

## **11. Residential Development**

### **Census information**

Six shires form a major part of the Alexandra Region. These shires are:

- Alexandra
- Broadford
- Kilmore
- Mansfield
- Pyalong
- Seymour
- Yea

The total population of these shires in 1986 stood at approximately 37,912. The population increase of the region from the 1981 to the 1986 census was 8,100 or almost 21%, a rate which is substantially in excess of the 4.9% increase in State population. The population increase was greater in the Shires of Broadford, Kilmore and Mansfield. The increase in the Shires closer to Melbourne, namely Broadford, Kilmore and Yea is probably attributable to people/families with work destinations in Melbourne using these shires as dormitory locations.

The increases in Mansfield and Alexandra are probably due to the increased use of these areas as holiday or retirement locations. The population of Seymour has shown a marginal increase.

	<b>Population</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>% Population Increase</b>
Shire	1981	1986	1981 to 86
Alexandra	4376	5353	22.3
Broadford	2371	3230	36.2
Kilmore	4919	6724	36.7
Mansfield	4900	6430	31.2
Pyalong	495	602	21.6
Seymour	11218	11412	0.3
Yea	3460	4200	21.4

### **Planning**

The framework of rural planning should be based upon an information base which clearly outlines natural, social and economic resources and their limitations.

The Planning and Environment Act provides a single instrument of planning control for any area – the planning scheme – which sets out the way land may be used or developed. Each planning scheme which is normally administered by Shire Council consists of a State, regional and local section.

A planning scheme must seek to achieve the objectives of planning in the area to which it applies. To do this a scheme may make provisions relating to the use, development, protection or conservation of land in that area.

### **Contents of a scheme**

#### **Urban areas**

Residential, industrial and commercial uses should be contained within the urban zonings of a shire and be located within or immediately adjacent to existing township or urban nodes. All development should comply with the Residential Development Provisions, and be fully reticulated with services. Unused capacity of the residential zones should not exceed 10 years supply at the current rate of use.

Urban areas should cater for most of the social, welfare and economic needs of the rural and township communities.

## **Rural residential areas**

Rural residential development is defined, perhaps rather narrowly, as the use for residential purposes of allotments between 0.4 ha and 2.0 ha in size. The same provision of service infrastructure would be expected as with town development, with the exception of reticulated sewerage.

Allotment size in particular would be influenced by land capability considerations particularly the area required for efficient effluent disposal on site. Additional site area, above that required for a house, access tracks, garage, effluent disposal and so on, may well be needed to sustain use without detriment to neighbouring land from nutrient runoff or drainage of effluent.

Rural residential development is essentially an urban use requiring urban works and services. As such any provision for rural residential zoning should be immediately adjacent to existing urban/township nodes or service centres. A clear distinction should be made between rural residential and hobby farm use. On rural residential allotments maintenance can be undertaken with a large ride-on mower and gardening equipment. On hobby farming or landscape/conservation areas where allotment sizes are in the 8 ha to 40 ha range, use of agricultural technology needs to be employed to maintain the land.

Three important strategic considerations should be complied with prior to development for rural residential purposes. These are:

- can the development be justified in terms of planning strategy (bearing in mind that it is an URBAN zone and a need demonstrated for rural residential subdivision)?;
- is the land physically capable of accommodating the development without detriment to the existing environment including agricultural lands?;
- what will be the likely future impact of the development on surrounding land?

## **Site analysis for rural residential development**

The following criteria are suggested as a basis for the consideration of rural residential proposals.

### **1. Location of proposed development**

- the development should be confined to areas adjacent to existing urban fringe and service nodes
- the development must be located in areas that can be readily serviced from existing facilities
- development is to be located on land that is physically capable of absorbing and containing its own effluent
- rural residential development should not impede or prejudice long term urban growth options
- development shall be in accordance with any Regional Strategy or Outline Development Plan

### **2. Subdivision design and layout**

- development should be compatible with the capability of the land and also be in sympathy with the natural characteristics of the site
- a variety of allotment sizes within the range 0.4 ha to 2 ha should be provided and be consistent with the capability of the land
- fire protection plans should be lodged for each subdivision

### **3. Sitting of buildings and works on each allotment**

- buildings should be sited where impact on natural features, resources and landscape is minimised
- buildings are to be sited to avoid fire hazard (MPE Design and Sitting Guidelines: Bushfire Protection for Rural Houses)

### **4. Access to and within each allotment**

- safe access should be provided to all allotments
- access tracks/drives within allotments should provide safe all-weather access to building sites
- grades on tracks should be flatter than 12% and access trails flatter than 8%, and provided across slope where possible

- drives or access tracks should not impede nor concentrate natural drainage

**5. *Water supply***

- adequate water supply shall be made available to all allotments

**6. *Effluent disposal***

- all sewerage and sullage should be treated within the curtilage of each allotment (each allotment shall be of sufficient size to contain all household effluent)
- effluent shall not drain onto any adjoining property, road or any watercourse or drain

**7. *Drainage***

- drainage provisions shall be adequate to handle anticipated surface water flows without detriment to natural physical features of the site or adjacent waterways
- establishment of flora buffers shall be considered to minimise erosion and improve landscape aesthetics particularly adjacent to watercourses and along ridges and roadsides

**8. *Vegetation***

- clearing should be kept to a minimum and be consistent with fire protection guidelines
- establishment of flora buffers shall be considered to minimise erosion and improve landscape aesthetics particularly adjacent to watercourses and along ridges and roadsides

**9. *Fire hazard control***

- subdivisions shall be so designed to ensure that fire hazards are minimal. Limitations on dead end roads
- allotments and building envelopes are to be located where possible on southern and eastern slopes

**10. *Land capability***

- all rural residential development should be located on land capable of supporting
  - building foundations
  - access tracks
  - on-site effluent disposal

***Agricultural/farming areas***

The Victorian Government recognises the substantial importance of agricultural production to the State's economy, and the need to maintain a prosperous and viable rural sector.

In order to realise potential opportunities, Victorian agricultural industries must increase competitiveness through, amongst other things, continued improvements in production efficiency and improvements in product quality and product innovations. Land as a non-renewable resource should be used wisely and the potential retained to ensure the resource can be used as efficiently as possible over the long term.

To satisfy these requirements all rural land should be mapped for capability of a range of agricultural activities. Land which is found to have a high capability for any agricultural activities or have a moderate to high capability (versatility) for a range of agricultural uses, should be included within an appropriate rural or agricultural zone of the relevant planning scheme. The controls of this zone should protect the potential for the land to be used for efficient agricultural production.

The better agricultural lands should not be included in zones which allow closer subdivisions or hobby farm development. Land management efficiency and rural land use on these small blocks is inherently poor. Little or no potential is available to realise economics of scale associated with larger machinery and agricultural equipment.

### **Hobby farming/rural living**

These rural activities generally suffer from poor land use efficiency and should be located on land which has moderate to poor agricultural capability and low versatility.

They should also be located in areas which have higher landscape quality. Areas primarily intended for rural living should have good accessibility and transport routes and lie reasonably close to townships or rural service centres.

Depending on topography, vegetation cover and land type the size of lots provided in these areas should fall into the 8 ha to 40 ha size range.

### **Conservation/high quality habitat**

Areas identified as having high quality flora and fauna habitat should be identified and appropriate planning controls developed in conjunction with landowners to ensure viable retention of the native habitat.

Where owners are committed to long term retention of these areas the establishment of conservation covenants may be investigated. These may be arranged through the Victorian Conservation Trust which provides legal assistance to landowners wishing to enter into such arrangements.