

3.30 Planning Area No. 30 Mary River Valley

3.30.1 Location and Role

This Planning Area encompasses rural lands in the western part of the Shire. These lands are located within the catchment area of the Mary River and Belli Creek, both of which represent important water and environmental resources within the Shire and region.

The Planning Area is intended to remain an important area for dairying, other pastoral uses and forestry, whilst conserving its significant environmental values (including those of the Mary River and tributaries).

The Conondale State Forest and adjoining National Park, as well as the western section of the Mapleton State Forest are included in the Planning Area. The Planning Area contains the largest areas of remnant vegetation in the Shire. Such vegetation serves as important habitats for many species of fauna. Many rare and threatened animal and plant species are found within the area's remnant forest areas. The remnant vegetation mosaic of the river valley, especially that of the native riparian vegetation, is also of significance for the protection that it offers to aquatic plants and fauna, including migratory birds and the endangered Mary River cod. These waterway corridors also provide for fauna movement between the larger areas of remnant vegetation in the State Forests and Conservation Parks.

The superb scenic and aesthetic qualities of the Planning Area have high passive recreational value.

3.30.2 Vision Statement

(1) It is intended that:

the Mary River and associated creek valleys remain in productive and sustainable rural use, set within a vegetated waterway system, with continued use of more rugged land for State Forest, Conservation and recreational purposes.

(2) This will be achieved by:

- (a) preventing the fragmentation, or alienation of good quality grazing and agricultural land;
- (b) providing for the ongoing management of State Forest lands for sustainable forestry and secondary uses;
- (c) recognising and protecting the integrity and viability of conservation parks, waterways and other environmentally significant areas;
- (d) preventing the encroachment of rural residential or urban use into the area;
- (e) seeking development and use in accordance with best available land and environmental management practices;
- (f) protecting the amenity of the Kenilworth township; and
- (g) promoting sustainable leisure, recreation and tourism activity in appropriate areas.

3.30.3 Key Character Elements

(1) Rural Landscape

- (a) This Planning Area is intended to retain its key rural and nature conservation characteristics. On and adjoining the river and creek valley floors, sustainable rural (mainly dairy and other pastoral) activities are to continue. In areas of more rugged terrain, lower intensity rural uses are desired, in order to protect the valuable natural landform and densely vegetated landscape.
- (b) The significant areas of State Forest are to be managed for sustainable forestry purposes and for other compatible uses which would not prejudice the forestry activities. Passive recreation and leisure activities are to continue within these areas. Similarly, lands in conservation parks are to be managed in a manner which protects their conservation values, whilst allowing access to the wilderness recreation experiences to be had in these areas.

(2) Settlement Pattern

- (a) Kenilworth is to remain the local service centre for the Shire's western rural hinterland. As such, no new settlements are to be established in this Planning Area.
- (b) The area is too remote from social and infrastructure services, and comprises lands more suited to productive rural, forestry and conservation purposes, to allow for development for urban or rural residential purposes.
- (c) Community facilities present in the Planning Area, such as the public halls, provide valuable community facilities. It is envisaged that these uses continue. However any major expansion or additional facilities should be located in Kenilworth or Eumundi, in a conveniently accessible location for this part of the Shire.
- (d) Whilst the existing road network is intended to be maintained and improved as required, standards of service are to remain at a rural level in order to keep the rural and bushland lifestyle and character of the area.
- (e) It is preferred that any intensive animal industries be located away from Kenilworth, on sites where any potential for environmental harm or nuisance can be effectively managed.

(3) Environmental Values

- (a) The existing predominantly natural character of much of the Planning Area is intended to be conserved. Conservation Parks within the area are to be protected, while riparian vegetation and the habitat of the Mary River Cod, along the Mary River, Belli Creek, Skyring Creek and their tributaries should be maintained, enhanced, and restored where necessary.
- (b) The maintenance and strengthening of viable ecological corridors between the Mapleton and Conondale State Forests and the Conservation Parks in and adjoining the area is intended.
- (c) Best catchment management practices are to be adopted in order to achieve an acceptable quality of water entering the Mary River and its tributaries. The Mary River Catchment Strategy comprehensively deals with sustainable land use within the Planning Area.

3.30.4 Statements of Desired Precinct Character

(1) Mary River Valley - General Rural (Precinct Class = General Rural Lands)

Intent

This precinct comprises the northern foothills of the Blackall Ranges. Included within this precinct are areas of general rural lands and remnant native forest remaining mainly on the steeper land and adjacent to waterways. Low intensity rural uses are the major land use in this precinct.

The Mary River, which represents an important water and environmental resource, flows through the western edges of the precinct. Tributary creeks to the Mary River flow through other sections of the precinct. It is intended that the development and use of premises in the precinct be managed in ways which are consistent with ecologically sustainable resource management. The principles adopted in the Mary River Catchment Strategy are consistent with such a management approach.

It is intended to allow for a wide range of rural activities within this precinct, particularly those which are compatible with a rural setting and do not require urban services and infrastructure. Any development for non-rural purposes should be sensitively integrated into the rural setting.

Recreation and leisure facilities exist within this precinct in the form of roadside picnic and rest areas and scenic lookout points. These areas are of significant value to both the local and regional community, and enable local people and visitors to experience the attractive rural atmosphere of the area. The Eumundi Kenilworth Road and Kenilworth Brooloo Road are significant and scenic tourist routes in the Shire, and it is intended that the scenic rural qualities experienced from this road be retained.

The precinct also contains the Belli Public Hall and Gheerulla Halls which are important community facilities in the Planning Area.

Preferred and Acceptable Uses

Preferred uses within this precinct are those referred to in the Table of Development Assessment (refer Vol 1) for the General Rural Lands precinct class, provided they are undertaken in a manner which avoids or minimises land use conflicts, retains or enhances the area's environmental values, and sensitively integrates into the rural setting.

There may also be opportunities for small scale tourist uses such as Bed and breakfast, where they are sensitively integrated into the rural setting.

Residential, commercial, industrial and rural residential uses are not considered consistent with the intent and desired character of this precinct. In particular, large scale, intensive uses which are proposed to attract tourists are likely to detract from the general rural amenity and character of the precinct are therefore considered inappropriate.

In addition, intensive rural uses, such as intensive animal husbandry and rural service industry, should not be located in those parts of the precinct in close proximity to Kenilworth township so as to avoid land use conflict.

It is not envisaged that there be any major expansion of, or additions to, the public halls. Rather new community facilities should be located in Kenilworth or Eumundi where they are conveniently accessible.

Landscape and Built Form

Rural uses should be undertaken in ways which are consistent with principles of sustainable land management. Reference is made to the Codes for Rural Development and Use contained within Volume 4 of this Planning Scheme.

Any new development should provide for the protection of the environmental values of the Mary River and its tributaries. This includes the preservation of the quality of water entering the river and creeks and the preservation of vegetation adjacent to waterways and over steep land in order to prevent erosion and maintain sustainable habitat corridors along the river and creeks.

As far as practicable, any new development should occur within already cleared areas and provide for the preservation or enhancement of remnant vegetation along waterways and on steeper elevated lands.

3. STATEMENTS OF DESIRED CHARACTER FOR PLANNING AREAS AND PRECINCTS

Any development within the vicinity of the Eumundi Kenilworth Road and Kenilworth Brooloo Road should maintain the rural character and aesthetics of the area, with any buildings and structures suitably designed and sited, including large building setbacks, rural architecture, minimal signage, and landscaping with large trees. In particular, the rural setting and views experienced around rest areas and lookouts should be retained.

Any development which is on a site adjacent to a State Forest should have regard to the environmental and management issues of the adjacent forest, in particular bushfire management.

(2) Mary River Valley Pastoral (Precinct Class = Sustainable Pastoral Lands)

Intent

This precinct comprises pockets of land in the northern foothills of the Blackall Ranges. Included within this precinct are areas of alluvial land that are particularly valuable for pastoral uses. A major use of land within this precinct is dairying, reflecting the areas of good quality grazing land and sizeable land holdings.

Tributary creeks to the Mary River flow through the sections of the precinct. The Mary River system represents an important water and environmental resource within the Shire and the region. It is intended that the precinct be managed consistent with the principles of the Mary River Catchment Strategy, and ensure sustainable land management and improvement in water quality.

The intention of the precinct is to provide mainly for the sustainable use of good quality grazing land. It is intended to protect the area for pastoral production, particularly dairying, from inappropriate development, such as lot reconfiguration which fragments land holdings, and urban and semi-rural land uses.

Recreation and leisure facilities exist within this precinct predominantly in the form of roadside picnic and rest areas and scenic lookout points. These are areas of significant value to both the local and regional community, and enable local people and visitors to experience the attractive rural atmosphere of the area. The Eumundi Kenilworth Road and Kenilworth Brooloo Road are significant and scenic tourist routes in the Shire, and it is intended that the scenic rural qualities experienced from this road be retained.

Belli Picnic Shop on the corner of Brown and Eumundi Kenilworth Roads is the only local convenience store in the Planning Area, and is located within this precinct. This store services the local community and tourists, and is an important community facility.

Preferred and Acceptable Uses

Preferred uses within this precinct are those referred to in the Table of Development Assessment (refer Vol 1) for the Sustainable Pastoral Lands precinct class, provided they are undertaken in a manner which avoids or minimises land use conflicts, retains or enhances the area's environmental values, and sensitively integrates into the rural setting.

Residential, commercial, industrial and rural residential uses are not considered consistent with the intent and desired character of this precinct. In addition, lot reconfiguration which fragments land holdings is inappropriate.

There may also be opportunities for small scale tourist uses such as Bed and breakfast, where they are sensitively integrated into the rural setting. Large scale, intensive uses which are proposed to attract tourists are likely to detract from the general rural amenity and character, and pastoral production, of the precinct and are considered inappropriate.

In addition, intensive rural uses, any uses such as Intensive animal husbandry and Rural service industry, should not be located in those parts of the precinct in close proximity to Kenilworth township so as to avoid land use conflict.

It is not envisaged that there be any major expansion of, or additions to, the Belli Picnic Shop. Rather new commercial uses should be centrally located in Kenilworth or Eumundi where they are conveniently accessible.

Council may investigate the opportunity to expand the Kenilworth showgrounds if the opportunity arises.

Landscape and Built Form

Rural uses should be carried out in ways which are consistent with principles of sustainable land management. Reference is made to the Codes for Rural Development and Use contained in Volume 4 of this Planning Scheme.

Any new development should provide for the protection of the environmental values of the Mary River and its tributaries. This includes the preservation of the quality of water entering the river and creeks, and the preservation of vegetation along waterways and over steep land in order to prevent erosion and maintain habitat corridors along the river and creeks.

As far as practicable, any new development should occur within already cleared areas and provide for preservation or enhancement of remnant vegetation along waterways and on steeper elevated lands.

3. STATEMENTS OF DESIRED CHARACTER FOR PLANNING AREAS AND PRECINCTS

Any development within the vicinity of the Eumundi Kenilworth Road and Kenilworth Brooloo Road should maintain the rural character and aesthetics of the area, with any buildings and structures suitably designed and sited, including large building setbacks, rural architecture, minimal signage, and landscaping with large trees. In particular, the rural setting and views experienced around rest areas and lookouts should be retained.

Any development which is on a site adjacent to a State Forest should have regard to the environmental and management issues of the adjacent forest, in particular bushfire management.

(3) Mary River Valley State Forests and National Park *(Precinct Class = Special Purpose)*

Intent

This precinct comprises:

- the western and central parts of the Mapleton State Forest in the centre of the Shire's rural hinterland;
- the large Conondale State Forest in the south-western corner of the Shire, west of Kenilworth; and
- National Park 1100 at the south-western corner of the Shire adjoining the southern boundary of the Conondale State Forest.

The precinct is extensively vegetated with forestry and conservation the predominant land use activities. The precinct is of significant ecological and conservation value both locally and regionally due to the native forest.

The forested areas within this precinct provide natural habitat for many species of native flora and fauna. Within the precinct, rare vegetation communities exist, including an important large representation of the upland Scribbly Gum community, an area of *Eucalyptus montivaga* which is of particular conservation value, as well as remnant rainforest and blackbutt.

As well as its environmental and conservation values, the precinct has significant tourism, leisure and recreational value. A number of camping and recreation facilities exist within the State Forest which provide an important recreational and tourism resource. These facilities include the camping areas at Boolumbah and Charlie Moreland State Forests, Boolumbah Waterfalls, Fig Tree Boardwalk, the trail motorbike area at Gheerulla and various walking trails. The continuation of these low scale facilities is envisaged.

However it is not envisaged that high impact facilities, such as tourist resorts, shops or large structures, be located in the precinct. Rather, if necessary, these facilities should be located in adjacent rural areas or in Kenilworth.

It is intended that the precinct be managed by the State government in accordance with relevant legislation to ensure:

- retention of ecological and scenic values;
- sustainable management of forestry reserves; and

- an appropriate level of recreation facilities to provide tourism benefits at a level that is in keeping with sustaining the ecological values of the precinct.

Preferred and Acceptable Uses

Preferred uses within this precinct are those uses referred to in the Table of Development Assessment (refer Vol 1) for the Special Purpose precinct class, in this case State Forestry and National Park.

Any uses which detract from the natural and scenic qualities of the precinct are considered unacceptable in this precinct.

Commercial or residential uses, such as Shops and Integrated resorts and other high impact tourist facilities, are inappropriate in this precinct. Any commercial or residential uses which are considered necessary to support recreational and tourism use of the precinct, should be located outside of the precinct in adjacent rural areas, or in the case of commercial uses, located in Kenilworth township where they are conveniently accessible.

Landscape and Built Form

Any new development should be that which serves to protect and / or enhance the ecological and scenic values of the area and / or to manage recreational impacts. Management should ensure:

- retention of ecological and scenic values,
- sustainable management of forestry reserves, and
- an appropriate level of recreation facilities to provide tourism benefits at a level that is in keeping with sustaining the environmental values of the precinct.

Any new development should also provide for the protection of the environmental values of the Mary River and its tributaries. This include the preservation of the quality of water entering the river and creeks, and the preservation of vegetation along waterways and over steep land in order to prevent erosion and maintain habitat corridors along the river and creeks.

3. STATEMENTS OF DESIRED CHARACTER FOR PLANNING AREAS AND PRECINCTS

As far as practicable, any new development should occur within already cleared areas and provide for preservation or enhancement of remnant vegetation along waterways and on steeper elevated lands. It should also should maintain the natural character and aesthetics of the area, with any buildings and structures suitably designed and sited, including large building setbacks, rural architecture, minimal signage, and extensive landscaping with native species.

3. STATEMENTS OF DESIRED CHARACTER FOR PLANNING AREAS AND PRECINCTS
