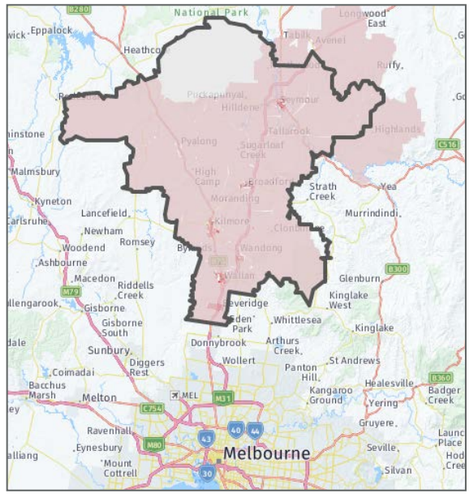

Shire of Mitchell

Appendix 4: State and regional PPF/rural zones

During the audit period, a review of Victoria's Planning Policy Framework (PPF) was changing the content of planning schemes. Planning schemes are always dynamic. However, the PPF translation is particularly significant because it re-organises the structure of the entire local policy portion of a planning scheme in one amendment.

KEY:

- ✖ No support
- ◗ Some support (could be augmented).
- ● Strong support
- N/A Not applicable

		Mitchell Planning Scheme: PPF							Mitchell Planning Scheme: Zone Schedules		Council Plans, Policies, Strategies			
		Clause 11.01– 1R Green Wedges - MM	Clause 11.03 – 3S Peri-Urban Areas	Clause 11. 03-5S Distinctive Areas and Landscapes	Clause 14.01-1S Protection of Agricultural Land	Clause 14.01-2S Sustainable Agricultural Land Use	Clause 17.01-1S Diversified Economy	Clause 21.05 Natural Resource Management (Agriculture)	Clause 35.06 Rural Conservation Zone Schedule	Clause 35.07 farming Zone Schedule	Council Plan 2017-2021	MHWP 2018-2021	Mitchell Rural Land and Activities Review Strategic Directions Paper – Draft 2019	Notes:
Peri-urban Planning Scheme Audit Benchmarking Principles														
Food Production	Does the planning scheme support 'accepted agricultural practices' and 'accepted farm structures' by exempting them from the requirement to obtain a planning permit (note: other regulation may apply).	N/A	✖	✖	✖	◗	N/A	◗	✖	✖	✖	✖	◗	
	Does the planning system facilitate expansion of the array of food produced - to satisfy demand for local food and expand access to local food for the community.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	◗	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	◗	
	Does the planning system facilitate resilience against climate change, peak oil, and other threats?	N/A	N/A	✖	N/A	◗	N/A	◗	✖	✖	✖	✖	●	
	Does the planning scheme support new sources of revenue on-farm, such as non-exempt agricultural uses, by taking a generally flexible and scale-sensitive approach? These might include farm-based businesses, agritourism, and direct sales.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	◗	◗	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	◗	
Food Processing and Manufacture	Does the planning system respond to the scale of an operation and developmental needs for food processing - such as other regulatory requirements, and the infrastructure needed for packaging and distribution.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✖	N/A	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	
	Does the planning system provide for the on-farm sale of prepared food, if components of that food are produced or processed on the farm?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	◗	N/A	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	◗	

For questions relating to the matrix content, please contact Linda Martin-Chew at E: info@planitrural.com.au.

		Mitchell Planning Scheme: PPF							Mitchell Planning Scheme: Zone Schedules		Council Plans, Policies, Strategies			
		Clause 11.01– 1R Green Wedges - MM	Clause 11.03 – 3S Peri-Urban Areas	Clause 11. 03-5S Distinctive Areas and Landscapes	Clause 14.01-1S Protection of Agricultural Land	Clause 14.01-2S Sustainable Agricultural Land Use	Clause 17.01-1S Diversified Economy	Clause 21.05 Natural Resource Management (Agriculture)	Clause 35.06 Rural Conservation Zone Schedule	Clause 35.07 farming Zone Schedule	Council Plan 2017-2021	MHWP 2018-2021	Mitchell Rural Land and Activities Review Strategic Directions Paper – Draft 2019	Notes:
Aggregation, Distribution and Storage (Wholesale Distribution)	Does the planning system facilitate producers self-distributing their products, especially when they have small and medium sized farms?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	●	
	Does the planning system facilitate producers' access to all types of local and regional supermarkets, restaurants and institutions– where most food is purchased– which is a necessary precursor to significantly expanding the consumption of locally grown products. This might relate to the availability of a variation of scales and types of on-farm and commercial storage, aggregation and distribution services.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	
	Does the planning system facilitate "secondary integrated agricultural activities" on farms – such as the sale of non-farm products (where these are ancillary to the marketing of an on-farm product), and the hosting of educational and cultural events related to farming.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Educational uses and place of assembly (in some zones) are prohibited so would have to provide a legal planning argument for support.
	Does the planning system facilitate personal relationships among producers and consumers whose collective desire is to eat food that is healthy, fresh, tastes good, and to support those who produce it. This might encompass farmers markets, food hubs, shared marketing, shared distribution, regional brand development.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✖	N/A	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Planning would require specific policy references – markets, food hubs, shared assets for distribution on farms. Goes against most policy direction to discourage commercial uses not directly related to the farm business.
Nutrient Management	Does the planning system facilitate the prevention of nutrient losses in the environment, moving away from waste management to nutrient management?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✖	N/A	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	◗	
	Does the planning system facilitate the production and use of compost as a valuable component of sustainable farming operations?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✖	N/A	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	
	Does the planning system facilitate sustainable agriculture practices – for example, environmental stewardship that supports soil health and biodiversity conservation/ enhancement, prevents manure and fertilizer runoff, reduces soil erosion and prevents livestock access to waterways. This may be achieved with buffers and setbacks that relate to the scale of the use/development.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	◗	N/A	◗	✖	✖	✖	✖	●	

Notes:

- Mitchell Shire Rural Economy Profile not included as it was written to influence the Rural Land and Activities Review (RLAR). The RLAR is represented in the table instead (this project is still not completed).
- Clause 14 (Natural Resource Management) was dropped out of the state section of most audits because it was relevant to so few of the benchmarking principles and provided strong support for none of them.
- Clause 14.01-2R Agricultural Productivity – Hume was not included as it provides extremely high-level guidance.
- Mitchell Shire has a Food Policy (2017), but it is a governance document for Council operated facilities, workplaces, and Council sponsored events. As such, it was not included in the audit.
- The consultation report for the Mitchell Shire Planning Scheme Review (V1.10) (MSPSR) became available soon after the audit was completed (May 2020). It has been reviewed and does not contain content directly relevant to the matters addressed above. It does recognise there is a lack of policy to guide decision making in the rural zones (p. 27). At time of writing, there is no amendment proposed in response to the MSPSR.

Declaration for transparency:

- Plan-it Rural P/L (PIR) and its directors are located in Mitchell Shire. As such, PIR provided a submission in response to the MSPSR in June 2020. The submission strongly reflected the findings of this project, however the consultation version was marked "policy neutral" which limited the ability to recommend new policy content through this process. Subsequently, the author was invited to meet with the consultant reviewing the planning scheme (July 2020) and was able to provide more extensive feedback (it emerged that there was not a requirement for the review of the planning scheme to be policy neutral). However, as mentioned above, the status of the MSPSR project is not known.

Summary recommendations:

Note for all Council Matrices

The Farm to Plate Victorian Peri-Urban Planning Scheme Audit defined the problem via a literature review, VCAT review, and a review of state and local government policy reforms, using this information to make recommendations for local planning scheme content within each Council matrix. Relevant content from publicly available, local Council strategies and plans has also influenced the recommendations. Possible changes to the wording in local policy to support local sustainable food systems have been proposed below (refer strike-through and blue text). However, planning schemes are dynamic and there can be no guarantee that the policy content that was reviewed here remains the same at time of reading.

Locally relevant documents:

Investigate the incorporation into the scheme of elements from the Rural Land and Activities Review Strategic Directions Paper (RLAR). The paper includes support for climate change resilience and sustainable land management (although the latter already has strong support in planning schemes overall). More significantly, there is strong support for benchmarking principle 7 - *Does the planning system facilitate producers self-distributing their products, especially when they have small and medium sized farms?* The paper does make the common mistake of aligning direct marketing from farms and agriexperiences (sic) only with tourism rather than community access to local food (which is still an economic opportunity). The paper also seeks to spatially allocate agricultural activity which is a risky approach because it can receive a very literal interpretation by planners. Policy areas in the middle and south of the shire provide encouragement to small-scale, niche, and innovative operations but do not mention tourism opportunities. In these areas, the term "commercial scale agriculture" is used as though the aforementioned agricultural activities cannot be commercial. The policy area in the north provides encouragement to broadacre and intensive agriculture but also encourages tourism opportunities that are agriculture related (farm gate sales, farm stays, tours, agriexperiences (sic) are specifically mentioned at pp 23-27).

One objective in the Municipal Strategic Statement provides limited opportunity for additional text to reflect the content available:

Clause 21.05-1 Agriculture:

Objective 2 in this clause is "To support the diversification of agriculture, the development of agro-forestry and the processing of agricultural products grown within the municipality." The strategies provide little guidance for what diversification of agriculture looks like. A new strategy might be (proposed content blue text):

- *Support the development of diversified agricultural activities including farm-based businesses relating to agritourism, on-farm processing, and direct sales of farm products.*