



THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD REGION  
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY

**plān|sphēre** [ // urban strategy planners ]

MUNICIPAL TOOLKIT  
WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT | SEPTEMBER 2003





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## 1. Introduction

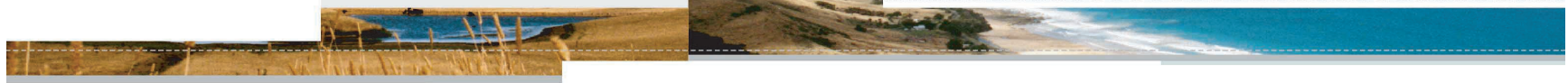
Planisphere was commissioned by the Department of Sustainability and Environment to undertake a landscape character assessment of the Great Ocean Road Region.

*Landscape character is the interplay of geology, topography, vegetation, water bodies and other natural features, combined with the effects of land use and built development, which makes one landscape different from another.*

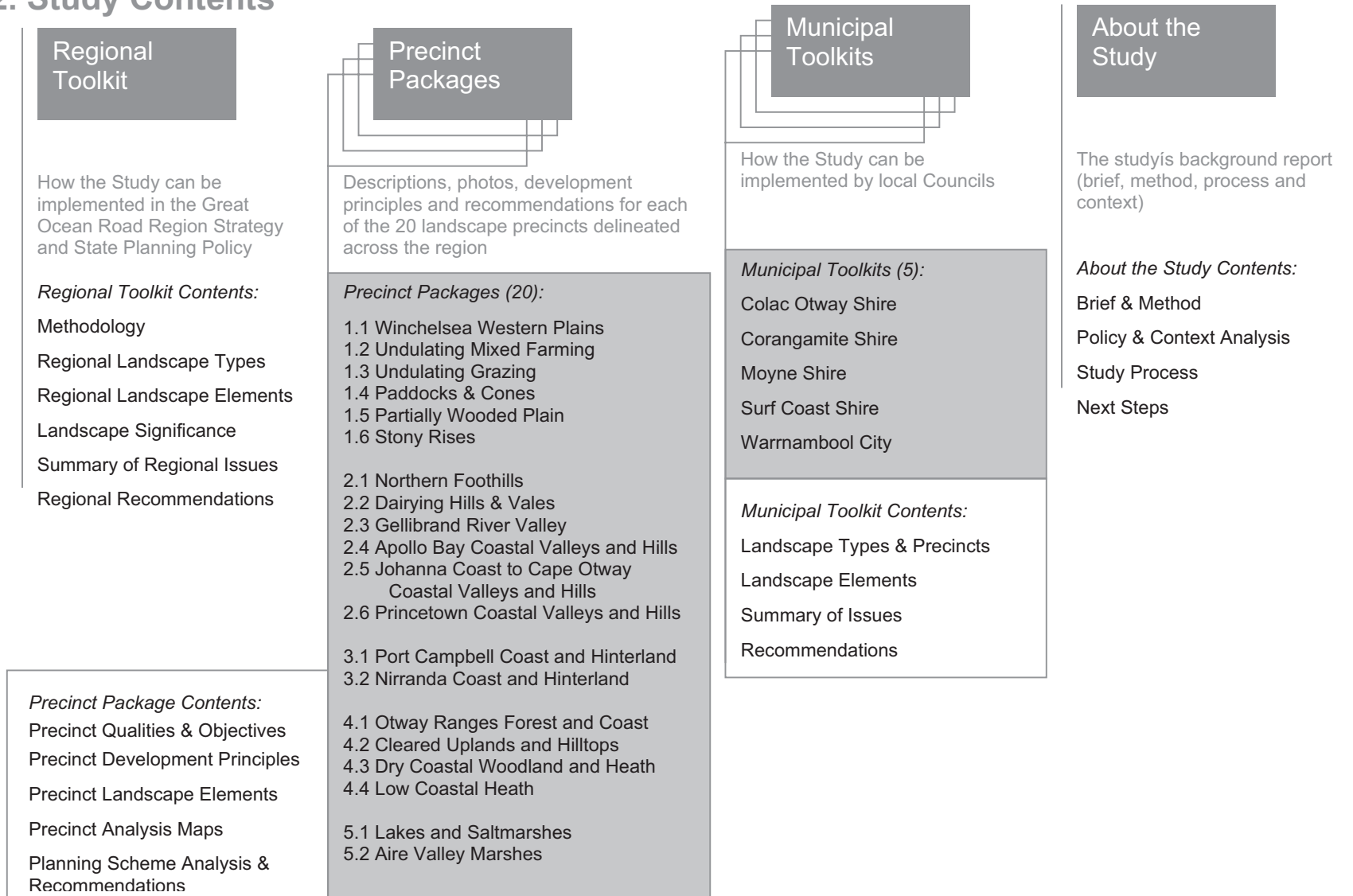
The landscape character assessment was undertaken as part of the overall Great Ocean Road Region Strategy, and has devised a sound and consistent methodology for assessing the character of landscapes and the way in which various types of development can be managed in different landscape types.

This document, the 'Warrnambool Municipal Toolkit', contains a synopsis of the landscape character types and precincts within the Shire, an explanation of landscape elements, a summary of key landscape character issues, and proposed recommendations, including the best method of implementing the findings of the Study through the Warrnambool Planning Scheme. It is intended that the relevant 'Precinct Packages' be appended to the Warrnambool Municipal Toolkit for a complete picture of landscape character within the Shire.

The Municipal Toolkits are one of four components that make up the contents of the Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study. An outline of the full contents of the Study is included on page 3 of this Toolkit.



## 2. Study Contents





### 3. Landscape Types and Precincts in Warrnambool

The City of Warrnambool is located at the western end of the Study Area, centred on the town of Warrnambool itself and bounded to the south by the ocean coastline.

The landscape of the City within the Study area is largely characterised by gently undulating topography with low scrub above sea cliffs and dune backed beaches at the coast. Further inland towards the Princes Highway, the landscape becomes flatter and extends to the Western Plains, with occasional stands of remnant vegetation and long distance views to volcanic craters and cones towards the east.

The following landscape character types and precincts exist within the City and are shown on the Warrnambool [Landscape Character Types and Precinct Map](#) on page 5.

#### Western Plains, Cones and Lakes (1.1 – 1.6)

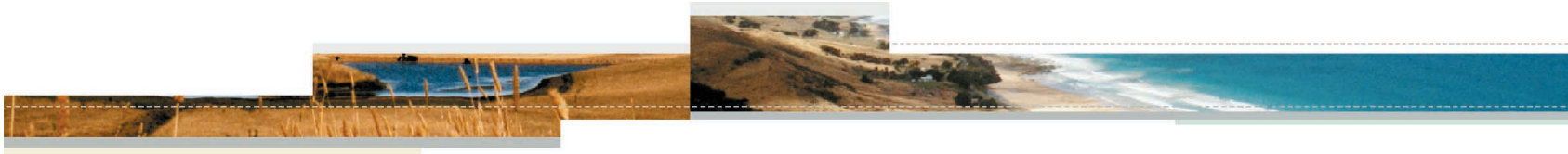
##### 1.4 Paddocks & Cones (part)

#### Western Coastal Cliffs (3.1 – 3.2)

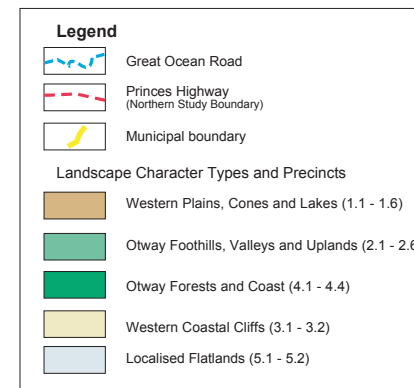
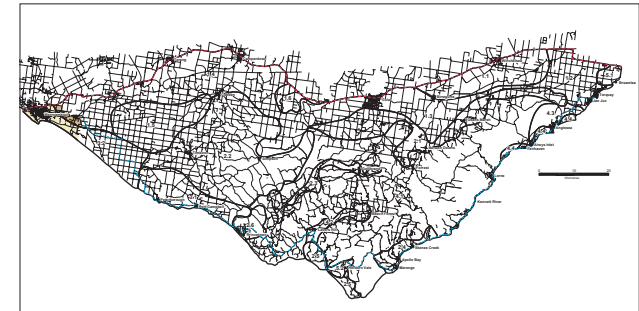
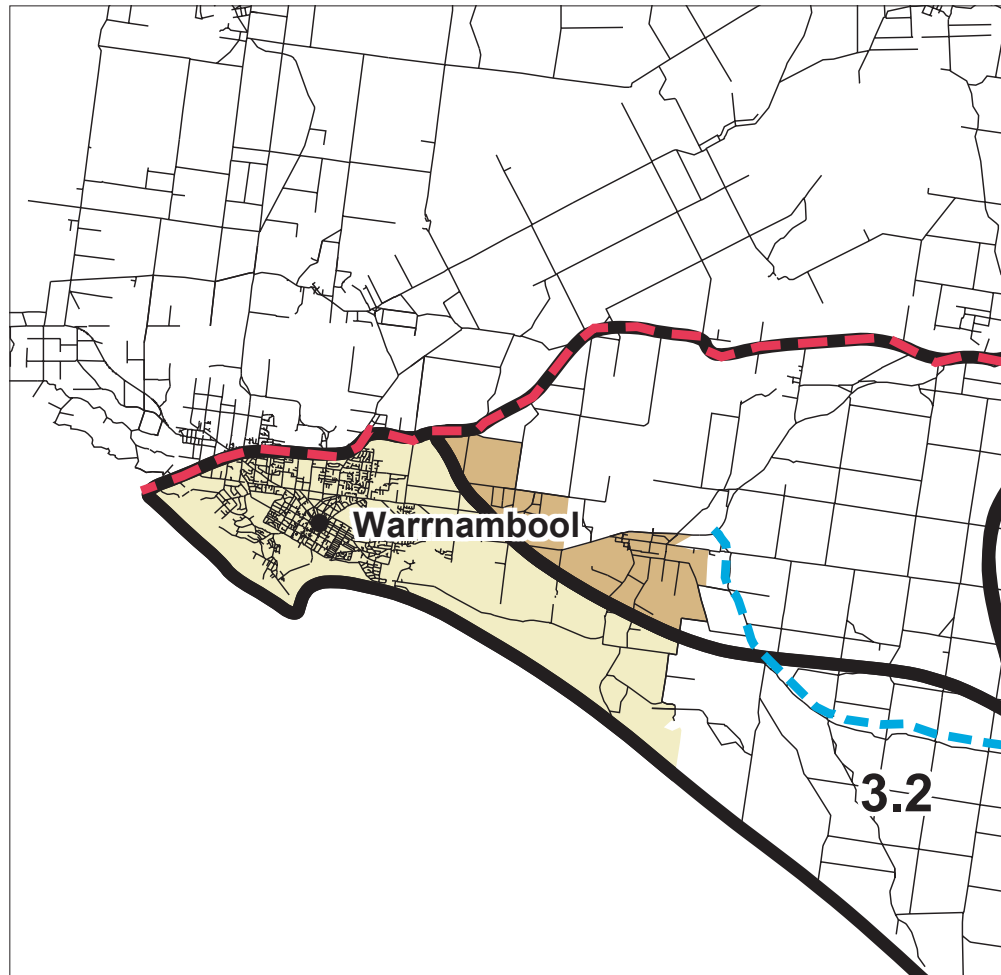
##### 3.2 Nirranda Coast and Hinterland (part)

### Implications for Local Policy

It is recommended that the Precinct Descriptions, Distinctive Qualities and Development Principles (including Landscape Objectives) relating to the precincts in the Shire be included as Local Policy in the Warrnambool Planning Scheme. (Refer to relevant [Precinct Packages](#) for details).



## Landscape Types and Precincts





## 4. Landscape Elements in Warrnambool

### Townships

Townships within the City of Warrnambool vary in their settings and relationship to the surrounding landscape. For example, parts of Warrnambool are dominated by their coastal location, with scenic views to the ocean and low heathland vegetation. Other townships further inland have a sense of being imposed on the relatively flat landscape, with incised creeks and stands of remnant vegetation providing visual relief in the landscape.

The landscape character of the following Warrnambool township is described in the Precinct Landscape Elements section of the relevant Precinct Package:

- Warrnambool (Precinct 3.2)

Key issues in Warrnambool townships include sprawling development on the periphery of settlements. It is important to contain townships, and for the natural landscape to dominate beyond that edge. Sprawl on the periphery of townships often occurs in low density residential areas where development 'spills' into the natural landscape. Signage clutter and bulky industrial development along the main road into a township and can have a similar negative visual effect.

Another key issue is the emergence of 'heavy' urban or suburban building forms that have no relationship to the landscape setting, particularly in coastal areas. This has the potential to detract from these settlements that were previously defined by a casual, 'beachside' character derived from light, simple buildings with articulated forms and a mix of materials.

### Edges

'Edges' occur in the landscape when different landscape types or features intersect. They create complexity in the landscape and

provide visual contrast and a point of interest. For any given landscape (eg the sea, a forest) it is often the edge (eg the coastline, a clearing in the forest) that attracts the most people and creates management issues.

There are many edges within the Warrnambool landscape, including the following that are described in the Precinct Landscape Elements section of the Precinct Packages:

- Township / natural landscape edges
- Edges where landscape character types intersect
- Edges where landscape character precincts meet
- The coastline
- Coastal park edges
- Topographical edges
- Features in the landscape creating edges ie incised valleys, stands of vegetation, rivers and other waterways, shelter belts etc
- Road corridors creating edges

### Corridors

Main road corridors and key tourist routes that pass through the Study Area in the City of Warrnambool include the Princes Highway, with the termination of the Great Ocean Road just outside Allansford. There are also a number of key north to south corridors, and secondary roads providing access to tourism destinations such as Logans Beach. The road corridors throughout the City pass through different landscape types and precincts, resulting in a variety of landscape experiences and scenery throughout the journey. Some of these journeys are described in the Precinct Landscape Elements section of the Precinct Packages.

Main road corridors throughout the Region are zoned Road Zone Category 1 and buildings within 100 metres of them require a planning permit in the Rural and Environmental Rural Zones. As a result most development adjacent to main roads can be assessed and managed. This is important because the impression and landscape character of





an area is often confined to what is seen from the main road corridors, particularly the key tourist routes.

The assessment and management of development that can be seen from main road corridors is therefore an important issue in the City. Particular types of development for which Development Principles have been prepared in relation to this issue include timber plantations adjacent to main roads, development on highly visible hill faces and ridges, ribbon development and low density development on township fringes.

## Key Views

There are a limited number of key viewing locations within the City's Study Area that are frequented by tourists and visitors to the Region. The best known of these is the Whale Watch platform at Logans Beach, featuring long distance coastal views.

Views from the following key location in Warrnambool is described in the [Precinct Landscape Elements](#) section of the relevant [Precinct Package](#):

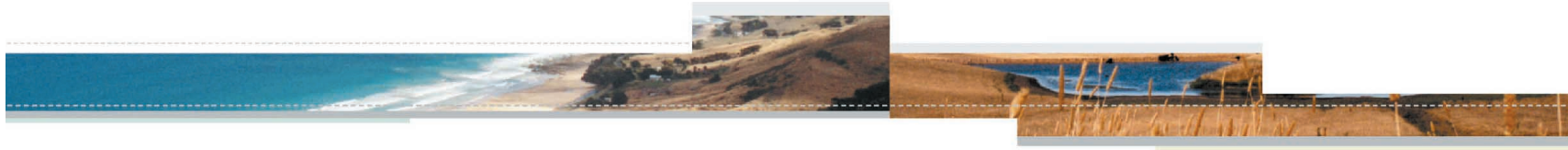
- Logans Beach Lookout (Precinct 3.2)

This key viewing location is shown on the Warrnambool [Key Views Map](#) on page 8.

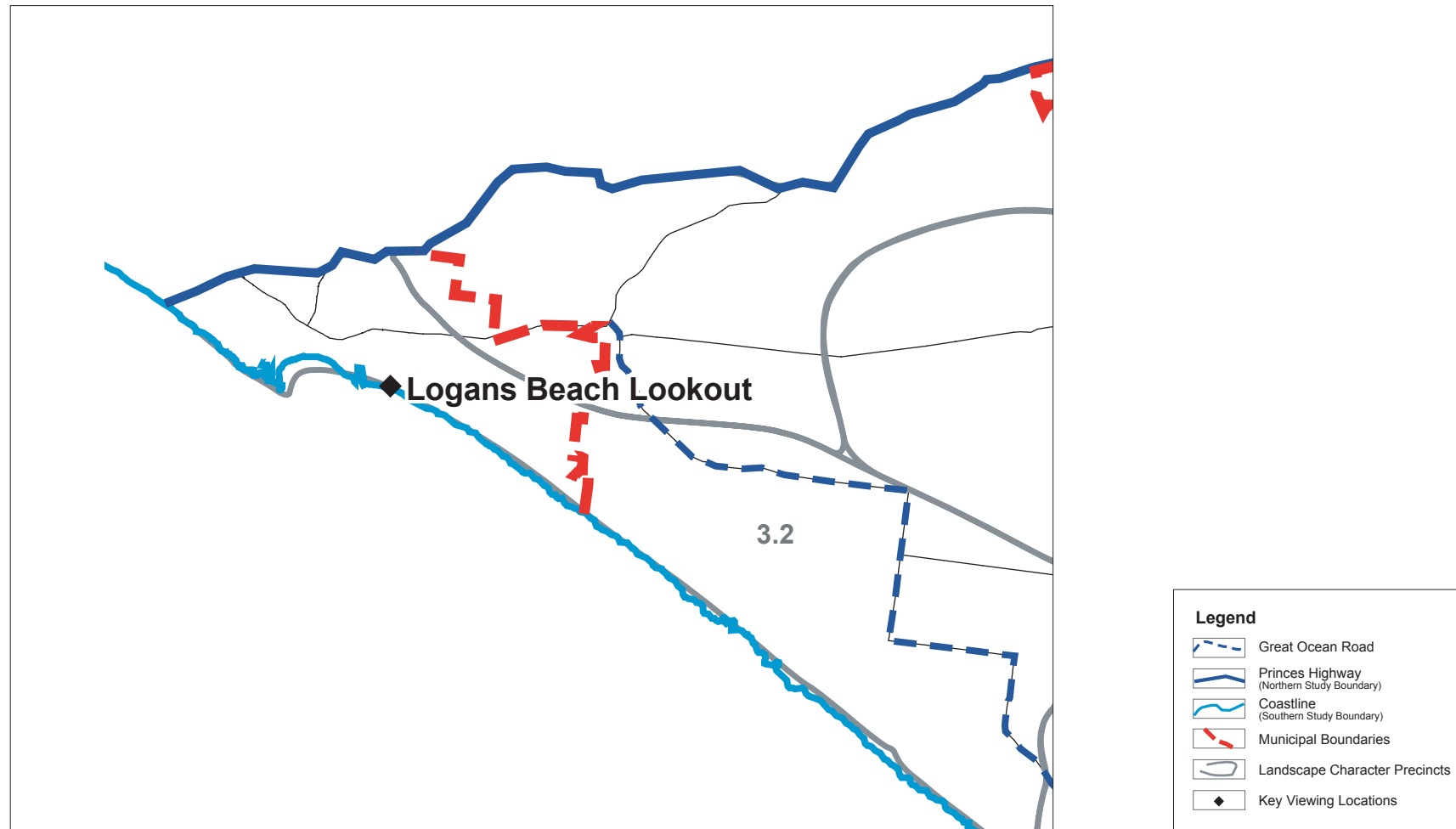
The protection and management of views from popular and established viewing locations is a key issue within the City. It is very important, in most instances, to retain the dominance of the natural landscape from these key viewing points, and to ensure that any new development is assessed for its impact on the character of the landscape.

## Implications for Local Policy

It is recommended that brief policy statements about each of these Landscape Elements be included as Local Policy in the Warrnambool Planning Scheme. It is envisaged that the policy statements would be incorporated into the relevant Local Policy for that landscape character precinct.



## Key Views





## 5. Summary of Warrnambool Issues

### Development Pressures

Development pressure within the City is primarily focused in Warrnambool itself. Extensive redevelopment is occurring along the foreshore and this has extended beyond the township to all coastal areas of the municipality, where there is increasing pressure for new dwellings and tourism facilities and infrastructure. A particular focus for development is Logans Beach, a popular tourism destination where land prices are increasing.

Other development pressures are occurring on the outskirts of Warrnambool and include bulky goods establishments and associated signage along the main roads into the town.

### Planning Permit Controls

#### Zones

A large area of the City within the Study Area is zoned Rural. The key purpose of the Rural Zone is for dairying, grazing and crop raising.

A key issue throughout the City that has the potential to be managed through the provisions of the Rural Zone is the clear felling of plantation trees adjacent to main road corridors and tourist routes. This practice leaves large and often highly visible areas of the landscape scarred, detracting from the landscape character of the Region. The schedule to the Rural Zone provides the opportunity to require a permit for timber production over 40 hectares. It can also be specified that this requirement only relates to timber plantations abutting a Category 1 Road Zone. Introducing a permit trigger in the Warrnambool Planning Scheme would provide the opportunity to require plantations to be screened from main road corridors by an indigenous and/or native vegetation buffer including understorey (minimum width 20 metres to

be stipulated in Local Policy), thus obscuring clear felled areas from key tourist routes and other main roads.

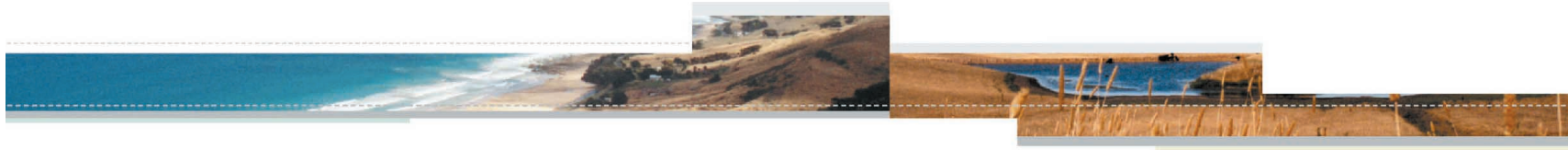
The Rural Zone provides a permit trigger for buildings within 100 metres of a Category 1 Road Zone. However, the standard Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) Decision Guidelines under the zone contains minimal reference to the protection and enhancement of landscape character. This gap in the VPPs will be improved through the provision of Local Policy containing the Precinct Principles (including Development Principles) prepared as part of this Study.

A review of existing VPPs rural zones has recently been completed, which may have implications for the detailed implementation of the above recommendations. However, it is recommended that the proposed changes be adapted as necessary and accommodated within any changes to the structure of the rural zones.

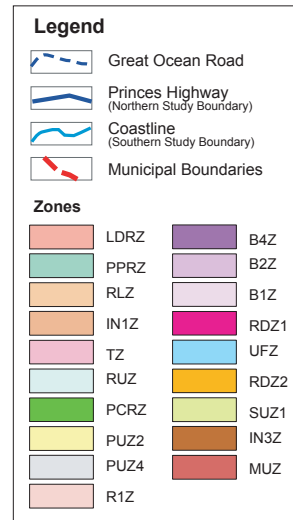
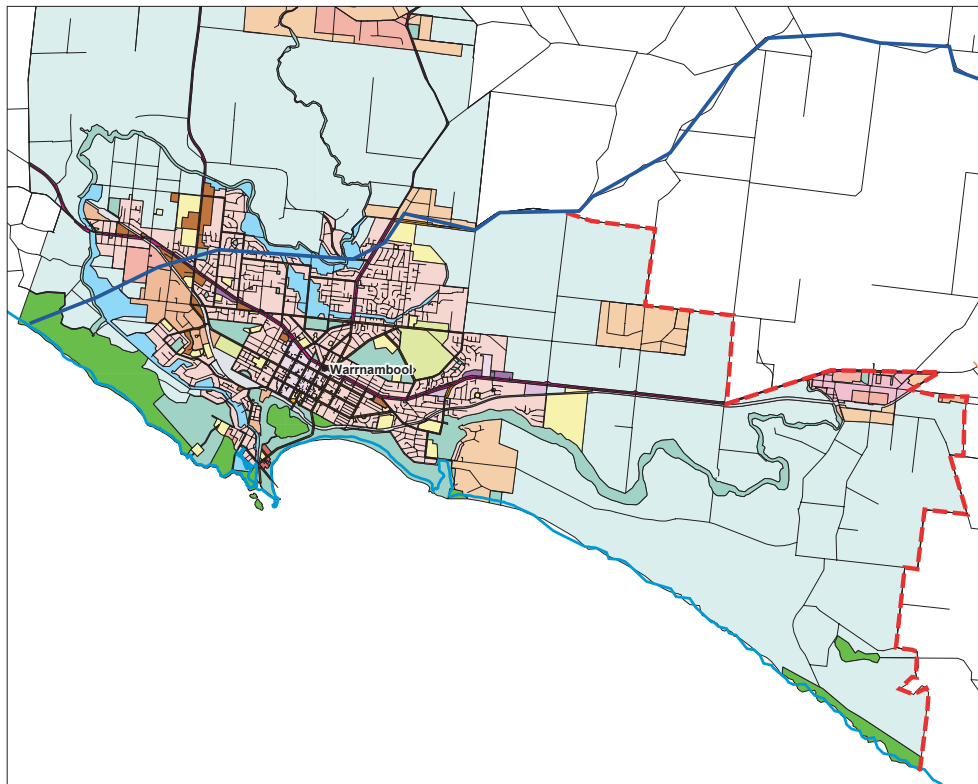
Towns within the Shire are primarily zoned Township or Residential 1, with some Low Density Residential or Rural Living zoned areas on the outskirts or in isolated pockets in the rural hinterland. As discussed, it is often the low density fringes of townships that 'spill' into the natural landscape as opposed to being contained, and result in an erosion of the landscape character. Being larger than other towns in the Region, Warrnambool also contains substantial areas of Industrial and Public Use Zoned land.

The narrow coastal strip and other public parks throughout the City's Study Area are zoned Public Conservation and Resource. Under the requirements of the zone, a permit is required to construct a building or carry out works unless it is shown on an Incorporated Plan which applies to the land, or is carried out by or on behalf of the public land manager.

The zones in place within the Study Area of the City are shown on the Warrnambool [Zoning Map](#) on page 10.



## Zoning





## Overlays

### Existing Significant Landscape Overlays

Within the Study Area, the Significant Landscape Overlay is in place over the majority of the coastline from the City's eastern Municipal boundary and extending westwards beyond Warrnambool (part Precinct 3.2). The schedule to the overlay (SLO1 Coastal Hinterland Landscape Area) contains Landscape Character Objectives that all relate to the scenic qualities of the coast and the protection of views, and the Permit Requirements and Decision Guidelines are clear.

It is recommended that the content of the schedule to the Significant Landscape Overlay be reviewed with reference to the precinct analysis undertaken as part of this Study, and additional Objectives and Decision Guidelines not relating to scenic qualities / views be added, if appropriate. It may also be appropriate to list additional assessment tools (ie Reference Documents and Local Policies) in the schedule.

### Other Existing Relevant Overlays

Other relevant overlays utilised within the City's study area are the Environmental Significance and Design and Development Overlays.

The Design and Development Overlay (DDO4) is used to provide a permit trigger for single dwellings over 7 metres in height within Warrnambool itself, and is also used in the Logans Beach area (DDO2) to set design, subdivision and development parameters.

It would be pertinent to review the DDO2 schedule to ensure consistency with the findings of this Study.

Existing overlays relevant to landscape character within the Study Area of the Shire are shown on the [Relevant Overlays Map](#) on page 12.

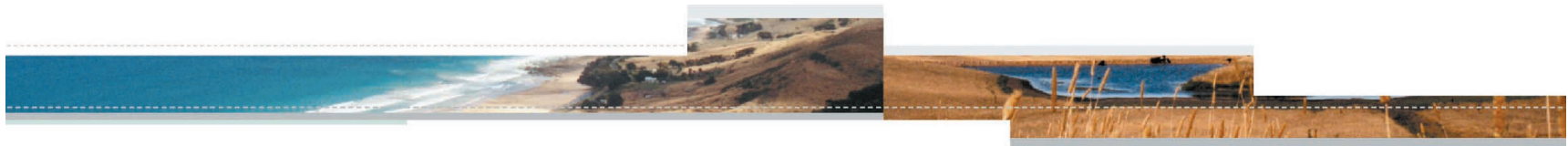
### Proposed Significant Landscape Overlays

There are no additional areas of significant landscape character that warrant protection and management through the application of the

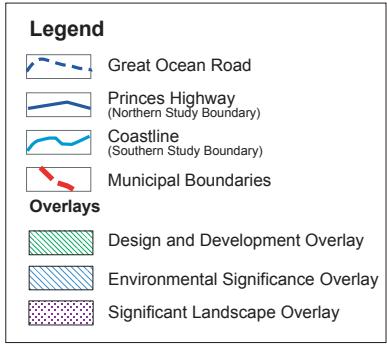
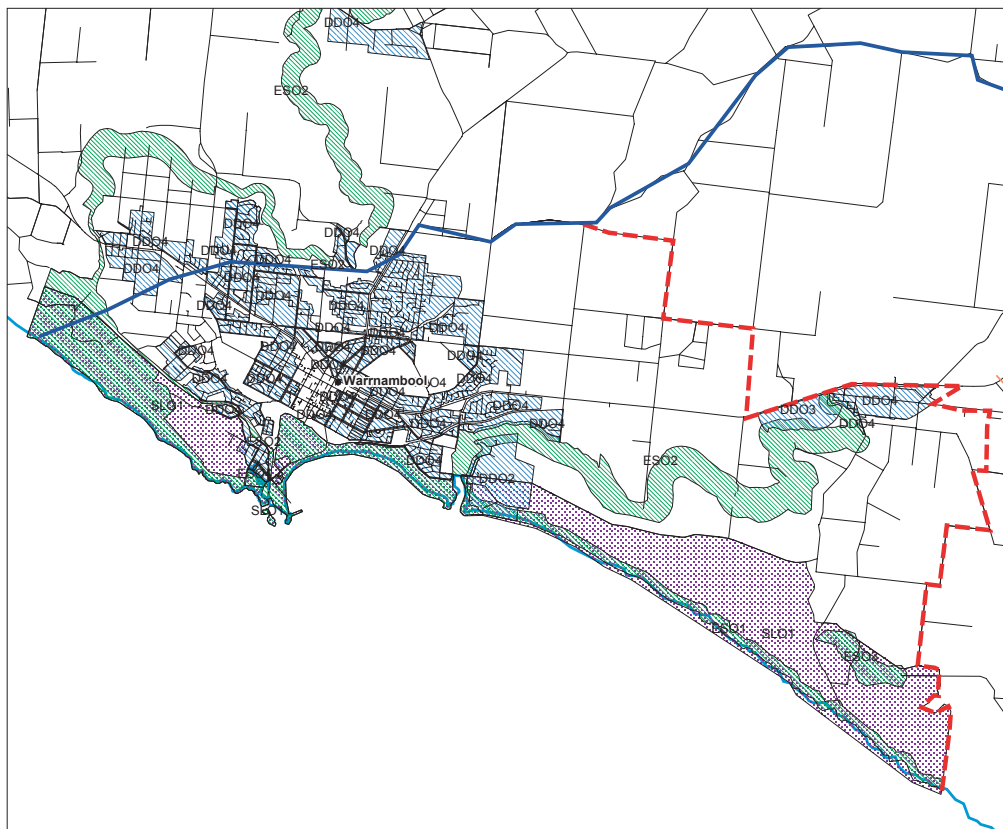
Significant Landscape Overlay. This was determined by applying the following formula to all parts of the City within the Study Area.

*Significance + Pressure + Lack of Control = Priority Area (for additional control)*

The level of significance (Regional, State or National) was attributed to the landscapes through the application of a set of assessment criteria. The methodology and findings in relation to landscape character significance are outlined in the [Regional Toolkit](#).



## Relevant Overlays





## Local Planning Policy Framework

The Warrnambool Planning Scheme includes Strategic Directions to:

- Protect significant natural environments.
- Protect and enhance landscaping on all major approach routes, access roads and local streets.
- Identify landscapes of high scenic value.
- Maintain a compact urban form that does not adversely affect landscape and environmental qualities.

And includes the following Local Policies relevant to landscape character:

### 22.01 Settlement and Housing:

- 22.01-1 Aboriginal Heritage
- 22.01-6 Building and Construction in Low Density Residential and Rural Living Zones
- 22.01-9 Logans Beach
- 22.01-11 Large Lot Local Policy
- 22.01-14 Warrnambool Foreshore Precinct
- 22.01-15 Lake Pertrobe Precinct
- 22.01-16 Breakwater Harbour Precinct
- 22.01-17 Escarpment Park Precinct

### 22.02 Environment:

- 22.02-1 Coastal Areas
- 22.02-2 Rare and Threatened Species
- 22.02-6 Steep Land
- 22.02-7 Hilltop and Ridgeline Protection
- 22.02-11 Hopkins Rover Open Space Policy
- 22.02-13 Wild Coast Precinct

The Three Year MSS Review Report (Keaney Planning and Research Pty Ltd and Michael Kirsch, August 2002) recommends changes to the structure, format and content of the Municipal Strategic Statement, including the above Local Policies which are of some relevance to

landscape character. The majority of these changes can be implemented without affecting the recommendations of this Study.

The Warrnambool Planning Scheme does not contain Local Policy relating specifically to landscape character and following the delineation of landscape character types and precincts, and the assessment of landscape character significance as part of this Study, it is recommended that this information be included as Local Policy in the Planning Scheme. It is important that Local Policy assists in exercising discretion within the Planning Scheme and it is therefore recommended that the Development Principles prepared as part of this Study also be included. (The Development Principles are contained in the relevant Precinct Packages).

The Local Policy, including Development Principles, will provide guidance in decision making in relation to landscape character that is currently lacking. Particular issues within Warrnambool City that will be covered include development visible from key tourist roads, plantations adjacent to main road corridors, development in coastal areas, and containment of township edges.



## 6. Warrnambool Recommendations

### Warrnambool Planning Scheme

#### Municipal Strategic Statement

Review and strengthen the Municipal Strategic Statement in relation to landscape character generally, including the following Clauses:

- 21.02 Overview of Warrnambool City Council
- 21.03 Factors Influencing Future Planning and Development
- 21.09 Environment

#### Local Policy

Introduce new Local Policy specific to the landscape character of Warrnambool, including Precinct Descriptions, Distinctive Qualities and Development Principles (including Landscape Objectives) relating to the precincts in the City.

Include brief policy statements about each of the Landscape Elements in the new Local Policy. It is envisaged that the policy statements would be incorporated into the relevant Local Policy for that landscape character precinct.

Include in Local Policy a requirement for an indigenous or native vegetation buffer (minimum depth 20 metres) for timber plantations abutting a Road Zone Category 1.

Review and strengthen all relevant Local Policies.

#### Rural Zone

Amend the Schedule to the Rural Zone to require a permit for timber production over 40 hectares abutting a Road Zone Category 1.

#### Significant Landscape Overlay

Review and rewrite the existing Significant Landscape Overlay schedule (SLO1) taking into account the findings of this Study so that the schedule includes other considerations, not just scenic qualities / views.

#### Other Relevant Overlays

Review the existing DDO2 schedule to ensure that it is consistent with the findings of this Study and provides appropriate guidance in decision making.

### Warrnambool Community Education

Consider the need for community education programs to disseminate information about landscape sensitive development and the findings of this Study.

### Council Staff Skilling

It will take time to become familiar with the findings of this Study and its implementation through the planning system, and the City's planners will need support and skilling to get the most out of the Study's recommendations. Correct approaches to site analysis, knowledge about acceptable design solutions for particular landscape character types, and consistency are all important. Training sessions, workshops and a review of permit applications by appropriately qualified consultants may be useful techniques. Above all, the Council must send out the right message to the development community through consistent decision making as well as communication about the value of the landscape character to the City's image and economy.





## Council Statutory Support

The main products for statutory support, which will aid decision making are the proposed changes to the Warrnambool Planning Scheme, including the Development Principles and Local Policy. However, there are other allied or associated measures that can be taken, including:

- Introduction of additional permit conditions
- Better enforcement of permit conditions
- Active monitoring of illegal works, and increased publicity regarding penalties
- Improved communication and coordination with public land managers to ensure that the desired landscape character outcomes are achieved