

RURAL LAND USE STRATEGY



Moorabool
Shire Council

JULY 2024

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

WHAT IS THE RLUS ABOUT?

Council is preparing a Rural Land Use Strategy (RLUS) to guide decision-making on the use and development of Moorabool's rural land into the future.

The RLUS proposes a Vision, Strategic Directions and Implementation measures to assist Council to more effectively manage use and development in rural areas. This includes dwellings, agricultural and non-agricultural land uses, environment, tourism and rural interfaces. We need your feedback on the draft RLUS. Submissions close on Sunday 19 August 2024.

WHY DO WE NEED A RLUS?

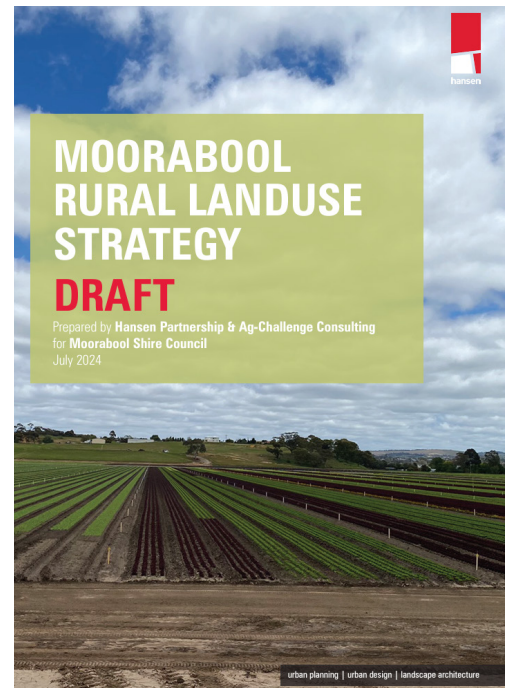
Moorabool is experiencing strong demand for rural living and pressures to convert quality agricultural land to urban uses. This threatens the viability of the Shire's agricultural production, food security, environment, and other rural industries.

The previous Rural Growth Policy was adopted by Council in 2012. Since that time, new challenges and opportunities have emerged requiring a review and development of a comprehensive Strategy that reflects current needs and aspirations of our rural areas.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

From the initial Landowner and Community Survey, our community told us that:

- A sense of belonging, peaceful and scenic landscapes, and productive agricultural land are the things they love most about rural Moorabool;
- Our rural areas are attracting new residents and land uses, however, land use conflicts between farming and non-farming uses are increasing;
- We need a cautious and balanced approach to protect agriculture and landscape amenity of our rural land.

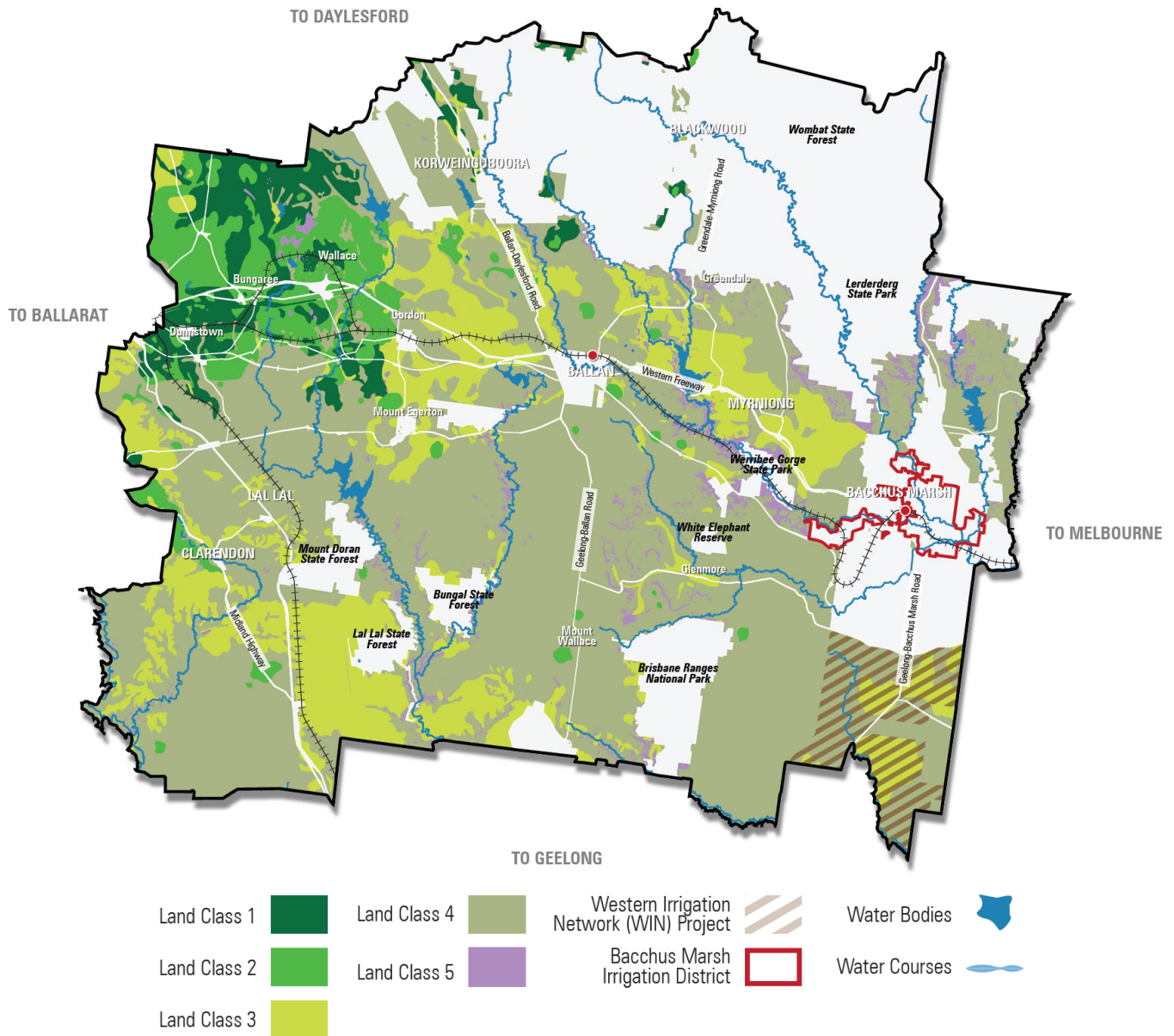


RLUS Project Stages

VISION FOR MOORABOOL IN 2050

Moorabool Shire has become sustainable, innovative, and resilient with a productive and diverse agricultural sector, despite climate change and pressures from Melbourne's 8.5 million residents.

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASS



Moorabool has high quality agricultural land. This was determined through a Shire-wide land quality assessment conducted by soil scientists. The Shire has:

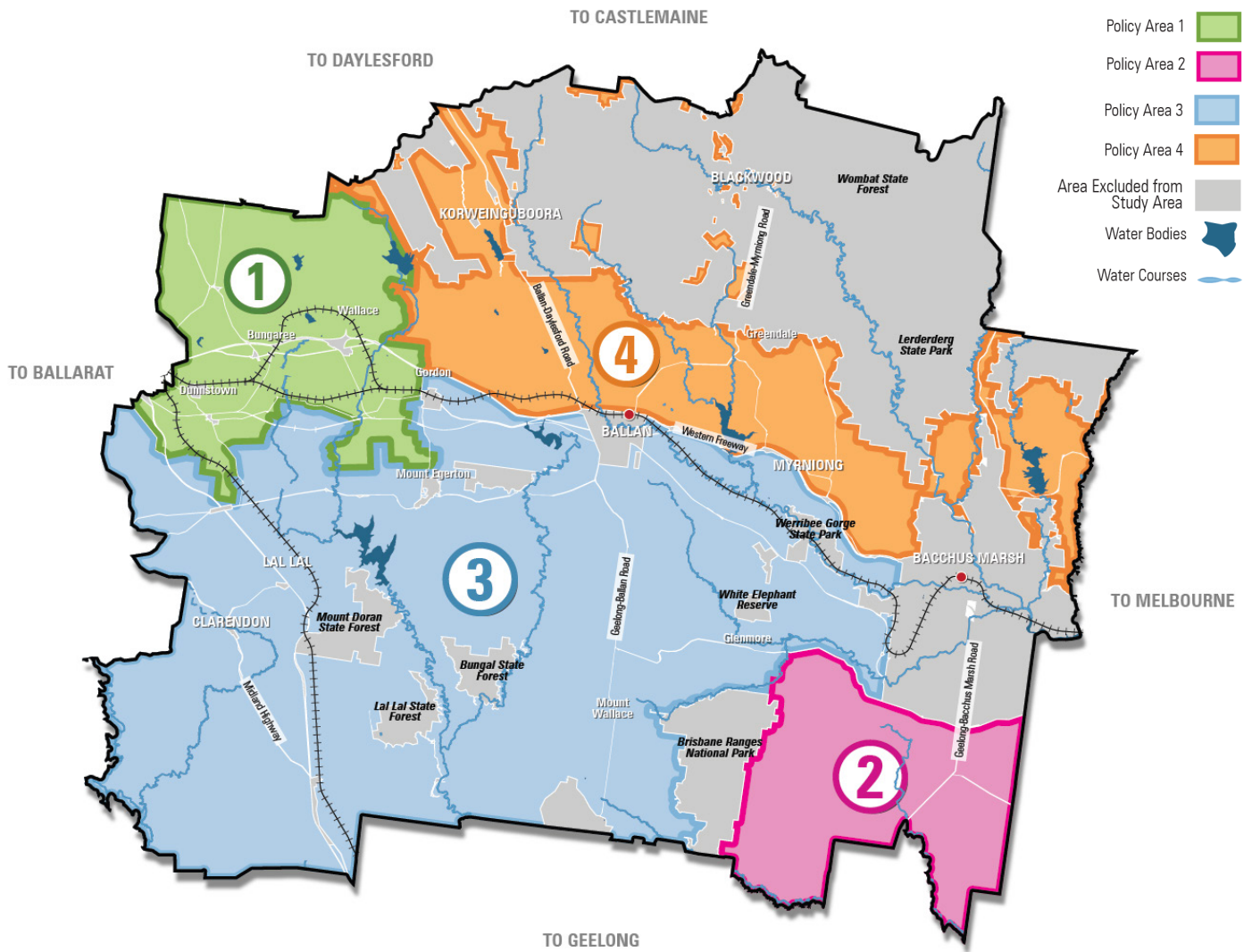
Classes 1 and 2 soils which are high quality and highly versatile agricultural land, often used intensively for horticultural crops, and generally considered to be strategically significant agricultural land within the peri-urban fringe of Greater Melbourne.

Class 3 land may be used for broadacre cropping, or for horticultural crops which do not require regular cultivation. Access to irrigation can increase class 3 land potential.

Class 4 land is mostly used for grazing but is occasionally cropped but with significant management interventions.

Class 5 land is mainly suitable for grazing use due to excessive physical restraints.

PRECINCT POLICY AREAS



Rural Moorabool is broken into four broad Precinct Policy Areas based on:

- Land classification and capability.
- Strategic importance.
- Topographic and key features and characteristics.
- Water availability (i.e. irrigation).
- Logical and identifiable boundaries.
- Existing land use patterns
- Lot size, ownership, and land fragmentation.
- Existing and expected future pressures.

AREA 1: High quality agricultural land

Located to the north-west of the Shire and contains the highest productive value land (Class 1 & 2) for commercial scale agriculture.

AREA 2: Land with irrigation potential

Primarily consists of Class 3 and 4 agricultural land with large parcels exceeding 80 hectares. Over 50% of the area benefits from recycled water from the Western Irrigation Network.

AREA 3: Mixed rural & broadacre agriculture

Located south of the Western Freeway and primarily contains Class 3 and 4 agricultural land. The area is diverse in landscape and supports a mix of rural and agricultural activities.

AREA 4: Mixed rural activity

Consists of Class 3 and 4 agricultural land, and some pockets of Class 1, 2, and 5. The area is diverse in landscape and supports a mix of agricultural activities, from soil-based farming to broadacre cropping and grazing, as well as rural tourism.

RLUS STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The RLUS outlines Statement of Intent, Strategies, Implementation actions, and recommendations for future work on critical rural issues including:

- ✓ Rural Zones and Overlays
- ✓ Rural Dwelling Policy.
- ✓ Rural Subdivision Policy.
- ✓ Agriculture Uses Requiring Planning Approval.
- ✓ Non-agricultural Uses Requiring Planning Approval.
- ✓ Landscape, Environment & Heritage.
- ✓ Rural Living.
- ✓ Rural Tourism.
- ✓ Settlement Interfaces.



ACTIONS

Local Planning Policy	Amend and update the Moorabool Planning Scheme to reflect the intent of the RLUS.
RLZ	Amend the Rural Living Zone (RLZ) Schedule to modify the current minimum 6ha for subdivisions and dwellings.
Farming Zone	New minimum 100m setback from boundaries for dwellings (increased from 5 metres) in order to allow existing and new agricultural uses to continue without affecting neighbours.
Site specific considerations	Assessment of new applications to consider decision guidelines from section 3.2 of RLUS



What is next in the planning process?

Council Officers will use the feedback to refine the RLUS. Once complete, the RLUS will be brought to Council for consideration. There will be further opportunities for engagement in the future, including through the implementation of some actions. Queries? Please contact Council via telephone 03 5367 7100 or email info@moorabool.vic.gov.au