

# STRATEGIC EXTRACTIVE RESOURCE AREAS PILOT PROJECT

## LANDOWNER AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION

**It's vital to secure the extractive resources that Victoria needs in coming decades as population grows and the demand for housing and infrastructure increases. The SERA pilot project is trialling the practical use of planning controls to achieve this safeguard and provide certainty to the Victorian community.**

Victoria's population is set to double by 2050. As our population rises, so will our demand for quarry materials such as rock, sand and gravel. These materials, known as extractive resources, are needed to build our future homes, schools, hospitals, road and rail infrastructure.

To increase the affordability of building, it's vital to ensure the raw materials are sourced close to where they'll be used in construction.

### Overview of the Strategic Extractive Resource Areas (SERA) pilot project

The SERA pilot project is a key planning initiative from *Helping Victoria Grow: Extractive Resources Strategy*.

The project identifies areas where there are actual and/or potential resources (based on existing work authorities, Extractive Industry Interest Area and industry engagement, DJPR 2019 and PwC 2016) while considering other existing land uses, environmental assets and community interests.

The information gathered through the project has informed the planning policy approach including the areas where the controls will apply. Once finalised, the SERA planning controls will be mapped and incorporated into the planning system. This will better secure and protect the

extractive resources while supporting the potential for complementary land uses and general liveability in local neighbourhoods.

This will provide greater certainty to the community, land use planners and industry, better informing future potential land uses well in advance of development.

## NOW IS THE TIME TO HAVE A SAY AND SHARE YOUR VIEWS

### The location of the SERAs

To keep construction costs down it's critical that rock, gravel and sand resources are sourced from places near transport routes.

The SERA pilot project has commenced in the Wyndham City Council and South Gippsland Shire Council areas. It will progressively expand to other strategically located areas.

The Wyndham area is the largest producer of hard rock in Victoria, while South Gippsland is an important sand resource location.



### Stakeholder engagement

The *Helping Victoria Grow: Extractive Resources Strategy* acknowledges the importance of gaining acceptance of local communities and affected stakeholders. It also highlights the need for communities to have better access to information relating to extractive resources.

We're working with councils through this SERA pilot project to ensure we understand local concerns and issues.

## LANDOWNER AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION: Q&AS

### What is an extractive resource?

An extractive resource is a material such as rock, gravel and sand, that is used for producing construction materials such as concrete, asphalt, bricks, tiles, and glass.

### Why do we need quarries?

Quarries supply the raw materials (stone, sand and gravel) that are needed to build our new rail, road, housing, school and hospital projects.

Victoria's population is set to reach more than 10 million by 2050, requiring 1.6 million new homes to be built, and supporting transport and social infrastructure.



### Why were the Wyndham City Council and South Gippsland Shire Council areas chosen for the pilot project?

To keep construction costs down it's critical the rock, gravel and sand come from places close to where the material will be used.

The Wyndham municipality was selected due to its:

- Large number of hard rock quarries, responsible for about 12 per cent of all hard rock in Victoria (2018/19).

- Wide tracts of land covered by Extractive Industry Interest Areas (EIIA) near to where demand is expected.
- Existing quarrying operations under pressure from expanding urban areas and other uses.
- Close proximity to high demand areas.

South Gippsland was selected due to its:

- Ranking as the number one strategic local government area for delivering extractive resources, based on its long-term supplies of quality sand (PwC, 2016), supplying 13 per cent of all sand and gravel produced in Victoria (2018/19).
- Position as a critical supply point for sand supporting Melbourne's growth.
- Regional location with sand resources extending into adjoining local government areas.
- Strategic importance for extractive industry growth.
- Land recognised as one of the Extractive Industry Interest Areas (EIAs).

### What are SERAs?

SERAs are important areas based on their actual and potential extractive resources being located close to where they are needed. They have been identified by taking into account transport links and the surrounding natural, cultural, and existing land uses.

Importantly, SERAs serve as strategic land markers in the planning system, indicating locations where extractive resources may exist and which need to be taken into account in land use decision making.

**SERAs will serve as clear identifiers in the planning scheme of locations where extractive resources may exist and which need to be considered in land use decision making.**

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## What are Extractive Industry Interest Areas?

EIIAs were established by the Geological Survey of Victoria in the 1990s and were updated in 2003. The purpose of EIIAs was to identify land close to major population centres likely to contain commercially viable stone resources and where quarries are likely to be established. Both of the proposed SERAs are completely within EIIAs.

The SERA pilot project proposes to build upon the EIIAs and bring a greater level of control through the planning scheme to guide decision-makers. This will ensure current and future extractive resources are not jeopardised by incompatible development.

The SERAs will become a clear identifier in the planning scheme of strategically important quarries and areas of potential resources.

## How does a SERA compare to an EIIA?

SERAs have only been proposed in areas where there is an existing EIIA. While EIIAs act as a flag in the planning system for potential extractive resource locations, they do not have clear and transparent planning policy protections.

The SERA pilot project contains tailored and enforceable planning provisions, adding improved resource protection to EIIA identified areas that contain or potentially contain extractive resources.

## What's the basis for selecting the SERA boundaries?

SERA boundaries encompass land identified as having potential extractive resources through EIIAs.

SERAs are only proposed on land where extractive industries are already a permitted land use.

## Does the SERA pilot project mean there will be a new quarry next to my property?

No. This project itself does not propose any new quarries. Any new quarries or expansion of existing quarries will still need to go through existing approval processes. These involve a

merit-based assessment against the policies and provisions in the planning scheme and applicable legislation.

## There are already several working quarries in my area – how does the SERA project change council's planning approval process?

The SERA project makes changes to the way council planning approval processes will be undertaken for new or expanding quarries, depending on their proximity to existing sensitive uses.

For some other types of development and land uses proposed close to existing quarries or future resource areas a permit will be required. These will also be referred to the regulator, Earth Resources Regulation, for review to ensure the development or land use does not adversely affect quarries or future resource areas.



## What approvals/permits will new quarries need if they are located in the SERA?

New quarries in the SERA will need the same approvals and permits as if they were located outside of the SERA.

New quarries must obtain an approved extractive industry work authority before any work can commence. For the majority of quarries, the work authority is only granted after:

- a work plan is approved by the regulator.
- planning approval is granted by the council.

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- a rehabilitation bond has been provided, and
- other consents are in place if required, such as water licence, biodiversity offsets.

The landowner must also give their consent for the quarry to be established on their land, which is normally agreed on commercial terms.

The process to obtain a planning permit for a quarry in the SERA may be exempt from being advertised to nearby landholdings if it meets certain conditions.

## What does this mean for my land?

If your land is covered by an EIIA it has already been identified as potentially suitable for quarrying activities and is permissible as per the planning scheme. The SERA pilot project reinforces the opportunity for quarry projects by making this more visible in the planning system. Quarries can also be approved outside of EIAs in appropriate land use zones.

A quarry may only be developed on your land with your permission, and if it has been granted an extractive industry work authority.

Any proposal to use and develop land for quarries within a SERA will still need to be assessed on its merits in accordance with the provisions of the relevant planning scheme and legislation.

Refer to the SERA Planning Fact Sheet and SERA Comparative Guide for more information.

## Will the buffer zones and new planning process affect what I can do on my land?

The SERA policies and controls aim to limit any new incompatible land uses or development into the buffer areas to protect existing quarries and to ensure the potential resource is not jeopardised.

The new policies and controls will not have any effect on existing dwellings or outbuildings.

Certain activities like large extensions to homes, new dwellings, places of worship will be strongly discouraged when located in the buffer areas.

You may also need additional permits to undertake certain activities and development on your land under the new SERA pilot project.

## What are the buffer zones for quarries in the Wyndham and South Gippsland areas?

The Wyndham hard rock quarries are protected by a 500-metre buffer as recommended by the Environment Protection Authority and regulated under the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*.

The South Gippsland sand quarries are protected by a 250-metre buffer. The buffer distance is shorter because blasting is not used as an extraction technique for sand quarries.

## What does this mean for my community?

The SERA clearly identifies in the planning scheme the location of strategically important quarries and potential resource areas.

It also provides additional planning management provisions to protect the amenity of landowners within the SERA boundaries and nearby existing quarry operations.

It protects areas of environmental significance such as the Western Grassland Reserve in Wyndham and maintains environmental requirements for the Adams Creek Nature Conservation Reserve in South Gippsland.

The project will also help to facilitate long term transport improvements in the surrounding areas. As new and expanding quarries are more likely in these areas, new jobs are also likely to be created.

## What are the effects on transport?

We are working on Transport Network Development Plans to study quarry truck movements around the two pilot SERA sites. These plans will identify opportunities to improve transport productivity and efficiency and determine options to reduce the effect of truck movements on communities.

## What does the SERA pilot project mean for the Western Grassland Reserve in the Wyndham municipality?

The proposed SERA in Wyndham does not apply to the Western Grassland Reserve. The only exception to this relates to two existing quarries that were approved prior to the establishment of the Western Grassland Reserve. Buffer areas of 500m from quarries within or adjacent to the Western Grassland Reserve are also applied. Importantly, this is a safeguard measure for quarries and does not allow existing quarries in to expand beyond their current boundaries or new quarries to be established within the Reserve.

## What does the SERA pilot project mean for the Adams Creek Nature Conservation Reserve in South Gippsland?

The Adams Creek Nature Conservation Reserve is declared Crown Land. This land has been included in the SERA because of underlying sand, and it forms a part of the buffer for existing quarries. Any proposal to establish a quarry within the Reserve would require planning and biodiversity approvals, and access being granted by the Minister for Environment.

## What is the Victorian Government doing to ensure quarry sites are returned to their natural state, or rehabilitated to the highest possible standard, once production has ceased?

We recognise that planning and investment in innovative land uses for former quarry sites can improve social, environmental and economic outcomes.

New land uses on former quarry sites can enhance areas and lifestyle for local communities and help provide habitat for threatened species.

The Victorian Government is working with the extractives industry to plan and implement new land uses after quarrying, that benefit local communities. This is a key action of the *Helping Victoria Grow: Extractive Resources Strategy*.

## How do I find out more information about the project?

Visit the website [engage.vic.gov.au/SERA-pilot-project](https://engage.vic.gov.au/SERA-pilot-project) for information during this consultation. More details about the *Helping Victoria Grow: Extractive Resources Strategy* are available at [earthresources.vic.gov.au](https://earthresources.vic.gov.au).

## What feedback is being sought during consultation?

The concept of SERA is supported by a key action in the *Helping Victoria Grow: Extractive Resources Strategy*. Feedback is being sought and is welcome on all aspects of the SERA pilot project, including:

- The method and steps undertaken.
- The proposed SERA boundaries.
- The drafted planning controls.

It is important that public feedback is gathered during this submission process.

After this public consultation phase, and after consideration of all the submissions, the Minister for Planning may decide to exercise his power under s.20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. This includes the power to prepare and approve an amendment to implement the SERA planning provisions without further opportunity for public submissions.

## I would like the draft SERA boundary reconfigured. What should I do?

Please provide your feedback in a written submission to the SERA pilot project. Within your submission, detail the reasoning behind your suggested change to the draft SERA boundary.

## How can I contribute to the project or request changes?

Visit [engage.vic.gov.au/SERA-pilot-project](https://engage.vic.gov.au/SERA-pilot-project) to make a submission or find out the status of the project.