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C48pym**02.03-1**---/---/---
Proposed C52pym**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS****Settlement**

The townships within the Shire function as rural service centres for the Shire's agricultural base. The emergence of tourism as a significant new industry is continuing to influence settlement patterns in the Shire.

The previous zoning arrangements in many settlements across the Shire included the whole of the original Crown Township in a residential zone, which has no relationship to the existing development of these townships. Many townships include residentially zoned areas that are unsuitable for development.

The Pyrenees Shire contains multiple floodplains with distinctive characteristics. Flooding events subject the townships to considerable social, economic, and environmental risks.

The overarching strategic directions relating to settlement in the Shire are to:

- Maintain viable communities at times of static or low population growth.
- Direct development to areas within township boundaries.
- Develop consolidated townships and settlements to provide improved access to services and community facilities.
- Enhance Beaufort and Avoca as the municipality's major towns through the provision of a wide range of services and facilities, and a diversity of housing types and lifestyle opportunities.
- Facilitate a compatible relationship between residential and non-residential uses, including the maintenance of appropriate environmental buffers.
- Promote qualities that create a unique sense of place and identity in the Shire's townships.
- Encourage consolidation of rural lots into larger holdings to minimise rural land fragmentation.

Beaufort

Beaufort has a population of approximately 1,712 people (Australian Bureau Statistics, 2021). Beaufort is a service and community centre to the surrounding rural area and includes retail, education, health, recreation and other community facilities. Beaufort's sewerage and water supply systems have the capacity to service substantial urban development.

Beaufort's influence (particularly as a retail centre) is tempered by its proximity to the nearby regional centre of Ballarat. However, its function as a highway service centre is expected to become more important now that the Western Highway bypasses Ballarat.

Farming and timber are the main enterprises in the district surrounding Beaufort. The area also contains exceptional areas of natural bushland, attracting significant numbers of visitors. However, widespread flooding and drainage problems occur in low-lying sections of the town, extending down the shallow valley from Beaufort Reservoir.

Beaufort's role as the Shire's principal town for urban development should be supported by:

- Retaining Beaufort's character and sense of place.
- Retaining the rural character and the amenity of areas adjacent to the Western Highway on the eastern approach to the township.
- Accommodating further community facilities within the existing commercial precinct.
- Managing and mitigating the impacts of flooding and drainage problems in low-lying sections of the town.

Avoca

Avoca is located at the junction of the Sunraysia and Pyrenees Highways and is the second largest town in the Shire with a population of approximately 972 people in 2016 (Australian Bureau Statistics, 2016). It is a compact settlement, located on undulating land adjacent to the Avoca River with an attractive backdrop of timbered elevated land to the east. Widespread riverine flooding occurs in the Avoca township and surrounding rural areas alongside the Avoca River floodplain and Rutherford Creek. Due mainly to its origins during the mid-nineteenth century gold rush, the town contains a number of significant heritage buildings.

The town provides community services to the surrounding rural area, with most other services now met by nearby regional centres. The commercial precinct is limited to a convenience retailing centre. However, Avoca's role is changing to meet the needs of tourism associated with the Pyrenees wine industry.

Avoca's role as an important community and services centre should be supported by:

- Accommodating conventional residential lots within the town and low-density and rural living lots west of the town and on the small rural lots on the high ground to the east of the township.
- Facilitating the town's tourism and service role associated with the Pyrenees wine industry.

Amphitheatre

Amphitheatre is a small township (approximate population of 150) on the upper reaches of the Avoca River at the junction of the Pyrenees Highway and the Beaufort-Amphitheatre Road. The township provides a focus for the surrounding farming community and contains community facilities including churches, a public hall, shop, hotel, school and a recreation reserve.

Widespread riverine flooding occurs in the Amphitheatre township and surrounding rural areas alongside the Avoca River floodplain and the Forest, Amphitheatre, and Glenlogie Creeks.

The township's existing role and function should be supported by:

- Directing township expansion to the larger lots immediately east and west of the existing developed area.
- Adopting the Avoca River, Amphitheatre Creek and the railway line as the limits to township expansion.

Crowlands

Crowlands is a very small low-density/rural-residential settlement (former Crown Township) located on the Eversley-Crowlands Road, 15 kilometres west of Elmhurst. The settlement is in the Wimmera River catchment, which contains the Wimmera River and its tributaries, including Mount Cole Creek, Wattle Creek (also known as Heifer Station Creek), Howard Creek, and Seven Mile Creek. These areas are subject to riverine flooding.

Crowlands' role as a low-density/rural-residential settlement in a rural area should be supported by:

- Restricting development to the core township area.
- Encouraging rural land uses outside the core township area.

Evansford

Evansford comprises a collection of houses and a community centre at the junction of the Lexton-Evansford Road, Stud Road and the Waubra-Talbot Road. The township and its environs are almost entirely contained in the Proclaimed Catchment of the Talbot Reservoir. Riverine flooding occurs in the Evansford township and surrounding rural areas alongside the Stony Creek and tributaries.

Evansford's role as a low-density/rural-residential settlement should be supported by:

- Consolidating the settlement to residentially zoned lots along Waubra-Talbot Road between McDonalds Road and Lexton-Evansford Road, where wastewater and onsite effluent disposal can be accommodated on site.

Landsborough

Landsborough is a small township associated with rural-residential development on the western side of the Pyrenees Range. The township sits on a narrow spur dividing Malakoff Creek from Native Creek, and contains a range of services and facilities including a school, police station, hotel, two general stores, post office, community swimming pool, public hall and a recreation reserve.

Landsborough is large enough to maintain a sense of urban community and has the potential to benefit from the wine industry and its attractive setting at the base of the Pyrenees Ranges. However, the lack of sewerage, potential for flooding, and steep land to the east and west of the township are all constraints to its development. Riverine flooding occurs in the Landsborough township and surrounding rural areas alongside the Native Youth Creek, Malakoff Creek and tributaries.

Landsborough's role as a small township should be supported by:

- Consolidating the developed town area and the rural living lots surrounding the township.
- Maintaining areas of low-density residential development at the northern end of the township.

Lexton

Lexton is a small local service centre for the surrounding farming community on the Sunraysia Highway at the intersection of Avoca, Beaufort and Talbot Roads.

While the subdivided area of the Township is extensive, it is dissected by Burnbank Creek, meaning development is dispersed and lacking cohesion.

Lexton should be supported by:

- Encouraging residential development within the township boundary.

Moonambel

Moonambel is a small service centre for the surrounding farming community located 17 kilometres north-west of Avoca at the centre of a significant wine producing area. Facilities in the township include a primary school, several churches, a public hall, a hotel and accommodation.

Moonambel is a compact township with a range of densities and development opportunities around the core strip. Rural residential development on the north side of Mountain Creek creates a potential for the township to become fragmented. Riverine flooding occurs in the Moonambel township and surrounding rural areas alongside the Wild Dog Creek.

Moonambel should be supported by:

- Discouraging rural residential expansion beyond the town boundary to protect agricultural uses.
- Maintaining Moonambel as the focal point of the Mountain Creek Valley and encouraging tourism-related facilities to locate within the town boundary.
- Encouraging the further development of Moonambel as a rural service centre.

Raglan

Raglan is located north of Beaufort and consists of dispersed housing that is more in the nature of a rural residential settlement than a township. Riverine flooding occurs in the Raglan township and surrounding rural areas alongside Fiery Creek and major tributaries. Closure of the local primary school removed a key focal point for the settlement.

Raglan's proximity to Beaufort and the availability of lots for housing will ensure that further growth continues. It is important that this growth be concentrated so that the settlement develops more of a focus.

Raglan's role as a dispersed rural-residential settlement should be supported by:

- Directing low-density residential development to the core area of the settlement, on lots of sufficient size to enable disposal of household wastewater and effluent.
- Maintaining surrounding rural land in rural use.

Redbank

Redbank is a small local service centre for the surrounding farming community at the headwater of Redbank Creek in a narrow 2.5 kilometre valley, bounded north and south by steep mountainous bushland of the Kara Kara National Park and State Forest. The "Grumbler Gully" area delineates the western extent of the township. Riverine flooding occurs in the township along the Redbank Creek and tributaries.

The township is focused on tourism, rural residential settlement and the wine industry, and is expected to experience some limited further growth due to its attraction for "bush block" settlement.

Redbank should be supported by:

- Consolidating township development to the area west of High Street.
- Confining rural-residential development to land east of the Grumbler Gully area and west of the Sunraysia Highway.
- Retaining the Grumbler Gully and areas to the west in rural use.

Snake Valley

Snake Valley acts as a residential dormitory for Ballarat, only 27 kilometres to the north-east.

The town centre is well defined, compact and radiates from the junction of the Carngham-Linton, Chepstowe-Snake Valley and Smythesdale-Snake Valley Roads. It is a consolidated township in which community facilities and services are accessible to residents, including a general store, public hall, school and several churches.

Most of the development at Snake Valley is low-density rural-residential and extends into the attractive hilly treed land southwest of the township.

Snake Valley and its environs will continue to experience significant growth due to its proximity to Ballarat and the attractive nature of its rural-residential areas.

Snake Valley should be supported by:

- Reducing the area designated for township development to include only the existing development (and potential infill) along the roads radiating from the main junction and the undeveloped area to the west of Nunns Road.
- Discouraging development of small lots along the west side of the Snake Valley-Carngham Road, north of the Snake Valley-Chepstowe Road.
- Retaining the areas to the north, east and west of the Township in rural use.

Waubra

Situated in the north-east of the Shire on the Sunraysia Highway, Waubra is a small rural service centre with strong links to Ballarat, located 35 kilometres to the east. There is a well-established rural-residential estate on elevated land at the western edge of the township. Most of the township's development is confined to the south-western side of the Highway. The area to the north is lower-lying and falls within the catchment of the Evansford and Talbot Reservoirs. Riverine flooding occurs in the Waubra township and surrounding rural areas alongside the Mt Greenock Creek.

It is anticipated that there will continue to be a demand for conventional and rural-residential lots in Waubra due to its strong links to Ballarat.

Waubra's role is to be supported by:

- Discouraging the expansion of the rural-residential subdivision to the west of the township, due to the steeply sloping topography and its visual sensitivity.
- Directing development to the north side of the township.

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Environmental risks and amenity

There are extensive areas of land within the environs of the Pyrenees Range and Great Dividing Range that are geologically unstable or subject to severe land management constraints. Adaptation and mitigation measures need to be taken to prevent intensive small-lot rural uses and promote rehabilitation of areas despoiled by previous human intervention.

Pyrenees Shire seeks to manage environmental risks and amenity by:

- Discouraging use and development that causes pollution of water resources.
- Minimising use and development that causes land degradation, fire hazards or other adverse environmental impacts.
- Protecting existing native vegetation and encouraging further planting of native vegetation, particularly on land in areas with erosion and salinity problems.
- Discouraging development on land demonstrated to have serious environmental management constraints.

Bushfire

The risk of bushfire in Pyrenees Shire is extreme in some areas. There are large areas of forest and grassland that regularly burn as a result of natural causes, accidents and deliberate action.

Areas where bushfire behaviour is likely to pose a significant threat to life and property have been identified. Fire protection measures under the Pyrenees Planning Scheme assist in the protection of life, property and the environment from the threat of bushfire.

Past subdivision patterns in some areas have resulted in developments that are vulnerable to bushfire.

Pyrenees Shire seeks to address bushfire risks by:

- Ensuring strategic and settlement planning decisions prioritise the protection of human life and minimise the risk to property.
- Ensuring that fire risks are carefully considered throughout the planning and development process.

Floodplains

The Pyrenees Shire contains a significant amount of flood prone land where flooding events have historically caused a substantial amount of damage to the natural and built environment. These areas consist of riverine systems and their associated floodplains. Townships including Beaufort, Avoca, Lexton, Raglan, Lake Goldsmith, Waubra, Amphitheatre, Landsborough and Moonambel have all experienced riverine flooding from these waterways.

The retention of native vegetation and planting additional vegetation is integral to minimise the potential for erosion and salinity problems, which will aid in the long-term health of the region's catchments.

The key riverine systems known to flood include the Avoca River, Wimmera River, Mount Emu Creek, Burnbank Creek, Bailies Creek, Fiery Creek, Yam Holes Creek, and their associated tributaries.

Pyrenees Shire seeks to:

- Support land use and development initiatives for flood mitigation works.
- Discourage development on floodplains and low-lying areas subject to riverine inundation and drainage difficulties.
- Maintain the capacity of the floodplain to convey and store water.
- Preserve the natural functions and values of floodplain environments.
- Discouraging the intensification of land use and development in the floodplains of the Yam Holes, Ding Dong, Cemetery and Cumberland Creeks at Beaufort.

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Natural resource management

Pyrenees Land Systems

The Pyrenees Land Systems groupings are based on an analysis of Land Systems in Pyrenees Shire by the Land Conservation Council and are shown on the Land Systems map at Clause 02.04.

Land within the **Alluvial** Land System consists of level plains with low erosion risks. Destruction of topsoil, widespread salting in the alluvial plains north of the Great Dividing Range, native vegetation clearance, over-cultivation and flooding are environmental risks in this land system. Alluvial land is very suitable for agricultural uses.

Land within the **Tertiary Sediments** Land System consists of undulating plains and is prone to moderate sheet erosion, high gully erosion in drainage lines, significant wind erosion and extreme infertility.

Land within the **Basalts** Land System also consists of undulating plains. It is subject to minimal to moderate erosion hazards, low permeability, shrink-swell characteristics on plains and lower slopes and rocky terrain on upper slopes. The low carrying capacity and sparse vegetation make this land system unsuitable for small-lot rural development.

Land within the **Palaeozoic Sediments 1, 2 and 3** Land Systems consist of gentle ridges, broken ridges and prominent ranges. Sheet erosion is a threat because of the slow rate of water entry into the subsoils. High gully erosion exists on the yellow sodic duplex soils in drainage lines and widespread salting is an issue where native vegetation has been cleared. The land of unconsolidated colluvial soils on the break of slope of the steep land is highly suitable for viticulture.

Land within the **Metamorphics** Land System consists of ridges that are susceptible to sheet erosion, severe gully erosion in drainage lines and salting on lower slopes below cleared areas. Land of unconsolidated colluvial soils on the break of slope of the steep land is highly suitable for viticulture.

Land within the **Granite 1** Land System consists largely of gentle hills. Land within the **Granite 2** Land System consists of steep hills. These Land Systems are constrained by impermeable hardpan restricted moisture storage, where heavy rain impedes the movement of machinery. Sheet and gully erosion are a risk if there is inadequate vegetation and removal of vegetation can lead to massive landslips. Land within the Granite 1 Land System is not suited to small-lot rural development and land within the Granite 2 Land System is not suitable for any development.

Pyrenees Shire seeks to:

- Encourage agriculture in the Alluvial Land System.
- Discourage small lot development along drainage lines in the Tertiary Sediments Land System.
- Maintain existing vegetation in the Tertiary Sediments Land System.
- Discourage small lot development in the Basalts and Granite 1 Land Systems.
- Discourage development in the Granite 2 Land System.

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- Encourage increased tree and vegetation cover on land in the Palaeozoic Sediments, the Granite 1 and 2, Tertiary Sediments and the Metamorphics Land Systems, especially on hills and slopes.
- Discourage development on steep ground in the Palaeozoic Sediments Land Systems.
- Encourage viticulture in the Palaeozoic Sediments 2 and 3 and the Metamorphics Land Systems.
- Discourage further development in the Metamorphics Land System (other than viticulture).

Agriculture

The majority of non-urban land in the Shire is used for agricultural purposes. A continuation of these uses is encouraged, consistent with responsible land management practices.

Pyrenees Shire will support agriculture by:

- Protecting agricultural land from fragmentation.
- Encouraging sustainable and diverse agriculture.
- Consolidating inappropriately subdivided rural land.
- Discouraging rural-residential development where it impacts on agricultural land.

Rural subdivision

Parts of Pyrenees Shire were the focus of intensive gold-mining activity in the 19th century, resulting in the creation of extensive Crown Subdivisions that converted widespread areas of rural land into smallholdings, including on some steep and environmentally hazardous land.

The pattern of subdivision within the Shire does not reflect current patterns of settlement and land use. Many of the original Crown Townships are now defunct and there are extensive areas of open farmland comprised of small lots. Fragmented ownership of these lots and the potential demand to construct a dwelling on them is not consistent with responsible management of rural land.

Pyrenees Shire seeks to manage rural subdivision by:

- Identifying areas that are unsuitable for small lot development and encouraging the consolidation of small lots.
- Restructuring rural areas with subdivisional patterns that are not conducive to responsible land management.

Viticulture

Viticulture is an important economic resource for the municipality. Land within the Palaeozoic 1, Palaeozoic 3 and Metamorphic Land Systems is particularly suitable for growing grapes, due to favourable drainage, low fertility soils and land that is unaffected by frosts because of its elevation.

Pyrenees Shire seeks to support viticulture and expand the wine industry by:

- Facilitating the further development of viticultural operations.
- Protecting land of high suitability for viticulture from incompatible development.

Water

Rivers, streams and designated water supply areas in the Shire are relied upon extensively for urban water supply and agriculture. Streams of regional significance include the Avoca River, Wimmera River, Mt Emu Creek, Fiery Creek and others.

The protection of these resources is of paramount importance for the continued provision of potable water supply for domestic consumption. The water supply catchments and the environs of domestic water supply bores are shown on the Water Supply Authorities map at Clause 02.04.

Pyrenees Shire seeks to protect water quality and quantity by:

- Conserving water resources.

- Minimising possible contamination of water supplies from urban, industrial and agricultural land use.
- Restricting subdivision, land use and development within water supply catchments.

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Built environment and heritage

Heritage elements from the gold rush provide opportunities for tourism, define the cultural identity of the municipality, and inform planning and development in townships.

A large proportion of the Shire's heritage remains intact, particularly within the townships and centres of Avoca, Beaufort, Landsborough, Lexton, Moonambel, Snake Valley and Waubra. Further significant places are found in areas including Natte Yallock, Navarre, Percydale, Redbank, Crowlands, Bung Bong/Homebush, Lexton and Amphitheatre.

A number of European and Aboriginal heritage places are of State heritage significance, in particular a collection of heritage places within the core area of the Avoca township.

However, a lack of population growth and development in some of the smaller, outlying towns has resulted in heritage assets falling into disrepair. Some heritage assets have been permanently lost through a lack of maintenance and continued use.

the loss of heritage assets through the lack of maintenance and sustainable use.

Pyrenees Shire seeks to protect its heritage and built environment by:

- Conserving cultural and heritage assets, including buildings, streetscapes, places, landscapes, mining-related areas and infrastructure that contribute to the identity of the Shire.
- Protecting known Aboriginal heritage places from development.
- Retaining the established character of existing townships.

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Housing

Detached housing has been the preferred form of residential development in all townships, and only a small proportion of the Shire's population lives in medium-density housing. Alternative housing forms exist only in isolated instances, such as for special accommodation, retirement villages, transient workers' accommodation, or tourist-related purposes.

Pyrenees Shire seeks to:

- Encourage a diverse range of housing to attract and maintain a socially diverse population base.
- Encourage medium-density housing in central locations in established townships, with good accessibility to transport, shops, infrastructure and community facilities.

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Economic development

Tourism in Mountain Creek Valley

The Mountain Creek Valley is located 20 kilometres north-west of Avoca and covers an area of approximately 60 square kilometres (identified on the Mountain Creek Valley Strategy Plan at Clause 17.04-1L Tourism in Mountain Creek Valley).

In addition to established broadacre farming uses, the valley is an important location for concentrated vineyard, winery, and related tourism development. This is because of its topography, collection of a number of well-known vineyards, and an expanding range of tourist facilities and attractions. These attributes give the valley a strong sense of place, which distinguish it from other more dispersed viticultural areas in the Shire. Moonambel is the focal point in the valley; however, most of the tourism-related facilities are based in the surrounding rural hinterland.

The role of Mountain Creek Valley is to be supported by:

- Promoting the further development of vineyards in conjunction with broadacre farming activities.

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- Encouraging a mix of agriculture, diversified rural industries, speciality shops, restaurants, artists' studios, art galleries and tourist accommodation facilities in Moonambel and surrounding rural areas.
- Protecting the rural character within and adjacent to the Mountain Creek Valley.