

Alpine Shire Rural Land Strategy



Adopted 7 April 2015



Contents

1	Contents	2
2	Maps	3
	Executive Summary.....	4
1	PART 1: RURAL LAND IN ALPINE SHIRE	6
1.1	State policy context.....	6
1.1.1	State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF):	6
1.2	Regional policy context	9
1.2.1	Hume Regional Growth Plan.....	9
1.2.2	Upper Ovens Valley Scenario Analysis.....	11
1.2.3	Alpine Valley Agrifood Project.....	11
1.2.4	North East Dairy Regional Growth Plan and Workforce Development Strategy.....	11
1.2.5	MAV Small Rural Lot project:.....	12
1.3	Local policy context.....	14
1.3.1	Alpine Shire Community Vision 2030	14
1.3.2	Alpine Planning Scheme	14
1.4	Rural land uses overview	16
1.4.1	Agricultural land:	16
1.4.2	Rural based tourism:.....	20
1.4.3	Landscape and environment:	22
1.4.4	Rural subdivision, dwellings and lifestyle:	25
1.5	Rural precincts	27
1.5.1	Introduction, rural precincts:.....	29
1.5.2	Precinct 1 – Bright to Harrietville:	29
1.5.3	Precinct 2- Bright to Myrtleford:	31
1.5.4	Precinct 3 – Wandiligong Valley:	33
1.5.5	Precinct 4 – Buffalo River to Gapsted:.....	35
1.5.6	Precinct 5 – Buckland Valley:.....	37
1.5.7	Precinct 6 – Happy Valley to Mudgegonga:.....	39
1.5.8	Precinct 7 – Kiewa Valley:.....	41
1.5.9	High country and remote areas:.....	43
1.5.10	Precinct Conclusions:.....	43
2	PART 2 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	44
2.1	Alpine Planning Scheme implementation	44
2.1.1	Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF):	44
2.1.2	Rural precincts:.....	51
2.1.3	Planning zones and controls:.....	51
2.2	Other implementation measures.....	52
3	PART 3 REFERENCES	53

Maps

Map 1: Strategically Significant Agricultural Land.....	10
Map 2: Land Versatility.....	17
Map 3: Rural Precincts in the Alpine Shire.....	28
Map 4: Precinct 1: Bright to Harrietteville.....	30
Map 5: Precinct 2: Bright to Myrtleford.....	32
Map 6: Precinct 3: Wandiligong Valley.....	34
Map 7: Precinct 4: Buffalo River to Gapsted.....	36
Map 8: Precinct 5: Buckland Valley.....	38
Map 9: Precinct 6: Happy Valley to Mudgegonga.....	40
Map10: Precinct 7: Kiewa Valley.....	42



Executive Summary

Alpine Shire Council has prepared the draft Alpine Shire Rural Land Strategy (the 'strategy') to provide guidance for the future use and development of agricultural and rural land in the municipality. The strategy provides strong support for an ongoing and diversified agricultural sector, comprising both the continuity and expansion of existing agricultural industries and an emergence of new agricultural industries.

The strategy is based on a range of technical assessment. Assessment has included research into rural land use patterns and trends, land capability, environmental values and constraints, land ownership patterns and emerging trends in associated rural industries. This technical assessment is summarised in the background report to the strategy.

Although some traditional agricultural industries remain strong and constant, they are subject to changing conditions and regulations. Other rural and agricultural industries have emerged, contributing to the economy and requiring recognition in land use planning. Key agricultural and rural industry trends in the municipality identified in the strategy are:

- The agricultural sector is the primary rural land use, forming a core component of the municipal economy.
- Agri-business is a steadily growing activity, providing an increasing level of importance for the economy and rural employment.
- Rural tourism is a key economic driver, the industry mainly being 'nature' and 'agri' based, centred on rural amenity and landscapes, agricultural production and the environmental significance of rural areas.
- The landscape and environmental assets are key features of the municipality's rural areas, contributing significantly towards the character and appeal of the area, rural based tourism, economic development and lifestyle appeal.
- Dairying is a traditional industry that has undergone deregulation and is now experiencing growth.
- The beef industry remains a strong traditional industry, although is experiencing more diversification to remain competitive.
- Smaller 'niche' agricultural industries are taking the place of, or supplementing, some traditional commercial farming, with some diversifying into the processing of agricultural products such as horticulture.

Extensive community consultation has been undertaken in the development of the strategy. In summary, community input noted the need to recognise and plan for the following rural land use issues:

- Dealing with structural change in agricultural industries.
- Development of small rural lots for dwellings and the associated impacts of urban encroachment threatening the right to farm.

- Recognition and protection of high amenity landscapes as a key driver for agricultural investment, tourism and lifestyle.
- The value of rural land is above agricultural value, being inflated by its landscape value.
- Fragmentation and development of rural land threatens agricultural viability.
- Provision of tourism opportunities in rural areas without destroying landscape amenity and encroaching on agricultural land.

A summary of consultation is outlined in the background report to this strategy.

The 2013 state-wide changes to rural zones have met many of the issues raised in community consultation to provide for a wider range of complementary uses in rural areas that were previously prohibited. As part of this process, the Farming Zone (that applies throughout most of the rural areas in the municipality) has been amended to provide for an increased range of accommodation, commercial and tourism uses that were previously prohibited in the zone.

The following strategic directions ('pillars') were identified through the strategy process and community consultation:

- Protection of agricultural land.
- Protection of rural amenity/ landscape values.
- Facilitating rural based tourism including agri-tourism.
- Providing limited opportunities for rural lifestyle with limited development potential in remote and other rural areas.
- Protection of environmental assets located in rural areas.

The strategy outlines directions and guidance for each of these major land use directions.

The strategy uses eight distinct areas or precincts to specifically outline and guide rural land issues and directions for each identified rural area. Detailed assessment of each precinct is outlined in the background report to this strategy.

Recommendations of this strategy are broken into two areas of implementation, actions under the Alpine Planning Scheme and other actions where Council can assist the ongoing development and vitality of the rural sector. Recommended changes to the Alpine Planning Scheme propose to amend strategic directions for the rural sector to reinforce the importance of agricultural and rural uses, strengthening and promoting appropriate current and emerging rural activities.

Recommended amendments to the Alpine Planning Scheme do not propose any changes to the current planning controls in relation to subdivision size or requirements for dwellings in the Farming Zone.

The strategy does however make some recommendations for the:

- Further review of Rural Activity and Rural Living Zones, if warranted in the future.
- Ongoing review of existing planning scheme overlays that apply the rural areas of the municipality, ensuring the protection of rural character and recognising existing land values or constraints.

PART 1: RURAL LAND IN ALPINE SHIRE

1.1 State policy context

1.1.1 State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF):

The SPPF in the Alpine Planning Scheme outlines state strategy and policy directions for land use planning. SPPF clauses of relevance to land use planning in rural areas are:

Clause 11, Settlement:

Clause 11.05, Regional development:

Clause 11.05-3, Rural Productivity:

Objective:

To manage land use change and development in rural areas to promote agriculture and rural production.

Strategies:

- Prevent inappropriately dispersed urban activities in rural areas.
- Limit new housing development in rural areas, including:
 - Directing housing growth into existing settlements.
 - Discouraging development of isolated small lots in the rural zones from use for single dwellings, rural living or other incompatible uses.
 - Encouraging consolidation of existing isolated small lots in rural zones.
- Restructure old and inappropriate subdivisions.

Clause 12, Environmental and Landscape Values:

The Clause includes sub-clauses for protection of biodiversity, native vegetation management, environmentally sensitive areas and landscapes.

Clause 12.04-3, Landscapes:

Objective:

To protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments.

Clause 14, Natural Resource Management:

Clause 14.01, Agriculture:

Clause 14.01-1: Protection of agricultural land:

Objective:

To protect productive farmland which is of strategic significance in a local or regional context.

Strategies include:

Ensure that the State's agricultural base is protected from the unplanned loss of productive agricultural land due to permanent changes of land use.

Take into consideration regional, state and local issues and characteristics in the assessment of agricultural quality and productivity.

Permanent removal of productive agricultural land from the State's agricultural base must not be undertaken without consideration of its economic importance for the agricultural production and processing sectors.

Clause 14.01-2: Sustainable agricultural land use:

Objective:

To encourage sustainable agricultural land use.

Strategies include:

Facilitate the establishment and expansion of cattle feedlots, piggeries, poultry farms and other intensive animal industries in a manner consistent with orderly and proper planning and the protection of the environment.

Clause 16, Housing:

Clause 16.02, Housing form:

Clause 16.02-1: Rural residential development:

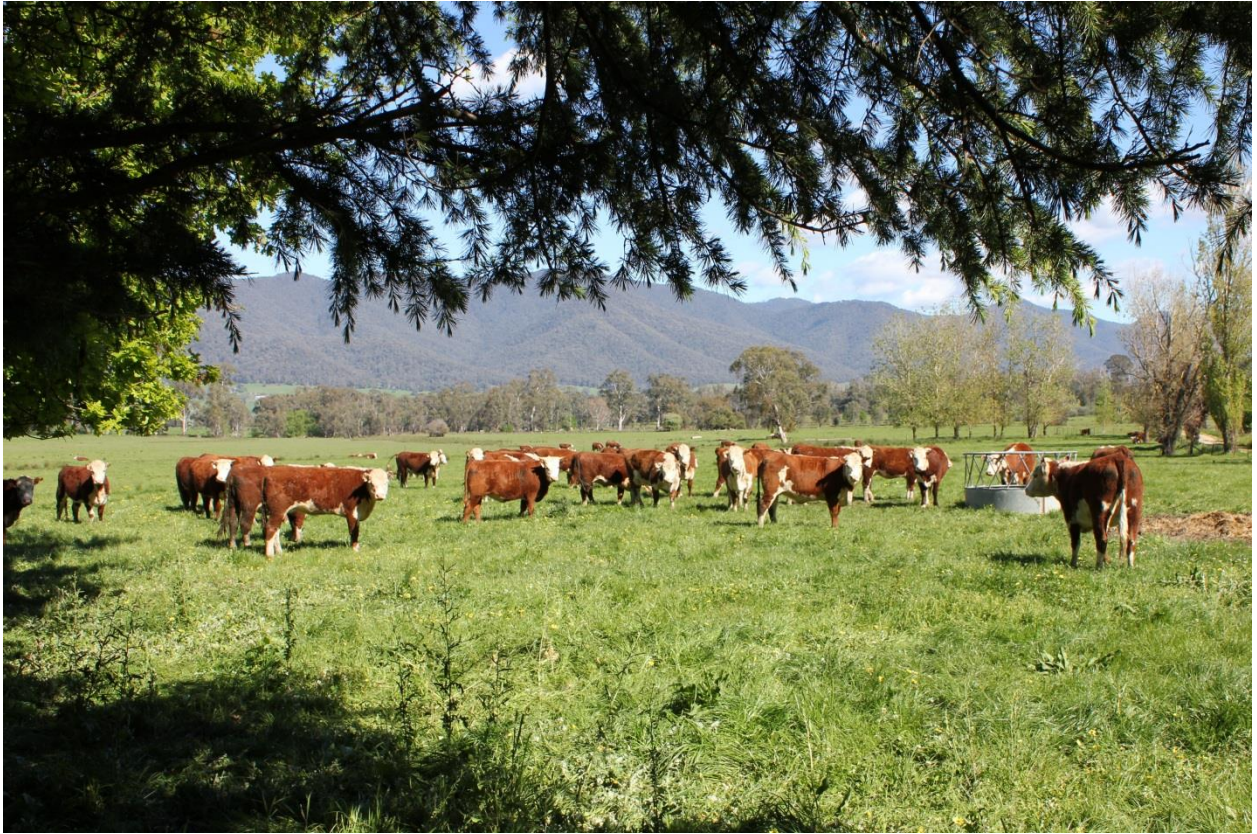
Objective:

To encourage sustainable agricultural land use.

Strategies include:

Manage development in rural areas to protect agriculture and avoid inappropriate rural residential development.

Encourage the consolidation in existing settlements where investment in physical and community infrastructure and services has already been made.



1.2 Regional policy context

1.2.1 Hume Regional Growth Plan

The recently released *Hume Regional Growth Plan* (May 2014) provides a strategic approach to land use planning in the Hume Region, identifying opportunities to encourage and accommodate growth and managing change in the region over the next 30 years. In addition to identifying locations for future development, the plan also nominates economic assets for protection, including agricultural land.

The Plan acknowledges that the Hume Region will be one of Australia's major food producing areas, noting:

Agricultural production will be supported through the protection and enhancement of key agricultural assets including land and water resources.

Maintaining and enhancing the contribution of these strategic resources to the production of a diverse range of agricultural commodities is a key component of the region's economic future.

Key directions for agriculture outlines in the Plan are:

- a) Support the protection of strategic farmland;
- b) Support and manage intensive agricultural production;
- c) Support changing farm sizes, methods, strategies and land uses;
- d) Plan for the potential impacts of climate change on agriculture;
- e) Respond to a changing irrigation landscape;
- f) Minimise fragmentation of agricultural land;
- g) Avoid conflicting land uses and activities;
- h) Maintain and enhance infrastructure supporting rural industry.

The *Hume Rural Land Use Study*, 2102, was used to inform the Hume Regional Growth Plan. The study outlined areas of 'productive agricultural land' that may be classified as strategically significant at a national, regional or local scales. The study recommends the highest policy protection for 'strategically significant' agricultural land to ensure agriculture remains a viable industry for the future. The study identified the wider Ovens and Kiewa Valleys as being of 'Strategic agricultural land of national/state, regional or sub-regional significance'. This map, which is included in the *Hume Regional Growth Plan*, is indicated as the following Map 1:



©The State of Victoria, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, 2014. The State of Victoria does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of information in this publication and any person using or relying upon such information does so on the basis that the State of Victoria shall bear no responsibility or liability whatsoever for any errors, faults, defects or omissions in the information.

Map 1: Strategically Significant Agricultural Land (Source: Hume Regional Growth Plan- May 2014, State Government Victoria, pg 25)

Map 1: Strategically Significant Agricultural Land, identifies Precincts 2, 4 and 7 as including agricultural land of state or regional significance. The *Hume Rural Land Use Study*, 2102 also identified Precincts 1, 3, 5 and 6 as including agricultural land of local significance.

The *Hume Regional Growth Plan* identified the following measures to protect areas identified as strategic agricultural land of national, state, regional or sub-regional significance:

- Directing proposals for settlement in these areas to existing centres and townships.
- Directing large commercial tourism uses away from these areas to urban locations or to rural areas of lower agricultural value.
- Avoiding encroachment from rural residential settlement and other land uses that are non-complementary to agriculture.

1.2.2 Upper Ovens Valley Scenario Analysis

The Regional Development Victoria (RDV) report Upper Ovens Valley Scenario Analysis, March 2010, developed a strategic planning approach for environmentally sustainable growth in conjunction with job investment and economic growth. The report aims to define a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable community in the Upper Ovens Valley.

The report highlighted the importance of agriculture in contributing to indirect employment as a result of value adding such as the establishment of food processing plants or industries that reuse agricultural waste. The report indicated that the majority of these value adding ventures will be based in Myrtleford.

Suggested land use planning actions demonstrated a strong preference for maintaining development within town boundaries and for agricultural land use to be maintained. Preferred actions included exploring new forms of tourism such as farm stays, further developing the successful cycle tourism industry and developing a local co-op for fruit and vegetable marketing and storage.

1.2.3 Alpine Valley Agrifood Project

The Alpine Valleys Agrifood Project, February 2010, facilitated by Alpine Shire and the Rural City of Wangaratta aims to attract new agricultural investment in the Ovens Valley to maintain agricultural production following the demise of the tobacco industry. The project recommended the promotion of agriculture as the main land use in the area, however also noted that there are a range of mixed tourist uses that make this area attractive for new residents and tourists interested in agribusiness.

1.2.4 North East Dairy Regional Growth Plan and Workforce Development Strategy

The North East Dairy Regional Growth Plan and Workforce Development Strategy February 2014, facilitated by Dairy Australia, aims to maximise the use of high versatility agricultural land for dairying. The plan / strategy estimated a significant increase in milk production from the Alpine Valleys of North East Victoria based on the region's natural biophysical

advantages, demonstrated improvements in farming technologies and a strong outlook for the global dairy market, ensuring a stable and favourable farm gate price for milk.

The plan / strategy noted the economic and social value of dairying, compared to beef and lifestyle use, recommending to local government that large parcels of land are retained in the Farming Zone, especially land classified as 'high versatility' agricultural land.

1.2.5 MAV Small Rural Lot project:

The Municipal Association of Victoria report Draft Issues and Options Paper- Small Rural Lot project, 2012 examined the use of small rural lots for dwellings where residential uses are introduced into farming areas. The report found that when dwellings are not properly managed or located they can:

- Introduce land use / amenity conflicts.
- Lead to the net loss of agricultural land as the land can no longer be consolidated to form a larger parcel suitable for commercial farming.
- Detrimentally impact on the use of the land for both the nearby agricultural activity and the dwelling itself.
- Be an unnecessary burden on Council resources due to the increased demand for services and cost of providing them.
- Create higher prices for rural land and higher rates, making it more difficult for agricultural activities to expand or remain.

The MAV project outlined challenges for municipalities when dealing with the use and development of small lots, including:

- Improving education to understand the importance of strategically significant agricultural areas and the implications of constraints and disbursed settlements and to ensure appropriate decisions are made.
- The need to break the myth that the possession of a lot automatically equates to a right to develop that parcel for a dwelling or another purpose
- Improving communication to alter expectations with regards to small rural lots.
- Improving education about agriculture.



1.3 Local policy context

1.3.1 Alpine Shire Community Vision 2030

The *Alpine Shire Community Vision 2030* outlines that the community would like to see agricultural land use remain in the Alpine Shire for future generations to enjoy. The 'snapshot' of the Alpine Shire in the year 2030 is:

The Shire has retained its agricultural and rural characteristics and has resisted the move to expand townships in to prime rural areas. In so doing, the rural sector has embraced more intensive and diverse farming pursuits. Horticulture has become a dominant rural industry driven by the wider need to utilise water efficiently and closer to its source. Rural cottage industries are also prevalent, particularly along the main highways in the Ovens and Kiewa Valleys.

The desired 'community vision' for 2030 includes:

- High value agricultural land will be retained.
- Niche agricultural and horticultural products, including organic production have evolved to make better use of the Shire's water and high quality agricultural land.
- Rural landscapes, including intensive horticulture will be preserved and valued as both open space and productive land, contributing to the Shire's economy.
- Growth in population is underpinned by growth in employment.
- The timber industry continues to be a major employer in value adding, forestry services, harvesting and transport.
- Employment is diverse and reflecting the region's economy, with strengths in niche market primary production, value-adding, forestry.

1.3.2 Alpine Planning Scheme

The Alpine Planning Scheme has some strategic directions for agriculture, tourism and rural landscapes and recognises the pressure for rural and semi-rural living in the rural areas of the municipality. Strategic directions include retaining high value and productive agricultural land resources, protecting rural landscapes, environmental protection, expanding rural products and value adding opportunities in agricultural areas, maintaining significant tourism attributes and protection of agricultural land from inappropriate development. The Alpine Planning Scheme recognises that rural living is a legitimate land use that contributes to housing choice but notes the adverse effect of subdivision and dwellings on productive agricultural land and the costs of this form of development, noting the need for identification of specific rural living areas.

A review of the Alpine Planning Scheme has been undertaken. This review will be implemented through the preparation of a revised Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) to the planning scheme. A revised LPPF should further clarify land use issues and directions for agricultural land and rural land generally, implementing the findings and recommendations of this strategy. Key agricultural and rural land use issue and directions for inclusion in a revised LPPF are:

- The structural and climatic change facing the agricultural industry.
- The significance of agriculture to the economy.
- Recognition of strategically significant agricultural land, protecting this land from inappropriate development.
- Encouraging and supporting the further development of rural based industries and value adding opportunities.
- Promotion of rural based tourism (comprising both nature based tourism and agri-tourism) opportunities.
- Further recognition and protection of significant cultural and scenic landscapes and the protection of significant landscapes from inappropriate development, ensuring that development is sensitive to these values.
- Further protection and recognition of environmental values and constraints, including the refinement and use of appropriate planning controls applicable to these values and risks.
- Management and provision of rural lifestyle aspirations and living opportunities in appropriate locations.
- Recognition and land use directions for specific rural precincts, as outlined in this strategy and background report.



1.4 Rural land uses overview

1.4.1 Agricultural land:

Alpine Shire Land Versatility Mapping Project, 2005:

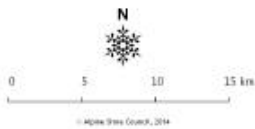
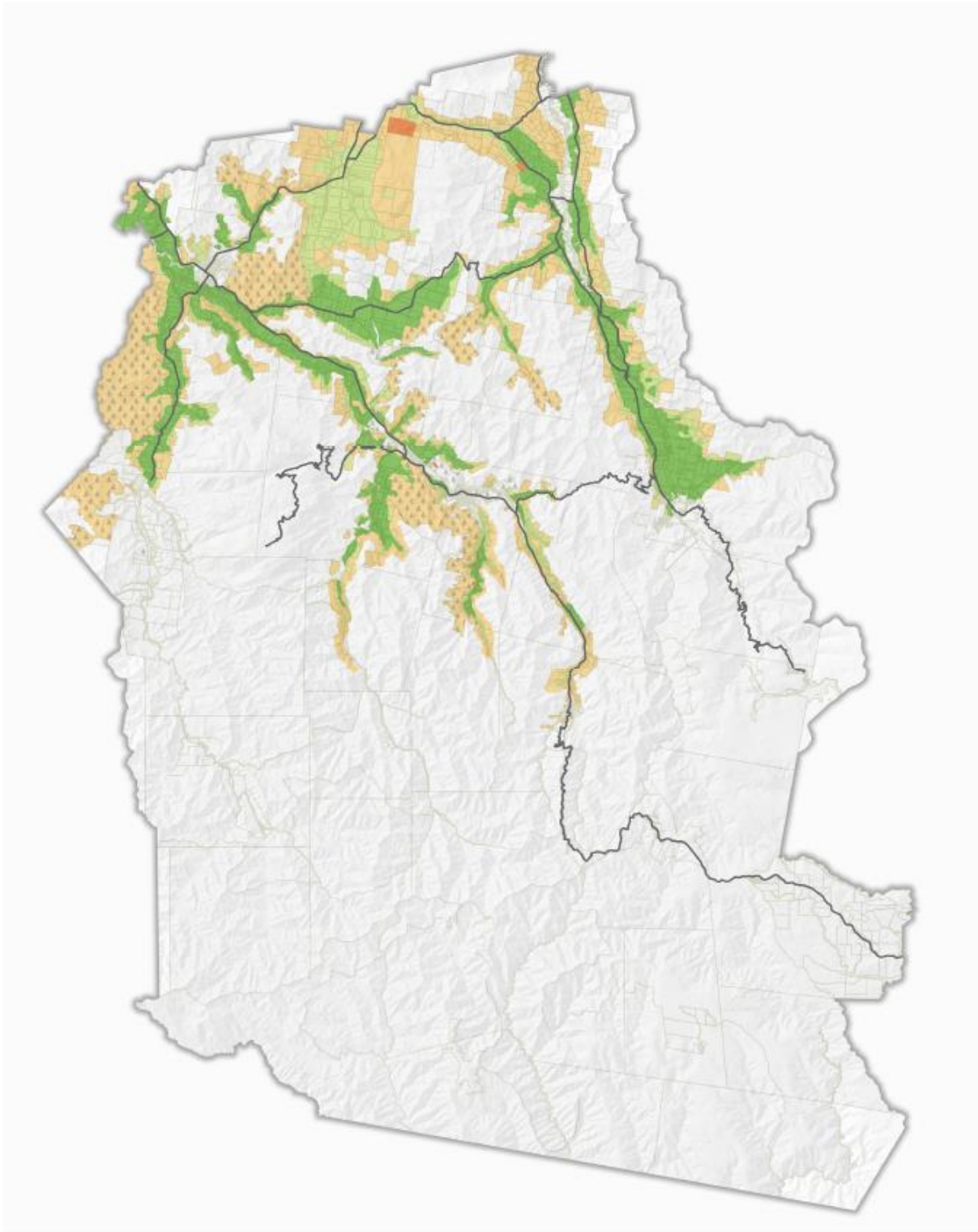
The Alpine Shire Land Versatility Mapping Project, RMCG, 2005 identified the classing and mapping of the agricultural versatility of rural land in Alpine Shire. Land was classed as high, medium or low agricultural versatility on the basis of soil type, slope, erosion risk and access to irrigation water.

Land versatility mapping provides the strategic background for Council and the community to make informed decisions regarding agricultural land use in the municipality. This mapping provides an understanding of agricultural land use, guides agricultural investment into the future and assists in protecting rural land from inappropriate development.

The project identified large areas of high versatility agricultural land along the river valleys of the municipality, that is the Ovens, Kiewa and Buffalo Rivers and Happy Valley Creek valleys and tributaries. A large area of medium versatility agricultural land was identified in the Mudgegonga area. Refer to Map 2, *Land Versatility for Agriculture in the Alpine Shire, 2005*.

The extent of high versatility agricultural land gives Alpine Shire distinct competitive advantages for long term agricultural production in areas capable of a range of agricultural activities. Agricultural uses in higher versatility areas can include high value, more intensive activities such as dairying and horticulture.

Agricultural versatility however is only one of a number of considerations that will influence the location and type of agriculture. Land prices, buffer requirements for intensive agriculture, proximity to urban and industrial development and suitability for horticultural and dairy development will impact on the nature of the agricultural industry (intensive or broad acre) and its preferred location.



Land Versatility
Alpine Shire Rural Land Strategy 2014



Map 2: Agricultural Land Versatility

Agriculture in Alpine Shire overview:

While many agricultural ventures in Alpine Shire are relatively stable, there has been significant and rapid change in other areas, including the demise of the tobacco industry and the bulk wine industry. Agriculture will continue to play an integral role in the municipality, forming an integral part of its economy, providing for a sustainable land use management and adding value to recreational experiences.

The Update of Agricultural Industries Report, RMCG, 2013 indicated changes in the nature of agricultural production in the municipality between 2006 and 2011. In 2006, the major agricultural industries by value were tobacco, livestock for meat, milk production and apples, with the total value of commodities being \$66 million. By 2011 the major agricultural industries by value were livestock, (particularly beef cattle), fruit and nuts (particularly apples) and milk, with the total value of commodities being \$53 million, representing 80% of the value of agricultural production in the municipality.

In 2011, production of horticultural production was the largest agricultural sector in the municipality, generating 44% of the total value of production. Horticultural production is generally mixed with grazing activities, with no core location dedicated to horticultural production, due to varying soil types and climatic conditions. Although the Oven Valley has an established horticultural culture, there is opportunity for substantial horticultural growth in the area, particularly on the high and medium versatility land. Horticulture is also present in the Kiewa Valley, mainly in areas that were once used for tobacco, with products including green tea, nuts, vineyards and olives. Similarly, there is further growth potential for horticulture in the area, particularly on the high and medium versatility land.

In 2011, dairying was the second largest agricultural industry, equal with fruit and nuts. Most dairying is located in the lower Kiewa Valley (Dederang – Tawonga) area. There are limited areas in Australia that are suitable for dairying. The Kiewa Valley has a natural advantage for dairying with favourable rainfall and soil, a culture of dairying and proximity to the Murray Goulburn Cooperative Kiewa Factory in Tangambalanga. There are limited areas in Australia that are suitable for dairying. With strong and stable domestic and export markets, there is a positive outlook for the dairy industry in the Kiewa Valley. To enable growth in the dairying industry, the North East Dairy Regional Growth Plan has urged the retention of large land parcels, especially land classified as 'high versatility' agricultural land, and protection of the right to farm.

While the whole of the municipality is suited to cattle grazing, the Kiewa Valley, Rosewhite and Mudgegonga areas are the most productive for this industry due to productivity, larger lot sizes and less demand for horticulture in these areas. There has been some pressure to subdivide traditional cattle grazing land for smaller rural lifestyle blocks, with an increasing trend towards lifestyle operations running cattle but not at a commercial scale.

The value of hop production in 2011 was relatively small at \$3.9 million, although the industry accounted for 76% of the value of hop production in Victoria.

Niche agriculture is an expanding sector in rural areas, producing small scale, non-traditional agricultural products. The agri-tourism sector has significant potential for industry and employment growth. This sector is further discussed under the following section on rural based tourism.

Forestry:

Timber production in Alpine Shire is mainly softwood plantation grown by Hancock Victorian Plantations on Crown land under long term licence from the Victorian State Government. This timber production is mainly located on low agricultural capability land that is typically steep and not suited for general agriculture. With timber processing at Myrtleford, the timber industry is strategically significant to the local economy and in particular the township of Myrtleford. With other timber processing facilities in Benalla, Wangaratta and southern NSW, the regional contribution of the plantation industry is significant.

While it is unlikely that there will be pressures to increase investment in timber plantations in productive river valleys, any expansion of plantation forestry on private land should generally be located away from agricultural land of strategic national / state, regional or sub-regional significance or of high value landscape. Agricultural land conclusion:

Alpine Shire has a range of strategically significant agricultural land. This land is significant at a national, regional or local level, varying in its productivity and versatility depending on its significance. There is considerable potential to expand various existing agricultural industries and strengths in the municipality.

Existing and future agricultural industries and associated opportunities require certainty without pressure from inappropriate and competing land uses and developments. There are a range of value adding and rural industry opportunities in the agricultural sector, subject to sound siting and design.

While plantation forestry on private land is an important industry, careful management is required for the industry to avoid any loss of agricultural land of strategic national / state, regional or sub-regional significance and minimise impact on the significant landscapes. The long term potential of extractive industry requires protection, with future production subject to amenity considerations and environmental protection.

State planning policy directions for rural land direct that these areas be retained for productive agricultural and rural purposes, the agricultural base is maintained, environmentally significant areas be identified and rural land be protected from inappropriate development. An approach to implement these policy directions is:

- Protecting productive farmland of 'strategic significance' at national / state, regional or local scales.
- Understanding the types of agricultural production the land is capable of sustaining (land versatility).
- Ensuring appropriate land use controls are in place to protect agricultural assets for future generations.
- Limiting new housing in rural areas.

The strengths and opportunities for agricultural and other rural land uses should be reflected in the Alpine Planning Scheme. See the strategy recommendations for detailed recommendations in relation to agricultural land.



1.4.2 Rural based tourism:

Rural based tourism in Alpine Shire overview:

Tourism is a significant employer and generator of economic activity in Alpine Shire, providing jobs, improving facilities and creating opportunities for business. Nature based tourism is the main drawcard for tourism in the municipality, which includes some of Victoria's most significant natural attractions. Key nature based tourism destinations in the municipality include the Alpine National Park, Mt Buffalo National Park, Dinner Plain, Lake Buffalo, food and wine trails, Ovens and Kiewa River, touring routes and heritage trails, shared bike paths, the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail and rural townships. All of these destinations are key drivers to tourism and investment in the municipality.

'Agri-tourism' is a developing and significant component of the tourism industry in Alpine Shire, with considerable potential for future growth in this sector. The agricultural industry forms the basis of the agri-tourism sector, with activities such as farm visits, farm accommodation, farm gate sales, wine tastings and food establishments being offered in attractive rural settings. This agri-tourism product is highly valued by tourists and the local community.

Tourism has become an important supplementary income for agricultural uses, particularly wineries. Some emerging agri-tourism experiences may be based on promoting non-traditional activities. The role of tourism, particularly tourism with a relationship to agricultural uses or rural settings, will become increasingly important. Retaining farmland is

an essential element of agri-tourism, particularly land that has been deemed strategically significant for the Shire.

Tourism growth is expected in the area, based on natural assets, agricultural landscapes and proximity to the Alpine resorts. It is important that rural tourism activities and developments are strategically planned to ensure they build on and are compatible with other rural land uses and protect the landscape, environmental and heritage values of the area. Rural based tourism must be linked to agriculture, agri-tourism or the natural environment, reinforcing the predominant use of the rural area for agricultural production and maintaining the rural character of the area.

It is important that tourist facilities and services in rural areas be:

- Compatible with and add value to the existing strengths of the municipality, such as its built and natural attractions.
- Sensitively designed and sited to be compatible with other rural land uses and protect landscape and heritage values.

Rural based tourism conclusion:

Alpine Shire has an important rural tourism sector, based on both the significant natural features of the municipality and agricultural production ('agri-tourism'). The rural tourism sector will experience further growth, forming an increasingly important component of the tourism sector and economy.

Rural tourism activities and developments must be compatible with other rural land uses and protect the landscape, environmental and heritage values of the rural area. Rural based tourism must be linked to agriculture, agri-tourism or the natural environment, reinforcing the predominant use of the rural area for agricultural production and maintaining the rural character of the area.

The significance of the rural tourism sector and future opportunities and enhancement for the growth of the industry should be reflected in the Alpine Planning Scheme. See the strategy recommendations for detailed recommendations in relation to rural tourism.

1.4.3 Landscape and environment:

Landscape and environment overview:

Alpine Shire includes some of the most scenic, unique and spectacular rural landscapes in Australia. Landscapes of the municipality have been recognised as being of national significance. The rural landscape provides economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to the local community, state and Australia as a whole.

Key landscape assets in the municipality include the Alpine National Park, Mount Buffalo National Park, extensive areas of public land (approximately 90% of the municipal area), fertile river valleys and cleared foothills.

Landscape protection is a vital component of future land use planning and economic directions. The protection and enhancement of the rural landscape will contribute to building a more diverse economy and sense of place for the region. It is essential that rural land uses reinforce and complement rural and landscape character.

Community consultation for the RLUS reinforced the significance of the rural landscape, the need for its protection for landscape and farming value, the importance of the landscape for both residents and tourists, the need for any development and subdivision to be in keeping with the landscape character and the need to avoid ribbon development.

Landscape is a key attraction to investment and driver for future employment opportunities of tourism, agriculture and townships. It is important to maintain landscape value to encourage investment.

The Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) is applied to significant landscapes of the municipality under the Alpine Planning Scheme. Mapping for the SLO requires review as it the overlay not fully applied to some known significant landscapes. The SLO mapping and schedule require review to accurately recognise and protect significant landscapes of scenic and cultural value.

Native vegetation and biodiversity:

Native vegetation on freehold land in the municipality has been significantly reduced and modified since European settlement. The main areas of native vegetation remaining are located within the State forests and other Crown land.

Rural communities increasingly recognise that remnant native vegetation makes a significant contribution to the overall health of their living environment by improving soil stability, water quality, and the productivity of farm enterprises while protecting native flora and wildlife. Improved management of the natural environment and land activities is required to address climate change, land use changes and other growth pressures, while maintaining the health of the natural environment.

Native vegetation is controlled and managed in land use planning under Clause 52.17, *Native Vegetation*, of the Alpine Planning Scheme. This clause requires a planning permit to remove or destroy most native vegetation, with purposes including avoiding the removal of native vegetation that makes a significant contribution to Victoria's biodiversity and providing offsetting of native vegetation to be removed. The clause requires consideration of the *Permitted clearing of native vegetation – Biodiversity guidelines* (2013), an

incorporated document to the Alpine Planning Scheme. It is not considered necessary at this stage for Alpine Shire to consider additional vegetation controls for the Alpine Planning Scheme, specifically the use of the Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO).

Catchments and waterways:

The headwaters of many of Victoria's major rivers originate in Alpine Shire. These river systems form part of a declared water-supply catchment that supply water to both the North East and East Gippsland regions for domestic use. The North East Regional Catchment Strategy 2013 provides broad directions for the catchment and waterways in the region and Alpine Shire.

The Upper Ovens and Kiewa river catchments provide irrigation water supply, mainly during summer.. Water Management Plans for the Ovens and Kiewa Rivers ensure appropriate water extraction and adequate that environmental flows are maintained to protect the environmental health of the rivers. Stress in river catchments can lead to decline in water quality, agricultural productivity, decline in recreational values, habitat availability for native species and the general health of the river.

Land use in catchments and waterways must be appropriately managed to ensure that a range of values are not compromised, including water quality, environment, landscape, agricultural uses, recreational activities and urban uses such as domestic water supply.

Water security and distribution will pose increasing challenges in the future across the state. With considerable upper catchment water collection and flow in Alpine Shire, the municipality has potential to promote the use of water at the source for agricultural production. This potential could be an advantage for the intensification and expansion of the horticulture industry.

Bushfire:

The Alpine Shire has been subject to numerous large bushfire events. Recent bushfires have been in 2003, 2005/2006, 2009 and 2013, all resulted in loss of property, with loss of life in 2009.

The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) has been introduced in the Alpine Planning Scheme to be applied to areas of high and severe bushfire risk, replacing the former Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO). The Minister for Planning will replace existing BMO mapping (land to which the former WMO applied) with new, upgraded mapping prepared by the CFA and DTPLI. There is an opportunity to prepare schedules to the BMO to exempt the need for planning permit for dwellings in defined townships (subject to meeting specified Bushfire Attack Levels and other conditions), in conjunction with the CFA and DTPLI.

Flooding:

Flooding in the north east region is a major issue in terms of its frequency and impact on urban and rural communities. Widespread major flooding within the floodplain of the Ovens and Kiewa Rivers occurred in September 1998 and more recently in September and December 2010. Severe flooding also occurred in 1974 and 1993.

Flooding has had a significant impact on Myrtleford and surrounding areas. Alpine Shire Council has recently completed Stage 1 of the flood mitigation works to protect the town

with the construction of a diversion channel, with further stages anticipated to reduce flood impacts on the township.

The Floodway Overlay (FO) and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) are presently used in the Alpine Planning Scheme to recognise and protect floodprone land. The boundaries of the overlays require review as the overlays do not presently apply to large areas of floodprone land. Although draft revised mapping has been prepared, the North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA) has not finalised this process. The mapping and controls for the overlays requires review, in conjunction with the North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA).

Erosion:

Soil erosion and sedimentation is considered to be a high risk in the low agricultural capacity areas of the Shire, particularly between Happy Valley Road and Yackandandah-Myrtleford Road. Soil erosion has the potential to reduce the productivity of agricultural land, reduce water quality and damage the built environment and infrastructure. Steep slopes on cleared land pose a significant erosion hazard and threat to water quality.

The Erosion Management Overlay (EMO) is presently used in the Alpine Planning Scheme to recognise and protect land subject to high erosion risk. The application and controls of the EMO should be monitored and reviewed, as required.

Climate change:

Climate change is an ongoing challenge for all communities, with likely future impacts on water resources and security, biodiversity health, soil erosion, bushfire frequency and intensity, primary production, landscape and infrastructure. In addition to the challenges it present, climate change presents opportunities for new rural activities, such as carbon capture and sequestration.

Climate change has the potential to enhance weather events and natural disasters. The municipal community must be prepared to respond and recover from hazardous events, both natural disasters and other incidents. It is important to build community resilience against these disasters and incidents.

Landscape and environment conclusion:

Alpine Shire has highly significant landscapes and landscape features of national significance. Rural land and the built environment also contribute significantly as key assets of the area's landscape. As a key feature and attraction, the landscape is a core component of the municipality's tourism industry and economy.

It is important that environmental assets, such as native vegetation, biodiversity, waterways and catchments are properly recognised and managed to protect their health and integrity. Similarly, it is important that environmental risks, such as bushfire, flooding, erosion and climate change, are fully considered and appropriately managed to reflect this risk and ensure that land use and development is appropriate to the level of identified risk.

These significance of the landscapes and environmental values generally should be reflected and protected in the Alpine Planning Scheme. Environmental risks also need appropriate recognition and controls to ensure that land use and development is managed in accordance

with this risk. See the strategy recommendations for detailed recommendations in relation to landscape and the environment.

1.4.4 Rural subdivision, dwellings and lifestyle:

Rural subdivision, dwellings and lifestyle in Alpine Shire overview:

The Farming Zone applies to most of the rural areas in Alpine Shire, with the Rural Conservation Zone only applying to small areas of remote rural land. The Farming Zone has a 40 hectare minimum subdivision size, except situations under Clause 22.02-2, Subdivision in rural areas, where a minimum of 20 hectares applies for demonstrated commercial rural production in accordance with an approved whole farm plan. This 20 hectare minimum lot size has only been used in a very limited number of proposals, with 40 hectares being the generally applied minimum lot size in the Farming Zone. The zone has a trigger of 40 hectares for dwelling proposals, with all dwelling proposals requiring a planning permit on lots below this size.

This strategy only proposes to clarify strategic directions for rural land under the Alpine Planning Scheme. The strategy does not propose any:

- Change to the existing subdivision size or requirement for dwellings in the Farming Zone.
- Rezoning of land (other than minor, corrective zoning changes on a small number of sites, as identified in individual rural precinct plans).

Planning permit requirements for subdivision and dwellings in the Farming Zone have provided the scrutiny to ensure that proposals have been linked to genuine agricultural and rural activity activities. It is important that subdivision and dwellings in rural areas are linked to an agricultural, associated rural activity or rural tourism use. Development of this nature must protect and complement the agricultural land resource, maintain productive agriculture and not impact on farming activities (a 'right to farm') in rural areas.

Alpine Shire is an attractive location for those seeking a rural 'residential' lifestyle. Increasing demand for rural and semi-rural living in the municipality is a major planning issue. While this lifestyle may be attractive to some, it has implications for the loss of productive land, loss of environmental values, risk and difficulty and cost of service provision. A rational approach in rural areas will assist in reducing any financial burden associated with unplanned rural lifestyle development.

Alpine Shire has a large number of small rural allotments throughout its rural areas, primarily created through previous settlement for mining and agriculture. The majority of these smaller lots comprise part of larger landholdings and are used for productive farming and rural uses such as dairying, cattle, horticultural and tourism industries. Planning and management of these allotments is required to avoid adverse impacts on agricultural use and production, discourage them to be converted for rural lifestyle purposes and continue their contribution to the long term economic sustainability of the municipality.

Comments raised in community consultation for the study included the need for a more rational approach to rural lifestyle aspirations, the loss and cost of agricultural land due to lifestyle pressures, environmental and amenity issues associated with rural lifestyle development and a need to focus on tourism opportunities rather than lifestyle aspirations.

Rural lifestyle development is a legitimate land use, contributing to the housing choices available to existing and prospective residents. There may be situations where residential development is an acceptable long term use in specific rural areas, for example de-facto rural townships and other locations on smaller, isolated lots that have no agricultural or tourist value. Rather than attempting to identify all locations where future residential development could be approved, it is preferable to allow limited strategically located areas for rural lifestyle development.

Rural subdivision, dwellings and lifestyle conclusion:

Subdivision and dwelling proposals in rural areas have been linked to genuine agricultural, rural activity or rural tourism uses. Subdivision and dwellings in rural areas must protect and complement the agricultural land resource and maintain productive agriculture.

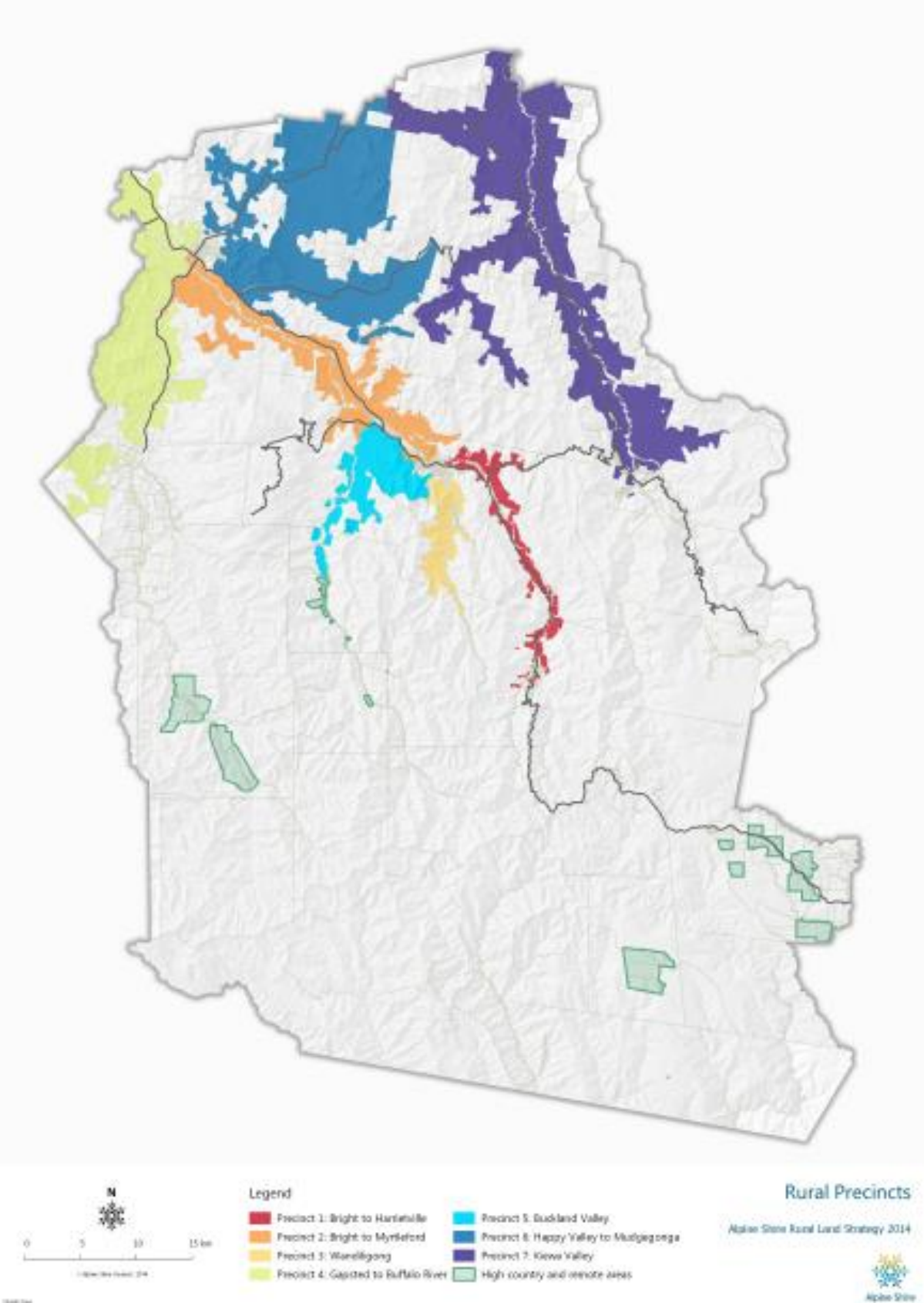
Demands for rural 'residential' lifestyle in Alpine Shire creates a potential loss of productive agricultural land, pressure on environmental values and unplanned demand and costs for servicing. Appropriate areas and mechanisms are required to manage and meet rural lifestyle demands while protecting agricultural and environmental resources.

A rational approach is required for rural subdivision, dwellings and lifestyle aspirations in the Alpine Planning Scheme, ensuring that land use decision making protects agricultural and environmental resources. Some consideration of 'residential' lifestyle living options can be made in limited areas and situations. See the strategy recommendations for detailed recommendations in relation to rural subdivision, dwellings and lifestyle.



1.5 Rural precincts

Eight distinct precincts have been identified in the rural areas of Alpine Shire, each being identified due to a range of differing land use, locational characteristics, agricultural productivity and land use pressures. The precincts are identified in the following map. This section outlines an assessment and recommendations for each precinct. For further details on each rural precinct, reference should be made to the background report for this strategy. Map 3 identifies the rural precincts identified in this study.



Map 3: Rural Precincts in the Alpine Shire (Source: Alpine Shire Council)

1.5.1 Introduction, rural precincts:

Characteristics for all precincts form part of the significance of Alpine Shire for agricultural production, tourism and landscape. All precincts have a need to protect agricultural land and the natural environment. All precincts offer opportunities for the further diversification of agriculture and tourism.

While the rural precincts share common values, needs and opportunities, precincts also include distinct characteristics, needs and opportunities unique to each area. These precinct specific issues require specific actions and responses for individual precincts. Community consultation for this strategy has guided the required responses and actions for each precinct.

Further assessment, opportunities and detailed recommendations for each precinct are outlined in the background report for this strategy. This background report guides future land use in precincts, identifying further detailed needs and potential in each precinct.

1.5.2 Precinct 1 – Bright to Harrietteville:

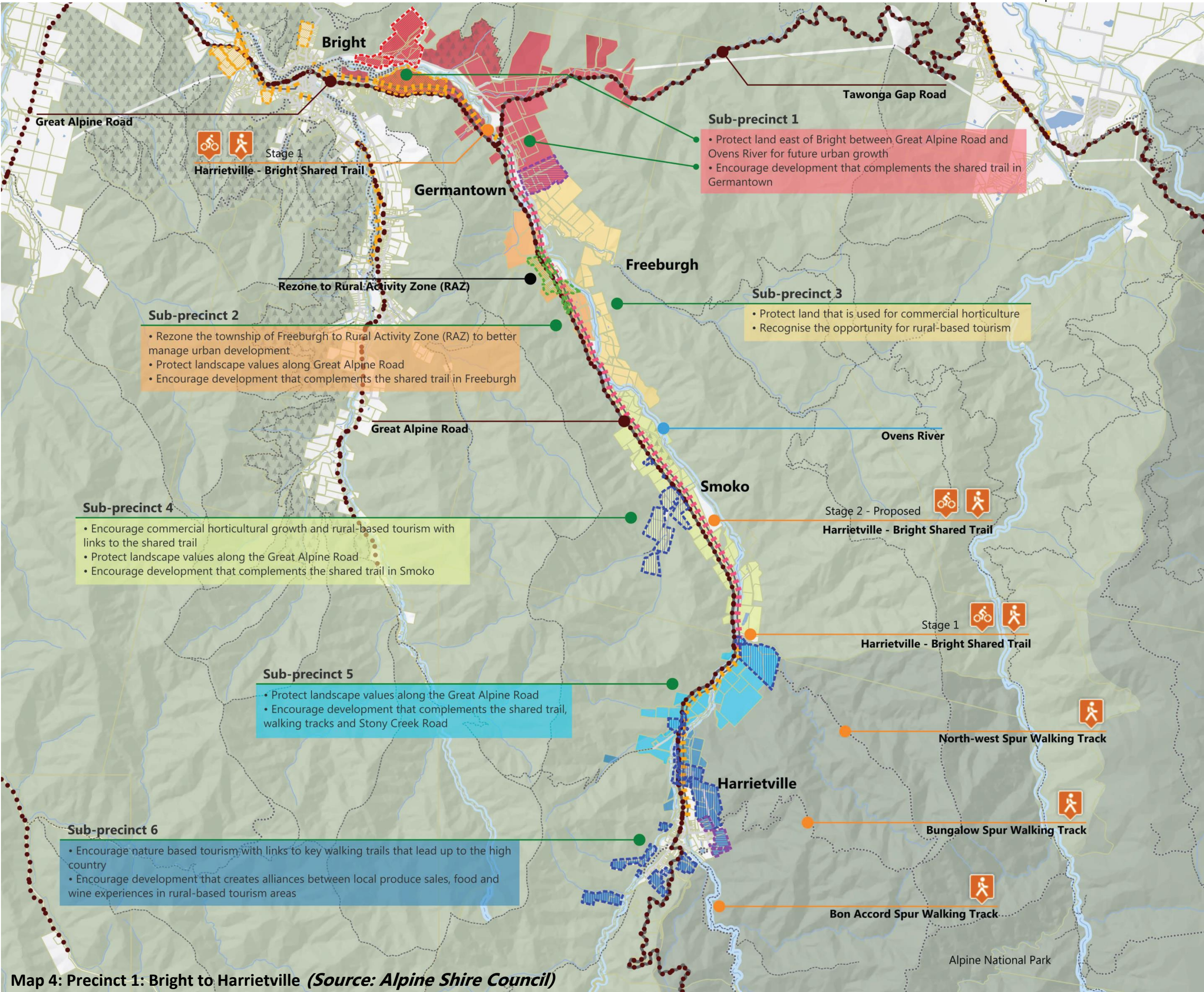
The Bright to Harrietteville Precinct is characterised by a flat to gently undulating narrow valley floor through which the Ovens River meanders. The sides of the valley rise sharply into the Alpine National Park to the east and the state forest to the west.

Subdivision and dwelling pressures are apparent in the precinct.

While the valley is not renowned for commercial agricultural production, there is opportunity to improve the agri-tourism experience by promoting the 'farm to plate' and 'pedal to produce' experience with links to the shared bike path. There is also opportunity to expand nature based tourism in areas fragmented from agriculture.

Tourism alliances should be built around key attractions such as walking trails, the Ovens River and local produce sales and food and wine experiences.

Precinct 1: Bright to Harrietville



Legend

Proposed areas

- Investigate rezoning
- Area to be rezoned
- Rural-based tourism areas
- Urban growth boundary

Existing areas

- Rural Living Zone

Key walking / cycling trails

- Walking trail
- Cycling trail
- Shared trail
- Shared trail (proposed)

Key touring routes

- Route

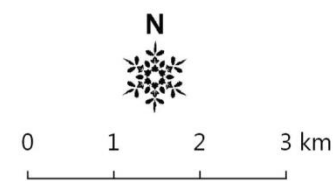
Key waterways

- Waterway

Land use types

- Plantations
- National Park / State Forest

Map is to be read in conjunction with the Rural Land Strategy Report



Map 4: Precinct 1: Bright to Harrietville (Source: Alpine Shire Council)

1.5.3 Precinct 2- Bright to Myrtleford:

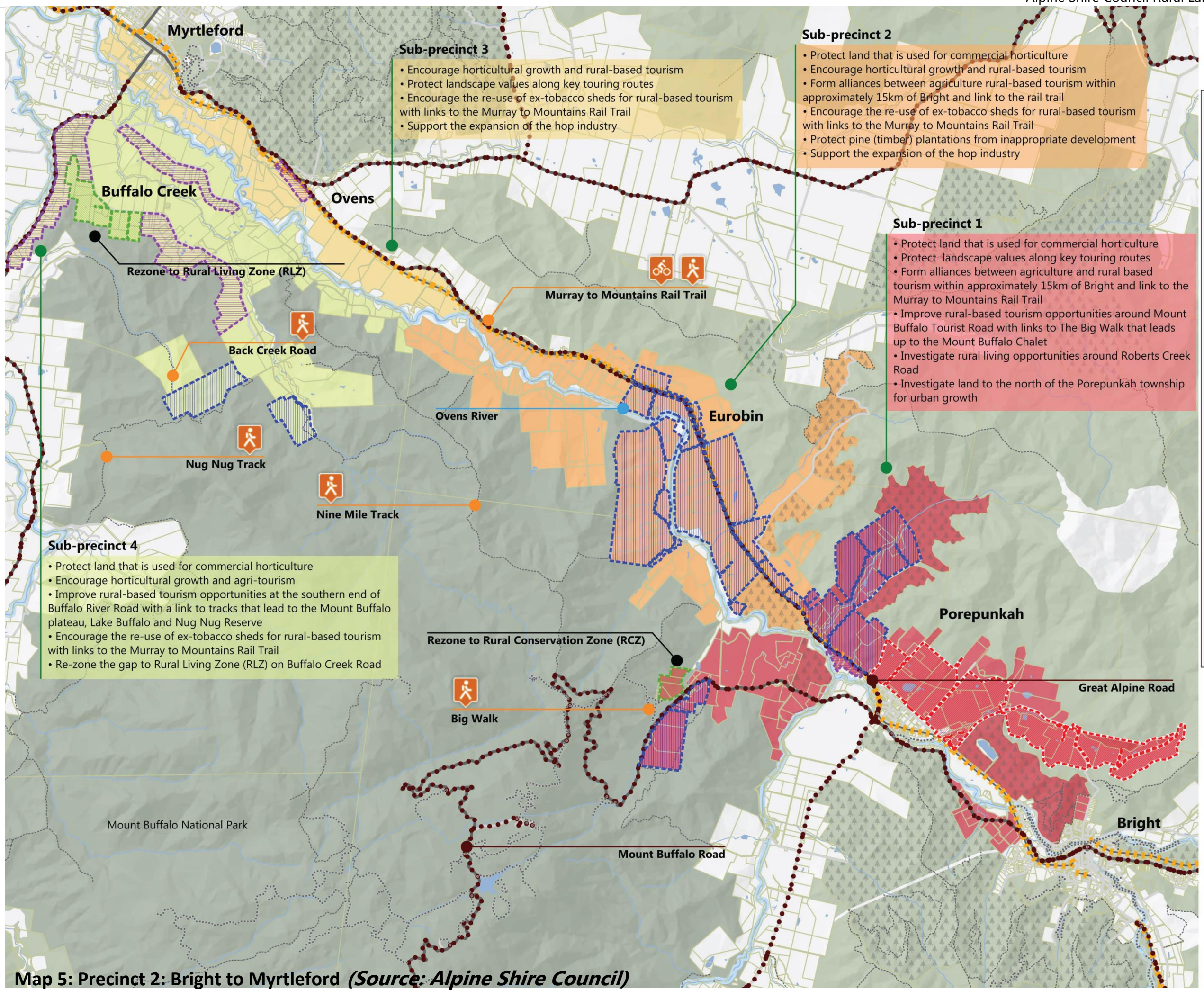
The Myrtleford to Bright Precinct follows the Ovens River and Great Alpine Road. It is characterised by the broadening floodplain and valley floor of the Ovens and the land associated with the tributaries of Roberts Creek, One Mile Creek, Porepunkah Gully Creek and Buffalo Creek. The significant towns of Bright, Porepunkah and Myrtleford are found in the Precinct. Mount Buffalo dominates the skyline.

This precinct includes regionally significant agricultural land that is capable of growing a wide variety of agricultural commodities suited to cool climate growing conditions. This land is capable of attracting higher value products, including horticulture and dairy and must be retained for agricultural production.

Subdivision and dwelling pressures are apparent in the precinct.

Tourism should be built around key attractions such as walking trails linking to the Mt Buffalo National Park, the Ovens River and local produce sales and food and wine experiences.

Precinct 2: Bright to Myrtleford



Legend

Proposed areas

- Investigate rezoning
- Area to be rezoned
- Rural-based tourism areas
- Urban growth boundary

Existing areas

- Rural Living Zone

Key walking / cycling trails

- Walking trail
- Cycling trail
- Shared trail
- Shared trail (proposed)

Key touring routes

- Route

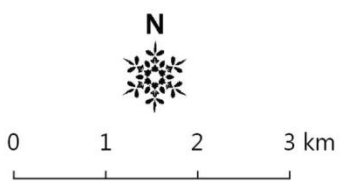
Key waterways

- Waterway

Land use types

- Plantations
- National Park / State Forest

Map is to be read in conjunction with the Rural Land Strategy Report



Map 5: Precinct 2: Bright to Myrtleford (Source: Alpine Shire Council)

1.5.4 Precinct 3 – Wandiligong Valley:

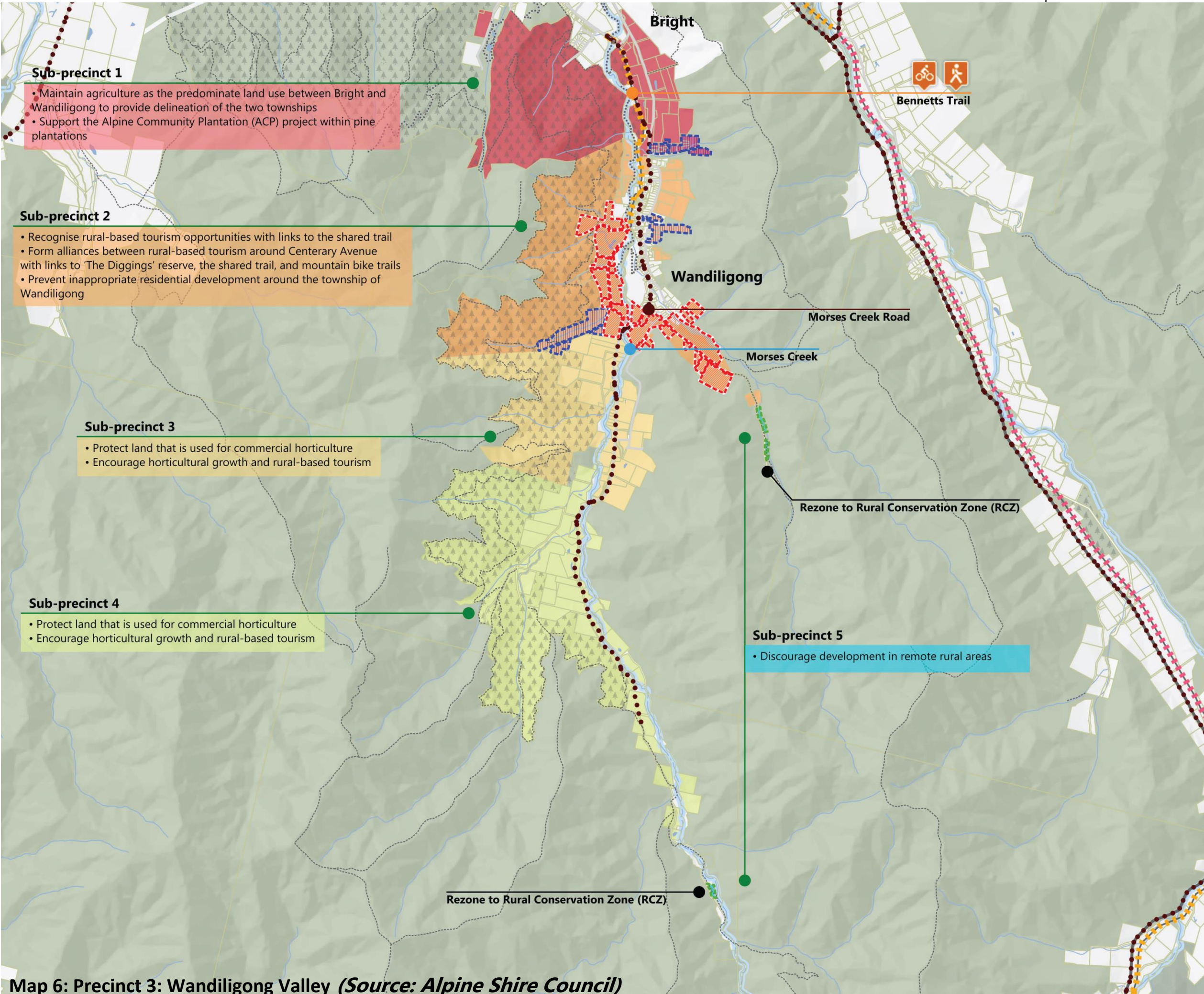
The Wandiligong Valley runs south from the outskirts of Bright and includes the historic township of Wandiligong. The narrow valley associated with Morses Creek is surrounded by steep hills with pine plantations on the west and Crown Land to the east.

Subdivision and dwelling pressures are apparent in the precinct.

This precinct is locally significant for agricultural production, being capable of attracting higher value products, including horticulture and downstream processing. The precinct must be retained for agricultural production.

There is an opportunity to expand nature based tourism, creating synergies with agri-tourism in Centenary Avenue, an area that is fragmented from agriculture. Tourism alliances should be built around key attractions such as Morses Creek, the Diggings and the Wandil Maze, mining relics and the historic township of Wandiligong.

Precinct 3: Wandiligong



Sub-precinct 1

- Maintain agriculture as the predominate land use between Bright and Wandiligong to provide delineation of the two townships
- Support the Alpine Community Plantation (ACP) project within pine plantations

Sub-precinct 2

- Recognise rural-based tourism opportunities with links to the shared trail
- Form alliances between rural-based tourism around Centenary Avenue with links to 'The Diggings' reserve, the shared trail, and mountain bike trails
- Prevent inappropriate residential development around the township of Wandiligong

Sub-precinct 3

- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Encourage horticultural growth and rural-based tourism

Sub-precinct 4

- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Encourage horticultural growth and rural-based tourism

Sub-precinct 5

- Discourage development in remote rural areas

Legend

Proposed areas

- Investigate rezoning
- Area to be rezoned
- Rural-based tourism areas
- Urban growth boundary

Existing areas

- Rural Living Zone

Key walking / cycling trails

- Walking trail
- Cycling trail
- Shared trail
- Shared trail (proposed)

Key touring routes

- Route

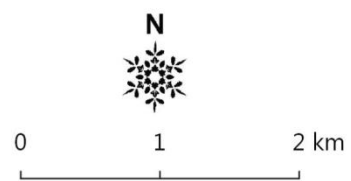
Key waterways

- Waterway

Land use types

- Plantations
- National Park / State Forest

Map is to be read in conjunction with the Rural Land Strategy Report



Map 6: Precinct 3: Wandiligong Valley (Source: Alpine Shire Council)

1.5.5 Precinct 4 – Buffalo River to Gapsted:

Buffalo River Valley and Gapsted Precinct runs south from the township of Myrtleford and north to the municipal boundary. The Buffalo River Valley below Lake Buffalo is narrow steep sided valley that gradually broadens to a flat plain near Myrtleford where the Buffalo River meets the Ovens River. The valley floor rises into moderate to steep undulating hills near the Shire boundary at Gapsted.

This precinct includes regionally significant agricultural land that is capable of growing a wide variety of higher value agricultural commodities suited to cool climate growing conditions, for example including horticulture and dairying. This land is capable of attracting higher value products, including horticulture and dairy and is required for ongoing agricultural production.

There is limited pressure for subdivision in the precinct due to the high proportion of existing small lots, primarily created through the presence of the former tobacco industry in the precinct. There are a limited number of lots being capable of further subdivision in the precinct.

There is opportunity to expand nature based tourism and create synergies with agri-tourism in areas that do not have traditional agricultural activities operating in them.

Precinct 4: Gapsted to Buffalo River

Sub-precinct 1

- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Encourage horticultural growth and rural-based tourism
- Encourage rural-based tourism opportunities in Gapsted that link to the Stanley State Forest and the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail
- Encourage the re-use of ex-tobacco sheds for rural-based tourism with links to the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail
- Protect land for future urban growth of Myrtleford

Sub-precinct 2

- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Encourage horticultural growth and rural-based tourism
- Encourage rural-based based tourism opportunities that link to the Mount Buffalo National Park, Nug Nug Reserve and Lake Buffalo

Sub-precinct 3

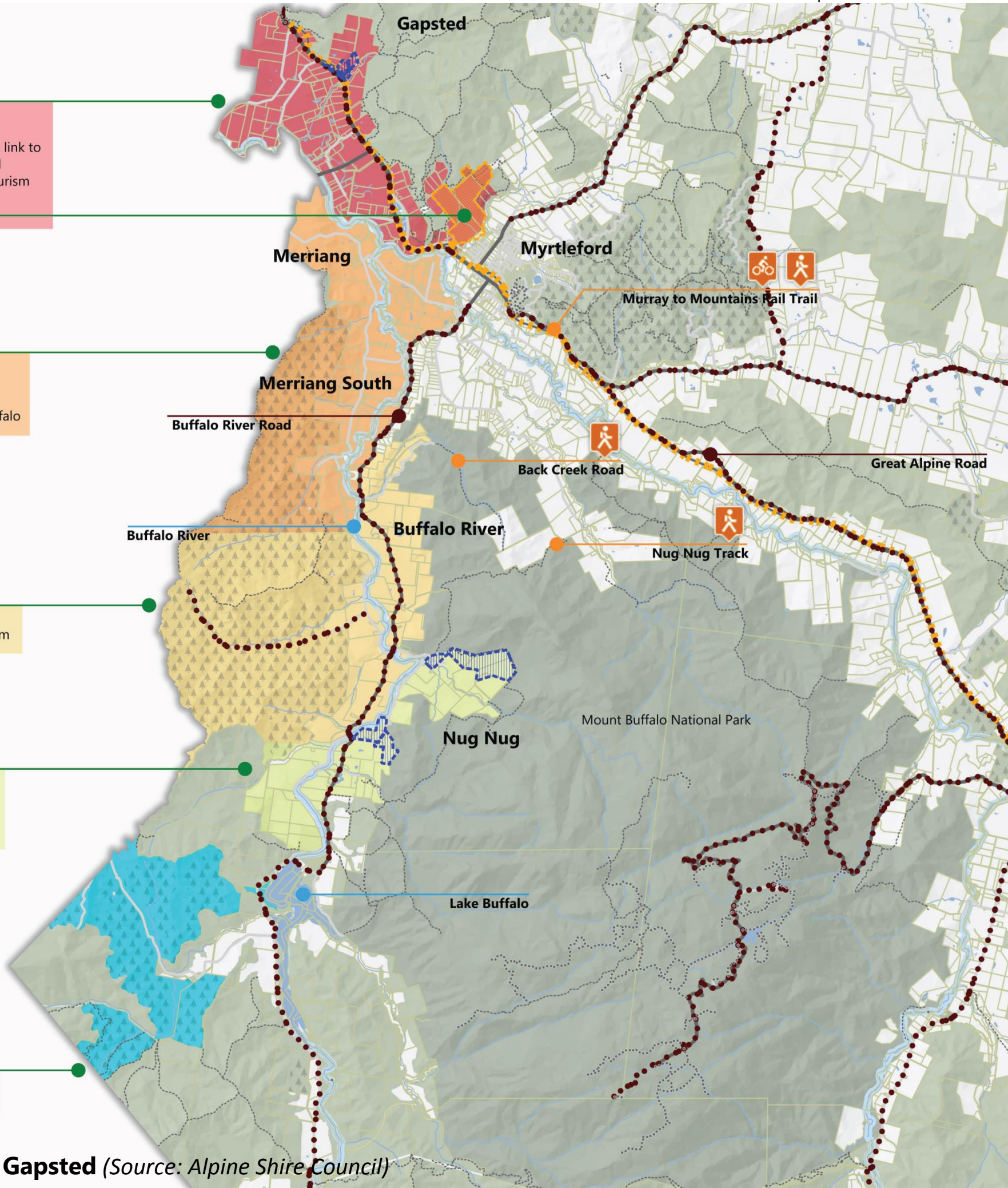
- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Encourage horticultural growth and rural-based tourism

Sub-precinct 4

- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Encourage horticultural growth and rural-based tourism
- Consider nature based tourism opportunities that link to the Mount Buffalo National Park, Nug Nug Reserve and Lake Buffalo

Sub-precinct 5

- Consider rural-based tourism opportunities that link to the Mount Buffalo National Park, Nug Nug Reserve and Lake Buffalo



Legend

Proposed areas

- Investigate rezoning
- Area to be rezoned
- Rural-based tourism areas
- Urban growth boundary

Existing areas

- Rural Living Zone

Key walking / cycling trails

- Walking trail
- Cycling trail
- Shared trail
- Shared trail (proposed)

Key touring routes

- Route

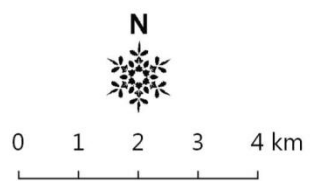
Key waterways

- Waterway

Land use types

- Plantations
- National Park / State Forest

Map is to be read in conjunction with the Rural Land Strategy Report



Map 7: Precinct 4: Buffalo River to Gapsted (Source: Alpine Shire Council)

1.5.6 Precinct 5 – Buckland Valley:

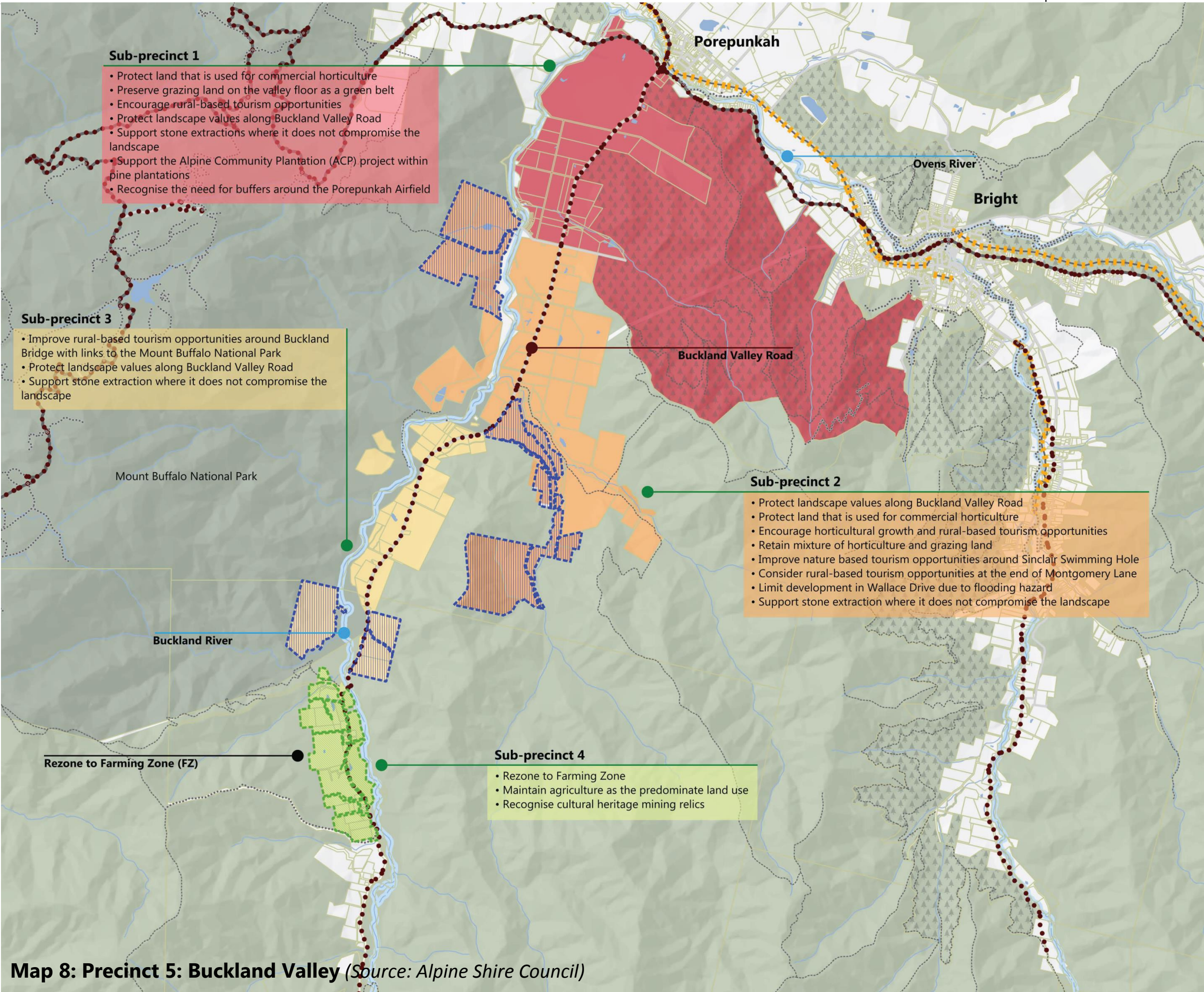
The Buckland Valley is a pastoral valley. It is wide at its northern end, narrowing in its upper reaches. The Buckland River runs along the valley, which is relatively sparsely settled.

The precinct is locally significant for agricultural production, with land being capable of attracting higher value products, including horticulture and dairying. Land in the precinct is required for ongoing agricultural production.

Overall, pressure for subdivision in the precinct is limited due to the high proportion of small lots in this valley.

There is opportunity to expand nature based tourism and create synergies with agri-tourism in areas fragmented from traditional agriculture with links to Mt Buffalo National Park.

Precinct 5: Buckland Valley



Sub-precinct 1

- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Preserve grazing land on the valley floor as a green belt
- Encourage rural-based tourism opportunities
- Protect landscape values along Buckland Valley Road
- Support stone extractions where it does not compromise the landscape
- Support the Alpine Community Plantation (ACP) project within pine plantations
- Recognise the need for buffers around the Porepunkah Airfield

Sub-precinct 3

- Improve rural-based tourism opportunities around Buckland Bridge with links to the Mount Buffalo National Park
- Protect landscape values along Buckland Valley Road
- Support stone extraction where it does not compromise the landscape

Sub-precinct 2

- Protect landscape values along Buckland Valley Road
- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Encourage horticultural growth and rural-based tourism opportunities
- Retain mixture of horticulture and grazing land
- Improve nature based tourism opportunities around Sinclair Swimming Hole
- Consider rural-based tourism opportunities at the end of Montgomery Lane
- Limit development in Wallace Drive due to flooding hazard
- Support stone extraction where it does not compromise the landscape

Sub-precinct 4

- Rezone to Farming Zone
- Maintain agriculture as the predominate land use
- Recognise cultural heritage mining relics

Legend

Proposed areas

- Investigate rezoning
- Area to be rezoned
- Rural-based tourism areas
- Urban growth boundary

Existing areas

- Rural Living Zone

Key walking / cycling trails

- Walking trail
- Cycling trail
- Shared trail
- Shared trail (proposed)

Key touring routes

- Route

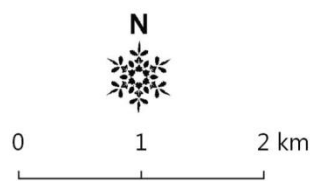
Key waterways

- Waterway

Land use types

- Plantations
- National Park / State Forest

Map is to be read in conjunction with the Rural Land Strategy Report



Map 8: Precinct 5: Buckland Valley (Source: Alpine Shire Council)

1.5.7 Precinct 6 – Happy Valley to Mudgegonga:

Happy Valley and Rosewhite extends north through to the Yackandandah Myrtleford Road and west towards the Kiewa Valley. The landform of the cleared land is dominated by gently to steeply undulating slopes with minor alluvial plains associated with the creeks.

Some subdivision and dwelling pressures exist in the precinct. Overall, the pressure for subdivision is limited due to the dominant presence of the cattle industry and long term land ownership.

There is a need to recognise the importance of grazing land for the dairy and beef industries, protect the core area from inappropriate development and avoid ad hoc decision making for lifestyle development in farming areas.

This precinct is locally significant for agricultural production, primarily supporting the cattle industry. The precinct includes high versatility agricultural land on the valley floor in Happy Valley / Rosewhite areas capable of attracting higher value products, including horticulture and dairying. Land in the precinct is required for ongoing agricultural production.

There is opportunity to expand nature based tourism and create synergies with agri-tourism in areas fragmented from traditional agriculture.

Precinct 6: Happy Valley to Mudgegonga

Sub-precinct 1

- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Encourage rural-based tourism opportunities
- Consider rural living opportunities on the Myrtleford-Yackandandah Road section fragmented from agriculture
- Preserve land with the potential for gravel extraction
- Investigate the expansion of the industrial land to the north-east of Carter Holt Harvey to capture future rural industry development that is not associated with the agricultural use of the land.
- Investigate implementing a buffer around Carter Holt Harvey to protect investment security

Sub-precinct 2

- Protect landscape values along key touring routes
- Support limited complimentary commercial development in old township area

Sub-precinct 4

- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Support rural-based tourism
- Protect landscape values along key touring routes with views to Mount Buffalo

Sub-precinct 3

- Consider rural-based tourism development

Sub-precinct 6

- Protect land that is used for commercial horticulture
- Support rural-based tourism
- Consider rural living opportunities on the Great Alpine Road section fragmented from agriculture

Sub-precinct 5

- Consider rural-based tourism opportunities

Legend

Proposed areas

- Investigate rezoning
- Area to be rezoned
- Rural-based tourism areas
- Urban growth boundary

Existing areas

- Rural Living Zone

Key walking / cycling trails

- Walking trail
- Cycling trail
- Shared trail
- Shared trail (proposed)

Key touring routes

- Route

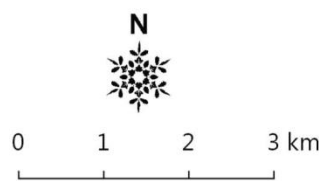
Key waterways

- Waterway

Land use types

- Plantations
- National Park / State Forest

Map is to be read in conjunction with the Rural Land Strategy Report



Map 9: Precinct 6: Happy Valley to Mudgegonga (Source: Alpine Shire Council)

1.5.8 Precinct 7 – Kiewa Valley:

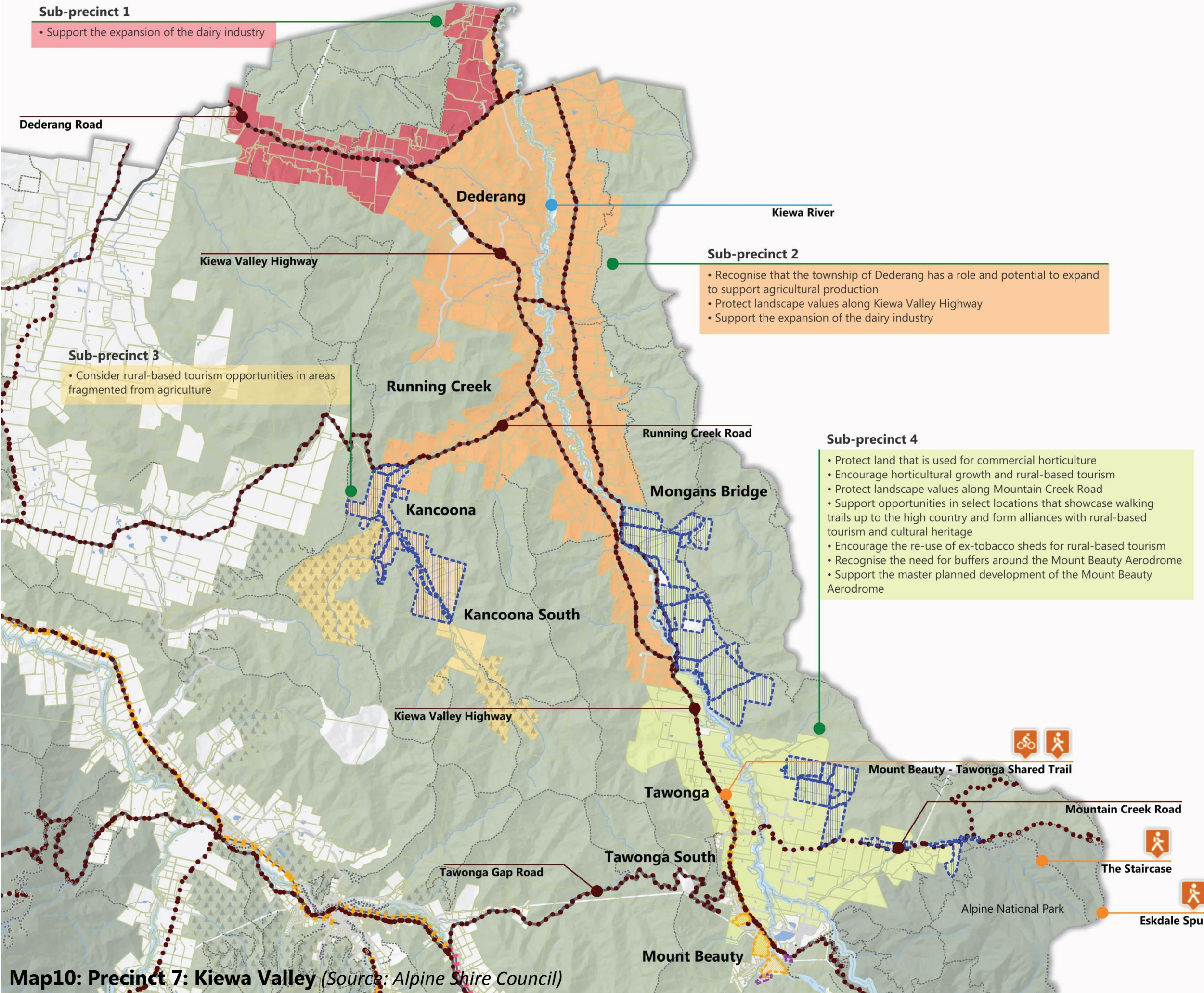
The Kiewa Precinct is characterized by the broadening valley floor and the floodplain of the Kiewa River. The precinct includes the areas associated with the tributaries on Mountain Creek and Running Creek. The precinct includes the wide valley floor and foot slopes and is bordered by state forest to the east and west and the Alpine National Park to the south.

The precinct has regionally significant agricultural land that is capable of growing a wide variety of agricultural commodities suited to cool climate growing conditions and attracting higher value products, including horticulture and dairying. The precinct includes the most productive grazing land in the municipality, with grazing being the predominant land use. The precinct is the centre of the dairy industry in the municipality, the industry being a significant contributor to the economy.

Subdivision and dwelling pressures are apparent in the precinct.

There is opportunity to expand nature based tourism in the precinct, creating synergies with agri-tourism in areas fragmented from traditional agriculture linking to Mt Bogong and Alpine National Park.

Precinct 7: Kiewa Valley



Legend

Proposed areas

- Investigate rezoning
- Area to be rezoned
- Rural-based tourism areas
- Urban growth boundary

Existing areas

- Rural Living Zone

Key walking / cycling trails

- Walking trail
- Cycling trail
- Shared trail
- Shared trail (proposed)

Key touring routes

- Route

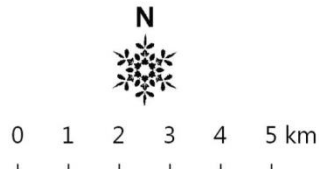
Key waterways

- Waterway

Land use types

- Plantations
- National Park / State Forest

Map is to be read in conjunction with the Rural Land Strategy Report



Map10: Precinct 7: Kiewa Valley (Source: Alpine Shire Council)

1.5.9 High country and remote areas:

There are a number of 'remote' rural areas in Alpine Shire in the upper valley catchments and sub-alpine / alpine areas of the High Plains. Remote rural areas comprise:

- The upper Wandiligong valley.
- The upper reaches of the Buckland, Ovens and Buffalo Rivers.
- Treasure Plain, the Dargo High Plains, Abbeyard and Cobungra.

The remote rural areas within upper valley catchments generally consist of a series of small lots created to facilitate mining activities, the majority being vacant with some being used for lifestyle / recreation purposes. The majority of these allotments are vacant and some are used for lifestyle/recreation purposes. The long term objectives for this land are for conservation purposes rather than farming.

Remote rural areas within the alpine or sub alpine environment generally include larger remote allotments that were created to facilitate cattle grazing and mustering. These remote areas differ from the valley areas due to extreme isolation, distance from towns and absence of essential physical and community services. While the majority of these allotments are used for cattle grazing, some are also used for rural lifestyle development and / or recreation purposes. These remote rural areas in the alpine and sub alpine environment have high conservation significance.

A major challenge in remote rural areas is the appropriateness of dwellings and subdivision, both of which should be minimised in this environmentally sensitive, high conservation value, isolated areas. These remote areas are generally subject to extreme fire risk and are extremely difficult to evacuate due to poor road access and isolation. The proposed application of the Bushfire Management Overlay to these high country and remote areas will manage development to minimise the loss of life and damage to property in the event of bushfire.

Demand exists for nature based tourism in remote rural areas. It is essential that tourism development is appropriately located and designed to not impact on the landscape, environmental and conservation values of these areas.

1.5.10 Precinct Conclusions:

Future land use planning under the Alpine Planning Scheme should recognise the general land use challenges, directions and opportunities in precincts generally, protecting agricultural land productivity and versatility, promoting development of tourism and agri-tourism and protecting landscape and environmental values.

See the strategy recommendations for and the background report to this strategy for planning and land use recommendations in relation to rural precincts.

PART 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Alpine Planning Scheme implementation

Changes in the Alpine Planning Scheme form a major component of the implementation of this strategy. These changes may comprise new strategic land use directions (that is strategies and policies) under the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) or changes to actual planning controls (that is zones and overlays).

2.1.1 Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF):

Recommended changes to the LPPF to implement the Alpine Shire Rural Land Strategy (the 'strategy'):

1. Align the LPPF with the strategy, including strategy findings in a revised LPPF based on the review report prepared for the LPPF / Alpine Planning Scheme.
2. List the adopted strategy as a reference (policy) document to the Alpine Planning Scheme.
3. Agricultural land:

Include the following objectives and strategies for agricultural land:

Objective 1, Agricultural industry:

Maintain a viable and sustainable agricultural industry to support the municipal economy and wellbeing.

Strategies:

- Protect the locational competitive advantages for agriculture in rural precincts.
- Foster and enhance an expansion of 'clean and green' agriculture.
- Facilitate the growth of key agricultural activities and associated rural industries to maintain and enhance the economic base of the municipality.
- Support and encourage the expansion of the horticultural industry, recognising that horticultural activities may be legitimately established on smaller allotments.
- Support and encourage the expansion of the dairy industry, retaining larger lot sizes in core dairy areas.
- Support and maintain the cattle industry.
- Facilitate the growth and expansion of farms, recognising industry requirements for incremental growth.
- Facilitate the potential diversification and value adding in agriculture to enhance the economic viability of the industry.

Objective 2, Strategically significant agricultural land:

Maintain and protect strategically significant agricultural land for production.

Strategies:

- Protect strategically significant agricultural land to support existing and future agricultural industries and the economic performance of agriculture.
- Ensure that agricultural land is maintained for the cost-effective production of agricultural food and raw materials.
- Protect strategically significant agricultural land for the continued operation of agricultural production.
- Ensure that rural land is used and developed in a way that will support efficient agricultural production.
- Encourage and support sustainable agricultural practices that are capable of increasing productivity levels.

Objective 3, Rural industries and value adding:

Facilitate rural industries and value adding in rural areas that support the agricultural sector.

Strategies:

- Encourage rural industries that specifically support the agricultural sector.
- Promote emerging natural resource based rural industries.
- Attract and develop value adding opportunities for rural industries to diversify the economy and maximise employment opportunities in rural areas.
- Encourage well designed, sustainable rural industries that enhance the visual amenity of rural areas.

Objective 4, Timber production:

Facilitate timber production and value adding.

Strategies:

- Encourage the further value adding and processing of timber products to strengthen the municipal economy and increase local employment opportunities.
- Ensure that the establishment of plantation forestry on private land avoids the loss of agricultural land of strategic national / state, regional or sub-regional significance.
- Minimise the impact of timber plantations and forestry on the environment and areas of significant landscape.
- Minimise the impact of timber plantation and forestry on rural infrastructure.

Objective 5, Extractive Industry:

Ensure the long term protection of known and unknown stone resources.

Strategy:

- Effectively manage extractive industry in response to surrounding land uses and the natural environment.

4. Rural based tourism:

Include the following objectives and strategies for rural based tourism:

Objective 1, Rural based tourism:

Facilitate the growth of rural based tourism in a manner that builds on and complements the agricultural industry and environmental assets.

Strategies:

- Ensure that rural based tourism is linked to agriculture, agri-tourism or the natural environment, reinforcing the predominant use of the rural area for agricultural production and maintaining the rural character of the area.
- Ensure that rural based tourism builds on and is compatible with other rural land uses and protect the landscape, environmental and heritage values of the area.
- Ensure that rural based tourism protects key environmental features, preserves land of high scenic quality, recognises the importance of the natural and built environment and is sensitively designed and located in the landscape to avoid adverse visual impacts.
- Promote agri-tourism uses, encouraging and promoting non-traditional agri-tourism experiences.
- Facilitate growth in tourism to assist with diversification of the economy, encouraging new tourist development in appropriate locations.
- Encourage growth in rural tourism and facilitate future tourism opportunities to diversify the rural economy.
- Encourage new tourist development in appropriate rural locations.
- Provide diversity in tourist attractions, accommodation and eating establishments.
- Service the needs of people visiting the natural features of the area such as the Alpine Resorts and national parks.

5. Landscape and environment:

Include the following objectives and strategies for landscape and environment:

Objective 1, Landscape:

Protect the natural and built landscape setting, values, integrity and character in rural areas.

Strategies:

- Ensure that use and development in rural areas considers, protects and does not dominate the landscape setting, integrity, character and significance.

- Protect and maintain the rural character of the municipality by minimising the visual intrusion of new buildings on the natural landscape.
- Maintain locally significant views and vistas, particularly the open farmed landscape and ridgelines that have a view line to or from national and state parks or other crown land.
- Reduce the impact of use and development on land adjacent to national and state parks other crown land.
- Recognise and protect the landscape and tourism values of the agricultural sector.
- Recognise the economic value of agricultural landscapes along key touring routes.
- Minimise the visual impact of infrastructure and signage on the landscape and viewpoints.
- Protect and enhance the visual quality of road corridors, particularly between towns.

Objective 2, Environmental values:

Maintain, conserve and enhance the natural environment and environmental and values in rural areas.

Strategies:

- Achieve ecologically sustainable use, development and management of rural land, particularly in the agricultural, timber and other industries that rely on the natural resources.
- Ensure that land use and development protects and enhances the natural environment and environmental values.
- Recognise, protect and maintain environmental, cultural and aesthetic features and values of rural areas.
- Promote and facilitate sustainable land use and development, encouraging environmentally sustainable design outcomes.
- Foster recognition, appreciation and protection of natural and cultural heritage sites, places and features, including Aboriginal heritage.

Objective 3, Catchments and waterways:

Maintain catchment and waterway health.

Strategies:

- Facilitate the health of land and water resources in rural catchments.
- Ensure that land use and development in water catchments does not adversely affect the quality and quantity of water that is available for domestic and agricultural consumption.

Objective 4: Biodiversity and native vegetation:

Maintain, conserve and enhance biodiversity and native vegetation assets and values.

Strategies:

- Protect and enhance the biodiversity assets and natural environmental values of local, state, national and international significance.
- Protect and retain native vegetation and enhance its contribution to biodiversity values.
- Protect, enhance and extend habitat and wildlife corridors across the landscape.
- Ensure that development is sited and designed to avoid and minimise removal of native vegetation.
- Retain, protect and enhance native vegetation, including roadside vegetation, remnant vegetation areas, large old paddock trees and revegetation areas.
- Prevent the ongoing and cumulative loss of native vegetation on both private and public land.
- Protect, rehabilitate and extend the integrity of habitat corridors across the landscape, particularly between private and public land.
- Encourage innovative environmental and native vegetation retention initiatives, including carbon farming and managing native vegetation offsetting to be applied within the municipality.

Objective 5: Environmental risks and constraints:

Recognise and plan for environmental risks and constraints in planning for the use and development of land.

Strategies:

- Ensure that environmental risks, constraints and hazards are fully considered in proposals for the use and development of land.
- Consider climate change in land use planning, including initiatives to address the issue such as fostering alternative energy sources, use environmentally sustainable development principles and carbon farming.
- Minimise the impact of pest plants and pest animals to protect environmental and biodiversity values and agricultural land.
- Prevent inappropriate development in areas subject to flooding.
- Ensure that areas subject to flooding are properly identified and considered to limit the potential for unsuitable development.

Objective 6: Bushfire risk:

Implement bushfire risk assessment and mitigation in land use planning.

Strategies:

- Ensure that decisions on strategic and settlement planning prioritise the protection of human life over other policy considerations and apply the precautionary principle when assessing the risk to life, property and community infrastructure from bushfire.
- Strengthen community resilience to bushfire by ensuring that bushfire protection measures are considered and given effect to in decision making.

- Implement bushfire risk assessment and mitigation measures to:
 - Reduce the overall bushfire risk to communities;
 - Minimise risk to life and property from bushfire through the appropriate location, design and management of uses and developments;
 - Ensure that bushfire protection measures are implemented for land uses and developments to ensure an acceptable bushfire risk level to life and property;
 - Integrate bushfire risk management and protection of human life in the consideration of land use and development.

6. Transport and infrastructure:

Include the following objectives and strategies for transport and infrastructure:

Objective 1, Transport and infrastructure:

Facilitate appropriate infrastructure to support agricultural and rural tourism uses and growth.

Strategies:

- Provide an adequate level of infrastructure to service agricultural, commercial and tourism uses and developments in rural areas.
- Provide appropriate infrastructure to support agricultural growth, maintaining a safe and efficient road network in the municipality.
- Maintain a safe and efficient rural road network in the municipality.
- Improve infrastructure in rural areas, particularly along key touring routes.
- Encourage new freight transport facilities and activities in Myrtleford that will improve economic development opportunities
- Protect airports from inappropriate development.

7. Rural subdivision, dwellings and lifestyle:

Include the following objectives and strategies for rural subdivision, dwellings lifestyle:

Objective 1, Rural subdivision:

Ensure that rural subdivision is linked to and required for an agricultural, associated rural activity or rural tourism purpose.

Strategies:

- Limit further fragmentation of rural land by subdivision.
- Ensure that rural subdivision maintains agricultural production and does not impact on the right to farm.
- Ensure that subdivision proposals create lots of sufficient size to be of benefit to agricultural production.
- Retain the potential for large scale, broadacre based farming enterprises.
- Encourage the consolidation of rural lots.

- Limit the cumulative impact of house lot excisions, including serial small lot subdivisions.
- Ensure that house lot excisions are undertaken for legitimate reasons related to agriculture.

Objective 2, Rural dwellings:

Ensure that rural dwellings are linked to and required for an agricultural, associated rural activity or rural tourism purpose.

Strategies:

- Ensure that dwellings in rural areas maintain agricultural production and do not impact on the right to farm.
- Discourage the proliferation of dwellings not associated with agriculture.
- Require any dwelling proposal to demonstrate that a dwelling is required to support a legitimate, established agricultural or rural activity.
- Discourage the proliferation of dwellings where the agricultural use of the land does not require the presence of a land manager.
- Ensure that dwellings do not result in the further fragmentation of productive agricultural land.
- Ensure that the development of dwellings in rural areas does not prejudice existing agricultural activities on surrounding land.

Objective 3, Rural lifestyle:

Ensure that rural lifestyle use and development is directed to existing areas zoned for rural lifestyle or areas where it can be demonstrated that the development meets the policy guidelines for rural lifestyle development.

Strategies:

- Limit rural lifestyle development in agricultural areas, particularly on 'high versatility' land.
- Ensure the cost effective servicing of towns and communities across the municipality through avoiding the impacts of a dispersed population base.
- Limit rural lifestyle use and development to defined rural residential settlements or zoned areas in proximity to urban areas where potential adverse impacts on agricultural and other rural based uses are minimised.

8. Policy guidelines:

Consider a proposal for a dwelling for rural lifestyle purposes if the land:

- Is less than 4 hectares in area;
- Is of low agricultural value and versatility;
- Is not able to be consolidated with adjoining land used for agriculture;
- Can be accessed via a road in Council's Register of Public Roads;
- Has no access to irrigation water.

2.1.2 Rural precincts:

Implement land use planning directions for each rural precinct, as outlined in Section 1.5 Rural Precincts.

Further assessment, opportunities and detailed recommendations for each precinct are outlined in the background report for this strategy. This background report guides future land use in precincts, identifying further detailed needs and potential in each precinct.

2.1.3 Planning zones and controls:

Potential rezoning and planning control measures for consideration and further investigation under the Alpine Planning Scheme are:

1. Rural based tourism:

- Monitor the use of the existing Farming Zone in the consideration of appropriate rural based tourism uses, considering the application of the Rural Activity Zone (RAZ) to facilitate these uses, if required.

2. Landscape and environment:

- Review the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) mapping and schedule to recognise and protect significant landscapes of scenic and cultural value.
- Implement the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) to recognise and protect land subject to high and severe bushfire risk, preparing schedules to the overlay to exempt the need for planning permit for dwellings in defined townships (subject to meeting specified Bushfire Attack Levels and other conditions), in conjunction with the CFA and DTPLI.
- Review the mapping and controls of the Floodway Overlay (FO) and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO), implementing revised flood mapping to recognise and protect floodprone land, in conjunction with the North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA).
- Monitor and review the application and controls of the Erosion Management Overlay (EMO) to recognise and protect land subject to high erosion risk, as required.
- Undertake the minor, corrective rezoning of land to Farming, Rural Conservation, Rural Activity or Rural Living, as identified in rural precinct plans.

3. Rural lifestyle:

- Investigate land in the vicinity of established townships for rezoning to Rural Living (RLZ) or specific urban zones for the planned growth of urban settlements.

2.2 Other implementation measures

During the development of the strategy, a number of actions were suggested by the community, agencies and Council. These actions are included in the background report and require implementation by a variety of stakeholders. The following actions are those that Council is able to progress and implement:

- 2.2.1 Review rating strategy to ensure fair distribution of the rate burden- this review has been completed in 2014.
- 2.2.2 Investigate a Land Management Biodiversity Incentive Scheme that recognizes and rewards landowners that implement land management principles and practices to improve sustainable agricultural opportunities and protect and enrich the environment.
- 2.2.3 Investigate suitable housing locations for dairy and seasonal horticultural farm workers –farm workers may not need to live on the farm, however they do require suitable accommodation near the farm.
- 2.2.4 Undertake a rural living strategy to determine supply, demand and the need for additional rural living zones and suitable locations.
- 2.2.5 Consider undertaking an industrial land strategy.
- 2.2.6 Assist local farming groups on seeking government funds and advice.
- 2.2.7 Liaise with the state government to provide extension support for farmers and more research and development facilities in the North East that can assist farmers in cool climate farming practices.

PART 3 REFERENCES

Alpine Shire (2010 Review), Alpine Shire Community Vision 2030.

Alpine Shire Council and Rural City of Wangaratta (2010), Alpine Valleys Agrifood growing at a higher level- Rural City of Wangaratta and Alpine Shire Agrifood Prospectus.

Australian Alps National Landscapes Tourism Inc. (2010), Australian Alps National Landscape Tourism Strategy for the International Experience Seeker Market.

Bridge Logic Consulting (February 2014), North East Dairy Regional Growth Plan and Workforce Development Strategy.

CPG Australia (2012), Draft Issues and Options Paper- Small Rural Lot Project.

CSIRO (2010), Upper Ovens Valley- Scenario Analysis.

Department of Environment and Primary Industries (December 2013), Reforms to the Native Vegetation permitted Clearing Regulations.

Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (November 2013), Planning Practice Note 42: Applying the Rural Zones.

Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (November 2013), Planning Practice Note 37: Rural Residential Development.

Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (June 2005), Planning Practice Note 30: Potentially Contaminated Land.

Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (February 2002), Planning Practice Note 18: Planning Considerations for Horticultural Structures.

Dodds (n.d), Farming's Impact on Land, Heritage Landscapes Selected Forum Papers 2004-2008 (Heritage Council of Victoria 2009).

Dwyer and Schapper (2009), Conclusions, Heritage Landscapes Selected Forum Papers 2004-2008 Heritage Council of Victoria (2009).

EnPlan Partners and Urban Enterprise (2012), Hume Rural Land Use Study.

Golder and Associates (October 2013), Alpine Shire- Sites at Tawonga South and Myrtleford, Erosion Management Overlay Review.

Goulburn Murray Water (January 2012), Upper Ovens River Water Supply Protection Area Water Management Plan.

Goulburn Murray Water (August 2012), Lower Ovens Groundwater Management Area Local Management Plan.

Goulburn Murray Water (July 2014), Kiewa Groundwater Management Area Local Management Plan.

Alpine Shire Planning Scheme, Draft review, 2014.

LRGM Services (2004), Thematic Environmental History of the Alpine Shire.

Municipal Association of Victoria (January 2012), Where and how should we grow.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria) (1977), Landscape Planning & Conservation in North East Victoria.

North East Catchment Management Strategy (May 2013), North East Regional Catchment Strategy.

RMCG (2010), Agricultural Industry Profile Report.

RMCG (2013), Alpine Shire Update of Agricultural Industries.

RMCG Consultants and O'Neil Pollock and Associates (2005), Land Capability Mapping Project- Final Report.

State Government Victoria (2014), Hume Regional Growth Plan.

The University of Melbourne (Draft 18th March 2013), the Alpine Valleys and Dairy Regional Overview.

Tourism North East (January 2014), Tourism North East: Strategic Plan and Implementation of Actions 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Tourism Victoria (2008), Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012.

Acknowledgements

Alpine Shire Council thanks the following who contributed and supported the strategy:

- Sally Beers, Strategic Planner, Alpine Shire Council
- Government Departments and Agencies
- Farming groups and representative bodies
- Many individual farmers, property owners and rural enterprises
- And anyone else who helped shape this strategy