Streams, Proclaimed Water Catchments and Habitat. The Vegetation Protection Overlay for the protection Significant and Remnant Vegetation a small section of land in the south of the precinct.

Colac-Otway	
	SL01
	VPO1
	ESO2
	ESO3
	ESO4

# PLANNING SCHEME ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Precinct	Municipality	Landscape Character Significance	Development Pressures	Relevant Planning Controls	Local Policies	Issues and Priority Areas	Key Planning Scheme Recommendations
4.2	Colac Otway	N/A	<p>Development Types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural buildings and houses</li> <li>Tourism development, including motels etc</li> <li>Plantations</li> <li>Signage</li> </ul> <p>Potential Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buildings and signage close to the roadside</li> <li>Buildings in prominent view lines</li> <li>Loss of pockets of vegetation</li> <li>Signage clutter</li> </ul>	<p>Zoning:</p> <p>RUZ</p> <p>PCRZ on the fringes</p> <p>TZ in Lavers Hill and Beech Forrest</p> <p>Overlays:</p> <p>SL01 Coastal, Otway and Plains Landscapes</p> <p>VP01 Significant and Remnant Vegetation</p> <p>ES02 Lakes, Wetlands and Stream</p> <p>ES03 Proclaimed Water Catchments</p> <p>ES04 Habitat Protection</p>	<p>22.01 Main Roads / Scenic Routes</p> <p>22.02 Ridgelines</p> <p>22.04 House Lot Excision in the Rural and Environmental Rural Zones</p> <p>22.05 Coastal and Otway Ranges Townships</p>	<p>Permit trigger exists for development within 100 metres of RDZ1</p> <p>Assessment tools could be strengthened</p> <p>Plantations adjacent to RDZ1</p> <p>SL01 covers small, northern portion of isolated precinct 4.2</p> <p>[Note previous issues re Colac Otway SLO Schedule]</p> <p>Other appropriate overlays in place in Lavers Hill ridge top area</p>	<p>Review/strengthen MSS in relation to landscape generally, particularly 21.01-03 and 21.04-02 The Nature of the Land</p> <p>Review MSS in relation to townships in the landscape, particularly 21.01-04 and 21.04-03 Settlement Patterns and Rural Living</p> <p>Also review MSS Clause 21.04-10 in relation to smaller communities</p> <p>Review/strengthen all relevant Local Policies</p> <p>Introduce new Local Policy including Development Principles for Precinct 4.2</p> <p>Rural Zone Schedule amended to require permit for timber production 40 hectares adjacent to RDZ1</p> <p>Local Policy [perhaps amend 22.01] to include indigenous buffer requirement for plantations adjacent to RDZ1</p> <p>Restructure and rewrite SL01 for each landscape type</p>