





1.1 Forested Hills and Mountains

This broad Character Area encompasses wet forested hilly areas which cover more than half of Murrindindi. It is largely contained in State Forest and National Park (and thus outside the scope of recommendations of this study) although some private forested lands are also included. The Area is topographically varied, often steep to mountainous in parts with numerous river valleys including the Yea and Murrindindi Rivers. Near-continuous native vegetation is the unifying feature throughout the character area. Active forestry occurs in state forests while two highways, and the town of Marysville are within this Character Area.



Indicators of Significance

- Maroondah Highway (Black Spur) is recognised by the Register of National Estate as being of state and regional importance for its sensitively located road. It provides an outstanding visual experience for the traveller, as well as historic, scientific, educational and recreational significance.
- The Rubicon Valley Historic Reserve and Cathedral Range are landscapes of outstanding cultural and scenic value, both of which are registered on the National Estate.
- Murrindindi Scenic Reserve on the Black Ridge has been set aside for outstanding scenic values.
- The northern reaches of Big River and the entire Howqua River are historically significant and classified as Heritage Rivers.
- Various National Parks and State Forest reserves within the area attract tourists from across the state and region.
- Marysville is a centre of tourism and cultural importance set within an attractive landscape backdrop.
- A number of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage sites occur in this Character Area, particularly at Kinglake National Park and the Cathedral Range.

Key Character Elements

- The topography is varied, ranging from rolling hilly forest of the Black Range, to steep mountainous forest in the south east of the municipality. Numerous river valleys with steeply incised sides occur.
- Vegetation is dominated by tall wet forest (e.g. *Eucalyptus regnans* forest with ferny understorey) in the southern areas, and dry scrubby forest, or herb-rich foothill forests to the north along the Black Range. In some areas native forest is being replaced by plantation (both eucalypt and pine), for example the Mt Robertson Plantation, near Kinglake. Mature exotic vegetation is a feature of Marysville.
- The Character Area is largely contained in National Park and State Forest, and as such forestry and tourism are the main land uses.

- Buildings and structures are largely confined to the Marysville township, however there are some scattered private dwellings set into forests. Two highways and three segments of high voltage electricity transmission line also traverse the area.

Pattern of Viewing

The town of Marysville is a substantial tourist centre and the only town located within this character type. There are also a number of recreation sites throughout, including numerous formal and informal camping grounds and picnic areas. The Maroondah Highway and Lake Mountain Roads are important tourist routes located within this precinct. The enclosed forest character provided by this area is an important part of the journey in both cases. Murrindindi Road from Toolangi to Murrindindi Scenic Reserve is promoted as a tourist drive while a number of accessible ridge top points are mapped as informal lookouts (e.g. rooftops Murrindindi-Tallarook Adventure Map). Kinglake-Whittlesea and Toolangi-Healesville Roads are also important viewing corridors.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the character area include:

- loss of vegetation through wildfire and fire management works;
- continuation of active forestry throughout parts of this character type (e.g. clear-felling of coupes, development of roads and the replacement of native forest with plantation);
- harvesting of established plantation (e.g. Kinglake West and Narbethong);
- management of vegetation at roadsides for safety purposes;
- development of telecommunications infrastructure;
- some minor pressure for development of residences and accommodation on private land, particularly in and around Marysville.

Existing state / local government policies likely to contribute to landscape change in the character area:

- The Racecourse Road Development Plan will guide development on private land to the west.
- Much of the Character Area is managed as National Park and State Forest.

Sensitivity to Change

The peripheral and higher hills provide a strong vegetated backdrop and contrast to agricultural areas and settlements in Murrindindi. The visible hillslopes, ridgelines and edges are highly sensitive to change, particularly large scale or linear landscape changes such as transmission line easements or forestry clearings, owing to their requirement for removal of vegetation. Examples of sensitive forests include the slopes of the Black Range State Forest visible from the Maroondah and Goulburn Valley Highways.

Within the character area vegetation and topography provide the opportunity for screening many smaller-scale landscape changes, however roadsides are also sensitive to change owing to the number of viewers and the contribution that continuous forest makes to the character of the area.

Future Character Directions

The Character Area should continue to be dominated by intact native forest providing an enclosed setting at roadsides, around settlements, and from tourism and recreation locations throughout the area. Waterways and other natural features should be maintained and enhanced as important scenic landscape resources. Use and development on edges and ridgelines should be carefully managed so that the area continues to provide a strong vegetated backdrop to surrounding Character Areas.

The landscape management of private land bordering on State Forest and National Park should aim to be consistent with the priorities identified for those areas, and the contribution they make to the landscape character of Murrindindi Shire.

Landscape Objectives

- To encourage the ongoing management of native forests, waterways and other natural features and the protection of important forest landscape values and their contribution to the future directions for Character Areas identified in this Study.
- To retain the dominant vegetation cover throughout.
- To minimise the impact of development on the dominant forest character of the Area.
- To minimise the impact of road siting and design on the dominant forest character of the Area.
- To protect the vegetated character of hill faces and ridgelines, visible in the foreground (0-1 kilometres) and middleground (1-3 kilometres) of key viewing opportunities.
- To minimise the impact of developments on hill faces which form a backdrop to important viewing opportunities greater than 3 kilometres away, including outside the Character Area.
- To manage development around Marysville to protect the forested landscape setting of the township.
- To manage the siting of substantial infrastructure to avoid visual scarring of the landscape.

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Landscape Management	To encourage the ongoing management of native forests, waterways and other natural features and the protection of important forest landscape values and their contribution to the future directions for Character Areas identified in this Study.	<p>Liaise with the Department of Sustainability and Environment to ensure the use and management of forests in State Forest and National Park is consistent with the contribution the forests make to the landscape of the Shire.</p> <p>Integrate landscape guidelines and priorities with existing landscape management systems in place for forested and natural areas at the state level (State Forests and National Parks).</p> <p>Enhance access points to significant landscape features to facilitate visitation and protection of values.</p> <p>Liaise with Vic Roads to ensure roadside vegetation management is consistent with the landscape character objectives for this Character Area.</p>	Inconsistent landscape management approaches.
Vegetation	To retain the dominant vegetation cover throughout.	<p>Protect the dominant vegetation cover throughout the Character Area, wherever possible.</p> <p>Where vegetation is to be removed by development, it should be replaced by locally appropriate vegetation which will grow to a similar height, and replace or retain the continuous forested canopy.</p> <p>Manage and site clearing of vegetation for safety or fire management purposes to reduce 'visual scarring' wherever possible.</p>	<p>Loss of continuity of forested landscape character.</p> <p>Developments which require permanent clearing of vegetation.</p>

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Siting and Design	To minimise the impact of development on the dominant forest character of the Area.	Buildings and structures should be avoided in this Character Area wherever possible. Where buildings and structures cannot be avoided, they should be sited, designed or landscaped to minimise visibility. For example, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using non-reflective, dark materials; • avoiding the loss of vegetation or replacing lost vegetation with suitable plants which will grow to a similar height; and • using building forms and heights which sit beneath the dominant canopy height. 	Buildings and structures which are highly visible and / or located in prominent locations. Buildings and structures which require substantial vegetation removal.
	To minimise the impact of road siting and design on the dominant forest character of the Area.	Roads should be avoided in prominent locations. Roads and access ways should be designed to contour around topography, and maintain dense vegetation at roadsides.	Roads in prominent locations which cause visual 'scarring' of the landscape.
Prominent Hill Faces and Ridgelines	To protect the vegetated character of hill faces and ridgelines, visible in the foreground (0-1 kilometres) and middleground (1-3 kilometres) of key viewing opportunities. To minimise the impact of developments on hill faces which form a backdrop to important viewing opportunities greater than 3 kilometres away, including outside the Character Area.	Development should not be visible on the skyline of a prominent ridgeline. Where a development occurs on a prominent hillface, it should be designed, sited and landscaped so as to be inevident from foreground viewing locations in less than 2 years, and inevident from middleground viewing in 5 years. Developments which require substantial vegetation removal should occur in a manner which substantially maintains the vegetated backdrop to viewing from towns, roads and other key viewing opportunities greater than 3 kilometres away.	Development visible on skylines. Conspicuous or intrusive developments on prominent hill faces.
Townships and settlements	To protect the forested landscape setting of Marysville.	Development should retain the vegetated backdrop on hillslopes visible from Marysville. Encourage the management, and where necessary, rehabilitation of forested slopes surrounding Marysville. Protect and enhance the leafy character of the Marysville township and streetscape.	Loss of forested setting to Marysville through inappropriately sited developments. Removal of native vegetation except for fire management purposes. Loss of street trees in Marysville.

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Infrastructure	To minimise visual impacts of infrastructure on the dominant forested character.	<p>Linear infrastructure should be located to avoid the need to remove vegetation in visible locations and / or replant and rehabilitate to be inevident from key viewing locations in 2 years.</p> <p>Towers and other structures should avoid prominent hill faces and skylines as above or be designed and sited so as to be inevident from key viewpoints, roads and townships.</p>	<p>Landscape 'scarring' resulting from the removal of vegetation for infrastructure.</p> <p>Towers and other structures in prominent locations.</p>

1.2 Lake Eildon Forests

This Character Area is characterised by scattered dry eucalypt forest on steep slopes. The Area includes large areas of National Park with private land at the western and northern edges. The Area is dominated by forest and has very few buildings and settlements except along Skyline Road and in and around Eildon township. The area contains several access roads to Lake Eildon and nearby recreation / camping locations. A number of scenic points / lookouts occur along Skyline Road.

The boundary is defined by vegetation and topographic change to the west. The character type probably extends outside the municipality to the east although this has not been surveyed.



Indicators of Significance

- The landscape is diverse with dry, rugged native forest woodland vegetation; waterways and lake; and settlements.
- Lake Eildon is a tourist and recreation destination which attracts visitors from across Victoria. Skyline Road is a scenic ridgeline drive between Bonnie Doon and Eildon offering long distance views.
- A Significant Landscape Overlay applies to Lake Eildon and surrounds in recognition of its scenic landscape values.
- Lake Eildon and Lake Eildon National Park is identified on the register of the National Estate significance for cultural heritage, recreation and landscape values.
- The steep, prominent and mostly vegetated slopes form an important backdrop to Lake Eildon National Park and Upper Goulburn Valley.

Key Character Elements

- Hilly with some steeper slopes.
- Some minor watercourses drain to Lake Eildon, which is the dominant landscape feature.
- Dry eucalypt forest / woodland frequently with shrubby / grassy understorey.
- Settlements and structures are confined to private land at Eildon and along Skyline Road. Taylor Bay, located on the edge of Lake Eildon, is a sprawling settlement of low -density residential allotments located around two inlets of Lake Eildon. Some minor infrastructure and several lake access roads and camping areas (eg. Fraser Camping Area) are also in the Area.

Pattern of Viewing

Within the Character Area key viewing opportunities include Eildon township and access roads to Lake Eildon and nearby recreation / camping locations. Skyline Road is a scenic tourist drive with numerous scenic points / lookouts offering long range views of the upper Goulburn Valley, Lake Eildon and the

ranges. Lower U. T. Creek Road and the Goulburn Valley Highway are also key viewing corridors outside the Character Area. Views from the lake itself are also important.

Landscape Change

Ongoing and anticipated change to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- loss of vegetation due to wildfire, and fire management works;
- improvement of visitation infrastructure in key locations;
- newer houses situated to take advantage of views along Skyline Road, and near existing settlements at Taylor Bay and Eildon.

Existing state / local government policies likely to contribute to landscape change in the Character Area:

- Protect views from Lake Eildon by applying a Significant Landscape Overlay below Skyline Road, between Lake Eildon National Park and Eildon township; and
- control of future expansion of Eildon township (MSS)

Sensitivity to Change

Many of the elevated areas of this Character Area are steep and prominent, and visible from either the Upper Goulburn Valley or Lake Eildon, and as such are highly sensitive to developments which are prominently located or contrast with the existing landscape. Lower areas are less sensitive to landscape change as vegetation and topography provide screening potential and there are existing modifications (e.g. around Eildon township). However, development which involves disturbance to the denser vegetation which occurs in lower areas can also have substantial landscape impacts.

Future Character Directions

The Eildon Dry Forests Character Area should maintain a native vegetation dominated character, and continue to provide a scenic backdrop to Lake Eildon and the Upper Goulburn Valley (from Eildon to Thornton).

Developments should be sited away from prominent locations and/or designed to have inevident visual intrusion from key viewing locations of Lake Eildon, and the Goulburn Valley Highway. Assuming that Skyline Road continues to be promoted as a tourist route, lookouts and viewing locations should be enhanced. Management of natural values should continue to be important to the appreciation of the landscape character of the area.

Landscape Objectives

- To encourage the ongoing management of native forests, waterways and other natural features and the protection of important forest landscape values and their contribution to the future directions for Character Areas identified in this Study.
- To retain the dominant vegetation cover throughout.
- To manage the siting and design of buildings and structures to protect the dominant native-vegetated character of the Character Area.
- To ensure developments which require substantial vegetation removal occur in a manner which does not impact on the intact native forest character viewed from key viewing opportunities within and outside the character area.
- To protect the vegetated character of hill faces and ridgelines, visible in the foreground (0-1 kilometres) and middleground (1-3 kilometres) of key viewing opportunities.
- To minimise the impact of developments on hill faces which form a backdrop to important viewing opportunities greater than 3 kilometres away, including outside the Character Area.
- To manage development in and around Eildon and Taylor Bay Lake to protect the forested landscape setting of the townships.
- To enhance the vegetated setting of existing built elements.
- To manage the siting of substantial infrastructure to avoid visual scarring of the landscape.

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Landscape Management	To encourage the ongoing management of native forests, waterways and other natural features and the protection of important forest landscape values and their contribution to the future directions for Character Areas identified in this Study.	Liaise with the Department of Sustainability and Environment to ensure the use and management of forests in State Forest and National Park is consistent with the contribution the forests make to the landscape of the Shire.	Inconsistent landscape management approaches.
Vegetation	To retain the dominant vegetation cover throughout.	Protect the dominant vegetation cover throughout the Character Area, wherever possible. Where vegetation is to be removed by development, it should be replaced by locally appropriate vegetation which will grow to a similar height, and replace or retain the continuous forested canopy. Manage and site clearing of vegetation for safety or fire management purposes to reduce 'visual scarring' wherever possible.	Loss of continuity of forested landscape character. Developments which require permanent clearing of vegetation.
Siting and Design	To manage the siting and design of buildings and structures to protect the dominant native-vegetated character of the Character Area. To ensure developments which require substantial vegetation removal occur in a manner which does not impact on the intact native forest character viewed from key viewing opportunities within and outside the character area.	Buildings and structures should be sited within existing townships where possible. Where buildings and structures can not be sited within townships, they should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be constructed of materials which reduce distant visibility appropriate to the local area; be set amongst established native vegetation; be screened by the planting of vegetation; and use building forms and heights which conform to topography (e.g. stepping down the slope) and sit beneath the dominant canopy height. 	Buildings and structures which are highly visible and / or located in prominent locations. Buildings and structures which require substantial vegetation removal.
Prominent Hill Faces and Ridgelines	To protect the vegetated character of hill faces and ridgelines, visible in the foreground (0-1 kilometres) and middleground (1-3 kilometres) of key viewing opportunities. To minimise the impact of developments on hill faces which form a backdrop to important	Development should not be visible on the skyline of a prominent ridgeline. Where a development occurs on a prominent hill face, it should be designed, sited and landscaped so as to be inevent from foreground viewing locations in less than 2 years, and inevent from	Development visible on skylines. Conspicuous or intrusive developments on prominent hill faces.

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
	viewing opportunities greater than 3 kilometres away, including outside the Character Area.	<p>middleground viewing in 5 years.</p> <p>Developments which require substantial vegetation removal should occur in a manner which substantially maintains the vegetated backdrop to viewing from towns, roads and other key viewing opportunities greater than 3 kilometres away.</p>	
Townships and Settlements	To manage development in and around Eildon and Taylor Bay to protect the forested landscape setting of the town areas.	Contain the expansion of Eildon and Taylor Bay within defined urban growth boundaries which protect important views to vegetated hill sides and Lake Eildon / Eildon Pondage from within the townships, and the vegetated setting of approach roads.	<p>Uncontrolled expansion of townships and settlements into hillsides.</p> <p>Ribbon development along roadsides.</p>
	To enhance the vegetated setting of existing built elements.	Encourage landscaping of existing buildings and structures and townships with locally appropriate species.	Insufficient native vegetation landscaping around existing structures.
Infrastructure	To manage the siting of substantial infrastructure to avoid visual scarring of the landscape.	<p>Linear infrastructure should be located to avoid the need to remove vegetation in visible locations and / or replant and rehabilitate to be inevident from key viewing locations in 2 years.</p> <p>Towers and other structures should avoid prominent hill faces and skylines as above or be designed and sited so as to be inevident from key viewpoints, roads and townships.</p>	<p>Landscape 'scarring' resulting from the removal of vegetation for infrastructure.</p> <p>Towers and other structures in prominent locations.</p>

2.1 Kinglake Surrounds

This Character Area is loosely centred around the gently rolling agricultural plateau which surrounds Kinglake, Kinglake Central, and Pheasant Creek / Kinglake West. It is a high-rainfall area with a rich agrarian character evident in large paddocks containing high quality agricultural land. Native vegetation contributes strongly to the character, remnants occurring in dense copses in paddocks and near-continuous roadside reserves and in State Forest and National Parks at the edges of the area. A string of settlements along the Whittlesea – Kinglake Road are loosely clustered into three townships defined by basic commercial facilities at their centre. Dwellings are set in remnant native and established exotic vegetation which contributes to ‘soft edges’ of the townships. Kinglake and Kinglake West are located at two entrances to the Municipality from the northern outskirts of Melbourne. Within paddocks, mature exotic shelter belts and established exotic gardens associated with farm residences provide contrasts with the pasture.



Indicators of Significance

- Scenic character is contributed to by varied rolling topography, diversity of landscapes (productive agriculture and well-maintained fields, forest edges, and hills, valleys and rivers) and clumps of vegetation within paddocks, contrasting with rural land.
- The Kinglake National Park and State Forest provides a state and regional drawcard for tourism and recreation visitors from the Melbourne Region and throughout Victoria.
- Kinglake National Park is registered on the National Estate Register for its scenic and tourism values.

Key Character Elements

- The rolling topography is set on a plateau surrounded by steeper vegetated hills in adjacent Character Areas.
- Vegetation consists of cleared pasture in large paddocks with native vegetation (wet, shrubby eucalypt forest) in copses within paddocks and at roadsides. There are some examples of mature exotic shelter belts and established exotic gardens associated with farm residences.
- Tourism and production agriculture are the key land uses. Parts of the area are becoming attractive for commuters. The Character Area is entirely surrounded by wet forest character type contained in Mt Robertson State Forest and Kinglake National Park.
- Settlements are loosely scattered along roads, and houses are generally nestled in vegetation.
- Buildings and structures are largely confined to residential settlements scattered along the roads although a high voltage transmission line traverses the area outside the towns.

Pattern of Viewing

The Kinglake-Whittlesea and Kinglake-Healesville Roads are the main viewing corridors as well as the settlements as noted. Recreation / tourism locations in Kinglake National Park and State Forest are other important viewing locations.

Views are largely confined to the local area, terminating at surrounding vegetated hillsides. There are some examples of distant views to Melbourne to the south.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- ongoing agricultural activity;
- revegetation of degraded areas including weed removal;
- likely increased population and settlement patterns;
- continuing commercial forestry activities in adjacent Character Areas.

Existing state / local government policies likely to contribute to landscape change in the Character Area:

- The Kinglake-Flowerdale Integrated Strategy Plan guides development near settlements in the Character Area. It requires the consideration of environmental impacts (among others), including loss of native vegetation, and outlines potential future areas for residential growth around Kinglake, and for rural living at Pheasant Creek / Kinglake West, and a range of rezoning options to coordinate and control expansion of the settlements.
- Council's Municipal Strategic Statement sets out an objective to retain and improve native tree cover including roadside vegetation and support revegetation programs (cl21.10-3).
- The Local Policy on High Quality Agricultural land (22.01-5) and the Environmental Significance Overlay apply to this Character Area.

Changes to the rural zones at the state level are also likely to significantly affect how development occurs in this Area.

Sensitivity to Change

Rolling topography and scattered vegetation provide some opportunities for siting smaller residential developments, medium scale structures / agricultural infrastructure. Parts of existing settlements may more easily integrate urban or semi-urban developments within existing boundaries of settlement.

Developments in open paddocks, or on densely forested and steeper areas are less easily integrated.

Future Character Directions

The diversity of agricultural, natural and developed landscapes should be maintained by protecting remnant native vegetation, ensuring productive agricultural activity continues on high quality agricultural lands and carefully integrating buildings, settlements and infrastructure.

Future residential development should be sited amongst vegetation within existing township. Only single or small groups of buildings should occur within open paddocks, and these should be softened by substantial garden plantings. Native roadside vegetation should be maintained and enhanced, and native vegetation to the precinct edges should be maintained and managed as strong visual edges to the Character Area.

Landscape Objectives

- To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.
- To protect the scenic outlook of existing agricultural activity from roadsides.
- To encourage the management of forest landscape values in State Forest and in a manner consistent with the future directions of this Character Area.
- To protect and enhance native vegetation as an important character element, particularly at roadsides, on hill faces and ridges, and around watercourses.
- To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.

- To minimise the impact of buildings and structures on scenic landscape character.
- To protect the existing pattern of native vegetation and open paddocks as viewed from roads and settlements.
- To manage the siting of roads and access tracks to reduce visual impact and 'scarring'.
- To carefully site and design plantation forestry to avoid substantial change to the character and viewing in the Area.
- To manage the expansion of settlements to ensure the diversity of rural, natural and urban character is maintained
- To protect important views and vistas from intrusive and insensitive development.

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Landscape Management	To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.	Encourage the continuation of sustainable land management practices and productive agricultural activities which have a positive impact on the landscape. Encourage farm owners to prepare Whole Farm Plans, which consider scenic and landscape values.	Unkempt and poorly managed agricultural lands. Uses, developments and management practices which reduce the productivity of agricultural lands. Uses and developments which interfere with the ongoing management of agricultural lands.
	To protect the scenic outlook of existing agricultural activity from roadsides.	Design landscape change to protect the existing scenic patchwork pattern of agricultural activity contributed to by productive cropping, shelterbelts and waterways.	Large scale or linear landscape changes which disrupts the scenic agricultural landscape character.
	To encourage the management of forest landscape values in State Forest and in a manner consistent with the future directions of this Character Area.	Liaise with the Department of Sustainability and Environment to ensure the use and management of forests in State Forest and National Park is consistent with the contribution the forests make to the landscape of the Character Area.	Inconsistent landscape management approaches.
Vegetation	To protect and enhance native vegetation as an important character element, particularly at roadsides, on hill faces and ridges, and around watercourses.	Protect existing native vegetation wherever possible. Encourage the ongoing rehabilitation of waterways and roadsides and other areas with locally sourced vegetation.	Clearing of creek corridors. Loss of vegetation in prominent locations and roadsides.
	To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.	Retain existing shelter belts wherever possible. Replace lost, old, degraded or incomplete shelter belts with the same species or an alternative species, suitable to the character of the local area. Encourage the retention of substantial garden plantings associated with towns and homesteads.	Loss of shelter belts as a landscape feature. Unkempt, broken or incomplete shelter belts. Loss of established garden plantings.

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Siting and Design	<p>To minimise the impact of buildings and structures on landscape character.</p> <p>To protect the existing pattern of native vegetation and open paddocks as viewed from roads and settlements.</p>	<p>Future residential development should be sited amongst vegetation within existing townships wherever possible.</p> <p>Buildings and structures located outside townships should be designed to reduce visual intrusion by use of low scale building forms, and / or non-reflective materials and colours appropriate to the local area wherever possible.</p> <p>In addition development of dwellings outside townships should attempt to reflect traditional 'homestead clusters' by being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ set back a long distance from roads and nearby dwellings; and ▪ surrounded by substantial landscaping of locally appropriate species. 	<p>Dominant building forms in prominent locations.</p> <p>Buildings or structures in open paddocks without landscaping.</p> <p>Loss of open paddocks where an absence of buildings and structures is a characteristic.</p>
	<p>To manage the siting of roads and access tracks to reduce visual impact and 'scarring'.</p>	<p>Roads and driveways should be sited and designed to reduce visual intrusion by conforming to topography and maintaining vegetation as a screen.</p> <p>In highly visible locations, the use of dark, locally sourced material is preferable.</p>	<p>Straight roads up hill sides.</p> <p>Roads / driveways in prominent locations.</p> <p>Roads / driveways built of bright and / or highly contrasting materials.</p> <p>Roads / driveways which require the removal of substantial established vegetation.</p>
Plantation Forestry	<p>To minimise the impact of plantation forestry on the character and viewing in the Area.</p>	<p>Plantation forestry should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ of a scale subordinate to the scale of existing agricultural activity (e.g. existing paddock sizes); ▪ integrated with existing vegetation / forest edges and / or designed with varied edges. ▪ located in the lower two thirds of the slope on a prominent hillside, wherever possible; ▪ sited so as to be viewed at an oblique angle from key touring routes, wherever possible; ▪ screened from key viewing locations using, established native vegetation (including understorey). 	<p>Plantation continuous at the roadside, or in prominent locations.</p> <p>Plantation forestry which blocks key views.</p> <p>Large scale plantation forestry which dominates open spaces.</p>

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Townships / Settlements	To manage the expansion of settlements to ensure the diversity of rural, natural and urban character is maintained	<p>Expansion of settlements should occur asymmetrically, in accordance with existing land use constraints, and to maintain substantial areas of open pasture and native vegetation as key character influences on the township setting.</p> <p>Development at the town edges should be softened by integrating buildings and structures with substantial vegetation.</p>	Ribbon development along highways and key touring routes.
Views and Vistas	To protect important views and vistas from intrusive and insensitive development.	<p>Buildings, structures and other developments which occur in the foreground (up to 1 kilometre) of key views and vistas including should be designed and sited so as to retain the character and quality of the views unless it can be shown that equivalent publicly accessible vistas are available nearby.</p> <p>Key views identified by the Council may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'gateway' views on main roads and highways; ▪ views from recreation locations or sign-posted scenic points (e.g. Frank Thomson Reserve, Kinglake); ▪ locally important vistas to the arts community. 	Unsympathetic development in key view fields.

2.2 Flowerdale Valley

The Flowerdale Valley Character Area is a small, discrete, flat-bottomed river valley with steep wooded sides in the south-west of Murrindindi. The valley bottom is cleared for pasture, with mature native trees (eucalypts and blackwoods) in paddocks. King Parrot Creek is an important landscape feature, and the numerous old wooden bridges which give access to settlements across the Creek contribute to the character of the Area. A loose string of residential settlements at Flowerdale, Hazeldene and Silver Creek is amongst pastoral land on narrow river flats between King Parrot Creek and steep vegetated hillsides. Residences are frequently accessed across old wooden bridges and service roads opposite the main highway. The edge of the character area is defined by state forest on either side of the valley.



Indicators of Significance

- Scenic features including proximity of creek to road, contrast of farmland and steep wooded hills, and stands of native vegetation at roadsides.
- Kinglake National Park and adjacent State Forests attract visitors from around the Metropolitan region.

Key Character Elements

- The creek valley is flat to gently rolling, and set beneath steep vegetated hillsides.
- King Parrot Creek is an important feature at the roadside.
- Indigenous vegetation lines roads and creeks with substantial areas remaining on river flats and in the densely vegetated hillsides at the edge of the Area.
- Flat land is used for grazing and agriculture, while some subdivision of creek flats for housing has also occurred.
- Development is scattered throughout, but is concentrated around the small settlements of Flowerdale and Hazeldene and subdivisions at Long Gully Road area and Silver Creek, both south of Flowerdale. Numerous old wooden bridges access settlements across the Creek and are characteristic structures of the Area.

Pattern of Viewing

Key views are from the Yea–Wittlesea Road which runs through the length of the precinct and settlements.

Only internal views are available, terminating at the vegetated hillsides which defined the Character Area's edges.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape Character Area include:

- rehabilitation and revegetation of parts of the King Parrot Creek environs.

- continuation of existing patterns of agriculture and forestry within this precinct and in adjacent precincts;
- change of use of some dwellings from part-time, occasional holiday homes to permanent residency.
- increased development of settlement on existing small lots;
- infrastructure including telecommunications towers;
- completion of significant recreational pathway works.

Existing state / local government policies likely to contribute to landscape change in the Character Area:

- The Kinglake-Flowerdale Integrated Strategy Plan guides development near settlements in the Character Area. It requires the consideration of environmental impacts (among others), including loss of native vegetation, and identifies rural areas near Flowerdale for future rural living. Control of residential development at Flowerdale has been managed by the restructuring of numerous small lots into larger parcels.

Changes to the rural zones at the state level are also likely to significantly effect how development occurs in this Area.

Sensitivity to Change

Views to ridges and hillsides at the edge of the Area are sensitive to development that requires substantial removal of vegetation, as these are prominent and viewed in close proximity to roads and settlements.

King Parrot Creek is an important landscape seen by many people but it is potentially impacted by pollution, weeds, rubbish erosion and/or over development.

Future Character Directions

The Flowerdale Valley should continue to provide a scenic natural setting to small-scale settlements. Remnant native vegetation should be maintained, particularly at roadsides and as a strong visual edge to the Area. The King Parrot Creek is an important landscape feature and its natural character

should be protected and enhanced. Retention of the wooden bridges would also contribute to the character of the area.

Landscape Objectives

- To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.
- To encourage the management of forest landscape values in State Forest and in a manner consistent with the future directions of this Character Area.
- To protect and enhance native vegetation as an important character element throughout the Area, particularly at roadsides, on hill faces and ridges, and around King Parrot Creek.
- To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.
- To minimise the impact of buildings and structures on scenic landscape character.
- To carefully site and design plantation forestry to avoid substantial change to the character and viewing in the Area.
- To minimise the impact of development in and around townships on the dominant natural / agricultural character of the Valley.
- To protect and enhance the King Parrot Creek and environs.
- To maintain and enhance the strong vegetated character of hillslopes viewed from main roads and townships in the Character Area.
- To avoid development which will be visible on the skyline.

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Landscape Management	To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.	Encourage the continuation of sustainable land management practices and productive agricultural activities which have a positive impact on the landscape. Encourage farm owners to prepare Whole Farm Plans, which consider scenic and landscape values.	Unkempt and poorly managed agricultural lands. Uses, developments and management practices which reduce the productivity of agricultural lands. Uses and developments which interfere with the ongoing management of agricultural lands.
	To encourage the management of forest landscape values in State Forest and in a manner consistent with the future directions of this Character Area.	Liaise with the Department of Sustainability and Environment to ensure the use and management of forests in State Forest and National Park is consistent with the contribution the forests make to the landscape of the Character Area.	Inconsistent landscape management approaches. Development in adjacent Character Areas which significantly impacts on the character of Area.
Vegetation	To protect and enhance native vegetation as an important character element throughout the Area, particularly at roadsides, on hill faces and ridges, and around King Parrot Creek.	Protect native vegetation along King Parrot Creek and on prominent hill sides. Retain vegetation within paddocks wherever possible. Encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation species throughout the Character Area, particularly for rehabilitation works, or associated with new developments.	Loss of vegetation along King Parrot Creek. Loss of vegetation in prominent locations.
	To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.	Retain existing shelter belts wherever possible. Replace lost, old, degraded or incomplete shelter belts with the same species or an alternative species, suitable to the character of the local area. Encourage the retention of substantial garden plantings associated with towns and homesteads.	Loss of shelter belts as a landscape feature. Unkempt, broken or incomplete shelter belts. Loss of established garden plantings.
Siting and Design	To minimise the impact of buildings and structures on scenic landscape character.	Site buildings within existing settlements wherever possible. Outside settlements, reduce visual intrusion by utilising low scale building forms, tucked into the landscape and materials and colours that occur in the local area in new buildings or structures. Set back buildings and structures from Yea-	Large, intrusive or highly visible buildings and structures. Buildings and structures close to the roadside. Lack of planting around buildings and structures.

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
		Whittlesea Road and King Parrot Creek. Integrate any new development with the landscape through the use of appropriate indigenous vegetation, and a landscape plan where appropriate.	
Plantation Forestry	To minimise the impact of plantation forestry on the character and viewing in the Area.	Plantation forestry should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of a scale which reflects the existing paddock sizes or scale of existing agricultural activity; • integrated with existing vegetation / forest edges and / or designed with varied edges. • located in the lower two thirds of the slope on a prominent hillside, wherever possible; • sited so as to be viewed at an oblique angle from key touring routes, wherever possible; • set back from key views and touring routes, with vegetative screens, preferably utilising existing established native vegetation (including understorey). 	Domination of paddocks with plantation. Plantation which is continuous at the roadside. Plantation in prominent locations.
Townships / Settlements	To minimise the impact of development in and around townships on the dominant natural / agricultural character of the Valley.	Ensure townships have a definite visual edge, delineating the boundary between urban development and the natural / rural landscape beyond. Carefully site buildings and structures at the town edges to integrate with existing topography / vegetation. Develop planting within townships to reflect the character of the surrounding landscape.	Ribbon development along Yea-Whittlesea Road. Lack of vegetative softening to townships.
Landscape Features	To protect and enhance the King Parrot Creek and environs.	Encourage landowners and responsible agencies to protect and maintain vegetation along the Creek corridor. Seek to maintain the old wooden bridges across King Parrot Creek wherever possible.	Developments which intrude on King Parrot Creek. Loss of existing wooden bridges.

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Prominent Ridges and Hill faces	<p>To maintain and enhance the strong vegetated character of hill slopes viewed from main roads and townships in the Character Area.</p> <p>To avoid development which will be visible on the skyline.</p>	<p>Development on prominent hill faces should be avoided wherever possible.</p> <p>Where development can not be avoided on prominent hill faces, the following guidelines apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site developments in the lower one-third of the visible slope, wherever possible; • set buildings and structures amongst existing vegetation, and / or establish gardens of locally appropriate species; • design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site; • articulate buildings into separate elements, and avoid visually dominant elevations. • construct buildings and structures of materials which reduce distant visibility (e.g. darker colours, non-reflective materials). 	<p>Buildings and structures which are visible on the skyline.</p> <p>Highly visible buildings and structures on prominent and / or vegetated hill faces.</p>

2.3 Acheron Valley

This Character Area contains flat to generally rolling pastures that follow the Acheron River and Steavensons Creek. Agricultural land is set beneath steep, vegetated hillsides including the Cathedral Range, which is an important landscape feature viewed from much of the area. There are two small towns in the Area, although residential settlements are loosely scattered around these. The tourist centre of Marysville is just outside the area to the south. The Maroondah Highway which runs north-south through the precinct is an important touring route offering outstanding views to the Cathedral Range and surrounding landscapes.



Indicators of Significance

- Maroondah Highway (Black Spur) is listed on the Register of the National Estate as having state and regional importance for sensitively located road providing an outstanding visual experience for the traveller, as well as historic, scientific, educational and recreational significance.
- Cathedral Range is a regional landmark, a National Trust registered landscape and listed on Register of the National Estate for scenic values (amongst others). It is reserved as State Park for recreation, scenic, geomorphic and environmental values. A Significant Landscape Overlay applies to land adjoining the west of the Cathedral Range State Park in recognition of the National Trust classification of this landscape.
- Recreational and tourist visitors to the Area are drawn from throughout the region and State, and potentially nationally.
- The community values the scenic beauty of the Area's diverse landscapes and a balance of natural forested areas and farmlands.
- Views, touring routes and tourist values include the Acheron Way: purpose built vehicle tourist route 1920s: 'one of the most spectacular scenic drives in Australia'. Marysville-Buxton Road is a scenic touring route.
- A number of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage sites occur in the Character Area, particularly near the Cathedral Range.

Key Character Elements

- Flat to gently rolling topography surrounded by steeper hillsides.
- The Steavenson and Acheron Rivers are major watercourses in the Character Area, and important landscape features. There are also numerous medium-sized farm dams on open, cleared farmland.
- Native vegetation occurs as an important and defining features at the edges of the area, along waterways and within roadside reserves. Some exotic shelterbelts have been established in pasture on farmland.
- Grazing is the primary land use, while plantation forestry also occurs on private land. There are small areas dedicated to tourism / recreation.

- Residential settlement occurs in a few minor towns, notably Narbethong and Buxton. Newer low-density residential development surrounds Buxton, and occurs at the foot of the Cathedral Range. A few scattered rural homesteads are set well back from the roads throughout the Area.
- A high voltage electricity transmission line also runs through the Area.

Pattern of Viewing

The Maroondah Highway which runs north-south through the Character Area is an important touring route which offers outstanding views to the Cathedral Range and surrounding landscapes.

There are residential settlements and small scale visitor and key viewing opportunities at Buxton and Narbethong within the area, while Taggerty and the tourism centre of Marysville are just outside the area to the north and south respectively.

Views over the Acheron Valley are available from forest recreation areas nearby and views from walking tracks on the Cathedral Range are particularly important.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- continuing agricultural activity;
- conversion of pasture to plantation forestry in some areas;
- commercial forestry in adjacent Character Areas;
- construction of dwellings and change of use of holiday homes to permanent residences;
- pressure for subdivision of larger lots for primarily residential 'hobby farm';
- development of tourist facilities and accommodation; and
- rehabilitation of creek valleys and riparian vegetation.

Existing state / local government policies likely to contribute to landscape change in the Character Area:

- a Significant Landscape Overlay applies to land adjoining the Cathedral Range east of Buxton and south of Thornton to protect the Cathedral Range and surrounding landscape from visual intrusion and inappropriate development.
- Council's Municipal Strategic Statement sets out an objective to retain and improve native tree cover including roadside vegetation and support revegetation programs (cl21.10-3) and for no extension of Buxton, Taggerty and Narbethong (cl21.09-3) .

Changes to the rural zones at the state level are also likely to significantly effect how development occurs in this Area.

Sensitivity to Change

The elevated forest edges of the Character Area are particularly sensitive to modification, as are the slopes beneath the Cathedral Range, due to the prominence of this landscape feature.

Open paddocks viewed from roadsides are less able to visually absorb development, although clumps of vegetation give some scope to integrate individual buildings or small clusters of buildings, where they are set back from roads.

The roadside vegetation is also sensitive to change.

Future Character Directions

The Character Area should continue to provide a scenic transition between the forested mountains and the rolling pastures around Alexandra. Vegetation at roadsides and within creek valleys should continue to be a defining feature, while paddocks and pastures should create an open, scenic contrast to the backdrop of the Cathedral Range and Black Range. Special consideration should be given to the protection of views to the Cathedral Range, paddocks and on hillsides visible from the Maroondah Highway, and the main roads linking to Marysville / Lake Mountain.

Landscape Objectives

- To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.
- To encourage the management of forest landscape values in State Forest and in a manner consistent with the future directions of this Character Area.
- To protect and enhance native vegetation as an important character element, particularly at roadsides, on hill slopes and ridgelines and around watercourses.
- To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.
- To manage siting and design of buildings and structures to ensure protection of important views to the Cathedral Range, and the dominant agricultural character.
- To protect important views and vistas from intrusive and insensitive development.
- To carefully site and design plantation forestry to avoid substantial change to the landscape character and views to the Cathedral Range.
- To protect the landscape setting of townships and contain development within established boundaries.
- To improve the character and setting of rural residential areas outside townships.

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Landscape Management	To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.	Encourage the continuation of sustainable land management practices and productive agricultural activities which have a positive impact on the landscape. Encourage farm owners to prepare Whole Farm Plans, which consider scenic and landscape values.	Unkempt and poorly managed agricultural lands. Uses, developments and management practices which reduce the productivity of agricultural lands. Uses and developments which interfere with the ongoing management of agricultural lands.
	To encourage the management of forest landscape values in State Forest and in a manner consistent with the future directions of this Character Area.	Liaise with the Department of Sustainability and Environment to ensure the use and management of forests in State Forest and National Park is consistent with the contribution the forests make to the landscape of the Character Area.	Inconsistent landscape management approaches. Development in adjacent Character Areas which significantly impacts on the character of Acheron Valley.
Vegetation	To protect and enhance native vegetation as an important character element, particularly at roadsides, on hill slopes and ridgelines and around watercourses.	Retain existing native vegetation wherever possible. Protect significant stands of native vegetation at roadsides and on prominent hill faces / ridgelines. Encourage the ongoing rehabilitation of waterways, roadsides and other areas with locally sourced vegetation, including development of vegetative linkages to the Rokeby-Crossover bushland reserve.	Clearing of creek corridors. Loss of vegetation in prominent locations and roadsides.
	To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.	Retain existing shelter belts wherever possible. Site new shelter belts to protect scenic views to the Cathedral Range. Replace lost, old, degraded or incomplete shelter belts with the same species or an alternative species, suitable to the character of the local area. Encourage the retention of substantial garden plantings associated with towns and homesteads.	Loss of shelter belts as a landscape feature. Shelter belts which block important scenic views. Unkempt, broken or incomplete shelter belts. Loss of established garden plantings.
Siting and Design	To manage siting and design of buildings and structures to ensure protection of important views to the Cathedral Range, and the dominant agricultural character.	Non-agricultural buildings and structures should be located within existing townships wherever possible. Where buildings and structures are to be located outside existing townships, they should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> located with existing clusters of buildings (e.g. agricultural homesteads) and / or established 	Loss of large open areas where lack of buildings is a characteristic. 'Cluttering' of buildings in paddocks as viewed from roadsides. Ribbon development along the Maroondah Highway. Buildings and structures in important or scenic

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
		vegetation, wherever possible; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set back from roadsides; • designed to reduce visual intrusion by use of low scale building forms, and / or non-reflective materials and colours appropriate to the local area; • located to be sensitive to important views to the Cathedral Range (see below). 	viewfields.
Key Views and Vistas	To protect important views and vistas from intrusive and insensitive development.	Development in the (up to 1 kilometre) of key views and vistas should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • designed and sited so as to be inevident in less than 2 years; and / or • otherwise shown to be compatible with the character and quality of the view unless it can be shown that equivalent publically accessible vistas are available nearby. Key views may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'gateway' views on the Maroondah Highway; • sign-posted scenic points; • locally important vistas to Cathedral Range used by the arts community; • views from recreation / tourism locations. 	Unsympathetic or intrusive development in key view fields.
Plantation Forestry	To minimise the impact of plantation forestry on the character and viewing in the Area, in particular scenic views to the Cathedral Range.	Plantation forestry should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • located on flat land, or on the lower one-third of the visible slope of a hillside; • integrated with existing vegetation / forest edges and / or designed with vegetated screens of native vegetation; • sited and designed so as to allow the general pattern of outviewing from roads and key viewing locations to continue; and 	Plantation forestry in prominent locations. Plantation forestry which is continuous at the roadside, and / or of such a scale as to alter the open character. Plantation that blocks key views or vistas, especially to the Cathedral Range.

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of a scale which reflects the scale of existing agricultural activity (e.g. existing paddock sizes). 	
Townships and settlements	To protect the landscape setting of townships and contain development within established boundaries.	<p>Development at the edges of Buxton and Thornton should be restricted within defined urban growth boundaries which closely relate to the existing town extent, and important views, topography and landscape features so as to maintain open character outside townships.</p> <p>The edges of Buxton and Taggerty should be landscaped with locally appropriate species.</p> <p>Development in and around Narbethong should be sited within existing vegetation and/or be developed with substantial landscaping of locally sourced species. Loss of vegetation, particularly visible from roadsides, should be avoided.</p>	<p>Expansion of Buxton and Taggerty into key view fields to the Cathedral Range.</p> <p>Ribbon development along the Maroondah Highway.</p> <p>Development at the edges of townships and settlements, without landscaping.</p>
	To improve the character and setting of rural residential areas outside townships.	Encourage landowners to improve the setting of established rural residential properties located in key viewfields through appropriate landscaping and colouring which reduces visual intrusion.	Highly visible dwellings in prominent locations in key view fields.

2.4 Toolangi Agricultural

The Toolangi Agricultural Character Area is located on rolling to steep topography of the Great Dividing Range, in the south of Murrindindi. It is a high-rainfall area with specialist horticultural activities occurring in large paddocks, contributing to a rich, productive and dynamic agrarian character. Within paddocks there are only a few agricultural buildings and very few dwellings although mature exotic shelterbelts are a strong element. The settlement of Toolangi is nestled in native vegetation within a valley surrounded by active cropping and pasture. Settlement is sporadic and linear along the main road with an older residential core set close to the road. Steep vegetated hillsides contained in State Forest and National Parks at the edges of the area provide important backdrop to viewing.



Indicators of Significance

- Toolangi's unique, scenic character is contributed to by rolling topography, productive agriculture and intact native vegetation. An absence of dwellings contributes to some particularly scenic views
- The Toolangi State Forest (and nearby Murrindindi Scenic Reserve) provide a drawcard for tourism and recreation visitors from the Melbourne Region and throughout Victoria.
- The area is associated with poet CJ Dennis who lived and wrote many of his poems in Toolangi.

Key Character Elements

- Topography is a rolling to steep valley, bounded by steeper vegetated hills in adjacent Character Areas.
- The upper reaches of the Yea River occur in the Character Area, with the river flowing through forest close to Toolangi.
- Vegetation consists of cleared pasture in large paddocks with native vegetation (wet, shrubby eucalypt forest) surrounding Toolangi, and at roadsides. There are some examples of mature exotic shelter belts and established exotic gardens associated with farm residences.
- Production agriculture is the main land uses, with horticulture including vegetable and commercial flower production. The Character Area is entirely surrounded by wet forest character type contained in the Toolangi State Forest.
- Toolangi is the only settlement in the area, located close to the road, with houses nestled in vegetation.
- Buildings and structures are absent from paddocks, being largely confined to Toolangi, although some farm houses and outbuildings do occur, scattered along the roads.

Pattern of Viewing

The Kinglake--Healesville Road and the settlement of Toolangi are the main opportunities for viewing within the Character Area. The Toolangi Forest

Discovery Centre and recreation / tourism locations in State Forest nearby are other important viewing opportunities which potentially attract visitors from across the region and state.

Views are largely confined to the local area, terminating at surrounding vegetated hillsides

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- ongoing agricultural activity;
- continuing commercial forestry activities in adjacent Character Areas

Existing state / local government policies likely to contribute to landscape change in the Character Area:

- Council's Municipal Strategic Statement sets out an objective for no future expansion of Toolangi township (cl21.09-3) and to retain and improve native tree cover including roadside vegetation (cl21.10-3).
- The Local Policy on High Quality Agricultural land (22.01-5) and the Environmental Significance Overlay apply to this Character Area.

Changes to the rural zones at the state level are also likely to significantly effect how development occurs in this Area.

Sensitivity to Change

The steep, densely forested hillsides found within and at the edge of this Character Area provide little opportunity for integrating developments which require substantial vegetation removal. Views across open paddocks are also sensitive, although rolling topography and scattered vegetation provide some opportunities to minimise intrusion of smaller developments such as dwellings and agricultural infrastructure.

Future Character Directions

The unique agrarian character of this Area should be protected, by encouraging the continuation of productive agricultural activity on high quality

agricultural land and carefully integrating buildings, settlements and infrastructure into the landscape.

Future residential development should occur within existing township boundaries, and be tucked into native vegetation. Only single or small groups of buildings should occur within open paddocks, and these should be softened by substantial garden plantings. Native roadside vegetation should be maintained and enhanced, and native vegetation to the precinct edges should be maintained and managed as strong visual edges to the Character Area.

Landscape Objectives

- To recognise the contribution that productive farming / agriculture and associated structures / infrastructure make to landscape character and to encourage the continuation of agricultural activities.
- To encourage the ongoing management of forest landscape values in adjacent Character Areas.
- To ensure protection and enhancement of native vegetation as an important character element, particularly at roadsides, on hill faces and ridges, and around watercourses.
- To encourage the management and replacement of shelterbelts.
- To manage siting and design of buildings and structures to ensure protection of the agricultural character.
- To protect the 'vegetated hamlet' setting of Toolangi township.
- To carefully site and design plantation forestry to avoid substantial change to the character and viewing in the Area.

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Landscape Management	To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.	Encourage the continuation of sustainable land management practices and productive agricultural activities which have a positive impact on the landscape. Encourage farm owners to prepare Whole Farm Plans, which consider scenic and landscape values.	Unkempt and poorly managed agricultural lands. Uses, developments and management practices which reduce the productivity of agricultural lands. Uses and developments which interfere with the ongoing management of agricultural lands.
	To protect the scenic outlook of existing agricultural activity from roadsides.	Design landscape change to protect the existing scenic patchwork pattern of agricultural activity contributed to by productive cropping, shelter belts and waterways.	Large scale or linear landscape changes which disrupts the scenic agricultural landscape character.
	To encourage the management of forest landscape values in State Forest and in a manner consistent with the future directions of this Character Area.	Liase with the Department of Sustainability and Environment to ensure the use and management of forests in State Forest and National Park is consistent with the contribution the forests make to the landscape of the Character Area.	Inconsistent landscape management approaches. Development in adjacent Character Areas which significantly impacts on the character of Area.
Vegetation	To ensure protection and enhancement of native vegetation as an important character element, particularly at roadsides, on hill faces and ridges, and around watercourses.	Maintain native vegetation wherever possible, particularly along Yea River, at edges of paddocks and at roadsides. Encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation species in the Character Area to create links with native forest at the edge of the Area. Integrate any new development with the landscape through the use of appropriate vegetation. Require larger developments, or those in prominent locations, to complete a landscape plan prior to development.	Loss of vegetation along water courses.
	To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.	Retain existing shelter belts wherever possible. Replace lost, old, degraded or incomplete shelter belts with the same species or an alternative species, suitable to the character of the local area. Encourage the retention of substantial garden plantings associated with towns and homesteads.	Loss of shelter belts as a landscape feature. Unkempt, broken or incomplete shelter belts. Loss of established garden plantings.

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Siting and Design	To minimise the impact of buildings and structures on the scenic agricultural character.	<p>Avoid the development of non-agricultural buildings and structures outside Toolangi township, wherever possible.</p> <p>Where buildings and structures outside the township can not be avoided, they should be:</p> <p>located with existing clusters of buildings (e.g. agricultural homesteads) and / or established vegetation, wherever possible</p> <p>sited away from prominent views from Kinglake-Healesville and Sylvia Creek Roads;</p> <p>designed to reduce visual intrusion by use of low scale building forms, and / or non-reflective materials and colours appropriate to the local area.</p>	
	To minimise the impact of roads on the scenic landscape of the Area.	<p>Roads and driveways should be sited and designed to reduce visual intrusion by conforming to topography and maintaining vegetation as a screen.</p> <p>In highly visible locations, the use of dark, locally sourced material for gravel roads is preferable.</p>	<p>Straight roads up hill sides.</p> <p>Roads / driveways in prominent locations.</p> <p>Roads / driveways built of bright and / or highly contrasting materials.</p> <p>Roads / driveways which require the removal of substantial established vegetation.</p>
Townships and Settlements	To protect the 'vegetated hamlet' setting of Toolangi township.	Development in and around Toolangi should be sited within existing vegetation and/or be developed with substantial landscaping of locally sourced species.	Loss of native vegetation in and around Toolangi.
Plantation Forestry	To minimise the impact of plantation forestry on the character and viewing in the Area..	<p>Plantation forestry should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> of a scale subordinate to the scale of existing agricultural activity (e.g. existing paddock sizes); integrated with existing vegetation / forest edges and / or screened from key viewing locations and roads using, established native vegetation, planted vegetative screens (including understorey) or existing shelter belts; located in the lower two thirds of the slope on a prominent hillside, wherever possible; sited so as to be viewed at an oblique angle 	<p>Plantation of a scale which dominates the viewed landscape.</p> <p>Plantation continuous at roadsides.</p> <p>Plantation in prominent locations.</p>

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
		<div>from key touring routes, wherever possible;</div> <div><div>▪</div>screened from key viewing locations using, established native vegetation (including understorey).</div>	

3.1 Yea-Alexandra Rolling Pastures

This broad Character Area spreads from Glenburn to north of Yea, and from Strath Creek to west of Alexandra, interrupted by the forested Black Range in the central sections. The Character Area is dominated by rolling hills covered by open grasslands / pasture, which contrast with a backdrop of wooded valley sides. Stands of native woodland remnants are found along roadsides and in some hilltop situations in the south west of the area. Large areas of cleared pasture have been replanted with pine plantation throughout.

The Shire's major rural centres – Yea and Alexandra – are both within this Character Area, each town having extensive garden and streetscape plantings. Outside the towns, a sense of spaciousness is afforded by large spaces between homesteads, which are often set back from the roads and surrounded in exotic vegetation, including shelter belts.



Indicators of Significance

- Trawool Valley is a National Trust landscape and is listed on National Estate for its landscape character and visual quality (among other values).
- Yea River is identified as a regional scenic and recreation resource.
- A number of important scenic drives and touring routes occur in the area including the Melba Highway and Murrindindi Road.
- The former Tallarook to Yea railway line is a dominant historic feature with architectural and cultural values of National Estate significance (including the Cheviot Tunnel).
- The Valley of a Thousand Hills viewed from Murchison Gap is a unique and recognised landscape which features in artistic records.
- The Yea Baragwanathia Flora Fossil Site is a location of international scientific significance.
- A number of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage sites occur in the Character Area.

Key Character Elements

- Undulating, hilly topography throughout, steeper near valley sides and valley head and around Strath Creek.
- Several major watercourses occur in the Area, including Yea and Murrindindi Rivers, Home Creek and King Parrot Creek.
- Vegetation has largely been cleared and replaced with pasture, with some strips of remnant or regenerating vegetation in roadside and streamside areas. Single eucalypts within paddocks are frequently in decline.
- The major land use is cattle grazing (having replaced sheep in the last two decades), while plantation forestry is replacing pasture in parts and some vineyards and new productive olive groves are also found (notably established vineyards in the Murrindindi Valley and at Ghin Ghin).
- Structures are mainly confined to towns and rural localities which occur near rivers throughout the Character Area. Outside the towns, scattered farm homesteads are set well apart and newer hobby farms and

residences are being established in between. Farm sheds are also common.

- Several highways, main roads and a high voltage transmission line traverse the area.

Pattern of Viewing

The rural centres of Yea and Alexandra are key viewing locations while the Melba, Maroondah and Goulburn Valley Highways are important touring routes which carry a large number of viewers. Occasional basic lookout points have been established at roadsides and ridges (e.g. Goulburn Valley Lookout, Maroondah Highway south of Alexandra).

Local topography contains much of the viewing although surrounding vegetated hillsides at the edges of the character type provide an important backdrop and terminus to viewing, particularly near Alexandra, where views to high mountains are available.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- ongoing agricultural activity, including establishment of olive groves, vineyards, and orchards;
- harvesting of established plantations, and conversion of pasture to plantation in some areas;
- increase in native vegetation through active revegetation by community groups and farmers (particularly along the Murrindindi River, Home Creek and King Parrot Creek) and natural regeneration of less productive agricultural areas;
- development of serviced but underdeveloped residential land at the outskirts of Yea and Alexandra;
- further development of Yea and Alexandra industrial precincts;
- pressure for residential development outside towns in some areas and development of housing on existing small to medium size lots near towns;

- pressure for subdivision of larger lots for residential 'hobby farms'.

Existing state / local government policies likely to contribute to landscape change in the Character Area:

- The settlements policy defines land within and surrounding Alexandra and Yea as key areas for future residential development, including rural residential areas at the towns' outskirts.
- Council's draft Industrial Strategy identifies land on Whittlesea-Yea Road to the south of Yea for future industrial development.
- Council's Municipal Strategic Statement sets out to retain and improve native tree cover including roadside vegetation and support revegetation programs (cl21.10-3).
- The Rural Living Development Guidelines, 2004 will affect the way rural living is controlled and managed in the shire including protection and enhancement of landscape and significant ridgelines.

Sensitivity to Change

Cleared open hillsides present little opportunity to integrate buildings and structures, particularly where visible from key touring routes or as a backdrop to towns. Topography can screen some developments, and there is potential to integrate structures into vegetation.

Future Character Directions

The dominant rural character of this Area should be protected by carefully siting non-rural land uses. Gradual evolution of the rural character should be encouraged including new farming practices and crops (e.g. olive groves and vineyards), and revegetation of less productive farmlands and areas of environmental degradation. Plantation forestry should contribute to the retention of an open rural character and integrate with revegetation efforts.

Landscape Objectives

- To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.
- To retain existing native vegetation, particularly at roadsides, and encourage the rehabilitation of hill faces, ridges, and watercourses with locally indigenous species.
- To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.
- To manage siting and design of buildings and structures to protect the rural outlook from main roads, important viewing locations and townships.
- To manage the siting of roads and access tracks to reduce visual impact and 'scarring'
- To encourage development within Yea and Alexandra in a manner sympathetic to the surrounding rural character and existing vegetation, waterform and topographic landscape features.
- To contain minor settlements within current boundaries.
- To carefully site and design plantation forestry to avoid substantial change to the landscape character.
- To protect and enhance the landscape setting of important cultural and heritage sites.
- To manage the landscape character as viewed from important views and vistas.

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Landscape Management	To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.	<p>Encourage the continuation of sustainable land management practices and productive agricultural activities which have a positive impact on the landscape.</p> <p>Encourage farm owners to prepare Whole Farm Plans, which consider scenic and landscape values.</p>	<p>Unkempt and poorly managed agricultural lands.</p> <p>Uses, developments and management practices which reduce the productivity of agricultural lands.</p> <p>Uses and developments which interfere with the ongoing management of agricultural lands.</p>
Vegetation	To retain existing native vegetation, particularly at roadsides, and encourage the rehabilitation of hill faces, ridges, and watercourses with locally indigenous species.	<p>Avoid the removal of native vegetation wherever possible.</p> <p>Encourage the rehabilitation of hill slopes and ridges and replanting of riparian areas and linkages through paddocks with locally indigenous vegetation.</p>	<p>Loss of vegetation around watercourses and at the roadside.</p>
	To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.	<p>Retain existing shelter belts wherever possible.</p> <p>Replace lost, old, degraded or incomplete shelter belts with the same species or an alternative species, suitable to the character of the local area.</p> <p>Encourage the retention of substantial garden plantings associated with towns and homesteads.</p>	<p>Loss of shelter belts as a landscape feature.</p> <p>Unkempt, broken or incomplete shelter belts.</p> <p>Loss of established garden plantings.</p>

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Siting and Design	To minimise the impact of buildings and structures on the rural character as viewed from towns and roads.	<p>Encourage the majority of residential development to occur within existing townships.</p> <p>Outside townships, buildings and structures should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be set back from roads; • sparsely located, or sited with existing clusters of buildings (to mirror traditional homestead clusters); • designed to be low-scale, tucked into the landscape wherever possible; • built of materials and colours that reduce distant visibility; and • sited with established vegetation (e.g. native vegetation in paddocks, or existing exotic vegetation / shelterbelts) and/or developed with substantial landscaping of locally appropriate species. <p>Buildings and structures should not be developed on a skyline unless the development can be shown to be in keeping with the line, form, colour and texture of the landscape, and / or visual impact is softened by siting amongst existing vegetation or landscaping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A landscape plan may be required for developments on prominent hill faces and / or skylines. 	<p>Ribbon development along roadsides.</p> <p>Large, bulky and incongruous designs in rural landscapes</p> <p>Buildings and structures in prominent locations, without sufficient landscaping.</p> <p>Poorly designed buildings on skylines.</p>
	To minimise the impact of roads on landscape character.	Roads and driveways should be built to conform to topography and avoiding steep, prominent hillsides wherever possible.	<p>Straight roads up hill sides.</p> <p>Roads / driveways in prominent locations.</p> <p>Roads / driveways which require the removal of substantial established vegetation.</p>

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Townships and Settlements	To encourage development within Yea and Alexandra in a manner sympathetic to the surrounding rural character and existing vegetation, waterform and topographic landscape features.	Define an urban growth boundary for Yea and Alexandra which retains existing waterform and vegetation features and the dominant agricultural character of the landscape setting, and protects important views from the townships. Development at the town edges should be softened with vegetation which reflects the character of the surrounding landscape.	Uncontrolled expansion of Yea and Alexandra. Development on hillslopes and ridgelines at the edge of the urban area. Lack of vegetation at town edges.
	To contain minor settlements within current boundaries.	Minor settlements including Yarck, Taggerty and Strath Creek should be contained within the current landscape setting, which includes substantial undeveloped plains and hill faces as viewed from the towns.	Expansion of townships along roads or into the rural landscape viewed from the towns.
Plantation Forestry	To minimise the impact of plantation forestry on the viewing and character of the area.	Plantation forestry should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> of a scale which reflects the scale of existing agricultural activity (e.g. existing paddock sizes); sited away from prominent hill faces and ridgelines, preferably in the lower two-thirds of the visible slope; integrated with existing vegetation / forest edges and / or screened from key viewing locations using, established native vegetation, planted vegetative screens (including understory) or existing shelter belts wherever possible; designed with curved edges which respond to topography; set back from main roads and scenic outviews. 	Plantation forestry in prominent locations as viewed from roads or settlements. Plantation forestry of a scale that dominates the viewed landscape. Plantation forestry that is continuous at the roadside.
Landscape Features	To protect and enhance the landscape setting of important cultural and heritage sites.	Manage and enhance the landscape character of the relevant heritage values of significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations in the setting of cultural landscape features. Encourage landscape change and management which recognises an appropriate setting for heritage	Intrusion of development on recreational sites which depend on their landscape setting. Development which is insensitive to the setting of heritage features / cultural sites by reasons of bulk, siting, design or other impact.

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
		and cultural features.	
Key Views and Vistas	To manage the landscape character as viewed from important views and vistas.	<p>Buildings, structures and other developments which occur in the foreground (up to 1 kilometre) of key views and vistas should be designed and sited so as to retain the character and quality of the views unless it can be shown that equivalent publically accessible vistas are available nearby.</p> <p>Key views may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'gateway' views on the Maroondah, Melba or Goulburn Valley Highways or other main roads / touring routes; • sign-posted scenic points; • locally important vistas used by the arts community; • views from recreation / tourism locations. 	Unsympathetic or intrusive development in key view fields.

3.2 Goulburn River Flats

This Character Area is nestled within the Rolling Agricultural Character Area and shares many of its characteristics, including productive farmland and extensive outviews. However, Goulburn River Flats Character Area is dominated by flat floodplains surrounding the Goulburn River and the lower reaches of some major tributaries (e.g. Acheron and Yea Rivers). The Area contains large remnant single eucalypts and riparian vegetation in some areas including river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). Exotic vegetation including willows also occurs. A lack of dwellings characterises the Area although the townships of Molesworth and Thornton are exceptions, both being built on the Goulburn Valley floodplains. There are also a few scattered homesteads in the precinct.



Indicators of Significance

- Scenic riverscapes occur throughout including substantial river red-gums and wetlands. The scenic character of this precinct is accentuated at 'edges', where there is a backdrop of hills, such as at Molesworth and Trawool.
- The landscape surrounding the Goulburn River near Kerrisdale is a National Trust landscape and listed on the National Estate register for scenic qualities and geological and cultural significance.
- Whanregarwen Road and other highly scenic and accessible locations are important to the local community, and have been the subject of artistic works including paintings by Arthur Streeton.
- Goulburn River is listed as a heritage river under the Heritage Rivers Act 1992.
- Several significant Aboriginal Places have been identified along the Goulburn River in this Character Area.

Key Character Elements

- Topography is generally flat throughout, with small undulations and rises in the floodplain.
- The Goulburn, Yea, and Acheron Rivers and Home Creek are important landscape elements. Numerous billabongs and wetland areas also occur.
- Vegetation is largely cleared for agricultural flats, frequently with large remnant single eucalypts and riparian vegetation including river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). Wetland vegetation is found in parts. Occasionally exotic vegetation, including willows, occurs along some sections of the rivers and as shelterbelts in paddocks.
- Grazing is the dominant land use, as well as intensive agriculture while some areas are set aside as public parks / recreation areas or for nature conservation. Some sand and gravel quarries are also found in the Area.
- Relatively few buildings and structures are found in the Area although scattered farm buildings and farm houses occur and two small towns, Molesworth and Thornton, have been developed within the area. Yea

occurs at the edge of the Character Area. Smaller rural living lots are found between Eildon and Thornton.

Pattern of Viewing

The Goulburn Valley Highway traverses the edge of much of the Character Area, providing the main viewing corridor. Whanregarwen Road is also an important scenic drive between Alexandra and Yea. The flat topography and narrowness of the Character Area, means that viewing often includes the hillslopes of adjacent Character Areas as a backdrop.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- continued grazing and agricultural activity;
- future use of floodplains for intensive agriculture, horticulture and associated farm buildings;
- rehabilitation work, including removal of exotic vegetation along rivers;
- frequent inundation and land prices have tended to reduce some pressure for development of substantial settlement in the area;
- reduction in farm size due to changing use, some of which will require infrastructure on the property.

Existing state / local government policies likely to contribute to landscape change in the Character Area:

- Councils MSS recognises the Goulburn River as an important natural feature that has cultural and heritage significance, and outlines an objective to protect the natural and heritage river values of the Goulburn River (cl21.10).
- Council's MSS sets out an objective for no future expansion of Molesworth township (cl21.09-3) and to retain and improve native tree cover including roadside vegetation (cl21.10-3).
- The Local Policy on High Quality Agricultural land (22.01-5) and the Environmental Significance Overlay apply to this Character Area.

Sensitivity to Change

Views out to surrounding areas and across open flood plains from Goulburn Valley Highway and Whanregarwen Road are the most sensitive to landscape change. Flatter land and scattered vegetation makes location of some buildings and structures possible without visual intrusion. However, vegetated and riverine areas are less able to absorb development owing to their scenic nature and environmental sensitivity.

Future Character Directions

The Character Area should continue to be characterised by open spaces. Rural pastures and crop lands should be interspersed by substantial corridors of riparian vegetation. Protection and rehabilitation of waterways for environmental and scenic values should be encouraged, including protection and enhancement of the contribution that river red gums make to the landscape of the Area.

Landscape Objectives

- To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.
- To protect the scenic outlook of small scale paddocks nestled amongst vegetation.
- To protect and enhance native vegetation as an important character element throughout the Area, particularly adjacent to waterways and billabongs.
- To minimise the impact of buildings and structures on the scenic landscape setting of the River floodplains.
- To contain development of townships within existing boundaries, avoiding encroachment on the Goulburn River.
- To protect the views and setting of key viewing locations.
- To protect the views from culturally important locations.
- To protect important waterforms from inappropriate development.

- To minimise the impact of plantation forestry on character and viewing in the Area, including scenic outviews.

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Landscape Management	To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.	Encourage the continuation of sustainable land management practices and productive agricultural activities which have a positive impact on the landscape. Encourage farm owners to prepare Whole Farm Plans, which consider scenic and landscape values.	Unkempt and poorly managed agricultural lands. Uses, developments and management practices which reduce the productivity of agricultural lands. Uses and developments which interfere with the ongoing management of agricultural lands.
	To protect the scenic outlook of small scale paddocks nestled amongst vegetation.	Design landscape change to protect the existing pattern of paddocks and vegetation.	Large scale or linear landscape changes which disrupts the scenic agricultural landscape character.
Vegetation	To protect and enhance native vegetation as an important character element throughout the Area, particularly adjacent to waterways and billabongs.	Protect existing vegetation, particularly river red gums (<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>), adjacent to waterways and billabongs. Development which requires removal of any vegetation should aim to replace or rehabilitate an equivalent vegetation cover using locally appropriate species.	Loss of vegetation adjacent to waterways and billabongs. Reduction in the overall vegetation cover of the Character Area.
Siting and Design	To minimise the impact of buildings and structures on the scenic landscape setting of the River floodplains.	Buildings and structures should be avoided outside townships wherever possible. Where buildings and structures can not be avoided outside townships they should be associated with the continuation of pastoral / agricultural activities, nature conservation or appropriate recreation / tourism in the Character Area and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sited away from watercourses and billabongs; designed to be low scale, tucked into existing vegetation and / or landscaped with locally appropriate species; set back from the Goulburn Valley Highway; and constructed of materials which blend with the landscape and reduce distant visibility. 	Buildings and structures not required as part of continued appropriate use of the Area (e.g. agricultural activity). Buildings and structures close to roads, watercourses or other prominent locations. Poorly designed or intrusive buildings and structures.

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Townships and Settlements	To contain development of townships within existing boundaries, avoiding encroachment on the Goulburn River.	<p>No new townships or settlements should be developed in the character area.</p> <p>Existing settlements of Molesworth and Thornton should not extend beyond current boundaries, and continue to be set back from the Goulburn River.</p> <p>Encourage development at the edges of Molesworth and Thornton to be landscaped with locally appropriate species (e.g. <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>) and to avoid important waterform features.</p>	<p>Expansion of urban areas.</p> <p>Residential or other development near Goulburn River.</p> <p>Lack of vegetation within townships.</p>
Key Views and Vistas	To protect the views and setting of key viewing locations.	The landscape viewed in the foreground (up to one kilometre) of key views from main roads, lookouts and recreation locations should be designed, sited and landscaped so as to be inevident in the viewed landscape within two years.	Intrusive development in key view fields.
Landscape Features	To protect the views from culturally important locations.	The landscape setting of cultural heritage sites, locations of contemporary or historic cultural value to the local indigenous community and other significant cultural locations should be managed in accordance with these values.	<p>Intrusion of development on recreational sites which depend on their landscape setting.</p> <p>Development which is insensitive to the setting of heritage features / cultural sites by reasons of bulk, siting, design or other impact.</p>
	To protect important waterform from inappropriate development.	Development should be set back and designed so as to protect existing rivers, creeks and billabongs, and their vegetated setting.	Development close to, or which impacts on, the character and environmental quality of water ways.
Plantation Forestry	To minimise the impact of plantation forestry on character and viewing in the Area, including scenic outviews.	<p>Plantation forestry should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ of a scale which reflects the scale of existing agricultural activity (e.g. existing paddock sizes); ▪ integrated with existing vegetation / forest edges and / or designed with varied edges. ▪ Located on flat lands at the toe of the slope in adjacent character areas wherever possible. ▪ located away from key outviews from roads and settlements in the Area; and ▪ not continuous at the roadside. 	<p>Plantation forestry which dominates open paddocks.</p> <p>Plantation forestry which is continuous at the roadside of the Goulburn Highway or which blocks scenic views.</p>

4.1 Highlands – Terip Plateau

The Highlands - Terip Plateau Character Area forms part of the Strathbogie Ranges, rising above the rolling agricultural land around Yea and Alexandra in the north of Murrindindi. Across the plateau topography is varied with a forested escarpment to the south and east which forms a strong backdrop to northern parts of the municipality. Larger stands of remnant native vegetation are found than in other parts of Murrindindi. Ongoing agricultural activity results in cleared grazing and cropping land interspersed with plantation forests and significant stands of native vegetation in reserves and on private land. Long range views are available from parts of the Area both north and south.



Indicators of Significance

- The steep escarpment to Goulburn River and Home Creek is a significant landscape feature and a defined viewing edge for some areas in the north of the municipality.
- The diversity of landform (e.g. granite outcrops) and vegetation provides numerous scenic features.
- There are some local and regional heritage features.
- A number of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage sites occur in the Character Area.

Key Character Elements

- Steep escarpment rises to a rolling / hilly plateau, flattening toward the north. Distinctive granite outcrops occur throughout.
- There are some minor watercourses and substantial farm dams
- Vegetation is a mix of cleared pasture, intact native vegetation (herb-rich foothill forest and dry grassy forest), and plantation forests of both eucalypt and pine.
- Sheep, cattle grazing and viticulture are common in cleared areas (with the area having a recognised fine-wool industry), while substantial areas are set aside in bushland reserves including the Caveat Bushland Reserve, Gobur and Yarck Flora Reserves, and the Switzerland Ranges Flora and Fauna Reserve.
- Settlements are small scale, frequently scattered individual homesteads of varying ages and there are no established townships. Farm sheds are scattered throughout. More recent hobby farms and bed and breakfast accommodation are establishing.

Pattern of Viewing

There are no substantial population centres within the Area although some roads and recreation / accommodation locations are important viewing locations. Long range views to the north and south are an important characteristic of much of the Character Area, with important scenic viewpoints

over Yea, Alexandra and surrounds available from the escarpment. The Goulburn Valley and Maroondah Highways are important touring routes outside the Character Area which provide views to the escarpment.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- harvesting of established plantation forests across the Character Area;
- establishment of further plantation forestry;
- more intensive farming including establishment of vineyards;
- development of agricultural industry on larger lots to the north;
- residential and boutique accommodation development on previously undeveloped small lots.

Existing state / local government policies likely to contribute to landscape change in the Character Area:

- Council's Municipal Strategic Statement sets out an objective to retain and improve native tree cover including roadside vegetation and support revegetation programs (cl21.10-3).

Sensitivity to Change

The steep, largely vegetated escarpment is highly sensitive to landscape changes including removal of vegetation, or introduction of contrasting forms and colours onto the slopes or skyline.

At the plateau, integration of developments can occur due to rolling topography and existing vegetation, which can act to partially screen buildings or land uses where it is retained.

Future Character Directions

The character type should be dominated a native-vegetated character, with continued agricultural activity occurring amongst forested areas across the plateau. Settlements and buildings should be carefully sited in less prominent

locations, integrated with vegetation and topography across the Character Area. The Switzerland Ranges-Black Range escarpment should continue to provide a natural backdrop to views from major roads, townships and recreation areas. Active land management and revegetation of slopes should ensure protection of geological and geomorphological features. Some viewpoints at the escarpment should be protected and lookouts should be promoted as key tourist vantage points.

Landscape Objectives

- To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.
- To protect and enhance native vegetation as an important character element, particularly at roadsides, on hill faces and ridges, and around watercourses.
- To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.
- To minimise the impact of buildings and structures on the rural character of the Area.
- To minimise the impact of plantation forestry on the character and viewing in the Character Area.
- To maintain and enhance the character of the Highlands escarpment and other prominent hill faces.
- To avoid development which will be visible on the skyline.
- To protect existing geological and heritage features.
- To protect important views and vistas from intrusive and insensitive development.

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Landscape Management	To maintain the positive contribution that productive agricultural landscapes make to the landscape of the Character Area.	<p>Encourage the continuation of sustainable land management practices and productive agricultural activities which have a positive impact on the landscape.</p> <p>Encourage farm owners to prepare Whole Farm Plans, which consider scenic and landscape values.</p>	<p>Unkempt and poorly managed agricultural lands.</p> <p>Uses, developments and management practices which reduce the productivity of agricultural lands.</p> <p>Uses and developments which interfere with the ongoing management of agricultural lands.</p>
Vegetation	To protect and enhance native vegetation as an important character element, particularly at roadsides, on hill faces and ridges, and around watercourses.	<p>Protect vegetation around watercourses and on the Highlands escarpment as viewed from Category 1 roads and settlements outside the Character Area.</p> <p>Retain native vegetation in paddocks and at roadsides wherever possible.</p> <p>Encourage the replanting of riparian areas and linkages through paddocks with locally indigenous vegetation.</p>	Loss of native vegetation in prominent locations or along watercourses.
	To ensure established plantings continue to contribute to the character of the Area.	<p>Retain existing shelter belts wherever possible.</p> <p>Replace lost, old, degraded or incomplete shelter belts with the same species or an alternative species, suitable to the character of the local area.</p>	Unkempt, broken or incomplete shelter belts.
Siting and Design	To minimise the impact of buildings and structures on the rural character of the Area.	<p>Buildings and structures should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set back from roads; • sparsely located, or sited with existing clusters of buildings; • designed to be low-scale, tucked into the landscape wherever possible; • built of materials and colours that reduce distant visibility; and • sited with established vegetation (e.g. native vegetation in paddocks, or existing exotic vegetation / shelter belts) and/or developed with substantial landscaping of locally appropriate species. 	<p>Buildings or structures located close to roads or in prominent locations.</p> <p>Buildings and structures which are unsympathetic to the landscape character and / or lack landscaping.</p>

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
Plantation Forestry	To minimise the impact of plantation forestry on the character and viewing in the Character Area.	<p>Plantation forestry should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sited away from prominent hill faces and ridgelines, preferably in the lower one-third of the visible slope; integrated with existing vegetation / forest edges and / or screened from key viewing locations using, established native vegetation, planted vegetative screens (including understorey) or existing shelterbelts wherever possible; designed with curved edges which respond to topography; set back from main roads and scenic outviews. 	<p>Plantation forestry in prominent locations and skylines.</p> <p>Plantation forestry which is continuous at the roadside or which blocks scenic outviews.</p>
Prominent Ridges and Hill faces	<p>To maintain and enhance the character of the Highlands escarpment and other prominent hill faces.</p> <p>To avoid development which will be visible on the skyline.</p>	<p>Development in prominent parts of the Highlands escarpment should be avoided wherever possible.</p> <p>Development should not be visible on the skyline as seen from important outviews from roads and settlements.</p> <p>Where development can not be avoided on prominent hill faces, the following guidelines apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> set buildings and structures amongst existing vegetation, and / or establish an gardens of locally appropriate species; design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site; articulate buildings into separate elements, and avoid visually dominant elevations. construct buildings and structures of materials which reduce distant visibility (e.g. darker colours, non-reflective materials). 	<p>Buildings and structures which are visible on the skyline.</p> <p>Poorly designed and intrusive buildings and structures on prominent hill faces.</p>
Landscape Features	To protect existing geological and heritage features.	Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage values of significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.	Development which is insensitive to the setting of heritage features / cultural sites by reasons of bulk, siting, design or other impact.

Character Element	Objective	Response	Avoid
		Encourage landscape change and management which recognises an appropriate setting for heritage and cultural features.	
Key Views and Vistas	To protect important views and vistas from intrusive and insensitive development.	<p>Buildings, structures and other developments which occur in the foreground (up to 1 kilometre) of key views and vistas should be designed and sited so as to retain the character and quality of the views unless it can be shown that equivalent publically accessible vistas are available nearby.</p> <p>Key views may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'gateway' views on the Maroondah, Melba or Goulburn Valley Highways or other main roads / touring routes; • sign-posted scenic points; • locally important vistas used by the arts community; • views from recreation / tourism locations. 	Unsympathetic or intrusive development in key view fields.