



THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD REGION
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY

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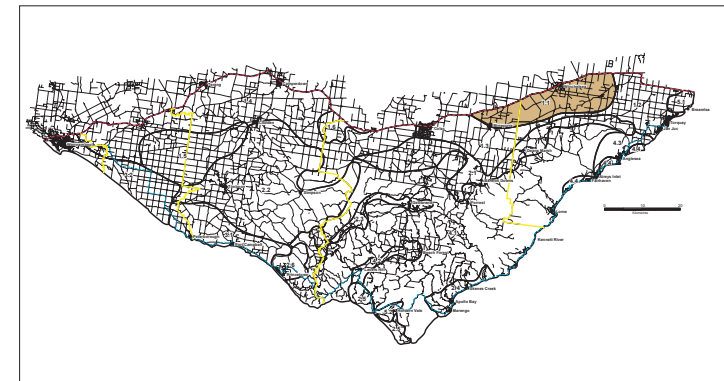
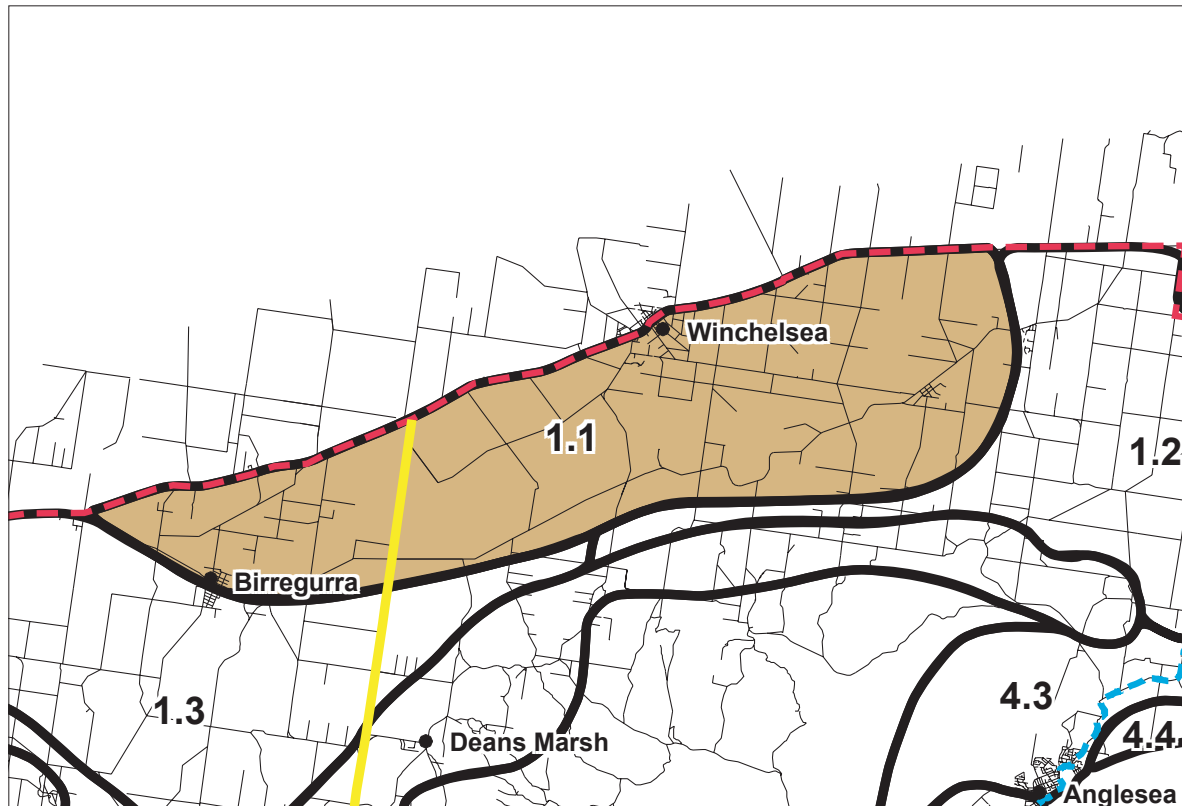
PRECINCT PACKAGE

PRECINCT 1.1 | WINCHELSEA WESTERN PLAINS

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT | SEPTEMBER 2003

LOCALITY MAP

PRECINCT 1.1 | WINCHELSEA WESTERN PLAINS



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 1.1 | WINCHELSEA WESTERN PLAINS



PRECINCT DESCRIPTION

Precinct 1.1 is characterised by generally flat topography, with the occasional volcanic outcrops. The large, open paddocks are sometimes divided by shelter belts of cypresses and low, transparent post and wire style fencing. Stands of remnant vegetation are located throughout the precinct, often adjacent to the road corridors and in proximity to waterways such as the Barwon River. Farm houses and outbuildings are scattered throughout the pastoral landscape, with a smaller subdivision pattern occurring on the perimeter of the townships. Long distance views to the low horizon are available from within the precinct.

DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES

The Western Plains, Cones and Lakes landscape character type is located in a horizontal band across the northern section of the study area. It is associated with the flat to gently rolling topography of the western plains, punctuated in some areas by volcanic cones, craters and outcrops. The landscape comprises mostly paddocks divided by shelter belts, with some remnant stands of vegetation throughout.

Within this landscape type, precinct 1.1 is distinctive for its relatively flat topography, larger paddocks and long distance views to a low horizon. This is the 'big sky' precinct of the Western Plains, Cones and Lakes area.

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



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- A sense of vastness and openness
- Long distance views to a low horizon
- Shelter belts as a feature between large paddocks
- Indigenous vegetation emphasising landscape features
- The character of farming structures

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Vegetation is currently quite sparse in the precinct, and this contributes to the sense of openness. However, there is the opportunity to emphasise the presence of natural features such as creeks and valleys with additional indigenous vegetation, and to continue to express the pattern of paddocks with additional shelter belt planting. The contribution of farming structures to the character of the landscape has the potential to be strengthened, along with the appearance of existing rural residential development.

LANDSCAPE OBJECTIVES

- To increase indigenous vegetation in the precinct, particularly adjacent to road corridors and waterways.
- To ensure that shelter belt planting remains a feature of the area.
- To recognise the contribution of farming structures to the character of the working landscape.
- To reduce the visual impact of development on large areas of the landscape.
- To retain the sense of openness and the long distance views within the precinct.
- To improve the outlook from main road corridors by minimising the visibility of commercial timber plantations.
- To maintain the dominance of the natural landscape from main road corridors outside townships.
- To improve the appearance of rural residential development located on the fringes of townships.

PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

PRECINCT 1.1 | WINCHELSEA WESTERN PLAINS

| LANDSCAPE ELEMENT | OBJECTIVE | DESIGN RESPONSE | AVOID |
|---------------------|---|---|---|
| VEGETATION | To increase indigenous vegetation in the precinct, particularly adjacent to road corridors and waterways. | Retain existing indigenous and native trees and understorey and provide for the planting of new indigenous vegetation wherever possible. | <i>Loss of indigenous vegetation in or adjacent to landform features such as waterways, and road corridors.</i> |
| SHELTER BELTS | To ensure that shelter belt planting remains a feature of the area. | Retain existing shelter belts wherever possible. Replace lost shelter belt trees with the same species or an alternative species, suitable to the local area. | <i>Loss of shelter belts.</i> |
| SITING AND FINISHES | To recognise the contribution of farming structures to the character of the working landscape. To reduce the visual impact of development on large areas of the landscape. | Adopt the clustered development pattern of homesteads found in the precinct. Use simple building details. Utilise colours and finishes that complement those occurring naturally in the local area. | <i>Loss of rural character.</i> |
| SITING | To retain the sense of openness and the long distance views within the precinct, particularly from main roads. | Between townships, locate development a substantial distance from the Princes Highway and other Category 1 Roads wherever possible. | <i>Loss of sense of openness and long distance views.</i> |

| LANDSCAPE ELEMENT | OBJECTIVE | DESIGN RESPONSE | AVOID |
|--|--|--|--|
| TIMBER PLANTATIONS | To improve the outlook from main road corridors by minimising the visibility of commercial timber plantations. | 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. | <i>Visibility of timber plantations from main road corridors.</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>Highly visible ribbon development.</i> <i>Unclear edges to townships.</i> <i>Signage clutter at entrances and exits to townships.</i> |
| RURAL LIVING AND LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT | To improve the appearance of rural living and low density residential development located on the fringes of townships. | In rural living and low density residential areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use permeable surfacing for all unbuilt areas to minimise surface run-off and to support vegetation. - Retain existing indigenous and native trees and understorey and provide for the planting of new indigenous and native vegetation wherever possible. - Utilise vegetation for privacy screening and to delineate property boundaries, instead of fencing. If fencing is necessary, provide open style fencing of a type traditionally used in rural areas. | <i>High, solid fencing.</i> <i>Loss of vegetation.</i> <i>Impervious surfacing.</i> |

PRECINCT LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

PRECINCT 1.1 | WINCHELSEA WESTERN PLAINS



ABOVE | View looking south from the Princes Highway on the eastward journey to Winchelsea.



ABOVE | Roadside vegetation on the journey to Winchelsea.

EDGES

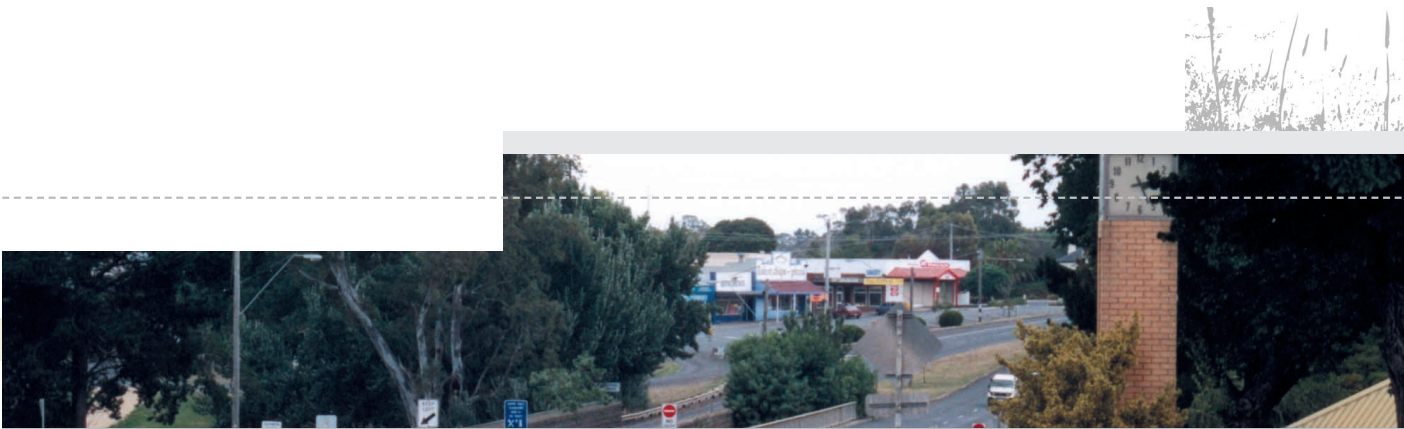
The following 'landscape edges' exist within the precinct:

- Interface of road corridors with the landscape, and development adjacent to those road corridors
- Edges of townships with the 'natural' landscape
- Landscape features as edges within the landscape, such as creeks, incised valleys etc.
- Interface of development with landscape features such as waterways, including lakes
- The edge of the horizon, where the sky meets the landscape
- Edges of paddocks defined by shelter belts

CORRIDORS

The following, taken from field survey notes, provides a sequence description of the journey travelling north along Forrest Road towards Birregurra and east on the Princes Highway from Birregurra to Winchelsea:

... Approaching Birregurra from the south – enter plains landscape – views back to the Otway foothills – indigenous vegetation along roadsides – views to Barwon River, incised in the broken country – view to Birregurra church spires – timber cottage edge to town – Birregurra – cross railway line – Otways on the southern horizon – flat to rolling land with pine and cypress belts – some stony rises – cross railway line – flatter, more open towards Winchelsea – rural residential 'visual intrusion' to the north of the Highway – gateway to Winchelsea sugar gums and cypresses – Winchelsea – olive grove – red gums – views to Lake Modewarre and more red gums – vines occasionally...



ABOVE | Low point in the topography of Winchelsea where the Barwon River runs through the township.



ABOVE | Arriving at Winchelsea.

There are two major townships within the precinct: Winchelsea and Birregurra.

WINCHELSEA

Winchelsea is the largest settlement within the precinct and is set on a narrow grid either side of the Princes Highway. The Barwon River runs through the centre of the settlement, resulting in the town being located in a small gully. The western plains extend into the town from the north and south, with few tall trees resulting in a sense of exposure. The built form of the township is characterised by a mix of architectural styles, with low density residential development occurring in a scattered formation at its edges.

BIRREGURRA

Birregurra is a small town with development largely contained within the original grid layout. Though the southern outskirts of the town are zoned to accommodate rural residential development, this edge is currently compact and defined. The northern edge of the town meets the western plains, with the landscape surrounding the town being cleared for grazing with many cypress shelter belts. To the south east of the town is the west branch of the Barwon River, forming a dramatic escarpment on the south eastern approach. The built form of the town is characterised by intact and restored Victorian timber cottages and shops, with a good canopy tree cover including reinstated avenues of plane trees.



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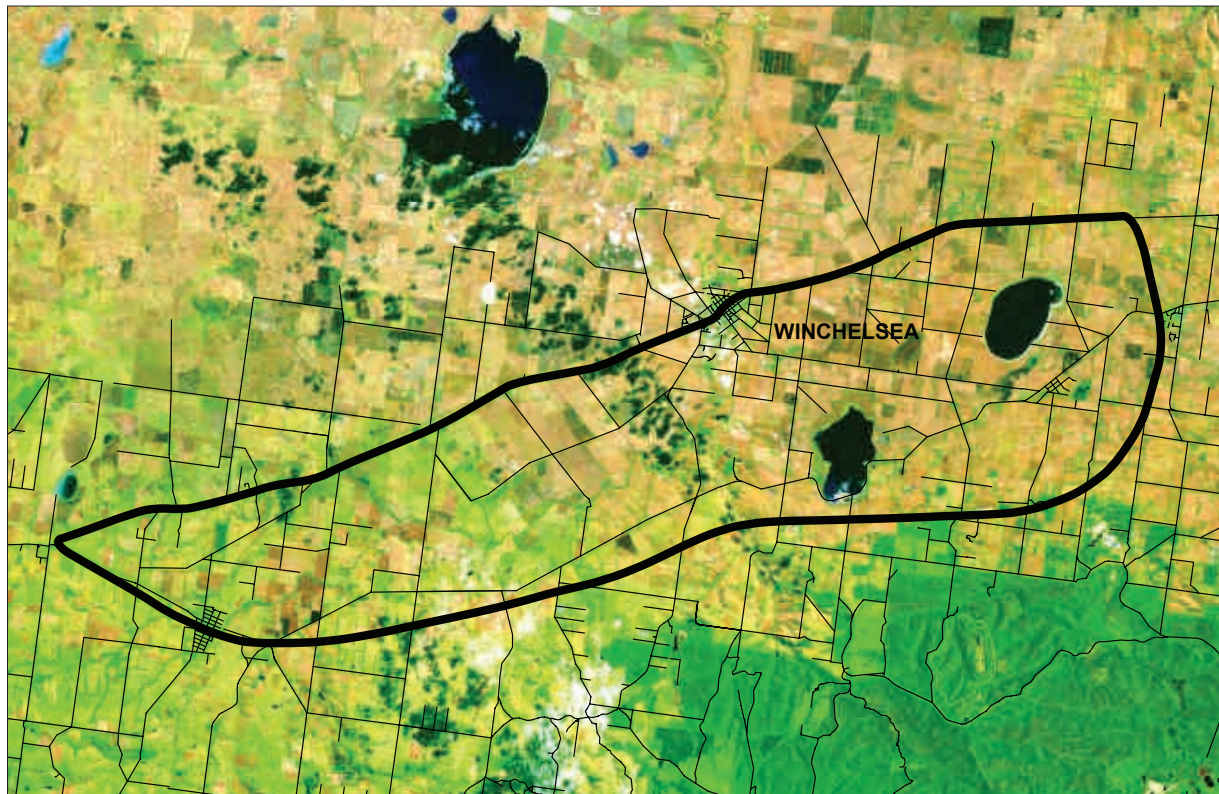
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PRECINCT ANALYSIS
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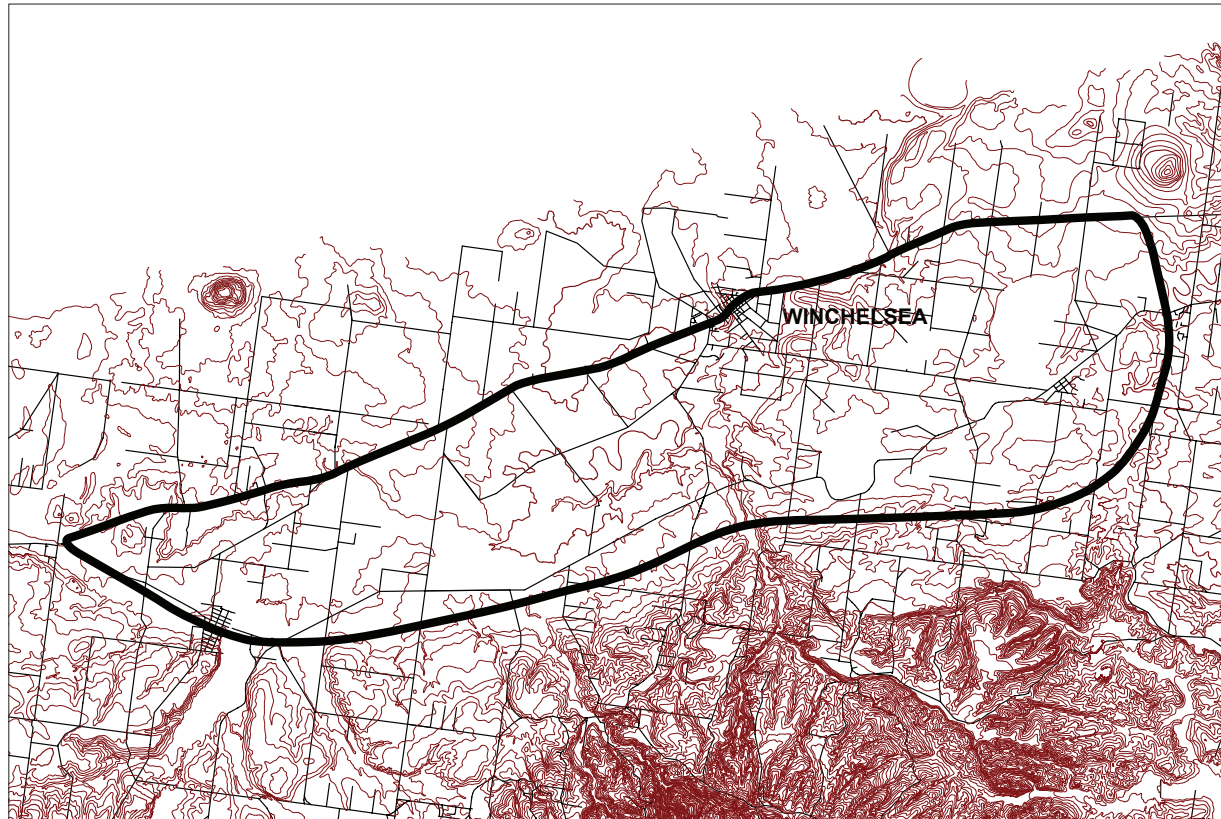
PRECINCT ANALYSIS MAPS

PRECINCT 1.1 | WINCHELSEA WESTERN PLAINS



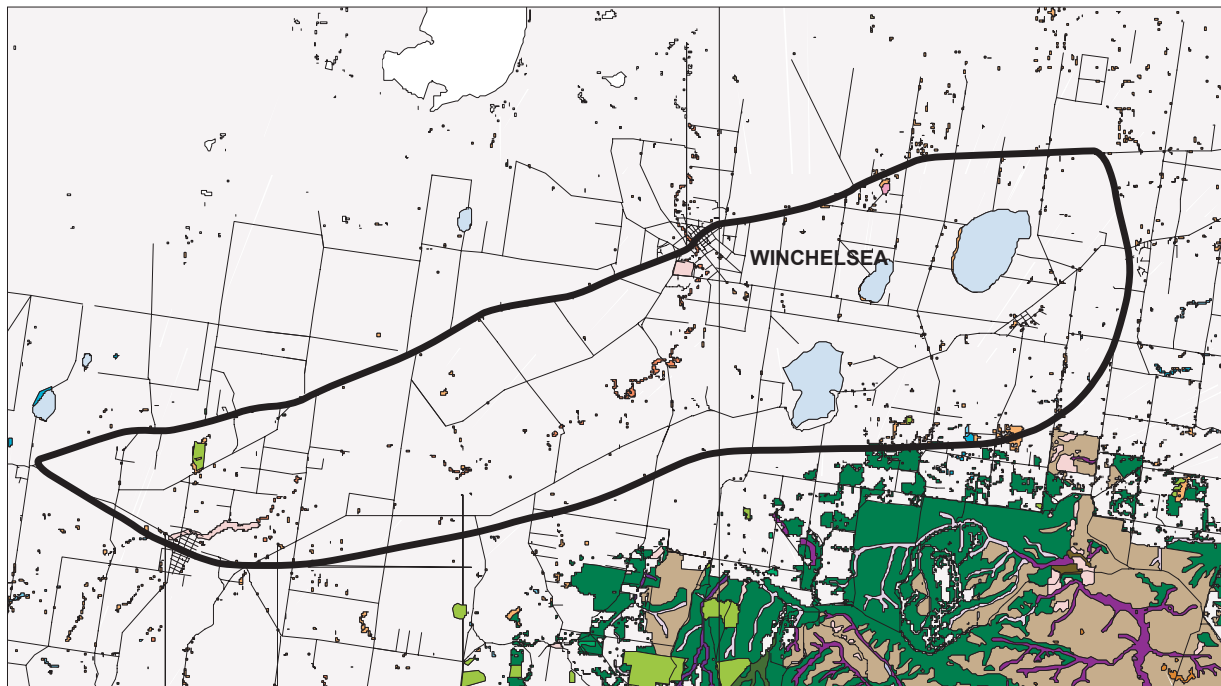
SATELLITE PHOTO

The satellite image shows a lack of vegetation, particularly in the eastern half of the precinct, with denser vegetation occurring generally in the river corridors. The two water masses of Lake Modewarre and the Wurdiboluc Reservoir are dominant, as is the division of the land into large paddocks.



CONTOUR MAP

The contours map highlights the generally flat landscape of the precinct, with steeper topography adjacent to river corridors.



ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES

The Ecological Vegetation Classes map shows a majority of the precinct as private land with no tree cover. Floodplain Riparian Woodlands and Grassy Woodlands are evident along the creek corridors and other parts of the precinct.

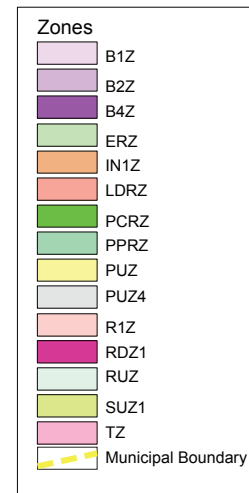
Vegetation Classes

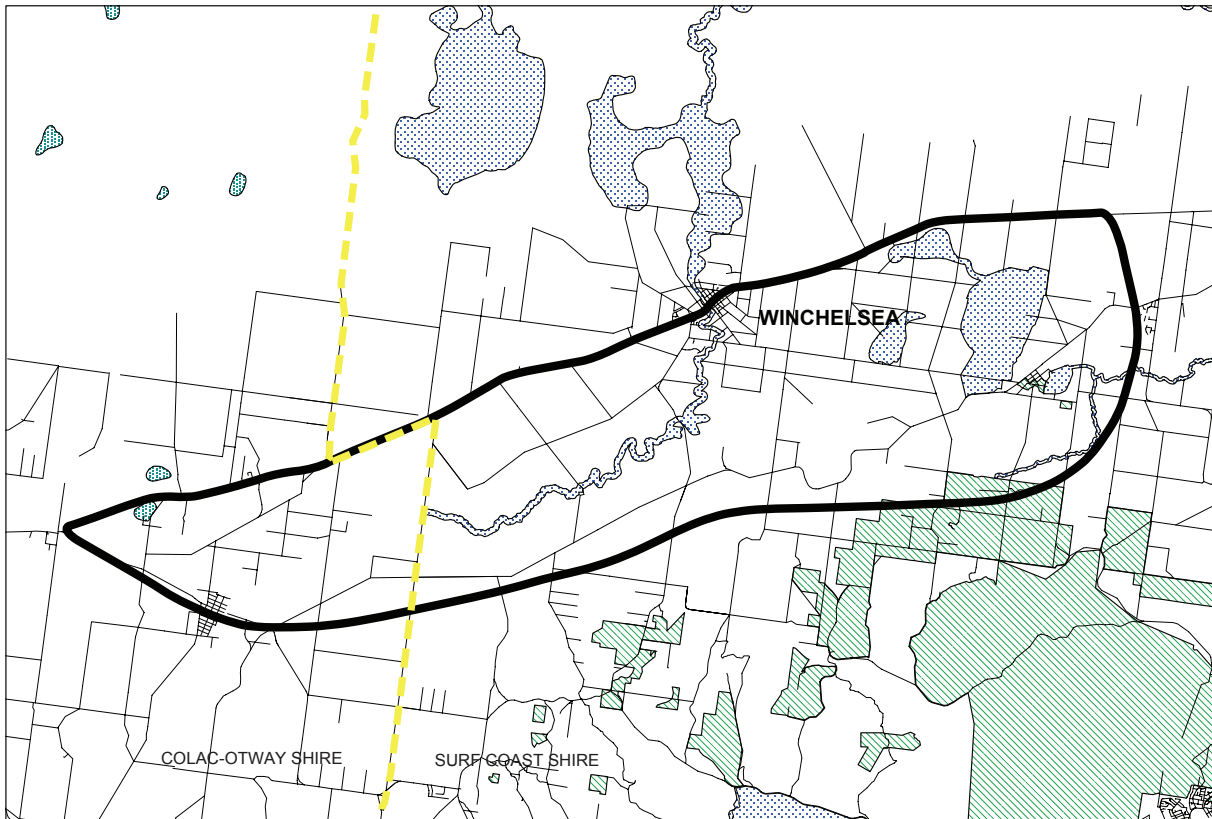
| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Aquatic Herbland □ Aquatic Herbland/Plains Sedgy Wetland Mosaic □ Bird Colony Shrubland □ Calcarente Dune Woodland □ Cane Grass-Lignum Halophyllic Herbland □ Cinder Cone Woodland □ Clay Heathland □ Cleared Severely Disturbed □ Coast Gully Thicket □ Coastal Dune Scrub □ Coastal Dune Scrub Mosaic □ Coastal Headland Scrub □ Coastal Headland Scrub/ □ Headland Coastal Tussock Grassland Mosaic □ Coastal Landfill / Sand Accretion □ Coastal Saltmarsh □ Coastal Tussock Grassland □ Cool Temperate Rainforest □ Creeklime Grassy Woodland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Damp Heath Scrub ■ Damp Heath Scrub/Heathy Woodland Complex ■ Damp Heathland / Damp Heathy Woodland ■ Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland ■ Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland / ■ Damp Heathland / Damp Heathy Woodland ■ Deep Freshwater Marsh ■ Estuarine Wetland ■ Floodplain Riparian Woodland ■ Freshwater Meadow ■ Grassy Dry Forest ■ Grassy Forest ■ Grassy Woodland ■ Heathy Woodland ■ Heathy Woodland/Sand Heath Mosaic ■ Herb-rich Foothill Forest ■ Herb-rich Foothill Forest/ ■ Shrubby Foothill Forest Complex ■ Lignum Wetland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lowland Forest ■ Mangrove Shrubland ■ Not assessed to date - Formerly Not Applicable/ ■ Not Within Victoria ■ Permanent Saline ■ Plains Brackish Sedge Wetland ■ Plains Freshwater Sedge Wetland ■ Plains Grassland ■ Plains Grassland/Plains Grassy Woodland Mosaic ■ Plains Grassy Wetland ■ Plains Grassy Woodland ■ Plains Sedgy Wetland ■ Plains Swampy Woodland ■ Plantation (undefined) ■ Private Land No Tree Cover ■ Reed Swamp ■ Riparian Forest ■ Riparian Scrub Complex ■ Riparian Woodland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Riparian Woodland / Escarpment Shrubland ■ Sand Heathland ■ Scoria Cone Woodland ■ Seasonally-inundated Sub-saline Herbland ■ Sedgy Riparian Woodland ■ Shallow Freshwater Marsh ■ Shrubby Dry Forest ■ Shrubby Foothill Forest ■ Shrubby Wet Forest ■ Stoney Rises Herb-rich Woodland ■ Stony Knoll Shrubland / Plains Grassy Woodland / ■ Plains Grassy Wetland ■ Swamp Scrub ■ Swamp Scrub / Aquatic Herbland ■ Swampy Riparian Woodland ■ Water Body - Natural or man made ■ Wet Forest ■ Wet Heathland ■ Wet Sands Thicket |
|--|--|---|---|



ZONING MAP

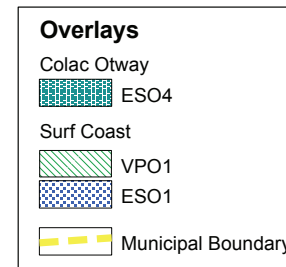
The zoning map shows that the majority of the precinct is zoned Rural with place specific use of the Public Conservation and Resource Zone (Lake Modewarre and other waterways) and Public Use Zone (Wurdiboluc Reservoir). The townships are generally zoned Residential 1, with the Low Density Residential and Rural Living Zones on the fringes.





RELEVANT OVERLAYS MAP

The overlays within the precinct related to landscape character include the Environmental Significance Overlay for protection of significant habitats and the Vegetation Protection Overlay for the protection of significant native vegetation.



PLANNING SCHEME ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PRECINCT 1.1 | WINCHELSEA WESTERN PLAINS

| Precinct | Municipality | Landscape Character Significance | Development Pressures | Relevant Planning Controls | Local Policies | Issues and Priority Areas | Key Planning Scheme Recommendations |
|----------|--------------|----------------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1.1 | Colac Otway | N/A | <p>Development Types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal development pressure Pressure focused on fringes and within townships <p>Potential Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of smaller lots Loss of shelter belts Ribbon development along the road corridors Lack of delineation of township edges | <p>Zoning:</p> <p>RUZ</p> <p>PCRZ primarily along waterways</p> <p>Birregurra primarily zoned TZ with LDRZ on the outskirts</p> <p>Overlays:</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>Assessment tools lacking generally</p> <p>Areas visible from Princes Highway a particular issue</p> <p>Permit trigger in place; decision guidelines required</p> <p>Plantations adjacent to main roads</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 Birregurra</p> <p>Review/strengthen all relevant Local Policies</p> <p>Introduce new Local Policy including Development Principles for Precinct 1.1</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> |

PLANNING SCHEME ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| Precinct | Municipality | Landscape Character Significance | Development Pressures | Relevant Planning Controls | Local Policies | Issues and Priority Areas | Key Planning Scheme Recommendations |
|----------|--------------|----------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| 1.1 | Surf Coast | N/A | <p>Development Types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal development pressure Pressure focused on fringes and within townships <p>Potential Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of smaller lots Loss of shelter belts Ribbon development along the road corridors Lack of delineation of township edges | <p>Zoning:</p> <p>RUZ</p> <p>PCRZ Lake Modewarre</p> <p>ERZ adjacent to Lake Modewarre</p> <p>PUZ1 Wurdiboluc Reservoir</p> <p>Winchelsea primarily zoned R1Z with LDRZ on the outskirts</p> <p>Overlays:</p> <p>ES01 Wetland and Associated Dryland Habitat Protection</p> <p>VPO1 Significant Native Vegetation</p> | <p>22.02 Rural and Environmental Development Policy</p> <p>22.03 Fire Safety</p> <p>22.05 Surf Coast Design and Colours</p> <p>22.06 Streetscape and Landscaping</p> | <p>Good strategic basis for landscape protection and enhancement</p> <p>Alternative 'landscape units' identified in MSS</p> <p>Comprehensive suite of local policies, but Local Policy specific to landscape required</p> <p>40 hectare permit trigger in place for timber production in the Schedules to the Rural Zone in Surf Coast</p> <p>Buffer requirement needed</p> <p>Permit trigger in place for development within 100 metres of RDZ1</p> <p>Key issue is ribbon development and low density residential development at township edges - decision guidelines required</p> | <p>Review MSS/strengthen if required:</p> <p>21.04 Environment and Landscape, and Housing and Settlement</p> <p>Review MSS Clause 21.06 Landscape and Culture Strategy; review/amend landscape units, descriptions and objectives</p> <p>Review/strengthen MSS Clause 21.09 Rural Residential Strategy for LDRZ and RLZ areas</p> <p>Review/strengthen MSS as it relates to townships within the landscape, especially Clause 21.14 for Winchelsea</p> <p>Introduce new Local Policy including Development Principles for Precinct 1.1</p> <p>Local Policy to include indigenous buffer requirement for plantations adjacent to RDZ1</p> <p>Review relevant Local Policies for inconsistencies eg with Development Principles</p> |