



THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD REGION  
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY

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

PRECINCT PACKAGE

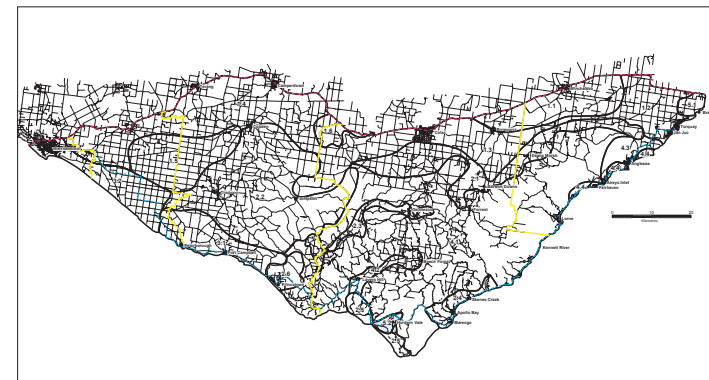
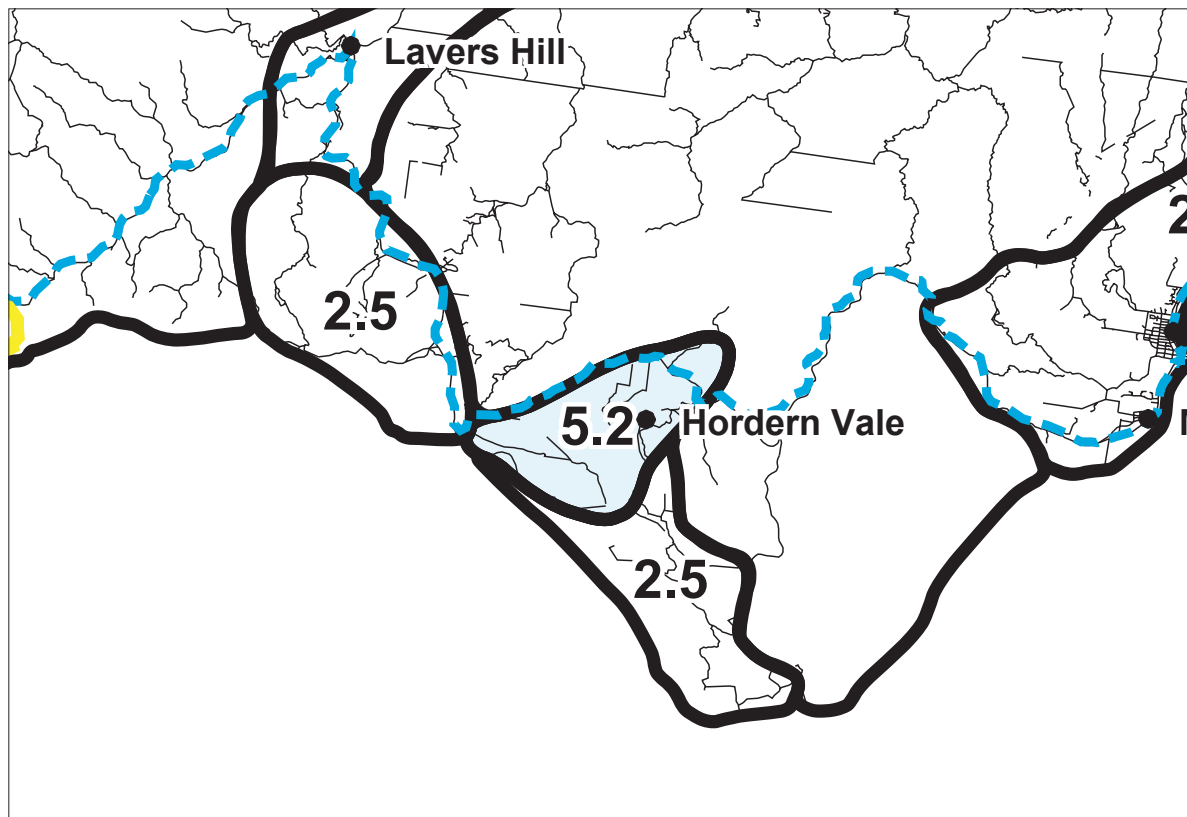
PRECINCT 5.2 | AIRE VALLEY MARSHES

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT | SEPTEMBER 2003



# LOCALITY MAP

PRECINCT 5.2 | AIRE VALLEY MARSHES



**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 5.2 | AIRE VALLEY MARSHES



## PRECINCT DESCRIPTION

Precinct 5.2 is a flat, estuarine inlet into a partly cleared area of the Otways. The meandering river winds through marshes, wetlands, pastures and fields of vegetables, eventually flowing between grassy dunes to an outlet through sandy Glenaire Beach. Vegetation includes exotic shelter belts and coastal shrubs on lower slopes near the coast edge, plus tea-tree and reeds. The surrounding hills, which are only partly vegetated, drop steeply to the inlet, and almost completely enclose it. Small, simple rural buildings nestle into the slopes and gullies of the hillsides. The precinct provides an unexpectedly flat and open landscape after the hilly, forested sections of Great Ocean Road to the east.

## DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES

The Localised Flatlands landscape character type consists of flat, predominantly open and isolated areas associated with the lakes and saltmarshes behind Breamlea and the Aire River estuary.

Within this landscape character type, precinct 5.2 is distinctive for its flat and open appearance with low, wetland vegetation. The hinterland area's contrast with the steep, enclosed landscape of the Otway Forest, and its visibility from the Great Ocean Road, contribute to its regional significance. The Aire Valley marshes coastal landscape itself has state significance.

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



## KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Unexpectedly flat and open landscape
- Meandering river in partly cleared area of Otway Forest
- Lushness
- Enclosure by surrounding hills
- Simple, rural buildings

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The low lands are currently free of development and this natural character should extend to the edge of the road, remaining uninterrupted by signs or other evidence of development. The contrast between the open, flat estuary, and the steep vegetated slopes of the enclosing hills should be retained.

## LANDSCAPE OBJECTIVES

- To protect the complex mix of vegetation types in the estuarine inlet.
- To protect the low lands of the river valley from development.
- To ensure that minimal development on the slopes and gullies of the hillsides is not dominant.
- To retain the sense of enclosure by the surrounding hills.



# PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

## PRECINCT 5.2 | AIRE VALLEY MARSHES

LANDSCAPE ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
VEGETATION	To protect the complex mix of vegetation types in the estuarine inlet.	Retain estuarine vegetation wherever possible and provide for the planting of new indigenous vegetation.	<i>Loss of indigenous vegetation.</i>
SITING	To protect the low lands of the river valley from development.	Keep the flat, low land areas clear of development wherever possible.  Where it cannot be avoided, locate development sparsely, siting buildings and structures to avoid the loss of existing vegetation, and set development back substantial distances from the Great Ocean Road.	<i>Development, and particularly visually dominant development, on the valley floor.</i>
SITING AND DESIGN INFRASTRUCTURE	To ensure that minimal development on the slopes and gullies of the hillsides is not dominant.  To retain the sense of enclosure by the surrounding hills.	In circumstances where development can not be avoided on hill faces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Locate development sparsely to avoid loss of vegetation.</li> <li>- Design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site.</li> <li>- Articulate buildings into separate elements, and avoid visually dominant elevations.</li> <li>- Use darker colours and finishes that are less prominent visually, particularly roofs.</li> </ul>	<i>Light colours or highly reflective finishes on hill faces.</i>  <i>Dark colours and finishes on ridge tops.</i>  <i>Excessive cut and fill.</i>  <i>Large building footprints.</i>  <i>Loss of vegetation in visually prominent locations.</i>



LANDSCAPE ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
SITING AND DESIGN INFRASTRUCTURE [Cont.]		<p>In circumstances where development can not be avoided on ridge tops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Locate development to avoid the loss of vegetation.</li> <li>- Use lighter colours and finishes to minimise visibility against the sky.</li> </ul> <p>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.</p> <p>Prepare a landscape plan utilising appropriate species and demonstrating how the affected area will be remediated after the development.</p>	

# PRECINCT LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

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ABOVE | Aire Valley from the Great Ocean Road

## EDGES

The following 'landscape edges' exist within the precinct:

- Edge at interface of flatlands and steep encasing hills
- Natural features such as the river itself as an edge in the landscape
- Interface of flatlands with adjacent precincts of contrasting character
- Edge created by the road corridor through the landscape

## CORRIDORS

The following, taken from field survey notes, is a description of the journey from Glenaire to the intersection of the Great Ocean Road and Lighthouse Road:

- ...Glenaire - Castle Cove - views to Cove / Bass Strait and over Aire Valley and Horden Vale - free of roadside tourist attractions apart from one farmhouse café
- rainforest - through dry forests of tall eucalypts...



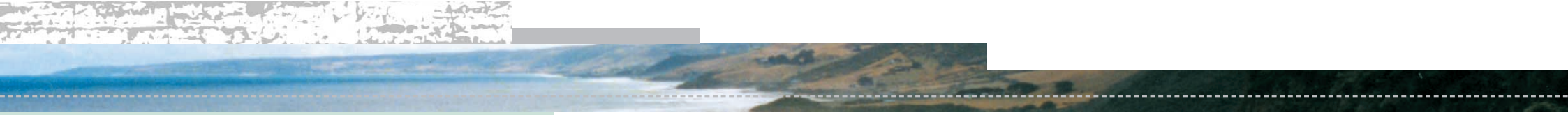


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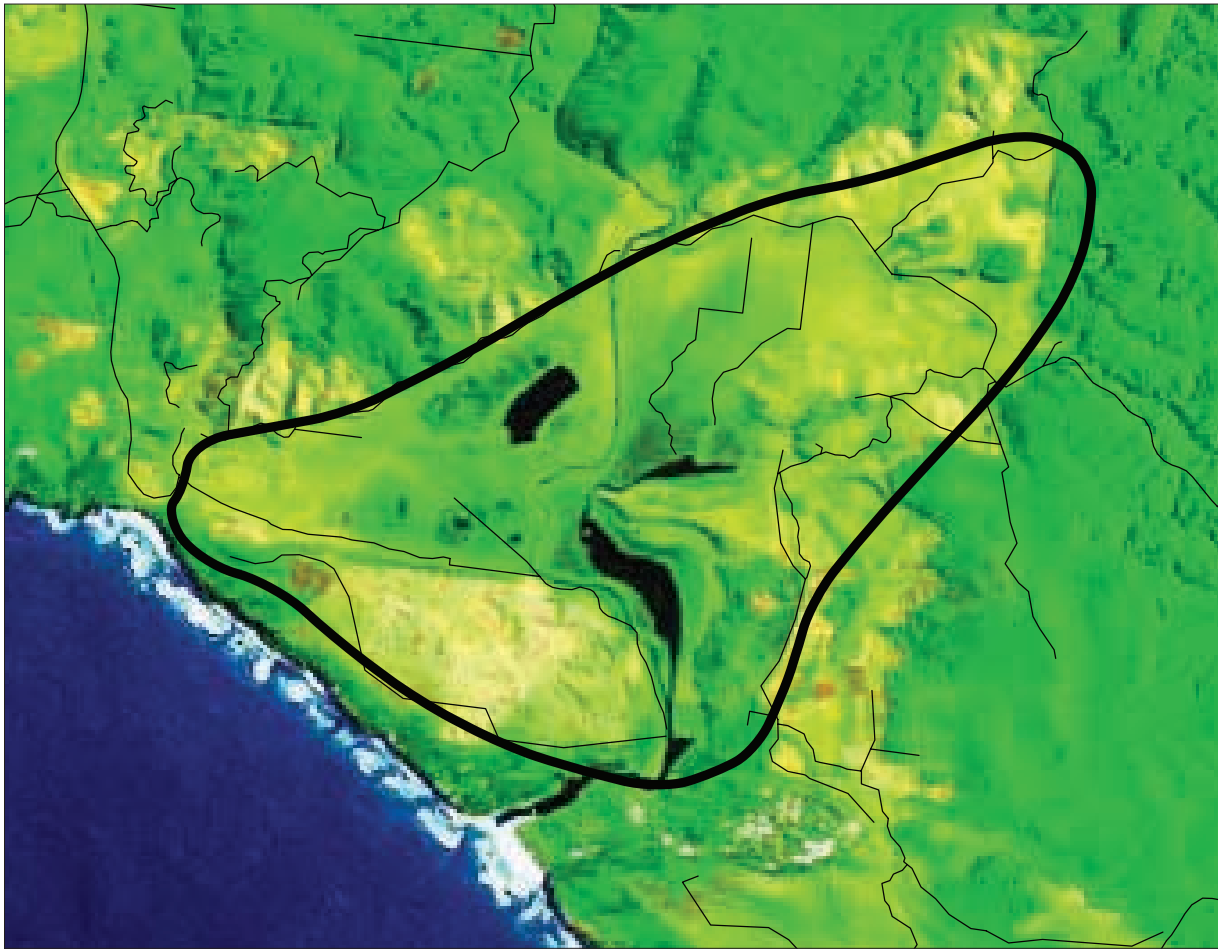
PRECINCT ANALYSIS  
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## PRECINCT ANALYSIS MAPS

PRECINCT 5.2 | AIRE VALLEY MARSHES



### SATELLITE PHOTO

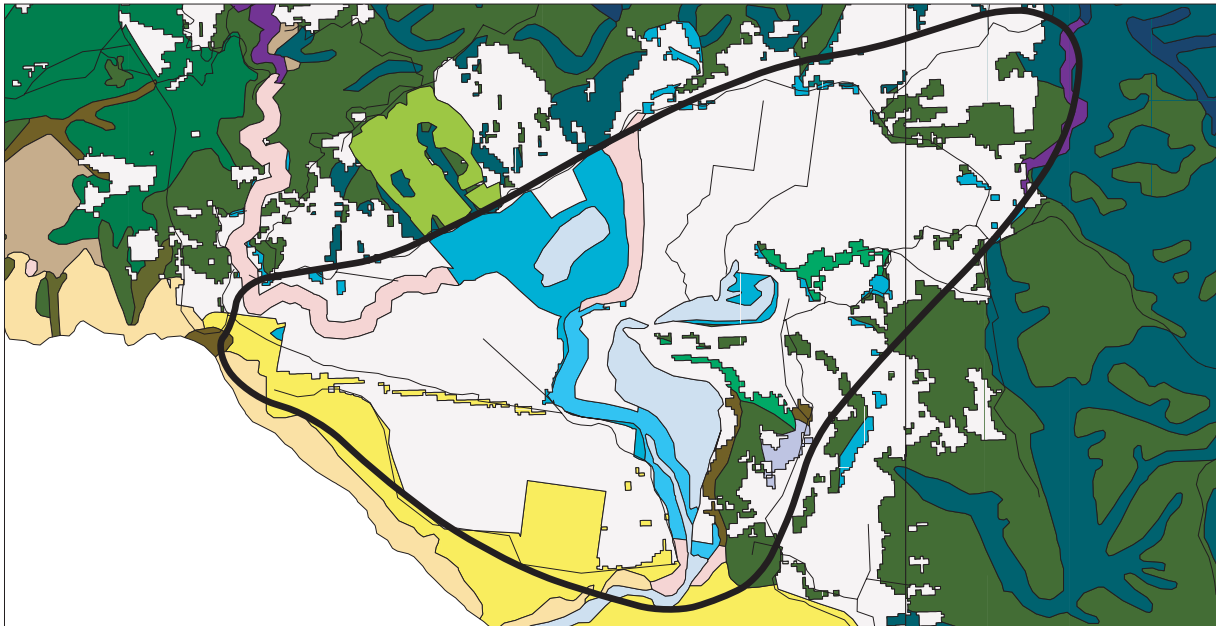
The satellite photo reveals an inlet combining pastures, wetlands, and rivers, surrounded by the steep hills and valleys of the Otway Ranges.



## CONTOUR MAP

The contour map highlights the contrast between the flatness of the precinct and the often steep, surrounding hills.



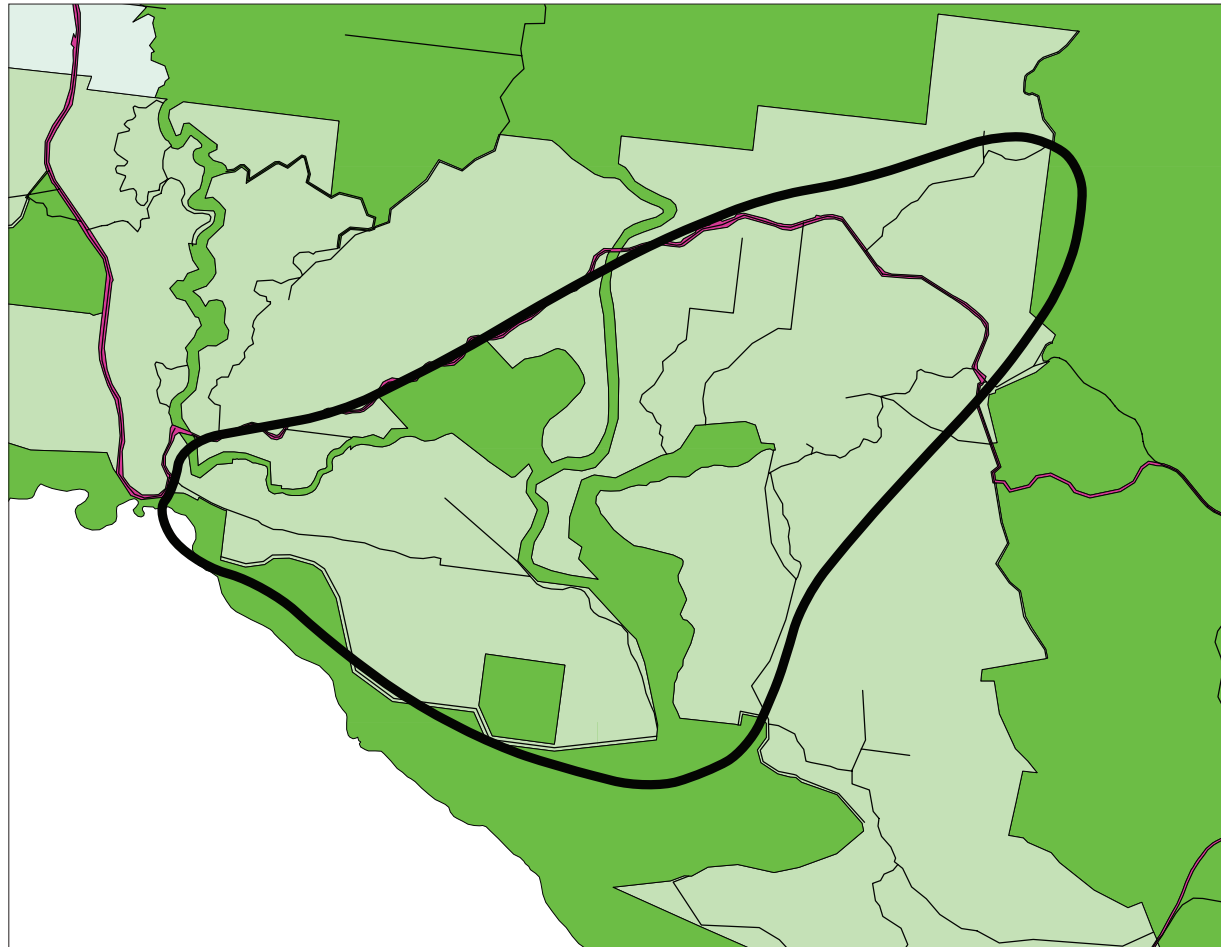


## ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES

The ecological vegetation classes map shows a large proportion of the precinct as private land with no tree cover. There are Estuarine Wetland and Swamp Scrub vegetation classes that surround the inland waterways, and strips of Coastal Dune Scrub and Coastal Headland vegetation classes at the coastline.




### Vegetation Classes

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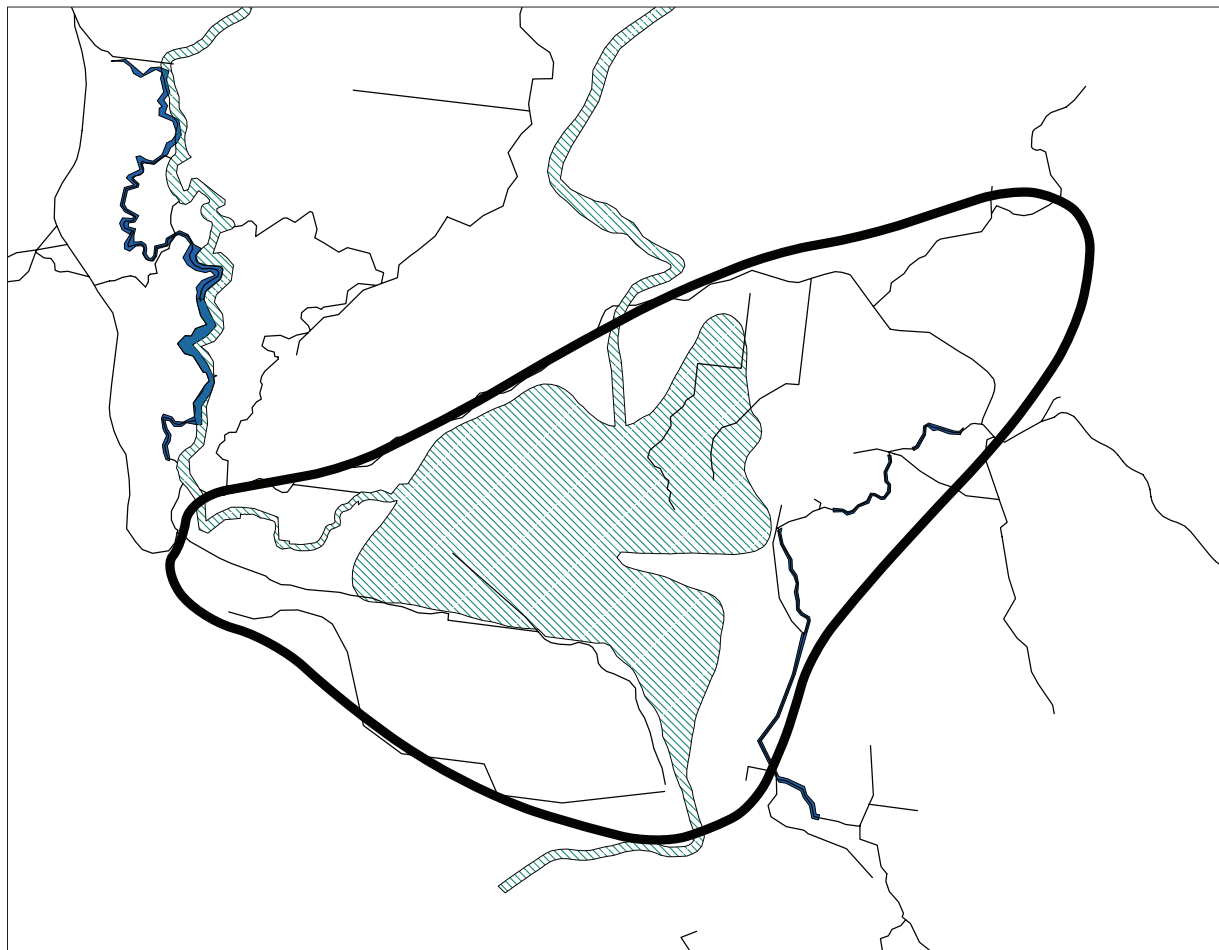


## ZONING MAP

The precinct is zoned mostly Environmental Rural with some Public Conservation and Resource zoning close to the coast and following watercourses and wetlands.

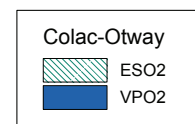
Zones	
	ERZ
	PCRZ
	RDZ1





## RELEVANT OVERLAYS MAP

Overlays relevant to landscape character include the Environmental Significance Overlay which covers most of the precinct for the protection and enhancement of water entering lakes and wetlands, the Vegetation Protection Overlay for Significant Roadside Vegetation also applies.



# PLANNING SCHEME ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## PRECINCT 5.2 | AIRE VALLEY MARSHES

Precinct	Municipality	Landscape Character Significance	Development Pressures	Relevant Planning Controls	Local Policies	Issues and Priority Areas	Key Planning Scheme Recommendations
5.2	Colac Otway	<p><i>State significance: Aire Valley Marshes coastal landscape</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Estuarine marshland (part pastoral) between coast and hills</i></li> <li>• <i>Visible and accessible in part from GOR</i></li> <li>• <i>Low visitation</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The landscape setting of the remainder of the precinct is of <u>Regional</u> significance</i></p>	<p>Development Types: (Minimal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Houses</li> <li>• Outbuildings</li> <li>• Road side and interpretative signage</li> </ul> <p>Potential Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structures on marshy floor [unlikely]</li> <li>• Development on southern side of GOR blocking open views</li> <li>• Visible, bulky road side development</li> <li>• Clearing / excavation of hill faces and ridges</li> </ul>	<p>Zoning:</p> <p>ERZ</p> <p>PCRZ primarily along waterways and within wetlands</p> <p>Overlays:</p> <p>ES02 Lakes, Wetlands and Streams</p> <p>VPO2 Roadside Vegetation</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>ESO in place for majority of precinct</p> <p>Precinct is also significant for its environmental features, including the Aire River</p> <p>ERZ provides appropriate permit trigger, though development in this precinct is minimal due to wetland characteristics</p> <p>The Great Ocean Road travels across the northern boundary of this precinct, and land on the coastal side is not subject to development pressure and is covered by the ESO</p> <p>Decision framework / assessment tools could be strengthened</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/strengthen all relevant Local Policies</p> <p>Introduce new Local Policy including Development Principles for Precinct 5.2</p>