

Shire of Nillumbik

Appendix 4: State and regional PPF/rural zones



KEY:	
✘	No support
◓	Some support (could be augmented).
●	Strong support
N/A	Not applicable

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.

		Nillumbik Planning Scheme: PPF								Nillumbik 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 21.03-2 Rural land use	Clause 21.05-2 Rural land use	Clause 35.04 Green Wedge Zone Schedule	Clause 35.07 Rural Conservation Zone Schedules	Council Plan 2017-2021	MHWP 2017-2021	Nillumbik Shire GWMP 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	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	Default provisions for outbuildings in schedules. Clause 21.05 (Objective 5) seeks to restrict the number of outbuildings and the use of zincalume as a building material.
	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	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	◓	●	

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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. GWMP advocates for educational activities on farms.
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:

Council Plan contains an action (Strategy 3.1) to “Clarify the planning scheme to enhance opportunities for agricultural enterprises and tourism to prosper in appropriate ways in rural areas of Nillumbik” at page 21. Whilst this is potentially useful in supporting recommendations, it is so vague and non-committal that it could not be used to support the benchmarking principles, above.

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 *Nillumbik Shire Green Wedge Management Plan 2019* (not implemented in the planning scheme) which provides relevant content for climate change resilience (page 21), and local food production. There is a specific objective to encourage sustainable and regenerative agriculture (O4.3) and to encourage sustainable, diversified, and productive agriculture, access to markets, and the right to farm (O4.2). Actions do not specifically recommend changes to planning policy, but include:

A4.3 To inform future policy development, conduct research into the types of agriculture that are likely to be successful in the green wedge and compatible with its environmental and lifestyle values.

A4.7 Consider policy and land use options (that comply with the planning scheme) to allow agricultural enterprises to diversify income sources by supporting complementary activities such as farm gate sales, events, education, and accommodation.

A4.10 Advocate to the Victorian Government that it alters planning and other controls to:

- allow landholders a right to farm in the Rural Conservation Zone on pre-existing cleared agricultural land with decision guidelines to avoid damage to surrounding properties or environment
- support supplementary rural business activities, such as farm gate sales, farm stays and other low environmental amenity impact enterprises, that are consistent with green wedge values
- to support small-scale and productive hobby farming.

The economy section of the document provides the following content:

There is an opportunity to more productively utilise land in Nillumbik's green wedge to supply Melbourne's growing demand for food. With the establishment of stronger local supply chains, use of technology and motivated landowners, growing produce for Melbourne will ensure farming in the green wedge is protected and enhanced.

One of the barriers to food production is being able to move product to market efficiently. The small-scale production that can occur in Nillumbik is not of a scale that suits the large wholesale market or supermarkets. However, strengthening the supply chain between Nillumbik food producers and food retailers could provide new opportunities for food production.

The close proximity of the Melbourne Market in Epping presents opportunities for our current and future producers, particularly given the growing importance placed on fresh and sustainable production.

(Nillumbik GWMP 2019, p. 29.)

The document also provides support for local food access for the community and the encouragement of local farmers markets and activities that encourage "food exchanges" (Nillumbik GWMP 2019, p. 30.)

Specific actions from the GWMP are deferred to annual implementation plans, which are not searchable on the website. As such, it is difficult to gauge whether the above actions have a high priority for Council.

In terms of recommendations for the planning scheme, there is little existing policy that lends itself to the incorporation of this content – a new Green Wedge Policy is required to give full justice to the opportunities from the GWMP.

One policy in the Municipal Strategic Statement provides a limited opportunity for modified text to reflect the content available:

Clause 21.05-2 (Objective 1 – Rural land use):

The objective for this clause is "To retain existing agricultural land for soil based agricultural production and promote sustainable agricultural activities." Strategies to achieve this objective could be augmented as follows (existing content black text/proposed content blue text):

- *Support the continuance and diversification of agriculture which demonstrates sustainable land management practices, including regenerative and agroecological farm practices.*
- *Facilitate opportunities for diversification in agricultural activities, which could include direct marketing from farms, events, education (such as growing and preparing food), and farm stays.*