

15. EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY, MINING AND SOIL REMOVAL

15.01 Regional Overview

Extractive industry, which include extraction of hard rock and clay, occurs in a number of locations in the Region, in a manner that has remained relatively unchanged over many years. It is an activity that is important in the provision of materials for road making and manufacturing of roofing tiles.

In order to protect top soil as an essential natural resource, the prohibition on soil removal, particularly for commercial purposes, will be reinforced and the removal of soil will only be allowed when associated with an approved development, such as buildings and dams.

Mining is a minor activity in the Region, with only one small gold mine at Hoddles Creek which has not operated for some years.

15.02 Primary Purpose - Extractive Industries

The primary purpose of the Extractive Industries Policies is to control the development and siting of existing and future extractive industry operations, so as to ensure minimal detrimental impact on the Region's environment, landscape and water resources and on the amenity of its residents.

15.03 Extractive Industry policies

Extractive Industry, whether as an expansion of an existing operation or through the establishment of a new operation, must be controlled to minimise detriment to the Region's environment, landscape and water resources and on the amenity of its residents.

All extractive industry sites must be satisfactorily rehabilitated in accordance with conditions specified in the relevant extractive industry approvals for the site.

New extractive industry operations must not be established within the Mt. Dandenong Ridge Area, National/State Parks, closed catchments, the Yarra Tributaries, Reference Areas, Sites of Natural and Cultural Significance, the Puffing Billy Railway Scenic Corridor and within any 'Environmental Living Zone'.

The expansion of an existing extractive industry may occur within a Site of Natural Significance provided that the expansion is in accordance with a detailed working plan, which has been agreed by the responsible authority and which restricts the removal of vegetation to specific areas shown within that detailed working plan.

15.04 Primary Purpose - Mining

The primary purpose of the Mining Policies is to facilitate the development and siting of existing and future mining operations in a manner which minimises detrimental effects

on the Region's environment, landscapes, water resources and the amenity of the Region's residents.

15.05 Mining policies

Mining operations must be designed and managed to minimise detriment to the Region's environment, landscapes, water resources and the amenity of the Region's residents. Mining operations must only be established in accordance with a planning approval unless the proposal has been the subject of an Environmental Effects Statement.

New mining operations must not be established within the Mt. Dandenong Ridge Area, National/State Parks, closed catchments, Yarra Tributaries, Reference Areas, Sites of Natural and Cultural Significance and in the Puffing Billy Railway Scenic Corridor.

Rehabilitation of mining sites must be in accordance with the conditions as specified by the licence issued under the Mineral Resources Development Act 1993.

15.06 Land management provisions for extractive industry, mineral prospecting and mining

Any extractive industry or mining proposals which require planning approval must demonstrate that:

- there is a need for the particular use or development at that specific location;
- the nature and intensity of the use or development is appropriate on that specific site;
- any undesirable effects of the use or development by reason of its appearance, use or discharge of noise or wastes into the environment or any other detrimental effects on the landscape, soil erosion or water quality or on the amenity of the surrounding areas, will be minimised or controlled;
- all works will be carried out in accordance with the conditions specified in any permit issued or any exploration or mining licence issued by the relevant Minister;
- noise and waste discharges will meet the requirements of the Environment Protection Act;
- traffic will be controlled so that there will be minimal impacts on adjoining roads, particularly those giving access to residential areas and measures to minimise dust emanating from vehicles using the site are instituted;
- any adverse effects of the use or development on the amenity of the local residents are minimised;
- advertising signs and/or company identification signs are located and designed so they do not detract from the landscape character of the area nor unnecessarily distract passing traffic;
- the intrinsic value of existing native vegetation and its value as a refuge or habitat for wildlife is maintained;
- the advice of the relevant Minister is obtained under the provisions of the Environment Effects Act, 1978, prior to the approval of any rezoning; and

- if the land is Public Land, agreement is obtained from the relevant Public Authority, Government Department or Council that controls the land.

15.07 Primary Purpose - Soil Removal

The primary purpose of the Soil Removal Policy is to strictly control, and where necessary prohibit, the removal of soil in all Rural and Landscape Living Policy Areas in order to protect the soil as an agricultural resource and to avoid soil erosion and land degradation.

15.08 Soil removal policies

Soil removal in Rural and Landscape Living Policy Areas

Soil removal in all Rural and Landscape Living Policy Areas must be subject to planning approval and must only be allowed where:

- the soil to be removed is surplus to the construction or maintenance of an approved dam which is necessary for the supply of water to the agricultural use of that land or for domestic and/or industrial water supply purposes and where the retention of that surplus soil on the subject land would reduce its suitability and/or capability for the continuation of its existing or a future agricultural operation, or
- the soil to be removed is to allow for the carrying out of an approved use or development, for which the retention of that soil would prejudice the use or development of the land, and the consideration and approval of that soil removal was part of the approval of the use or development.

Soil removal for public works and undertakings

Removal of soil by a Council, Government Department or Public Authority in association with works and undertakings or for normal maintenance operations, will be allowed, provided sufficient suitable soil is retained on site for use in appropriate rehabilitation of batters and other exposed earthworks.