Acknowledgements

Victoria has an ancient and proud Aboriginal history. We acknowledge the Wadawurrung, the Traditional Owners of the land described in this report, and offer our respect to the past and present Elders, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

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Cover image: Breamlea Beach, Claire Scott.
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Executive Summary

The following statutory implementation measures are recommended for the significant landscapes of the Surf Coast Declared Area. The page numbers refer to the relevant map in the body of the report.

- Introduce a new Schedule 10 to the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO10) to cover all land of state and national significance on the coastal side of the Great Ocean Road between Point Addis Road and the western edge of Jan Juc. Retain SLO1 for Anglesea, Big Hill and the Lorne Hinterland. Replace Map 1 (to Schedule 10) showing the Bells Beach viewshed locations for the whole landscape (low to critical), and include application requirements as recommended by this report (p. 13).

- Introduce a new Schedule 8 to the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO8) to protect and manage the state significant landscape of the Surf Coast Western Hinterland (p. 18).

- Introduce a new Schedule 9 to the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO9) to protect and manage the state significant landscape of the Torquay Coast and Breamlea Saltmarshes (p. 22).

- Three areas on the outskirts of Torquay are currently identified in the Surf Coast Planning Scheme as future residential land i.e. Torquay North East, Messmate Road and the Spring Creek Valley. If these areas are developed, the zoning and zone schedules will largely determine their landscape (and neighbourhood) character.

- The Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) is considered the most appropriate zone for these areas if they are developed, due to the provisions of the parent clause (e.g. maximum building height of 2 storeys and 9 metres), the ability to specify a minimum subdivision area in the schedule to the zone, and the capacity to vary the requirements of Clauses 54 and 55 in relation to building site coverage, permeability and landscaping. Recommendations in relation to these elements, if residential development proceeds in these areas, are outlined on p. 23 of this report.

- The Statement of Planning Policy and the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme should be consistent in their confirmation of a protected, long-term settlement boundary for Greater Geelong in the location of the existing Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area (ACUGA) boundary. This will protect against the threat of urban expansion into the Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds landscape of regional significance, of which the Thompson Valley Green Break is an integral part. No additional residential subdivision should occur beyond the ACUGA boundary. Refer p. 28.
Introduction

The Victorian Government has amended the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to recognise and protect Victoria’s most cherished and important landscapes under the new Distinctive Areas and Landscapes (2018) Amendment.

An outcome of this legislation is the requirement to prepare Statements of Planning Policy for these identified areas, which will be included as policy documents in the Victoria Planning Provisions at Clause 11.03-58.

Statements of Planning Policy are state policies for protecting and enhancing the valued attributes of distinctive areas that are vital to the functioning of Melbourne and regional Victoria. The declared areas have significant landscape, biodiversity, tourism, cultural and other assets, and because of these qualities and their proximity to Melbourne, they are experiencing increasing pressure for growth and change.

The Surf Coast Landscape Assessment Review (Volume 1) was completed by Claire Scott Planning in February 2020 and is a key input to the Statement of Planning Policy that is required for the Surf Coast Declared Area.

This Statutory Implementation Package (Volume 2) translates the findings of the Landscape Assessment Review into planning provisions for the identified significant landscapes that are directly implementable through the Surf Coast and Greater Geelong Planning Schemes.

This report comprises two parts, as follows:

Part 1: Confirmation & Justification of Landscapes of Significance

Part 2: Key Recommendations & Implementation Measures
Part 1:

Confirmation & Justification of Landscapes of Significance

The Distinctive Areas and Landscapes: Surf Coast Landscape Assessment Review (Volume 1), February 2020, (landscape assessment review) determined three landscape areas of regional, state and national significance within the Surf Coast Declared Area, as follows:

- Bells Beach to Point Addis: National significance
- Torquay Coast, Coastal Saltmarshes and Woodland: State significance
- Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds: Regional significance

Additional detailed fieldwork and mapping analysis has confirmed these landscapes of significance and their significance ratings, and their boundaries have been finalised as part of this implementation package.

Maps of the final landscapes of significance and further explanation as to the location of the significance area boundaries follows.

A full assessment of the visual qualities of the landscapes is outlined in the landscape assessment review report, with the assessment being based on the following definition of significance:

_Landscape significance is the designation of a particular landscape as special or important arising from its visual values, including its landscape features, edges or contrasts, and composition, with consideration of its other landscape values (i.e. cultural heritage, environmental, scientific, social etc.); and for its predominantly natural or undeveloped character, in which development is absent or clearly subordinate to its natural landscape qualities._
Bells Beach to Point Addis

National Significance

The final boundary of the Bells Beach to Point Addis landscape of national significance* is based on the same criteria that were used to determine the approximate extents of the significant landscape in the landscape assessment review.

* A rating of national significance, as opposed to international significance, has been attributed to Bells Beach as part of this project, as it is the highest level of significance that can be justified with the landscape significance assessment methodology that was employed. That is, an assessment undertaken within the Victorian state context. The significance assessment focused on the visual values of landscape and rated each component (landscape features, edges or contrasts and composition) against the rating considerations criteria (exemplary, iconic and scarce) as either:

Moderate = local significance
High = regional significance
Exceptional = state significance or higher

The Bells Beach to Point Addis landscape was rated as exceptional+ for every landscape component, which equates to a significance level of state or higher i.e. national significance. This is supported by the assessment of significant views and the cultural, environmental, scientific and social documented evidence. This is not to say that the landscape would not be found to be of international significance if an alternative methodology was employed. That is, a significance assessment methodology within a broader, international context; or one that elevates the importance of cultural and/or social values to that of visual values.

The significant landscape takes in the coastline, beaches, and coastal cliffs and incised valleys between Bones Road and Hurst Road. The inland boundary is topographically generated, and is based on the full extent of the significant landscape and its features. That is, it follows the break of slope at its highest point before the landscape gradient levels out and becomes less visually dramatic in the coastal hinterland.

The topographical high points define the inland boundary at approximately 110 metres above sea level, and from many locations at this elevation, the coast is visible; and from the coastal edge, the top of the coastal cliffs is visible. The boundary between Point Addis Road and Jarosite Road also coincides approximately with the Jarosite Track, which hugs the topographical high point in the northern part of the heavily vegetated coastal reserve.

Bells Beach, Southside, Addiscott Beach and Point Addis, and adjacent coastal reserves are included within the landscape of national significance. The landscape area also captures properties between Hurst Road and Point Addis Road, and a number of properties to the north and/or south of Jarosite and Bones Roads, at the eastern, coastal end of Bells Beach. These low density residential areas are included as they satisfy the definition of landscape significance, which includes that built form must be subordinate to the natural landscape.

The Bells Beach to Point Addis landscape of national significance is mapped on the following page.

Refer to Distinctive Areas & Landscapes: Surf Coast Landscape Assessment Review (Volume 1), Claire Scott Planning, February 2020, for the full landscape assessment against the visual values criteria.
Bells Beach to Point Addis: National Significance

Legend
- Surf Coast Dal boundary
- Bells Beach to Point Addis national significance boundary
Torquay Coast, Coastal Saltmarshes & Woodland

State Significance

The final boundary of the Torquay Coast, Coastal Saltmarshes and Woodland landscape of state significance varies only very slightly from the approximate extents of the significant landscape determined by the landscape assessment review. The slight variation amounts to the northern boundary of the significance area being retracted minimally to the north of Torquay, so that it no longer includes small slithers of rural land in the vicinity of Coombes and Messmate Roads. And to the north-east of Torquay, the boundary has also been retracted slightly to follow the 10 metre contour, taking in the lowest coastal topography of the saltmarshes, to the east of Horseshoe Bend Road.

The state significant landscape extends to the west and north-east of Torquay, and excludes the settlement areas of Torquay/Jan Juc, where built form predominates over the natural landscape. It does, however, include the settlement area of Bells Beach (part), the Addiscott Road Estate, the small hamlets of Bellbrae and Breamlea and the low density residential area of Jan Juc (part), where buildings are considered subordinate to the significant natural landscape qualities.

To the west of Torquay, the landscape includes the Spring Creek valley and hills between the western edge of Torquay and Bellbrae. It extends to the southern side of the Great Ocean Road to take in the heavily vegetated low density edge of Jan Juc, and land on the coastal side of the Great Ocean Road, including the majority of the settlement area of Bells Beach, up to the top of the coastal cliffs (which mark the commencement of the landscape of national significance).

On the inland side of the Great Ocean Road, the landscape of state significance includes the undulating landscape to the north and south of the Spring Creek corridor, in the westernmost part of the Declared Area. This area includes large swathes of remnant dry coastal woodland and heath, which spills into the landscape from the Anglesea Heathland further west. The northern boundary of the landscape of state significance in this area coincides with the highest points and break of slope at the top of the ‘Spring Creek valley hills’ (90 metres above sea level), before it tapers off to the gently undulating inland.

While there are exceptions, it is generally accepted that in a coastal area, landscape significance reduces with distance from the coast. Certainly, within this area of state significance to the west of Torquay, the landscape on the coastal side of the Great Ocean Road is considered of high state significance, due to its proximity to the coast, and its contiguity with the nationally significant Bells Beach and Point Addis landscape. Land on the hinterland side of the Great Ocean Road is considered to be of low to moderate state significance, with the heavily vegetated and undulating areas of coastal woodland rating higher (moderate state) than the semi cleared rural landscape elsewhere in the significance area.

The landscape of state significance to the north-east of Torquay follows the 10 metre contour commencing at the built up edge of Torquay (to the east of Horseshoe Bend Road, at South Beach Road), at a distance of 1.5km inland. The defined boundary of the area continues to follow the 10 metre contour to include the Breamlea Flora and Fauna Reserve, Breamlea Coastal Reserve and the Thompson Creek and adjacent rural lowlands to around Charlemont Road. At the coastal edge the landscape of state significance takes in Buckley’s Bay Beach, Breamlea Beach and Point Impossible Beach. Within this area of state significance, the coastal edge and reserves are considered to be of high state significance, graduating to the moderately significant cleared rural flatlands further inland.

As described, the landscape of state significance excludes the built up areas of Torquay/Jan Juc, but it does take in the entire foreshore landscape and coastal edge of the township, including Whites Beach, Torquay Front Beach, Torquay Surf Beach, Jan Juc Beach and Half Moon Bay, and all adjacent public coastal reserves. The Torquay/Jan Juc coastal edge is considered to be of high state significance.

Refer to Distinctive Areas & Landscapes: Surf Coast Landscape Assessment Review (Volume 1), Claire Scott Planning, February 2020, for the full landscape assessment against the visual values criteria.
Torquay Coast, Coastal Saltmarshes & Woodland: State Significance

Legend

- Surf Coast DAL boundary
- Torquay Coast, Coastal Saltmarshes & Woodland: state significance

Scale = km
1 2 3 4 5

Map prepared 2019
Mount Duneed Plain & Surrounds

Regional Significance

The final boundary of the Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds landscape of regional significance varies slightly from that defined in the landscape assessment report, owing to the minor adjustments to the adjacent boundary of state significance.

The landscape of regional significance comprises the land that forms the green break between the built up areas of Greater Geelong and Torquay. It is located immediately to the south of the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area (ACUGA), and extends southwards to the built up northern edge of Torquay, to a minimum distance of 1.5km from the coastline. The south-western area of the regionally significant landscape includes the less visually complex topography inland from the ‘Spring Creek hills’.

The majority of the Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds landscape is considered to be of low regional significance with areas of higher (moderate regional) significance coinciding with landscape features such as the Thompson Creek corridor, Mount Duneed itself, and the interface with the adjacent landscape of state significance.

Refer to Distinctive Areas & Landscapes: Surf Coast Landscape Assessment Review (Volume 1), Claire Scott Planning, February 2020, for the full landscape assessment against the visual values criteria.
Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds: Regional Significance
Landscape Assessment

Legend
- Surf Coast DAL boundary
- Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds: regional significance boundary

Scale = km

Map prepared 2019
Part 2

Key Recommendations & Implementation Measures

The key recommendations and implementation measures outlined in this toolkit have been formulated to meet the following objectives:

• To recognise and protect the state and nationally significant landscape of Bells Beach to Point Addis, on the coastal side of the Great Ocean Road.

• To recognise, protect and manage the state significant landscapes of the Surf Coast Western Hinterland, and the Torquay Coast and Breamlea Saltmarshes.

• To protect the green breaks between Jan Juc and Bells Beach, and between Torquay and Bellbrae.

• To ensure that any future residential development in Torquay and Jan Juc responds to the significant coastal landscape setting, and includes sufficient permeable land for the protection, planting and sustenance of native and indigenous vegetation, including canopy trees.

• To appropriately manage the Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds landscape of regional significance, of which the Thompson Valley Green Break forms an integral part, by confirming a protected, long-term settlement boundary for Greater Geelong in the location of the existing Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area (ACUGA) boundary.
Significant Landscapes & the SLO

The Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) is the most appropriate planning scheme tool for protecting and managing significant landscapes. The purpose of the overlay is outlined in the parent clause at Clause 42.03 of the Victoria Planning Provisions, and includes:

- To identify significant landscapes.
- To conserve and enhance the character of significant landscapes.

Under the SLO, a permit is required to construct a building, or construct or carry out works. This does not apply if a schedule to the overlay includes a specific building or works exemption. Agricultural activities e.g. ploughing, fencing etc. are also exempt, unless specifically included in a schedule. A permit is also required to construct a fence if specified in a schedule, and for vegetation removal (unless exempted).

An extensive list of additional exemptions relating to vegetation removal is outlined at clause 42.03-3, and includes vegetation removal related to emergency works, fire protection, mineral exploration and extraction, noxious weeds, the functioning of an existing railway, road safety, Traditional Owners acting under a parent clause agreement, and others.

The decision guidelines outlined in the parent clause (42.03-5) that the Council must consider are:

- The statement of the nature and key elements of the landscape and the landscape character objective (sic) contained in a schedule to this overlay.
- The conservation and enhancement of the landscape values of the area.
- The need to remove, destroy or lop vegetation to create a defendable space to reduce the risk of bushfire to life and property.

The decision guidelines outlined in the parent clause (42.03-5) that the Council must consider are:

- The impact of the proposed buildings and works on the landscape due to height, bulk, colour, general appearance or the need to remove vegetation.
- The extent to which the buildings and works are designed to enhance or promote the landscape character objectives of the area.
- The impact of buildings and works on significant views.
- Any other matters specified in a schedule to this overlay.

Also through a schedule to the SLO, a ‘statement of nature and key elements of landscape’ (or statement of significance) must be provided, together with objectives (up to five) and decision guidelines. The SLO areas can be further tailored through buildings and works and/or vegetation exemptions, and VC148 introduced the opportunity for application requirements to be included in an SLO schedule.

Bushfire risk

It is important to note that the SLO does not override the bushfire provisions of the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs). Large parts of the Declared Area are covered by the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) in both the Surf Coast and Greater Geelong Planning Schemes, and under the Building Regulations, most of the Surf Coast Shire is a designated Bushfire Prone Area. Bushfire risk must be considered in decision making during the planning process, and the need to prioritise the protection of human life over all other policy considerations remains, regardless of the recommendations of this implementation package.

Proposed SLO locations & boundaries

The decision to apply the SLO to a significant landscape, and the extent of the SLO boundaries depends on a number of factors. These include the physical extent of the significant landscape; existing zoning provisions and planning permit triggers (and gaps in those provisions and policy); the location and content of existing SLOs and schedules; current or potential development pressure; and the character of the landscape, including its sensitivity to threats and ability to accommodate built form.

Consideration of these factors means that proposed SLO boundaries can differ from the location and extent of significant landscapes which have been determined by a landscape assessment study.

This is certainly the case in the application of the SLO to the Surf Coast Declared Area, where proposed SLOs are influenced by existing overlays (e.g. proposed SLO10); and two separate SLO schedules are proposed for the state significant landscape of the Torquay Coast, Coastal Saltmarshes and Woodland (proposed SLO8 & SLO9), due to the contrasting character across the landscape (i.e. the low, flat landscape of the coastal saltmarshes versus the undulating, semi-forested hinterland) and the necessary differences required in the schedules’ contents as a result.

Discussion of the SLOs that apply to the Surf Coast Declared Area follows.
Existing Significant Landscape Overlay 1 (SLO1) & Proposed SLO10

Great Ocean Road and Coastal Environments - Bells Beach, Point Addis, Anglesea, Big Hill and Lorne Hinterland

SLO1 applies to a number of locations across the Surf Coast Shire, covering the Great Ocean Road and coastal environs. Within the Declared Area, SLO1 applies to Rural Conservation (RCZ) zoned land at Point Addis, between Hurst Road and Point Addis Road; a portion of the RCZ land at Bells Beach, generally between Bells Beach Road and Jarosite Road; and the southernmost coastal part of Jan Juc, zoned Low Density Residential (LDRZ). The overlay does not extend to the Great Ocean Road, nor does it cover public land/coastal reserves. The full contents of Schedule 1 to the SLO are a recent addition to the Surf Coast Planning Scheme.

SLO1 includes a comprehensive statement of nature and key elements of landscape, noting the international significance of the Victorian southwest coast landscape. The key objective outlined in the schedule is:

"To preserve and enhance the scenic landscape values and environmental qualities within viewsheds of the Great Ocean Road, Bells Beach and coastal environs…"

Under SLO1 a permit is required for all buildings and works, including a fence (unless the fence is of post and wire construction and under 1.5 metres in height), and vegetation removal. Detailed decision guidelines are outlined, based on whether the proposed development is 'visually recessive', 'visually apparent', or 'visually dominant'. A colour coded map (low – critical) of the Bells Beach viewshed locations forms part of the schedule, as do a series of maps highlighting significant vegetation and habitat within the overlay area.

Discussion

As confirmed by the landscape assessment review, SLO1 indeed (as it applies within the Declared Area) covers a landscape of national (and potentially international) significance. However, as outlined in Part 1 of this report, the nationally significant landscape extends beyond the boundaries of SLO1 to take in the full coastal landscape between Bells Beach and Point Addis (including public land), to the top of the ridgeline/topographical high points. Beyond this, the coastal hinterland was found to be of state significance.

While of state significance beyond the primary coastal ridgeline, and less visible from the coastal edge, the full landscape on the coastal side of the Great Ocean Road in this area is highly significant. As noted on the maps appended to SLO1 it contains swathes of significant indigenous coastal vegetation, including rare and threatened species, which extend inland to the Great Ocean Road, and beyond. Its character is a continuum of that covered by SLO1, with visually recessive dwellings tucked into areas of dense coastal scrub and dry forest, for the full extents of Addisoot, Jarosite, Bells and Bones Roads and Bells Boulevard.

With the exception of some visible dwellings in cleared, elevated areas, the whole settlement area of Bells Beach is itself a 'green break' existing beyond the edge of Jan Juc, the role and visual qualities of which are critical to maintain. The isolated, rugged and iconic landscape character of Bells Beach and environs is experienced from all the roads that travel through this landscape on the coastal side of the Great Ocean Road. In summary, while visual significance increases closer to the coastal edge, the area is experienced as one landscape unit of outstanding visual qualities. Also noteworthy are the views available from the Great Ocean Road travelling east into Torquay, near the intersection with Bells Boulevard. Here, a sweeping and open panorama stretches across the tree canopies of Jan Juc to the ocean beyond.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a new Schedule 10 (SLO10) to the Significant Landscape Overlay be introduced to cover all land (regardless of public or private ownership) generally between the settlement edge of Jan Juc and Point Addis, and extending inland to the Great Ocean Road. The SLO area should also include the LDRZ properties either side of Bells Boulevard and the PCRZ coastal reserve to its intersection with proposed SLO9, generally to the south of Ocean Boulevard, as shown on the map on page 36.

It is recommended that Schedule 10 be introduced to specifically apply to the Bells Beach to Point Addis landscape, and that SLO1 remain in place for the Anglesea, Big Hill and Lorne Hinterland landscapes i.e. –

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1 It is the author’s opinion that the SLO should be applied to public land, in the interests of consistency and good management. Protecting and managing significant landscapes consistently across the state is important for completeness, and to inform a full comparative assessment and designation of significance across a region or study area. It is also important to ensure appropriate landscape protection and management, because while public parks and reserves are often subject to additional legislation and separate management plans, they can still experience high degrees of development pressure and contention (e.g. the current proposal for a viewing deck at Bells Beach), where additional guidance such as that provided in an SLO schedule is of benefit to decision making. Public land managers should be held equally accountable for quality built form outcomes in landscapes of significance, and are often responsible for the development of significant pieces of built infrastructure.

Surf Coast Implementation Package Volume 2
• SLO1 Great Ocean Road and Coastal Environ: Anglesea, Big Hill and Lorne Hinterland
• SLO10 Great Ocean Road and Coastal Environ: Bells Beach to Point Addis

This recommendation and the proposed extents of SLO10 are based on the:

• State and national significance of the landscape as determined and justified by the landscape assessment review
• Visibility and proximity to the Great Ocean Road
• Visibility and viewing patterns, and viewing experience from the full extent of all roads that travel through the landscape
• Known environmental importance and the landscape character qualities of the indigenous remnant vegetation that occurs across the landscape
• Role of the whole area as a 'green break' in the landscape and the importance of ensuring that all development is visually recessive in an iconic area of such high landscape significance

While partially covered by the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO4), the inclusion of the LDRZ area transected by Bells Boulevard is considered important due to its landscape significance, vegetation coverage, the subordinate nature of the built form, and its vital role in the provision of the 'green break' between Jan Juc and Bells Beach (described as a 'virtual green break' in the landscape assessment review report, due to its visual landscape qualities). Minimal planning permit guidance is available through the LDRZ, and the application of the SLO to this area would fill that gap as well as provide a planning permit trigger for buildings and works that should be closely scrutinised. The contents of existing SLO (which should be transferred to SLO10) are also considered applicable and appropriate to this area, where development should not be visually dominant.

The inclusion of the Farming zoned (FZ) land, which is located to the north of Bones Road is also important due to its cleared and highly visible nature (from the Great Ocean Road, especially on approach to Torquay/Jan Juc), and the open vistas available across this landscape to the ocean.

Given the recent updates to SLO1 and its comprehensive and relevant contents to this landscape, it is considered preferable to transfer the bulk of the existing schedule to proposed SLO10, with minor additions and updates. A review of its contents has revealed that the statement of nature and key elements of landscape, objectives, permit requirements and decision guidelines are worded appropriately to cover any development within the proposed extended area. However, the following minor amendments and additions should be actioned:

Permit requirements

Given that SLO10 is proposed to cover public land, the following planning permit exemption is recommended, in addition to those already contained in Schedule 1:

• A permit is not required for works undertaken by a public authority relating to watercourse management or environmental improvements, or for the maintenance or installation of simple, non-structural infrastructure such as gravel pathways, or similar.

Application requirements

Given the emphasis on visual prominence in Schedule 10 to the SLO, the following application requirements (or similar) should be considered for inclusion:

• A site analysis that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the existing landscape context, including topography, vegetation, landscape features and views to the site from roads, public reserves and/or identified viewing locations, including tourist walks and viewing decks, if relevant.

• A landscape plan that proposes the use of locally appropriate species e.g. native and preferably indigenous vegetation that is a feature of the landscape character of the area, and how the affected area will be remediated after the development, with consideration of bushfire risk.

• A visual impact assessment of the proposal from nearby road corridors, including the Great Ocean Road, Jarosite Road, Addiscott Road, Bells Beach Road, Bones Road and Bells Boulevard; and public reserves and/or identified viewing locations where relevant, with consideration of the impact of the proposal on the foreground of views, as well as distant views and visibility.

Decision guidelines

• Include the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes: Surf Coast Landscape Assessment Review (Volume 1), Claire Scott Planning, February 2020 in the list of documents under Clause 5.0 Decision guidelines (general) at the end of the schedule

Map 1

• Replace Map 1 to proposed Schedule 10 showing the Bells Beach viewshed locations (low to critical) for the whole landscape area.
Proposed Significant Landscape Overlay 10 (SLO10)
Existing Significant Landscape Overlay 6 (SLO6)

Central Torquay and Jan Juc Residential Areas

Schedule 6 to the SLO has been part of the Surf Coast Planning Scheme for approximately 10 years and applies to residential areas of Jan Juc and Old Torquay, with the key purpose of protecting Bellarine Yellow Gum, Moonah and other established trees. The statement of nature and key elements of landscape notes that vegetation screens the appearance of buildings from the street and neighbouring properties and reinforces the ‘casual coastal character’ of the settlement areas.

Under SLO6, a permit is only required for vegetation removal i.e. Bellarine Yellow Gum, Moonah and native and exotic trees over 3 metres and 5 meters in height, respectively. A permit is not required for buildings and works, or to construct a fence. As such, the SLO is operating as a Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO), which would be the most appropriate overlay here, given the purpose outlined in the parent clause at 42.04 of the planning scheme.

While a better fit, the replacement of SLO6 with a new schedule to the VPO is not an urgent amendment required in the short term, as its replacement would not affect the management of the landscape, nor development outcomes. In the event that the SLO was to be replaced with the VPO however, it should potentially be extended to include those properties in Sunset Strip, Ocean Boulevard, Castaway Crescent and Broadbeach Road that fall outside the existing SLO6 and proposed SLO10. These properties are partially covered by ESO4 and are known to contain significant vegetation.

Existing Significant Landscape Overlay 7 (SLO7)

Bellbrae Township

SLO7 applies to the south facing hill slope, at the northern entry to Bellbrae. The land is zoned Farming (FZ).

Schedule 7 describes the township of Bellbrae, nestled within a canopy of trees, and outlines the importance of the sense of enclosure within the landscape, and outviews to the north. The key purpose of the overlay is to protect the rural landscape setting of the northern entry to the township by ensuring that development is sensitively sited and designed.

A permit is required for buildings and works, and native vegetation removal. Application requirements are included in the schedule, together with decision guidelines that are well linked to the landscape character objectives.

Given the focused and specific nature of Schedule 7 and the fact that potential for development still exists on the northern slopes outside Bellbrae, no changes are proposed to SLO7.
Proposed Significant Landscape Overlay 8 (SLO8)

Surf Coast Western Hinterland

The landscape assessment review determined that the Surf Coast hinterland through which the Great Ocean Road passes, including the Spring Creek corridor, and the undulating and partially forested landscape further west of the Great Ocean Road, through which Spring Creek continues its journey, is of state significance. As such, it is recommended that the SLO be applied to the landscape to ensure the appropriate siting and design of structures, including the Spring Creek corridor on the eastern edge of Torquay (including the designated Urban Growth Zone, UGZ1 settlement area); and to maintain scenic outlooks from main roads.

The following considerations informed the mapping and extents of proposed SLO8:

- Proposed SLO8 is an entirely new overlay area, which has been mapped based on the nature, extent and consistency of the physical characteristics of the significant landscape, as determined by the landscape assessment review.
- Apart from the determined significance of the landscape, an SLO is considered justified due to the topographical sensitivity i.e. an undulating and varied landscape with hill faces, high points and a waterway corridor; its visual sensitivity, that is its proximity and potential visibility from the Great Ocean Road; and its large swathes of remnant dry heathy woodland, linking it to the highly significant Anglesea Heath.
- While land both on the coastal and hinterland side of the Great Ocean Road is of state significance in this area, proposed SLO8 is tailored to the hinterland landscape, which is of low to moderate state significance. The level of significance on the coastal side of the Great Ocean Road is considered to be of high state significance, and most appropriately managed as part of the Bells Beach to Point Addis landscape unit, through a proposed extension to the boundaries of SLO1 (and the introduction of a new Schedule 10).
- Those parts of the hinterland considered to be of moderate state significance are the areas of dry heathy woodland, which characterise the western part of the landscape. The remainder is considered to be of low state significance, but highly sensitive.
- The northern boundary of proposed SLO8 follows the landscape significance area boundary, taking in the undulating slopes to their highest points, which is consistently around 90 metres above sea level.
- SLO8 is not proposed to replace the existing SLO7 (Bellbrae Township), which is focused and specific in its purpose, nor apply to the township of Bellbrae. While Bellbrae is included in the broader landscape of state significance (defined in Part 1) due to its landscape qualities and its built form being subordinate to natural attributes, it is proposed to be protected and managed through a new schedule to the Township Zone (TZ2).
- It is proposed that SLO8 be applied to the Spring Creek corridor at the western edge of Torquay zoned Urban Growth (UGZ1) and beyond that, Farming (FZ). The application of the SLO to the UGZ1 are does not prohibit its development, but provides additional guidance on the appropriate siting and design of development within a significant landscape.
- It is also recommended that SLO8 apply to public land (PCRZ and PPRZ) within the landscape, in the interests of consistency and good management, and based on the difficulties associated with past and current contentious development proposals on public land.
- The Special Use zoned land (SUZ9), which is the site of the Surf Coast Christian College Campus, is also included in the proposed SLO.
- While also of state significance, the coastal and coastal hinterland landscape to the north-east of Torquay (around Breamlea) is proposed to be managed through an alternative SLO schedule, due to its contrasting physical characteristics.

The following matters have been taken into account when drafting the SLO schedule permit requirements:

- The majority of land within the proposed overlay is zoned Farming (FZ). Under the zone, a permit is currently required for buildings and works associated with Section 2 uses. A permit is also required for a dwelling extension or an out-building associated with a dwelling over 100 square metres.
- It is considered reasonable in a rural landscape of low to moderate state significance that structures up to a certain size that support the purpose of the zone (i.e. farming and agriculture) should be able to be constructed without a permit, but that larger structures warrant closer scrutiny. Exemptions have therefore been applied in the farming landscape, beyond 100 metres of the Great Ocean Road. This also aligns with the setback distance specified in the current schedule to the FZ, within which a permit is required.
- The proposed SLO will not prevent or prohibit development in the landscape; its purpose is to more closely assess and guide the siting and design of proposed buildings and works.
- The objectives and decision guidelines in the proposed SLO schedule apply equally to any future residential development within the UGZ1.
• It is considered appropriate that all development within the pockets of Rural Conservation (RCZ) zoned land should require a permit as these areas are heavily vegetated, have known landscape and conservation values, and are of moderate state landscape significance (as opposed to low).

The proposed contents of Schedule 8 to the SLO are outlined below.

**Statement of nature and key elements of landscape**

The Surf Coast Western Hinterland is a well-known and highly valued hinterland landscape through which the iconic Great Ocean Road travels, towards Anglesea and beyond.

The significant hinterland area is incised by numerous creeks and their tributaries, which create a landscape of contrasting topography, with hilly undulations and inscribed valleys. Spring Creek, which begins its journey at the Torquay coast, meanders through the landscape in the east between rolling hills and remnant eucalypts, and contributes a picturesque green break between the township and the nearby hamlet of Bellbrae. It is an important biodiversity corridor, supporting a variety of Grass Woodland species, including the Bellarine Yellow Gum and Manna Gum, and offering a variety of habitats for fauna.

Further west, land adjacent to Spring Creek’s tributaries becomes increasingly hilly, steep and elevated as it climbs towards the Otway Ranges. This change in landform also coincides with an increase in indigenous vegetation cover, including dense patches of dry heathy woodland, which characterise the Anglesea Heath, one of the richest and most diverse vegetation communities in Victoria.

The hinterland landscape features a combination of enclosed and open views, including vistas framed by roadside vegetation across undulating paddocks, often terminating at a heavily forested backdrop. From high points in the immediate hinterland, views are also available towards the coast. This occurs from locations such as the Great Ocean Road on approach to Torquay from the west, where long range views across the rooftops and tree canopies of Jan Juc stretch to the ocean beyond.

While the aesthetic and vegetative contrasts of the landscape are considered less significant than the nearby Bells Beach to Point Addis coastline and coastal hinterland, the topographic complexity, existence of intact remnant coastal heathland, and proximity to the iconic Great Ocean Road all contribute to it being a visually sensitive landscape of low to moderate state significance.

**Landscape character objectives**

- To protect and manage the visual significance and associated cultural values of the Surf Coast Western Hinterland landscape.
- To minimise the visual impact of development on the Torquay hinterland and Spring Creek environs, including views of the landscape from road corridors that traverse the area, including the Great Ocean Road.
- To ensure that development demonstrates a high standard of design and responds to the identified character and significance of its landscape setting.
- To minimise the removal of remnant native and indigenous vegetation on and adjacent to development sites.
- To ensure that high points and ridgelines remain free from development, with no built form protruding above the natural topography, and views to elevated areas revealing the natural form of the landscape and the presence of canopy trees against the sky, rather than buildings.

**Permit requirement**

A permit is not required for the following buildings or works within the Farming Zone, provided it is not located within 100 metres of the Great Ocean Road:

- A building used for agriculture that is not more than 5 metres in height above natural ground level and not more than 100 square metres in floor area.
- An alteration or extension to an existing building used for agriculture provided the alteration or extension is no more than 5 metres in height above natural ground level and not more than 50 square metres in additional floor area.
- Construction of a farm access track that does not change the topography of the land.

A permit is not required for works undertaken by a public authority relating to watercourse management or environmental improvements, or for the maintenance or installation of simple, non-structural infrastructure such as gravel pathways, or similar.

A permit is required to construct a fence, except for open style fencing traditionally associated with farming such as post and wire, or post and rail, up to 1.5 metres in height.

A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation except where:

- The vegetation is dead.
- The vegetation is on the building side of a vertical line 3 metres from the outer edge of the roof of an existing or approved building.
- The vegetation is listed as an environmental weed in the incorporated document *Weeds of the Surf Coast Shire* (2013).
Application requirements

The following application requirements apply to an application for a permit under Clause 42.03, in addition to those specified elsewhere in the scheme and must accompany an application, as appropriate, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority:

- A site analysis that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the existing landscape context, including topography, vegetation, landscape features and views to the site from roads, nearby settlements and/or identified viewing locations, if relevant.
- A landscape plan that proposes the use of locally appropriate species e.g. native and preferably indigenous vegetation that is a feature of the landscape character of the area, and how the affected area will be remediated after the development, with consideration of bushfire risk.
- A visual impact assessment of the proposal from adjacent road corridors, especially the Great Ocean Road, Grossmans Road, Duffields Road, Gundrys Road and Elkington Road, if relevant, with particular consideration of the impact of the proposal on the foreground of views, adjacent to the roadside.

Decision guidelines

The following decision guidelines apply to an application for a permit under Clause 42.03, in addition to those specified in Clause 42.03 and elsewhere in the scheme which must be considered, as appropriate, by the responsible authority:

The visual impact of the buildings or works on the significance of the Torquay hinterland and Spring Creek corridor landscape.

Whether the buildings or works are sited:

- To avoid visually prominent locations such as ridgelines, and hill faces.
- Among established vegetation or screened with landscaping of an appropriate native species, with consideration of bushfire risk.
- To follow the contours and natural form of the landscape, e.g. stepping down the site, to minimise cut and fill and other earthworks.
- A sufficient distance from roads to minimise their visual impact when viewed from the road corridor.
- An adequate distance from watercourses.

Whether the buildings or works are designed:

- So that they are articulated into separate elements, avoiding visually dominant elevations.
- Using simple, pared-back building forms and design detailing.
- Utilising colours and materials that best immerse the building within the landscape.
- Utilising building finishes that reduce distant visibility, such as dark muted tones and natural materials within the landscape, and lighter colours in open areas, against the sky.

The visible impact of the buildings or works from road corridors that travel through the landscape, with particular consideration to the foreground of views, immediately adjacent to the roadside.

The effect of removing remnant vegetation on the landscape character and significance of the area, and any alternative means of locating buildings or works in order to conserve the trees.

Whether farm access tracks or other access roads are located across the slope to minimise their visibility.

The Distinctive Areas and Landscapes: Surf Coast Landscape Assessment Review (Volume 1), Claire Scott Planning, February 2020
Proposed Significant Landscape Overlay 8 (SLO8)
Surf Coast Western Hinterland

Legend
- Surf Coast DAL boundary
- Proposed Significant Landscape Overlay 8 (SLO8)

Map prepared 2020
Proposed Significance Landscape Overlay 9 (SLO9)

Torquay Coast and Breamlea Saltmarshes

The landscape assessment review determined that the Torquay/Jan Juc coastline extending to Breamlea and beyond, and the coastal saltmarshes and lowlands behind Breamlea, and around the lower reaches of the Thompson Creek, are of state significance.

As such, it is recommended that the SLO be applied to the landscape to manage the appropriate siting and design of structures in the largely open, flat and visually sensitive rural landscape; and to ensure the careful consideration of buildings, infrastructure and other works in coastal reserves at the Torquay/Jan Juc coastal edge.

A separate schedule is proposed to manage this landscape of state significance (as opposed to using proposed SLO8) as its physical characteristics vary from those to the west of Torquay, being flat to gently undulating, with long range views available from the minimal roads that transect or edge it. The coastline and coastal reserves extending to Jan Juc vary in their physical attributes in some areas, but are more appropriately managed by this overlay than SLO1, which focuses on the Bells Beach coast and hinterland, and not the beaches or coastal reserves adjacent to the built up areas of Jan Juc and Torquay.

The following considerations informed the mapping and extents of proposed SLO9:

- Proposed SLO9 is an entirely new overlay area, which has been mapped based on the qualities and extent of the significant landscape.

- The SLO is considered justified in this location due to its high state significance of the coastal edge for the full length of the Declared Area, and the significance and visual sensitivity of the coastal saltmarshes and adjacent rural land, owing to the topography i.e. built form and development has the potential to be seen from long distances away.

- The proposed boundary of SLO9 follows the 10 metre contour and matches the extents of the final defined state significant landscape in this area. It includes land in the farming Zone (FZ) and Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) around Thompson Creek, as well as all Public Conservation and Resource (PCRZ) and Public Purpose and Recreation (PPRZ) zoned land along the entire foreshore of the Declared Area to where it abuts SLO1 at the southern edge of Jan Juc.

- The proposed SLO affects not only the Surf Coast Planning Scheme, but also the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme at the very eastern edge of the Declared Area. The township of Breamlea, the surrounding coastal reserve (zoned PCRZ), and a small parcel of PPRZ land is within the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme. Ideally, a version of proposed SLO9 would also be implemented in Greater Geelong (where it would be numbered SLO16), but the ‘incomplete’ extent of the landscape assessment is acknowledged where the qualities of the landscape may extend further eastwards but have not been assessed as they are not within the Declared Area, together with the minimal development pressure occurring in the public reserve. Further, the township of Breamlea is proposed to be alternatively managed, as outlined below.

- While it is included in the landscape of state significance (due to development being subordinate to the natural landscape qualities), the coastal hamlet of Breamlea is excluded from the proposed SLO. Its landscape qualities and significance are proposed to be managed via a new schedule to the Township Zone (TZ2), together with the existing provisions of the Design and Development Overlay (DDO22), and Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1).

The following matters have been taken into account when drafting the SLO schedule permit requirements:

- The proposed SLO will not prohibit development in the landscape; its purpose is to more closely assess and guide the siting and design of proposed buildings and works.

- In a landscape of high state significance at the coast and moderate state significance elsewhere, and with high visual and environmental sensitivities throughout, buildings and works exemptions are not considered appropriate, with the exemption of rural fencing.

- Under the existing schedule to the Farming Zone (FZ) a permit is required for development within 40 metres of a Road Zone Category 2 e.g. Blackgate Road, and 20 metres of any other road. This existing trigger will capture development within the foreground of views from road corridors (outside the SLO), which has the potential to impact on long range scenic outlooks across and towards the low lying saltmarsh landscape. This further justifies the location of proposed SLO9 only over the landscape which is of state significance.

The proposed contents of Schedule 9 to the SLO are outlined below.

Statement of nature and key elements of landscape

The Torquay Coast and Breamlea Saltmarshes landscape is one of stunning visual contrasts, particularly at the coastal edge. It includes the high dunes of Point Impossible; the low flat beaches of Torquay; the limestone crags of Rocky Point; and the contrasting colours of the Jan Juc cliffs, with a unique landscape feature in the form of the Jan Juc Marl (Bird Rock), a small sea-stack that sits just off the coast. In the east, the Thompson Creek estuary flows through and behind the dunes at Breamlea, forming a unique, linear coastal wetland of high ecological value, including
intact communities of Coastal Saltmarsh and Coastal Moonah Woodlands.

This aesthetically compelling coastline is both diverse and complex, and is itself an ever-changing landscape edge. Behind Breamlea, further contrasts are evident in the landscape, where coastal saltmarshes are sustained by a saline creek, which directly abuts a coastal dune system. Atop the dunes here and along the entire coastline, further visual complexity exists in the mosaic of indigenous coastal grasses and scrub.

The highly significant landscape also provides the setting and subject of many notable views. Of particular significance are the views available from the coastal edge, including Bird Rock Lookout at Jan Juc. Here, close views feature a foreground of coastal headland scrub, with distinctive geological formations and shore platforms immediately below. Beyond this, panoramic views are available across the coastal cliffs north (along Jan Juc Beach) and south to the striking southern headland of Half Moon Bay. Equally stunning panoramas are available along the entire coastline.

The composition of views differs again in the isolated saltmarshes behind Breamlea, where coastal mangrove vegetation stretches across a flat landscape under big skies. The numerous and varied views available from the coastal edge, along beaches and to high sea cliffs and headlands, contribute a strong sense of place to locals and visitors alike.

The Torquay coast is representative of the ‘classic’ Australian coastline, and is elevated in importance by its diverse hinterland features such as Breamlea’s significant wetlands environs. This coastal landscape and its hinterland is distinctive and well-known, both for its stunning natural beauty, and for its association with the home of Australian surfing, and as the locality where the Great Ocean Road commences and continues its journey.

It is a landscape of high state significance.

Landscape character objectives

- To protect and manage the significance and associated cultural values of the Torquay Coast and Breamlea Saltmarshes landscape.
- To minimise the visual impact of development on the coastal foreshore and saltmarshes landscape, including views of the landscape from road corridors that traverse or edge the landscapes, identified viewing locations and/or coastal reserves.
- To ensure that all development demonstrates a high standard of design and responds to the identified character and significance of the surrounding landscape.
- To minimise the removal of vegetation associated with development within the significant coastal and coastal hinterland landscape.

Permit requirement

A permit is not required for works undertaken by a public authority relating to watercourse management or environmental improvements, or for the maintenance or installation of simple, non-structural infrastructure such as gravel pathways, or similar.

A permit is required to construct a fence, except for open style fencing traditionally associated with farming such as post and rail, or post and rail, up to 1.5 metres in height.

A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation except where:
- The vegetation is dead.
- The vegetation is on the building side of a vertical line 3 metres from the outer edge of the roof of an existing or approved building.
- The vegetation is listed as an environmental weed in the incorporated document Weeds of the Surf Coast Shire (2013).

Application requirements

The following application requirements apply to an application for a permit under Clause 42.03, in addition to those specified elsewhere in the scheme and must accompany an application, as appropriate, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority:

- A site analysis that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the existing landscape context, including topography, vegetation, landscape features and views to the site from roads, nearby settlements, public reserves and/or identified viewing locations, if relevant.
- A landscape plan that proposes the use of locally appropriate species e.g. native and preferably indigenous vegetation that is a feature of the landscape character of the area, and how the affected area will be remediated after the development, with consideration of bushfire risk.
- A visual impact assessment of the proposal from adjacent road corridors and/or identified public viewing locations, with particular consideration of the impact of the proposal on the foreground of views; nearby settlements and public coastal reserves, where relevant.

Decision guidelines

The following decision guidelines apply to an application for a permit under Clause 42.03, in addition to those specified in Clause 42.03 and elsewhere in the scheme which must be considered, as appropriate, by the responsible authority:
The visual impact of the buildings or works on the significance of the Torquay Coast and Breamlea Saltmarshes landscape.

Whether the buildings or works are sited:

• Among established vegetation or screened with landscaping of an appropriate native species, with consideration of bushfire risk.

• A sufficient distance from roads to minimise their visual impact when viewed from the road corridor.

• To minimise visual impact across a wide area by clustering buildings, works and/or infrastructure together, and using unifying design elements such as similar roof forms, materials, finishes, colours, and native or indigenous vegetation species.

• An adequate distance from watercourses.

Whether the buildings or works are designed:

• Using simple, pared-back forms, and design detailing.

• Utilising finishes that reduce distant visibility, such as dark muted tones and natural materials within a well vegetated setting, and lighter colours against the sky in open areas.

• In farming landscapes, the use of materials associated with the Australian rural vernacular such as galvanised iron is also an appropriate contextual design response.

The visible impact of the buildings or works from nearby settlements, public reserves and identified viewing locations, as relevant.

The visual impact of signage and other infrastructure on coastal areas and public reserves i.e. avoiding visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage, and signage (and other infrastructure) clutter.

Whether farm access tracks or other access roads are located across the slope to minimise their visibility.

The effect of removing remnant vegetation on the landscape character and significance of the area, and any alternative means of locating buildings or works in order to conserve the trees.

The Distinctive Areas and Landscapes: Surf Coast Landscape Assessment Review (Volume 1), Claire Scott Planning, February 2020
Proposed Significant Landscape Overlay 9 (SLO9)
Torquay Coast & Breamlea Saltmarshes

Legend
- Surf Coast DAL boundary
- Proposed Significant Landscape Overlay 9 (SLO9)

Map prepared 2020
Potential Future Residential Areas

As described in the Addendum to the Landscape Assessment Review report, there are three areas identified in the Sustainable Futures Plan: Torquay – Jan Jan 2040 (2014) as ‘future residential land’:

- Torquay North East – land to the north east of Horseshoe Bend Road and South Beach Road
- Messmate Road – land to the north west of Messmate Road, up to the ridgeline
- Spring Creek Valley – land up to 1 kilometre west of Duffields Road

Objectives and strategies for these areas are also outlined in Clause 21.08 of the Surf Coast Planning Scheme, which was updated as recently as February 2020.

Findings of the Landscape Assessment Review in relation to these areas are summarised below, together with principles for maintaining and strengthening their landscape character and identified significance, in the event that residential development occurs.

It should be noted that these recommendations are made with the primary objective of protecting and strengthening landscape character. It is fully acknowledged that other planning considerations must be taken into account (e.g. bushfire risk, population forecasts, lot yield, economic sustainability, wider housing affordability, community values etc.) in arriving at a final decision for these strategic sites.

Torquay North East

The potential future residential area of Torquay North East is located within a landscape of regional significance, but is very close to the Torquay Coast and Breamlea Saltmarshes landscape of state significance, which occurs immediately to the east. The land is not proposed to be covered by the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO), and is not protected and managed with any other planning scheme overlays.

As such, if the area is to be developed in future, the zoning and zone schedule contents will largely determine its landscape character (and other qualities).

All indigenous vegetation has been cleared on the land, as it has been used for agricultural gardens. That said, it is important that any future residential development does not mimic that which has occurred immediately to the south, which is characterised by large building footprints, minimal or no side boundary setbacks, minimal permeable land, very little vegetation and no canopy trees.

Land immediately to the west of the subject area is zoned Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) and is relatively successful as a low density estate due to the large lot sizes, retention of swathes of remnant vegetation, dense perimeter planting and minimal visibility of dwellings and other built form from the main roads.

It is considered that a balance could be struck for Torquay North East through the application of the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ). The LDRZ is not recommended as the schedule to that zone is very limited in its capabilities to influence landscape character, or any other qualities.

The following schedule inclusions to the NRZ should also be considered:

Landscape character objectives

- To ensure the connection of the Torquay North East residential area to the surrounding significant coastal landscape through the provision of permeable land and landscaped space between dwellings.
- To increase the native, and preferably indigenous, vegetation cover by requiring permeable land for planting and sustaining vegetation, particularly large canopy trees.

Requirements of Clause 54 and Clause 55

Site coverage maximum: 45%

Permeability minimum: 45%

The above percentages reflect those which are recommended for the residential areas immediately to the south, where it is considered that no more than 55% of a site should be covered by buildings and/or hard surfacing.

The above percentages also assume the development of average sized residential housing lots, as per the adjacent residential areas of Torquay North. If larger than average residential lots sizes are proposed, the site coverage maximum should be reduced, and the permeability minimum increased, exponentially.

Landscaping: Provision of a minimum of one canopy tree per 175 square metres of the site area, that will reach a minimum mature height that equals the height of the proposed development, including:

- a minimum of one canopy tree within each area of secluded private open space; and
- a minimum of one canopy tree within the front setback per 5 metres of width of the site (excluding the width of one driveway).
Each tree should be surrounded by 20 square metres permeable surface with a minimum radius of 3 metres. Up to 50% of the permeable surface may be shared with another tree.

The species of canopy trees should be native, and preferably indigenous, to the local area.

Decision guidelines

- The extent to which the provision of permeable space and vegetation, including canopy trees, on the development site strengthens the landscape character of the area, and restores the connection to the surrounding natural landscape.

Given the similarities of the suggested schedule inclusions, it may be appropriate to simply apply proposed NRZ2 to Torquay North East, and amend the schedule name.

At the time of writing, the area is the subject of an environmental assessment to determine its suitability for development.

**Messmate Road**

The potential future residential area to the north west of Messmate Road is also located within a landscape of regional significance, and is not proposed to be covered by the SLO. The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) affects a small portion of the land in the south-west, but otherwise the land remains unencumbered.

A ridgeline traverses the landscape in this area, running in a south-west to north-east direction, and sloping down to the north-east. The ridgeline is located at the north eastern edge of the subject land, and Clause 21.08 states that new residential growth in this area should be facilitated “up to the ridgeline.” The extent of development in this area and its relationship to the ridgeline should be resolved during the consideration of any future plan of subdivision for the site. However, as outlined in the Landscape Assessment Review, an important principle for the protection of landscape character and significance within the Declared Area is that high points and ridgelines remain free from development, with no built form protruding above the natural topography. Ideally a vegetated reserve (PPRZ) should be established atop the ridgeline and the upper-most slopes rising to it.

As with Torquay North East, if the area is to be developed in future, the zoning and zone schedule contents will largely determine its landscape character (and other qualities); and while the subject land is largely surrounded by the LRDZ, that zone is not recommended due to its very limited schedule capabilities.

As such, the NRZ is recommended for the Messmate Road residential area, if its future development proceeds. The schedule to the NRZ also includes the option to stipulate a minimum subdivision area, if larger lots are preferred.

In addition, the following schedule inclusions to the NRZ should be considered:

**Landscape character objectives**

- To ensure that the Messmate Road residential area is characterised by a strong connection to the surrounding landscape through the provision of permeable land and the establishment of native garden surrounds.
- To increase the native, and preferably indigenous, vegetation cover by requiring permeable land for planting and sustaining vegetation, particularly large canopy trees.
- To ensure that high points and ridgelines remain free from development, with no built form protruding above the natural topography, and views to elevated areas revealing the natural form of the landscape and the presence of canopy trees against the sky, rather than buildings.

**Site coverage maximum: 40%**

**Permeability minimum: 50%**

The above percentages reflect the location of the area on the north-western edge of Torquay, adjacent to existing LDRZ areas, and otherwise directly abutting open farmland. It is considered appropriate that no more than 50% of a site should be covered by buildings and hard surfacing.

The above percentages also assume the development of average sized residential housing lots, as per Old Torquay, Torquay North and West etc. If larger than average residential lots sizes are proposed, the site coverage maximum should be reduced, and the permeability minimum increased, exponentially.

For landscaping, provision of a minimum of one canopy tree per 175 square metres of the site area, that will reach a minimum mature height that equals the height of the proposed development, including:
• a minimum of one canopy tree within each area of secluded private open space; and
• a minimum of one canopy tree within the front setback per 5 metres of width of the site (excluding the width of one driveway).

Each tree should be surrounded by 20 square metres permeable surface with a minimum radius of 3 metres. Up to 50% of the permeable surface may be shared with another tree.

The species of canopy trees should be native, and preferably indigenous, to the local area.

Decision guidelines

• The extent to which the provision of permeable space and vegetation, including canopy trees, on the development site strengthens the landscape character of the area, and reinforces the connection to the surrounding natural landscape.

• Whether the buildings or works are sited:
  – To avoid visually prominent locations such as ridgelines, and hill faces.
  – To follow the contours and natural form of the landscape, e.g. stepping down the site, to minimise cut and fill and other earthworks.

Spring Creek Valley

The potential future Spring Creek Valley residential area extends to approximately 1km west of Duffields Road at the built-up edge of Torquay.

Landscape character and significance

The landscape character is undulating, with rolling hills and dales converging centrally at Spring Creek, and stands of remnant vegetation contrasting with linear shelterbelt planting throughout. The riparian corridor and its adjacent rural landscape provide a visual contrast to the residential development that directs abuts it to the north and south of Grossmans Road and the Great Ocean Road, respectively. The landscape is visible from both of the aforementioned roads, providing a green entry experience when approaching Torquay from the west.

The Spring Creek Valley is located within a landscape of state significance. The wider significant landscape extends to the north-western Torquay hinterland, beyond Bellbrae, and ranges from low to moderate state significance. This area specifically is an area of low state significance, and is proposed to be covered by the SLO which is recommended for the wider landscape (proposed SLO8).

Current zoning and overlays

The area is currently zoned Urban Growth (UGZ1), and the Spring Creek waterway is covered by the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1), designating it as a significant waterway with high biodiversity values. The creek corridor is also covered by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). ESO4, relating to the existence of significant remnant vegetation and habitat, applies to parts of the Christian College Campus site. The Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO1) also applies to a swathe of remnant native vegetation to the south of Spring Creek, largely to the east of the aforementioned school site.

The land abuts the Farming Zone (FZ) to the west, Low Density Residential (LDRZ) and General Residential (GRZ1) zones to the north and south; and GRZ1 to the east. (As part of this project, the abutting GRZ1 areas are proposed to be rezoned to Neighbourhood Residential, with tailored, differing schedules.)

Residential development scenario: Proposed zone & overlays

If the area is to be developed in future, the zoning and zone schedule contents will shape its landscape character (and other qualities); together with the proposed SLO8, which will not prohibit its development.

It is understood that if the land is to be subdivided for residential use, it will comprise low density residential lots, reflecting LDRZ areas to the north and south, rather than the average residential densities of built-up Torquay/Jan Juc. Due to the landscape significance of the site and its location directly abutting farmland at the edge of the township, low density residential development is supported. It would allow better protection of natural landscape characteristics, such as permeable land, vegetation and the waterway corridor, and would reduce the possibility of residential development that is incongruous with its significant natural landscape setting. However, while larger lot sizes are endorsed, the LDRZ is not recommended due to its limited schedule capabilities in relation to landscape character.

As such, the NRZ is recommended for the Spring Creek Valley if future residential development proceeds, with a minimum subdivision area(s) specified in the schedule. By way of comparison, the size of low density residential lots in the Ocean Acres Estate immediately to the north ranges from approximately 4,000 to 6,000 square metres, while LDRZ lots to the south adjacent to Bells Boulevard are considerably larger at 20,000 to 40,000 square metres (2 to 4 hectares). The low density estate centered on Aquarius Avenue, on the northern edge of Torquay,
consists of lots ranging from around 10,000 to 20,000 square metres (1 to 2 hectares). In the landscape assessment review, this estate was found to have a strong landscape character owing to high levels of permeability and vegetation, including perimeter planting, which screens the dwellings from view.

It may be that a range of lot sizes is appropriate for the Spring Creek Valley, all lower density, but with substantial lots in visually sensitive locations such as the perimeter (along the Great Ocean Road and at the rural interface) and in elevated areas. Ridgelines and road frontages should be vegetated with native species buffers.*

In addition, the following schedule inclusions to the NRZ should be considered, ensuring consistency but no double-up with the objectives and decision guidelines of the proposed SLO.

Landscape character objectives
• To ensure that the Spring Creek Valley residential area is characterised by a strong connection to the surrounding

* While the Spring Creek Valley is not covered by the BMO, nearby localities are, and the majority of the Surf Coast Shire is classified as a Bushfire Prone Area. It should be noted that lot size has been found to impact the management of fires ignited from ember attack i.e. different lot sizes support different fire outcomes. Smaller urban lots up to 800 square meters are less likely to enable fuel sources, while larger lots e.g. 0.2 to 4 hectares have the capacity for more localised fuel sources and require more extensive management by owners. It must be accepted that preferred landscape character outcomes are not always congruent with exemplary bushfire management, and these sometimes conflicting objectives require careful consideration. Particular attention is required at the subdivision interface, where potential impacts of bushfire can be mitigated.

significant landscape through the provision of permeable space between buildings and native landscaping.

• To increase the native, and preferably indigenous, vegetation cover in the Spring Creek Valley by requiring permeable land for planting and sustaining vegetation, particularly large canopy trees.

• To ensure that vegetation and the natural landscape qualities of the Spring Creek Valley visually predominate over built form, particularly when viewed from the Great Ocean Road.

Requirements of Clause 54 and Clause 55

While recommendations regarding building site coverage and permeability were made for the Torquay North East and Messmate Road future residential areas based on adjacent residential areas and their proposed NRZ schedule inclusions, the same is not possible for the Spring Creek Valley area due to its probable future low density character. However, as part of the previous residential survey work to determine building site coverage percentages, a small number of LDRZ lots at the south-western edge of Jan Juc (in Ocean Boulevard and Castaway Crescent) were scrutinised and are considered a reasonable starting point for the proposed NRZ schedule inclusions for this area.

The lots sampled are around 4,000 square metres in area (3,738 square metres average), and so represent the smallest LDRZ lots in Torquay/Jan Juc.

Refer to Appendix 2 for the Jan Juc LRDZ data sheet and sample area map.

Of the 23 lots sampled, the lowest building site coverage is 7.5%, and the highest is 20.1%. The average building site coverage is 11.9%.

• 30% of properties in the sample area have a building site coverage of up to 10%

• 70% of properties have a building site coverage of between 11% and 20%

Based on the above preliminary investigations, the following building site coverage and permeability percentages are recommended for lots of approximately 4,000 square metres:

Site coverage maximum: 20%

Permeability minimum: 70%

As a principle, to enable reasonable development parameters, the required building site coverage percentage should increase with smaller lots, and decrease with larger lots. (This also illustrates that improved landscape character outcomes are more possible with larger lots). While not sampled comprehensively, initial building site coverage analysis utilising Vicplan mapping data (https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan/) indicated the following percentages for the aforementioned LDRZ estates:

• Ocean Acres Estate (4,000 to 6,000 square metres): Building site coverage (BSC) up to approximately 20%; less for larger lots

• Aquarius Drive (1 to 2 hectares): BSC approximately 5%, or less

• Bells Boulevard (2 to 4 hectares): BSC less than 5%

Landscaping: Provision of a minimum of one canopy tree per 175 square metres of the site area, that will reach a minimum mature height that equals the height of the proposed development, including:

• a minimum of one canopy tree within each area of secluded private open space; and
• a minimum of one canopy tree within the front setback per 5 metres of width of the site (excluding the width of one driveway).

Each tree should be surrounded by 20 square metres permeable surface with a minimum radius of 3 metres. Up to 50% of the permeable surface may be shared with another tree.

The species of canopy trees should be native, and preferably indigenous, to the local area.

Decision guidelines

• The extent to which the provision of permeable space and vegetation, including canopy trees, on the development site strengthens the landscape character of the area, and reinforces the connection to the surrounding significant natural landscape.

• The extent to which the natural landscape and vegetation predominate visually, particularly in elevated areas, and when viewed from the Great Ocean Road.

No residential development scenario: Proposed zone & overlays

If the Spring Creek Valley landscape were to remain undeveloped (i.e. if the Torquay/Jan Juc settlement boundary were relocated to exclude this parcel of land), the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) would be recommended for its future protection and management. The RCZ provides for agricultural use and development which is consistent with the conservation of environmental and landscape values, and its purpose includes the following, which is particularly relevant to the Spring Creek Valley:

• To conserve and enhance the cultural significance and character of open rural and scenic non urban landscapes.

Under the RCZ, a planning permit is required for a dwelling, and for buildings and works associated with a new dwelling. However, a permit is not required for an outbuilding, or alterations or extensions to an existing dwelling, provided it does not exceed 100 square metres. A buildings and works exemption also applies to an agricultural building of 100 square metres, or less.

The minimum subdivision area under the RCZ parent clause is 40 hectares. This is increased to 60 hectares in the Surf Coast schedule and is considered equally applicable to this landscape.

Conservation values are also able to be included in a schedule to the zone, which is most appropriate for a landscape of state significance.

The zoning of the land to RCZ would also be consistent with the application of the proposed Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO8).
Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds & the Thompson Valley Green Break

The Thompson Valley Green Break forms an integral part of a wider landscape of regional significance, the Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds.

The visual significance assessment contained in the Distinctive Areas & Landscapes: Surf Coast Landscape Assessment Review, Claire Scott Planning, May 2020 (landscape assessment review report), describes the wider Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds landscape as:

“...a flat to gently undulating landscape formed by volcanic flows of basalt. It includes the low volcanic rise of Mount Duneed itself, with its unique geology and communities of grasslands. Another landscape feature is the Thompson Creek, which winds its way from the coast at Breamlea, its upper and middle reaches cutting a pathway through the patchwork of paddocks that characterise this agricultural landscape.

Remnant eucalypts are a further feature of this landscape, located in riparian reserves, adjacent to road corridors or scattered throughout the paddocks. They contrast with the mostly exotic, linear shelterbelt planting. This is an open and expansive landscape of long straight roads, under big skies. It plays a very important role as a green break between the built up areas of Geelong and Torquay, and the settlement areas of the Bellarine Peninsula.” (p. 99)

Protection & management of regional significance

While the wider Mount Duneed Plain and Surrounds landscape is of regional significance, it is not recommended to be covered by the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) for the following reasons:

- The zoning of the land is primarily the Farming Zone (in both the Greater Geelong and Surf Coast Planning Schemes), with the appropriate purpose of providing for the use of land for productive and sustainable agriculture.
- Pressure for non-rural/discretionary land uses are well managed through the Surf Coast Shire’s Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy (May 2019), which identifies the landscape as well suited to agribusiness and commercial farming, with good soil quality. The strategy states specifically that the green break between Torquay and Mount Duneed Road will be maintained, and that the Farming Zone will be retained (priority action 1.9, p. 26).
- Within the Surf Coast Shire, the minimum subdivision area is 60 hectares across the landscape. This can be reduced to 40 hectares, provided a land plan is submitted including measures relating to the protection of biodiversity and remnant vegetation, and the planting of additional trees etc., and that an on-going commitment is made to the implementation of the land plan via a Section 173 agreement. Within Greater Geelong, the minimum subdivision area in also 40 hectares.
- The minimum setback from Mount Duneed Road, and other main roads in the landscape (zoned RDZ1) across both municipal areas is 100 metres. This contributes to the on-going maintenance of open, rural outlooks.
- Remnant vegetation and important areas of flora and fauna are covered by the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1 & 2), and the Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO1) applies to significant native vegetation, indigenous roadside vegetation and linear reserves throughout the landscape, across both municipal areas.

In conclusion, it is considered that existing planning permit triggers are appropriate, and guidance provided by the zone and existing local policy are sufficient to protect and manage the regional significance of the landscape going forward.

To further strengthen decision making in relation to built form and landscaping, the following additional principles (which were included in the landscape assessment review report p. 36) may be included in the Greater Geelong and/or Surf Coast Planning Schemes, at the discretion of the Responsible Authorities:

- Built form should be characterised by the discreet placement of simple structures in the landscape, set back from main road corridors, and:
  - Using simple, pared-back building forms and design detailing.
  - Utilising colours and finishes that best immerse the building within the landscape. The use of materials associated with the Australian rural vernacular such as galvanised iron is also an appropriate design response.
  - Utilising building finishes that reduce distant visibility, such as dark muted tones and natural materials within the landscape, and lighter colours against the sky.
- Remnant indigenous vegetation should be protected and increased in riparian road reserves, along waterway corridors, and throughout the rural paddocks, with consideration of the most appropriate EVCs to strengthen landscape character i.e. Plains Grassland, Grassy Woodland and Floodplain Riparian Woodland.

Protection of the Thompson Valley Green Break (north)

In relation to that part of the regionally significant landscape within the City of Greater Geelong, and located between the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area (ACUGA) boundary and Mount Duneed Road (and forming the northernmost part of the Thompson Valley Green Break), the following conclusions were outlined in the landscape assessment review report (p. 129-130):

“When travelling along Mount Duneed Road, the new dwellings of Armstrong Creek are visible at a distance, across the open farmland.
Development has occurred at urban densities, with high building site coverage, minimal side boundary setbacks, small front and rear boundary setbacks, and minimal permeability. There is little or no space for significant vegetation on private lots. Street trees (primarily exotic) and other public space landscaping are establishing.

The existence of the ‘green break’ immediately to the south of the development front creates a sense of rural openness when travelling along Mount Duneed Road, and is important for the role it plays in this visual ‘breathing space’. This area links geographically and visually to the open, rural landscape to the south of the Surf Coast municipal boundary, with both areas combining to create the visual experience of the ‘open, green landscape’ while travelling along Mount Duneed Road.”

And further:

- “The geographical location of the northern part of the Thompson Valley green break (north of Mount Duneed Road/Lower Duneed Road), immediately abutting the southern development front of Geelong makes it vulnerable to development pressure and future change.

- This area is very important visually and geographically for the role it plays as part of a broader strategic landscape area i.e. as an integral part of the Mount Duneed Volcanic Plain Landscape Area, and as an open rural green break between settlements, and between Geelong and the Great Ocean Road landscapes.

- An assessment of the visual significance of the landscape has found that it is of regional significance.

- When travelling along Mount Duneed Road/Lower Duneed Road, the Thompson Valley green break to the north acts as an important ‘distance barrier’, mitigating the visual impact of the southern development front of Geelong.

- It also relates visually and geographically to the open landscape to the south of the City of Greater Geelong municipal boundary, the two areas combining to form the whole ‘landscape experience’ when driving along Mount Duneed Road.

- As such, the wider Thompson Valley green break has a direct relationship with the coastal landscapes of state significance further south, in that it separates them (and specifically Torquay) from the built-up urban edge of Geelong.

- In order to maintain the open rural green break, particularly from the area where it is most frequently viewed and experienced, i.e. Mount Duneed Road, there should be no policy change or rezoning of agricultural land beyond the current Greater Geelong Urban Growth Boundary.

- If residential development were to occur closer to Mount Duneed Road it would erode the rural views and experience of travelling to Barwon Heads/the Bellarine Peninsula via this route… If residential development were to occur immediately adjacent to Mount Duneed Road, the rural green break as experienced by most would cease to exist.”

In the face of potential future development pressure on this part of the Mount Duneed Plains and Surrounds landscape, it is recommended that the Statement of Planning Policy confirms a protected, long-term settlement boundary for Greater Geelong in the location of the existing ACUGA boundary.

This would safeguard against the threat of urban expansion into the landscape of regional significance, of which the Thompson Valley Green Break is an integral part.

It should be stated unequivocally that no additional residential subdivision should occur beyond the ACUGA boundary.