

## VicRoads

### Western Highway Project – Section 3: Ararat to Stawell

#### Planning and Land Use Impact Assessment Report

November 2012



*This Planning and Land Use Assessment ("Report"):*

- 1. Has been prepared by GHD Pty Ltd ("GHD") for VicRoads;*
- 2. May only be used for the purpose of informing the Environment Effects Statement and Planning Scheme Amendment for the Western Highway Project, Section 3, Ararat to Stawell (and must not be used for any other purpose); and*
- 3. May be provided to the Department of Planning and Community Development for the purpose of public exhibition as part of the Environment Effects Statement and Planning Scheme Amendment for the Western Highway Project, Section 3, Ararat to Stawell.*

*The services undertaken by GHD in connection with preparing this Report were limited to those specifically detailed in section '4. Methodology' of this Report.*

*The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this Report are based on assumptions made by GHD when undertaking services and preparing the Report ("Assumptions"), as specified in section '4. Methodology' and throughout this Report.*

*GHD excludes liability for errors in, or omissions from, this Report arising from or in connection with any of the assumptions being incorrect.*

*Subject to the paragraphs in this section of the Report, the opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this Report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the time of preparation. GHD has not, and accepts no responsibility or obligation to update this Report to account for events or changes occurring subsequent to the date that the Report was signed.*



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## Definitions

AMP	Access Management Policy
CEMP	Contractor Environment Management Plan- provides specific environmental controls to be complied with in response to the Environment Management Plan
Ch	Chainage
EES	Environment Effects Statement
EMP	Environment Management Plan- provides additional environmental controls over and above the VicRoads Contract Shell
LESPS	Local Environment Sustainability Priority Statement
LPPF	Local Planning Policy Framework
MSS	Municipal Strategic Statement
PAO	Public Acquisition Overlay
PSA	Planning Scheme Amendment
SPPF	State Planning Policy Framework
Sub-minimal lot	An allotment which is below the minimum lot size





## Executive Summary

VicRoads is progressively upgrading the Western Highway as a four-lane divided highway between Ballarat and Stawell (Western Highway Project). The Western Highway Project consists of three sections, to be constructed in three stages. The subject of this report is Section 3 of the Western Highway Project, (the Project), which extends between Ararat and Stawell.

On 27 October 2010, the then Victorian Minister for Planning advised that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) would be required to identify the anticipated environmental effects of the Project. GHD has been commissioned by VicRoads to undertake a Planning and Land Use impact assessment for Section 3 of the Project as part of the EES.

VicRoads selected an alignment for the Project following completion of the risk and impact assessment contained within this report. The potential impacts of the proposed alignment are outlined in Section 6. This report, combined with the technical reports prepared by GHD and our related Project consultants as part of the EES, supports VicRoads' selection of the proposed alignment.

The EES scoping requirements applicable to the Planning and Land Use Impact Assessment of the Project are detailed in Section 2 of this report. In summary, it was necessary to identify any likely adverse effects on existing and potential future land use in the vicinity of the Project, as well as recommended measures for addressing those effects and identification of appropriate planning controls to mitigate these impacts.

The Planning and Land Use Impact Assessment undertaken by GHD involved assessment and review of the Ararat and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes, relevant legislation, land titles, major physical infrastructure, site inspections and discussions with Planners at Council and the Department of Planning and Community Development. In summary, the assessment identified the following potential impacts:

- ▶ Short term amenity impacts whilst the construction of the new road is being undertaken;
- ▶ The creation of smaller, isolated allotments which could be subject to redevelopment pressure;
- ▶ Longer term amenity impacts from operation in some locations where the road is closer to dwellings;
- ▶ Longer term benefit for the Great Western township due to the diversion of freight and other vehicles out of the town centre thereby improving the safety and amenity of the town; and
- ▶ Longer term benefit for the economy and tourism in the region due to improved accessibility.

Key observations from the risk assessment of the proposed alignment and associated construction corridor are:

- ▶ Land use impacts would be localised and related to the acquisition of land for the Project. This would result in impacts on agricultural viability and ability to further subdivide or develop land. These impacts would be reduced through minimising the area to be acquired, compensation for losses or relocation of structures as appropriate, and the consolidation of land holdings.
- ▶ The project would impact the connection of some existing utility services. Impacts associated with disruption to services would be reduced by complying with provider requirements during project construction.

There are no key issues associated with the Project from a Planning and Land Use perspective that cannot be managed by controls during construction.

# 1. Introduction

This report contains the specialist land use and planning assessment for the Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the Western Highway Project: Section 3 - Ararat to Stawell (the Project).

This report provides an overview of the Project area and its environs and the land use conditions of the specific study area. The planning legislation and policy including the relevant State and local policies and controls set out in the Ararat and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes and the relevant considerations under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* are also described. In addition, this report responds to the EES Scoping Requirements, is informed by consideration of the existing conditions and applies a methodology for risk and impact assessment.

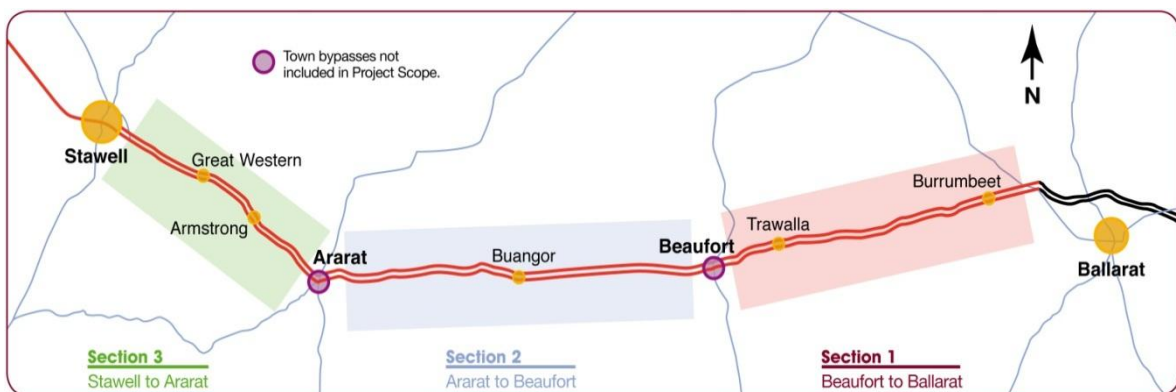
## 1.1 Project Description

The Western Highway (A8) is being progressively upgraded as a four-lane divided highway for approximately 110 kilometres (km) between Ballarat and Stawell. As the principal road link between Melbourne and Adelaide, the Western Highway serves interstate trade between Victoria and South Australia and is the key corridor through Victoria's west, supporting farming, grain production, tourism and a range of manufacturing and service activities. Currently, more than 5500 vehicles travel on the highway west of Ballarat each day, including 1500 trucks.

The Western Highway Project consists of three stages, illustrated in Figure 1:

- Section 1: Ballarat to Beaufort;
- Section 2: Beaufort to Ararat; and
- Section 3: Ararat to Stawell.

**Figure 1 Western Highway Project**



Works on an initial 8km section between Ballarat and Burrumbeet (Section 1A) commenced in April 2010 and will be completed in 2012. Construction for Section 1B (Burrumbeet to Beaufort) commenced in early 2012 and is expected to be completed by June 2014. Separate Environment Effects Statements (EESs) and Planning Scheme Amendments (PSAs) are being prepared for both Section 2 (Beaufort to Ararat) and Section 3 (Ararat to Stawell). It is expected that Sections 2 and 3 will be completed and opened in stages through to 2016, subject to future funding.



**Section 2** commences west of the railway crossing at Beaufort. Physical works commence at McKinnon Lane, and extend for a distance of approximately 38 km to Heath Street, Ararat.

**Section 3** commences at Pollard Lane, Ararat and extends for approximately 24 km to Gilchrist Road, Stawell.

The EES for Section 3 will assess the proposed upgrade of the Western Highway between Ararat and Stawell to a duplicated highway standard complying with the road category 1 (freeway) of VicRoads Access Management Policy (AMP1). The project includes a duplicated road to allow for two lanes in each direction separated by a central median.

The EES has also considered a proposed interim upgrade of the Western Highway to a highway standard complying with the VicRoads Access Management Policy AMP3. When required, the final stage of the Project is proposed to be an upgrade to freeway standard complying with AMP1.

The proposed interim stage of the Project (AMP3) would provide upgraded dual carriageways with wide median treatments at key intersections. Ultimately, the Western Highway is proposed to be a freeway (AMP1) where key intersections would be grade separated, service roads constructed and there would be no direct access to the highway.

To date \$505 million has been committed for the Western Highway Project by the Victorian Government and the Australian Government as part of the Nation Building Program.

Highway improvements for the three sections between Ballarat and Stawell will involve:

- ▶ Constructing two new traffic lanes adjacent to the existing highway, separated by a central median;
- ▶ Converting the existing highway carriageway to carry two traffic lanes in one direction; and
- ▶ Constructing sections of new four-lane divided highway on a new alignment.

In addition to separating the traffic lanes, highway safety would be improved with sealed road shoulders, safety barriers, protected turning lanes, intersection improvements, and service lanes for local access at some locations.

The town bypass of Ararat is not included in the Western Highway Project. Beyond Stawell to the Victorian border, ongoing Western Highway improvements would continue with shoulder sealing works, new passing lanes and road surface improvements.

The aims/objectives of this Project are to:

- ▶ Provide safer conditions for all road users by:
  - Reducing the incidence of head-on and run-off-road crashes;
  - Improving safety at intersections; and
  - Improving safety of access to adjoining properties.
- ▶ Improve efficiency of freight by designing for High Productivity Freight Vehicles;
- ▶ Provide adequate and improved rest areas; and
- ▶ Locate alignment to allow for possible future bypass of Ararat.





## **1.2 Study Area**

### **1.2.1 Project Area – Section 3 (Ararat to Stawell)**

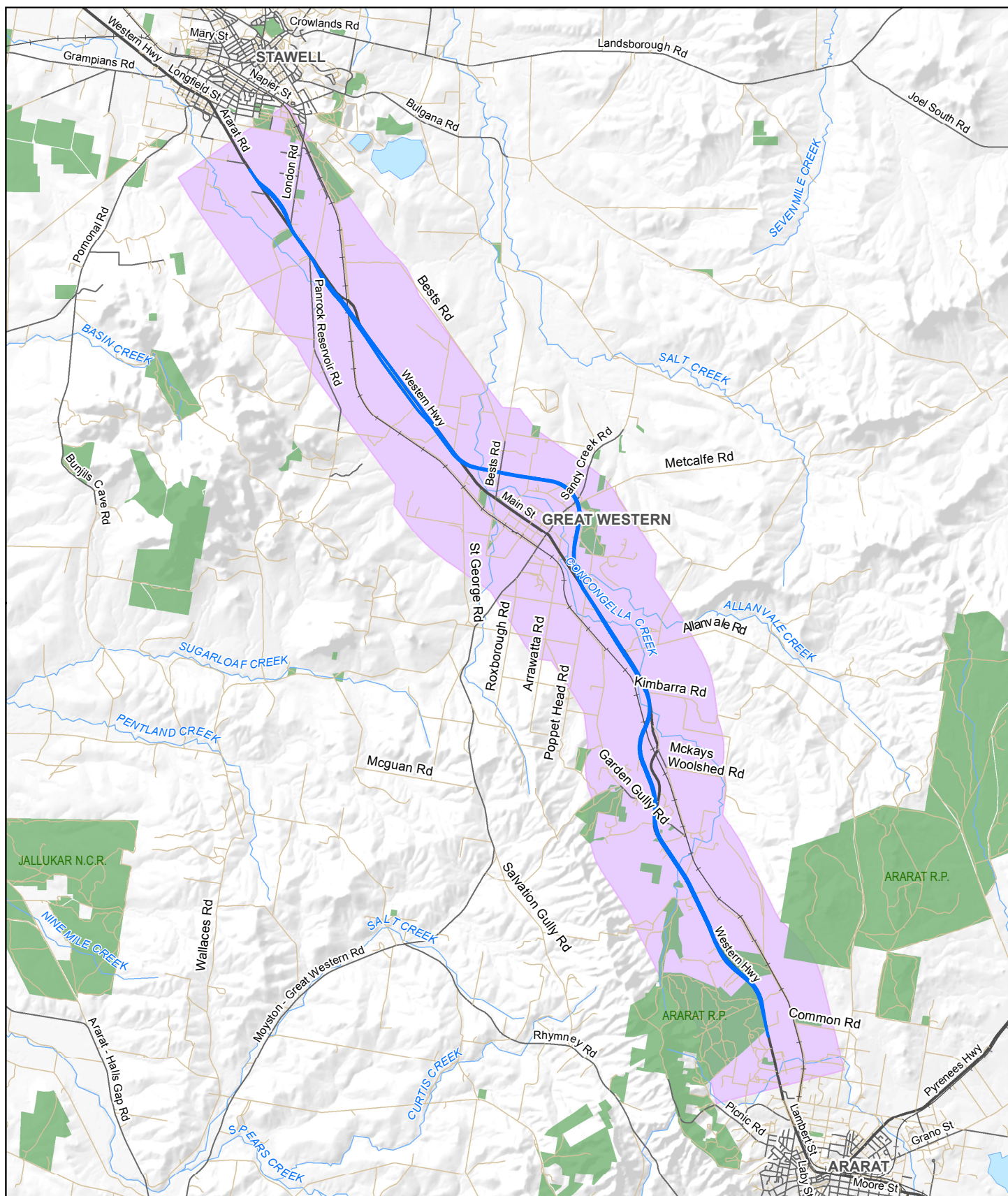
The project area was defined for the purposes of characterising the existing conditions for the Project, and to consider alignment alternatives. The project area encompasses a corridor extending generally up to 1500 m either side of the edge of the existing road reserve, except around Great Western where the project area extends up to 1800 m (encompassing the extent of new alignment possibilities either side of the town).

### **1.2.2 Section 3 Study Area**

The study area, for the purposes of the Planning and Land Use assessment for the EES encompasses the same corridor as the Project Area. The study area is shown in Figure 2.

### **1.2.3 Proposed Alignment**

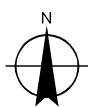
A multi-criteria assessment of alignment options was conducted based on information from the existing conditions assessments. The outcome was the selection of a proposed alignment for further consideration in the EES for Section 3. The proposed alignment and associated construction corridor is the subject of the risk and impact assessment detailed in Section 6 of this report. The proposed alignment generally extends adjacent to the existing highway corridor, except at Great Western where it bypasses the town to the north-east. The assessment of alignment options and selection of the proposed alignment is documented in Chapter 5 of the EES, and in the Options Assessment Report (Technical Appendix to the EES).



#### LEGEND

- Proposed Alignment
- Highway
- Study Area
- Sealed road (arterial & local)
- Unsealed road
- Parks

Paper Size A4  
 0 0.5 1 2 3 4  
 Kilometers  
 Map Projection: Transverse Mercator  
 Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994  
 Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 54



VicRoads  
 Western Highway Project

Ararat to Stawell  
 Study Area

Job Number 31-27558  
 Revision B  
 Date 08 Nov 2012

Figure 2

180 Lonsdale Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia T 61 3 8687 8000 F 61 3 8687 8111 E melmail@ghd.com W www.ghd.com

G:\31\27558\GIS\Maps\Deliverables\Stage 3\RISK AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT\03\_PLANNING\3127558\_S3\_001\_Study\_Area\_A4P.mxd  
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Data source: DSE, VicMap, 2012; VicRoads, 2011; GHD, Design, 2012. Created by: splaird



## 2. EES Scoping Requirements

### 2.1 EES Objectives

The Planning and Land Use objective outlined in the EES Scoping Requirements is:

- ▶ *To avoid or minimise disruption and other adverse effects on infrastructure, land use (including agriculture and households), as well as road users resulting from construction and operation of the highway duplication.*

### 2.2 EES Scoping Requirements

The EES Scoping Requirements for Planning and Land Use are as follows:

- ▶ *Characterise the area in terms of land use (existing and likely), zoning and public infrastructure that support current patterns of economic and social activity;*
- ▶ *Describe the consistency of the proposed works and relevant alternatives with the provisions of the Ararat City and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes and other relevant planning strategies. The EES should include an analysis of the proposed works and relevant alternatives against relevant planning scheme provisions, which highlights potential project implications in light of the relevant provisions;*
- ▶ *Identify potential long-term and short-term effects of the project on existing and potential future land uses either in the vicinity of the upgraded road or connected to it by the regional network (including induced development). Attention should be given to effects of the project on residential uses, agricultural uses including vineyards, wind farm infrastructure, the Ararat – Ballarat railway;*
- ▶ *Identify measures to avoid, mitigate and manage any potential adverse land use effects; and*
- ▶ *Assess the likely residual effects of the project on existing and potential future land uses.*

*The EES should also identify whether any planning scheme amendments and planning permits are required to facilitate the project. It should outline what the amendment/permit proposes to do and include an assessment of the amendment and/or project against any relevant considerations and/or requirements, where appropriate.*



### 3. Legislation, Policy and Guidelines

In order to assess the potential impacts of the Project on planning and land use, it is necessary to consider and understand any relevant Commonwealth, State and Local provisions that may apply.

#### 3.1 Commonwealth

There is no directly relevant Commonwealth legislation, policy or guidelines applicable to land use planning in relation to the Section 3 study area.

The following Sections are an analysis of relevant State based Planning and Land Use documents.

#### 3.2 State

##### 3.2.1 Planning and Environment Act 1987

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* establishes a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria in the present and long-term interest of all Victorians. The Act sets out the legislative basis to ensure that standard planning provisions are prepared and approved throughout Victoria.

The Act provides objectives of planning in Victoria as listed below. These objectives underpin all planning policy and decisions in Victoria, including:

- ▶ *To provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land.*
- ▶ *To provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity.*
- ▶ *To secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria.*
- ▶ *To conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value.*
- ▶ *To protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and coordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community.*
- ▶ *To facilitate development in accordance with the objectives set out in the points above.*
- ▶ *To balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.*

The Act sets out procedures for preparing and amending the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) and planning schemes, obtaining permits under schemes, settling disputes, enforcing compliance with schemes, and other administrative procedures. The Act provides for a single instrument of planning control, the planning scheme, which sets out the way land may be used or developed. The planning scheme is a legal document, prepared and approved under the Act.



It is noted that the relevant provisions of the Act, which establishes the process for the amendment of planning schemes is Part 3 – Amendment of Planning Schemes. In developing a Planning Scheme Amendment, a Strategic Assessment of the proposed amendment is required to be undertaken which outlines the planning rationale for preparing and evaluating a proposed planning scheme amendment and its outcomes.

### **3.2.2 Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986**

The process under which freehold land can be compulsorily acquired is set out in the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (LACA). Under the LACA, land required for a public purpose can be acquired by State Government Departments and Agencies. Acquisition can be done either compulsorily or by negotiation.

The *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* provides:

- The procedures for the compulsory or negotiated acquisition of land; and
- The procedures for the determination of compensation.

### **3.2.3 Transport Integration Act 2010**

The *Transport Integration Act 2010* (TIA) provides a policy framework for transport and land use agencies. The TIA:

- Provides for an integrated sustainable transport system by unifying all elements of the transport portfolio;
- Provides for a triple bottom line (economic, social and environmental) assessment of the transport system;
- Provides for a common vision, objectives and principles for integrated and sustainable transport policies and operations;
- Provides for the integration of land use and transport planning by including 'interfacing bodies / agencies' under the coverage of the Act; and
- Recognises that the transport system should be conceived and planned as a single system rather than competing modes.

### **3.2.4 Other Relevant Legislation**

Land use and development within Victoria is also controlled by other related legislation. The Planning Schemes, in setting out policy covering a range of social, economic, heritage and environmental matters, refer to a range of other aligned legislation and approvals. These include:

- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*;
- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*;
- *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*;
- *Environment Effects Act 1978*;
- *Environment Protection Act 1970*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth);





- ▶ *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1998;*
- ▶ *Heritage Act 1995;*
- ▶ *Land Act 1958;*
- ▶ *Road Management Act 2004*
- ▶ *Wildlife Act 1975.*

Under these Acts, a number of policies, strategies and guidelines have been developed to manage impacts on land, the environment and heritage. Policies, strategies and guidelines considered to be relevant to this Project have been identified and considered as part of the other specialist technical assessments prepared for the EES as appropriate. Where other project approvals are required under the listed Acts, these are outlined in the EES document.

### **3.3 Local Planning Schemes**

A planning scheme is a statutory document which sets out objectives, policies and provisions relating to the use, development, protection and conservation of land in the area to which it applies. A planning scheme regulates the use and development of land through planning provisions designed to achieve the objectives and policies.

The applicable planning schemes for Section 3 of the Project are the Ararat Planning Scheme and the Northern Grampians Planning Scheme. Both planning schemes have a consistent State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) and a tailored Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF). The LPPF in a Planning Scheme sets a local and regional strategic policy context for a municipality and consists of the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and specific Local Planning Policies. The MSS provides a profile of the municipality and sets out planning, land use and development objectives. The Local Planning Policies are more detailed policies for implementing the objectives and strategies identified in the MSS. These give effect to the zoning and overlay provisions discussed in Section 3.4 of this report.

Table 1 provides a summary of the objectives and strategies within the SPPF which are of particular relevance to Section 3 of the Western Highway Project.



**Table 1 SPPF Principles**

Clause	Principles / Objectives	Relevance
Clause 11 Settlement	<p><i>Planning is to anticipate and respond to the needs of existing and future communities through provisions of zoned and serviced land for housing, employment, recreation and open space, commercial and community facilities and infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>Planning is to recognise the need for, and as far as practicable contribute towards: Health and safety. ... A high standard of urban design and amenity. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources. Accessibility. Land use and transport integration.</i></p>	<p>Clause 11.05 has relevance to regional areas and the study area. Clause 11.05-1 seeks to promote the sustainable growth of Regional Victoria through a network of settlements. The strategies as part of Clause 11.05-1 support growth in regional cities, such as Ararat and Stawell.</p> <p>Clause 11.05-4 also notes the strategy to maintain and enhance regional Victoria's competitive advantages by avoiding adverse impacts on the capacity of major infrastructure (including highways) resulting from urban development in adjacent areas. It also seeks to focus major investments in regional cities on major transport corridors in order to maximise the access and mobility of communities. This Clause also notes the need to maintain and enhance environmental health and productivity of rural landscapes by managing development impacts, and by avoiding development impacts on land that contains high biodiversity values, landscape amenity, water conservation values, food production and energy production capacity, extractable resources and minerals, cultural heritage and recreation values, assets and recognised uses.</p>
Clause 12 Environmental and Landscape Values	<p><i>Planning should help to protect the health of ecological systems and the biodiversity they support (including ecosystems, habitats, species and genetic diversity) and conserve areas with identified environmental and landscape values.</i></p>	<p>This Clause contains a number of specific strategies that seek to protect and enhance biodiversity, and significant environments and landscapes. Many of the strategies and policies contained within this Clause would be addressed within the various specialist technical assessments being undertaken for the EES, including: Biodiversity and Habitat, Landscape and Visual, Surface Water, Groundwater and Soils and Geology.</p>
Clause 13 Environmental Risks	<p><i>Planning should adopt a best practice environmental management and risk management approach which aims to avoid or minimise environmental degradation and hazards. Planning should identify and manage the potential for the environment, and environmental changes, to impact upon the economic, environmental or social well-being of society.</i></p>	<p>This Clause contains a number of strategies relating to floodplain management, soil degradation, noise abatement and air quality. These policies would be addressed within the relevant technical assessments being undertaken for the EES, including: Noise and Vibration, Air Quality, Soils and Geology, Surface Water and Environmental Risk Assessment Report.</p>



Clause	Principles / Objectives	Relevance
Clause 14 Natural Resource Management	<i>Planning is to assist in the conservation and wise use of natural resources including energy, water, land, stone and minerals to support both environmental quality and sustainable development.</i>	Relevant policies within the Clause include those relating to protection of agricultural land, catchment planning and management, water quality and mineral and stone resources.  Clause 14.01-1, 'Protection of agricultural land', should be considered as part of the impact assessment being undertaken as part of this planning and land use assessment.
Clause 15 Built Environment and Heritage	<i>Planning should ensure all new land use and development appropriately responds to its landscape, valued built form and cultural context, and protect places and sites with significant heritage, architectural, aesthetic, scientific and cultural value. Creating quality built environments supports the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of our communities, cities and towns.</i>  <i>Land use and development planning must support the development and maintenance of communities with adequate and safe physical and social environments for their residents, through the appropriate location of uses and development and quality of urban design.</i>  <i>Planning should achieve high quality urban design and architecture.</i>	Relevant policies relate to landmarks, views and vistas, heritage, and design for safety. As part of the EES, these policies would be addressed within the relevant technical assessments being undertaken including the visual landscape assessment and social impact assessment.
Clause 16 Housing	<i>Planning should provide for housing diversity, and ensure the efficient provision of supporting infrastructure.</i>  <i>New housing should have access to services and be planned for long term sustainability, including walkability to activity centres, public transport, schools and open space.</i>  <i>Planning for housing should include providing land for affordable housing.</i>	This Clause seeks to ensure that housing is integrated with infrastructure and services, and is located with good access to services and transport.
Clause 17 Economic Development	<i>Planning is to provide for a strong and innovative economy, where all sectors of the economy are critical to economic prosperity.</i>	This Clause seeks to ensure that industry and tourism is located with good access for employees, freight and road transport.

Clause	Principles / Objectives	Relevance
Clause 18 Transport	<i>Planning should ensure an integrated and sustainable transport system that provide access to social and economic opportunities, facilitates economic prosperity, contributes to environmental sustainability, coordinates reliable movements of people and goods, and is safe.</i>	<p>This policy is directly relevant to the project, and is consistent with the project objectives.</p> <p>In particular, the policy requires that transport routes be located to achieve the greatest overall benefit to the community and with regard to making the best use of existing social, cultural and economic infrastructure, minimising impacts on the environment and optimising accessibility, safety, emergency access, service and amenity.</p> <p>It also seeks to locate and design new transport routes and adjoining land uses to minimise disruption of residential communities and their amenity.</p>
Clause 19 Infrastructure	<p><i>Planning for development of social and physical infrastructure should enable it to be provided in a way that is efficient, equitable, accessible and timely.</i></p> <p><i>Growth and redevelopment of settlements should be planned in a manner that allows for the logical and efficient provision and maintenance of infrastructure, including the setting aside of land for the construction of future transport routes.</i></p>	<p>This policy seeks to facilitate efficient use of existing infrastructure and human services. Providers of infrastructure, whether public or private bodies, are to be guided by planning policies and should assist strategic land use planning.</p>

### 3.3.1 Ararat Planning Scheme

The initial 7km of Section 3 of the Project is situated within the Ararat Rural City and applicable to the Ararat Planning Scheme. (Refer Figure 3).

The Ararat Rural City has an area of approximately 4,230 square kilometres. The municipality is situated some 200 kilometres north-west of Melbourne and is one of the major stopping points between Melbourne and Adelaide. The Melbourne-Adelaide railway and the Western Highway bisect the municipality and converge at Ararat. Ararat Rural City has a population of approximately 11,750 people. Ararat Township has a population of approximately 7,500 and is a very important service centre for the surrounding agricultural area. It has a large range of regional shopping, educational and recreational facilities.

The Western Highway is the main access road into and from the Ararat township. It is also noted that the Ararat Rural City contains many areas which have significant natural landscapes and features of environmental value, including natural wetlands and waterways, archaeological and historic features. There are also significant areas of public land hosting native vegetation and wildlife habitat.

The Ararat Planning Scheme provides the following relevant local strategies and policies as outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2 Ararat Planning Scheme LPPF Strategies**

Strategy	Objectives	Relevance
<b>Municipal Strategic Statement</b>		
Settlement and Housing	<p><i>To retain and promote the individual character and role of each of the towns as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ <i>Ararat as the major residential, service and business centre in the municipality</i></li> <li>▀ <i>To control development in townships having regard to the environmental and physical sensitivities.</i></li> <li>▀ <i>To promote living opportunities in the Ararat central business district.</i></li> <li>▀ <i>To focus rural living opportunities in identified areas around existing towns and serviced areas.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The municipality is heavily dependent on road transport as its primary means of transport and travel. The Western Highway through Ararat is a principal road, linking state capital cities and is designated as a National Highway. Land use planning should take full account of this National Highway when development occurs in its vicinity. The major future road issue facing the municipality is the potential for a bypass of Ararat and the consequent effects.</p> <p>These policies support the upgrade of the Western Highway and its underlying objectives to maintain safe and efficient access to key towns within the municipality.</p>
Environment	<p><i>To integrate and ensure consistency in land use planning and catchment management.</i></p> <p><i>To ensure that planning in rural areas has regard to key environmental and natural resource management issues.</i></p> <p><i>To protect and enhance native vegetation to achieve a net gain in the area and quality of native vegetation throughout the municipality</i></p> <p><i>To ensure that land use and development does not negatively impact on the environment, social and economical values of public land</i></p> <p><i>To protect, conserve and enhance areas, features and sites of historic, aboriginal, natural and cultural significance.</i></p>	<p>Relevant policies relating to heritage, social and economic impacts and flora and fauna would be addressed within the relevant technical assessments being undertaken for the EES.</p> <p>In assessing the proposed alignment, consideration would be given to natural resource management, including areas of native vegetation and water courses that would be impacted.</p> <p>In undertaking the EES, heritage assessments have been undertaken on historic and aboriginal cultural heritage to help inform the final alignment selected.</p>

Strategy	Objectives	Relevance
Economic Development	<p><i>To maintain and promote a viable and sustainable agricultural industry.</i></p> <p><i>To recognise and protect farmland as an important resource.</i></p> <p><i>To promote and maximise the benefits of tourism for the municipality</i></p> <p><i>Develop and promote the Western Highway Logistics Hub as the preferred location for industries requiring access and exposure to the highway, heavy vehicle activities, warehousing and transport businesses.</i></p> <p><i>Discourage development along the Western Highway through Ararat which may be detrimental to its safety, efficiency and function.</i></p>	<p>These policies support the upgrade of the Western Highway and its underlying objectives to maintain safe and efficient access to the region.</p> <p>The alignment seeks to minimise travel time for businesses utilising the highway and also to assist in tourism through safer road connections. Adoption of VicRoads' Tourism Signage Policy would assist in maintain and promoting tourism for businesses along and off the highway.</p> <p>The alignment has also had consideration of impacts on lot sizes and the ability for ongoing viable land uses.</p> <p>Socio-economic issues are considered with the relevant specialist assessments undertaken for the Project, including: Social Impact Assessment and Economic Impact Assessment.</p>

#### Local Planning Policies

There are no Local Planning Policies within the Ararat Planning Scheme

### 3.3.2 Northern Grampians Planning Scheme

The Northern Grampians Shire encompasses approximately 17km of the Project, from Armstrong to Stawell. This extent of the alignment is subject to the provisions of the Northern Grampians Planning Scheme (Refer to Figure 3).

Northern Grampians Shire is located in central western Victoria, about 230 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. The Shire's population in 2006 was approximately 11,871. Council's planning scheme states that approximately 73% of the Shire's population reside in the towns of Stawell (approximately 7,000 people) and St Arnaud (approximately 3,000 people). These towns provide the focus of the Shire's retail, commercial, industrial, administrative and service orientated employment and economic activity.

Smaller townships of the Northern Grampians include Glenorchy, Great Western, Halls Gap, Marnoo, Navarre and Stuart Mill. The Shire encompasses a total land area of almost 6,000 square kilometres, including substantial areas of national park. Rural land is used mainly for sheep grazing, cereal cropping, viticulture, olive growing and gold mining. Tourism is an important industry. Major tourist features of the Shire include the Grampians National Park, St Arnaud Range National Park, Lake Bellfield, Lake Fyans, Lake Lonsdale, Moora Moora Reservoir, Wartook Reservoir, Stawell Gold Mine, the Stawell Central Business District, Brambuk - The National Park & Cultural Centre, numerous nature conservation reserves and various wineries. The Shire is served by the Sunraysia Highway, the Western Highway and the Wimmera Highway.

A review of the Northern Grampians Planning Scheme revealed the following local strategies and policies relevant to the Project, as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3 Northern Grampians Planning Scheme LPPF Strategies**

Strategy	Objectives	Relevance
<b>Municipal Strategic Statement</b>		
Settlement	<p><i>To facilitate the orderly development of the Shire's main townships.</i></p> <p>Stawell:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>All urban development will be directed to the north of the Western Highway, ensuring that its role as a bypass is not prejudiced.</i></li> </ul> <p>Great Western:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>All development with frontage to the Western Highway will have regard to the importance of the highway as a national road.</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Viticulture and wine production industries to be encouraged</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Development of Great Western is to be consistent with the Great Western Strategic Framework Plan</i></li> </ul>	<p>The towns of Stawell and Great Western are bisected by the existing Western Highway. In Stawell this provides for a service business centre complementing existing services and industries within Stawell.</p> <p>The Project includes a bypass of Great Western, reducing the volume of heavy vehicle movements through the town. The MSS outlines the proposed growth of Great Western, but notes that further development is restricted by existing flood prone areas and poor soils which do not support septic systems. The new highway alignment could provide a new boundary to the town to the north-east.</p>
Tourism	<p><i>Promote the complementary functions between tourist destinations in the Shire with those in Ararat, Horsham, and Dunkeld.</i></p> <p><i>Promote the development of Stawell as an attractive town with many heritage assets as the gateway to the Grampians.</i></p>	<p>The upgrade to the Western Highway would assist in facilitating access to the tourist destinations and maintain safe and efficient access to the region.</p>
Environment	<p><i>Objective is to achieve total catchment management;</i></p> <p><i>Manage Salinity;</i></p> <p><i>Maintain and improve the condition of waterways and wetlands to achieve acceptable water quality standards;</i></p> <p><i>To protect flora and fauna;</i></p> <p><i>To reduce soil erosion; and</i></p> <p><i>To reduce the impacts of flooding and surface water run-off.</i></p>	<p>The Western Highway crosses a number of creeks and floodplains. The Project would result in new waterway crossings and surface water modelling and a surface water impact assessment (which forms Technical Appendix G the EES) have helped inform the design of the new carriageways to reduce flooding impacts.</p> <p>The proposed alignment has been designed to minimise impacts on the environment, including flora and fauna, where possible by varying the alignment width to protect areas of sensitive vegetation within centre medians and minimise the construction footprint (including run off areas) where required.</p>





Strategy	Objectives	Relevance
Heritage	<i>Conserve and protect sites and precincts of natural, archaeological, architectural, cultural and historic significance.</i>	<p>A Cultural Heritage Management Plan would be prepared for the Project under the requirements of the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i>.</p> <p>An Aboriginal Heritage assessment and a Historical Heritage assessment have been undertaken as part of the EES (refer to Technical Appendix K) and have been utilised to help inform the alignment and protect areas of heritage significance.</p>

#### Local Planning Policies

Clause 22.02 Western Highway	<p><i>To ensure that the use and development of land does not prejudice the levels of service, safety and amenity of the Western Highway.</i></p> <p><i>To minimise any adverse effects of noise from traffic using the highway, particularly where the highway passes through Stawell and Great Western.</i></p>	<p>This policy applies to the use and development of land within 100 metres of the Western Highway within the townships of Stawell and Great Western. The technical studies being undertaken as part of the EES have helped to inform the new alignment to consider and address potential adverse amenity considerations (such as noise), particularly at Great Western.</p> <p>This policy supports the upgrade of the Western Highway and its underlying objectives to maintain safe and efficient access to the region.</p>
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### 3.4 Planning Zones and Overlays

Planning zones ('zones') are used in all planning schemes, and are used to administer and implement the SPPF and LPPF. Some zones, such as the Farming Zone (FZ) have schedules that provide for local circumstances. In addition, further planning provisions may apply to a site or area through the application of an overlay. As with the zones, standard overlays are applied to implement strategy as required. Generally, overlays apply to a single issue or related set of issues, and multiple overlays can be used. Many overlays have schedules to specify local objectives and requirements. The zones and overlays that apply to the study area from both the Ararat and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes are outlined in sections 3.4.1 to 3.4.2 of this report. Planning Scheme Amendments (PSAs) to the Ararat and Northern Grampians planning schemes would be required for the Project.

#### 3.4.1 Planning Scheme Zones

Table 4 provides a summary of zones and their relevant objectives within the study area. The zones can trigger approvals for use of land, buildings and works and removal of vegetation. Zoning maps for the study area are provided in Appendix A.



**Table 4 Planning Zones**

Planning Zone	Planning Scheme	Objectives
Road Zone Category 1 (Western Highway)  (RDZ1)	Ararat Planning Scheme  Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	<i>To identify significant existing roads.</i>  <i>To identify land which has been acquired for a significant proposed road.</i>
Rural Living  RLZ2  RLZ5	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	<i>To provide for residential use in a rural environment.</i>  <i>To provide for agricultural land uses which do not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding land uses.</i>  <i>To protect and enhance the natural resources, biodiversity and landscape and heritage values of the area.</i>  <i>To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.</i>
Farming Zone  (FZ)	Ararat Planning Scheme  Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	<i>To provide for the use of land for agriculture.</i>  <i>To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.</i>  <i>To ensure that non-agricultural uses, particularly dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.</i>  <i>To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.</i>  <i>To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.</i>
Public Use Zone  PUZ4- Transport	Ararat Planning Scheme  Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	<i>To recognise public land use for public utility and community services and facilities.</i>  <i>To provide for associated uses that are consistent with the intent of the public land reservation or purpose.</i>
Public Conservation and Resource Zone  (PCRZ)	Ararat Planning Scheme  Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	<i>To protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values.</i>  <i>To provide facilities which assist in public education and interpretation of the natural environment with minimal degradation of the natural environment or natural processes.</i>  <i>To provide for appropriate resource based uses.</i>

Planning Zone	Planning Scheme	Objectives
Township Zone (TZ)	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	<p><i>To provide for residential development and a range of commercial, industrial and other uses in small towns.</i></p> <p><i>To encourage residential development that respects the neighbourhood character.</i></p>
Public Park and Recreation (PPRZ)	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	<p><i>To recognise areas for public recreation and open space.</i></p> <p><i>To protect and conserve areas of significance where appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>To provide for commercial uses where appropriate.</i></p>

### 3.4.2 Planning Scheme Overlays

Table 5 sets out a summary of Overlays and their purpose within the study area. Planning Overlays can trigger approvals for buildings and works and removal of vegetation. Overlay maps for the study area are provided in Appendix B.

**Table 5 Planning Scheme Overlays**

Planning Overlay	Planning Scheme	Purpose
Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)	Ararat Planning Scheme Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	<p><i>To assist to strengthen community resilience to bushfire.</i></p> <p><i>To identify areas where the bushfire hazard requires specified bushfire protection measures for subdivision and buildings and works to be implemented.</i></p> <p><i>To ensure that the location, design and construction of development considers the need to implement bushfire protection measures.</i></p> <p><i>To ensure development does not proceed unless the risk to life and property from bushfires can be reduced to an acceptable level.</i></p>
Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO1) Significant and Remnant Vegetation VPO2 Roadside Vegetation Project Areas	Ararat Planning Scheme	<p><i>To protect areas of significant vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>To ensure that development minimises loss of vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>To preserve existing trees and other vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>To recognise vegetation protection areas as locations of special significance, natural beauty, interest and importance.</i></p> <p><i>To maintain and enhance habitat and habitat corridors for indigenous fauna.</i></p> <p><i>To encourage the regeneration of native vegetation.</i></p>
Land Subject to Inundation (LSIO)	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	<p><i>To identify land in a flood storage or flood fringe area affected by the 1 in 100 year flood or any other area determined by the floodplain management authority.</i></p> <p><i>To ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is</i></p>

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*compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions and would not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity.*

*To reflect any declaration under Division 4 of Part 10 of the Water Act 1989 where a declaration has been made.*

*To protect water quality in accordance with the provisions of relevant State Environment Protection Policies, particularly in accordance with Clauses 33 and 35 of the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria).*

*To ensure that development maintains or improves river and wetland health, waterway protection and flood plain health.*

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### **3.5 Particular Provisions**

Particular provisions are specific planning requirements for a range of identified uses and developments. They apply consistently across the State and are therefore common to both the Northern Grampians and the Ararat Planning Schemes. The particular provisions apply in addition to the requirements of a zone or overlay. Those considered relevant to the project and the study area are outlined below.

#### **3.5.1 Clause 52.03 Specific Sites and Exclusions**

This Clause provides for specific planning approval exemptions in particular circumstances and can be applied to provide for a single overarching approval where there are otherwise multiple approvals required. Where this provision is applied, the land / project must be identified within a schedule to the zone and specific controls developed to facilitate approval or restrict approvals.

When Clause 52.03 is utilised, an 'Incorporated Document' must be prepared outlining any specific approvals requirements and included within the planning scheme. The Incorporated Document is listed in the Schedule to Clause 81.01 (Incorporated Documents).

#### **3.5.2 Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation**

This Clause seeks to protect and conserve native vegetation through avoiding the removal of native vegetation, and if the removal cannot be avoided, to minimise the removal through appropriate planning and design, and appropriately offsetting the loss of native vegetation. A planning permit is required under this Clause to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead native vegetation, except if a specified exemption applies. An application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation must be supported by a flora and fauna assessment that takes consideration of the steps required to avoid, minimise and offset the loss of vegetation, consistent with *Victoria's Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action* (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002). A flora and fauna assessment has been undertaken for the Project and has considered these requirements in detail.



### **3.5.3 Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to a Road Zone, Category 1, or a Public Acquisition Overlay for a Category 1 Road**

This Clause applies to land adjacent to a Road Zone, Category 1, or a Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) if the purpose of the acquisition is for a Category 1 road, and ensures appropriate access to identified roads by requiring a permit to create or alter access to a road in a Road Zone Category 1, and/or land in a PAO.

A PAO would be required to facilitate acquisition by VicRoads of land required for the Project. Requirements associated with changed access would be managed as part of the acquisition process by VicRoads and considered as part of the EES and PSA.

## **3.6 Other Local Strategies**

The following strategic plans and documents are also considered to be relevant to the study area as they inform land use and development in the broader area. These are outlined below.

### **3.6.1 Ararat Residential Land Use Strategy 2005**

The objective of this strategy is to address the 30 year housing needs for the town of Ararat. Ararat has significant opportunities to address anticipated housing demand beyond the year 2035. The residential options discussed in this strategy are a high level identification of residential and rural residential land to address the housing needs of Ararat. The options also address many of the Victorian Government criteria for identifying residential land. It is important to note that to clarify a more detailed demand and supply position; a local structure plan would have to be undertaken in the identified areas.

The Strategy outlines the following option for increasing the supply of residential land:

#### **Infill**

- ▶ By actively encouraging redevelopment of existing larger lots, particularly those lots with side or rear lane access and shop-top housing, it is anticipated that up to half the supply required could be found within the existing area of Ararat. However there appears to be a market reluctance to take up infill opportunities. It is anticipated that this would change over time.

#### **Greenfield**

- ▶ As no single area has been identified as completely free of constraints a preferred staging of development has not been determined. It has been decided that the market is best placed to determine the staging and timing of development. This strategy therefore identifies options and not preferences that apply within the study area.
  - The area to the east of town, adjacent to Green Hill Lake, has been identified as suitable for residential development, provided transport and connectivity issues to the Ararat town centre can be overcome.

#### **Rural Residential**

- ▶ Provision of sufficient supply and choice are the main criteria.
- ▶ Rural Living demand should be directed to an expansion of the northern Rural Living Zone (RLZ) area between the Western Highway and the railway line.
  - Development of a new RLZ area is recommended for the area south of the Racecourse.



- Where sewerage disposal issues can be addressed, it is recommended that Council investigate the option of Low Density Residential development in order to maximise the use of this land.

### **3.6.2 Ararat Rural Zone Review 2007**

In 2007, a review of Rural Zones was undertaken within the Ararat Rural City. The review was undertaken to assess the 8,000 rural zoned lots which were less than the 40 hectare (ha) minimum lot size. The objective of the review was to provide recommendations to Council associated with the long term planning framework to guide urban, residential and rural living development and to provide a framework for the development of dwellings on land in the Farming Zone. The Ararat Rural Zones Review suggested guidelines be incorporated into the planning scheme for development on lots less than 40 ha. Recommendations from the Review associated with rural residential development and township frameworks were incorporated into the Planning Scheme, however, the guidelines for residential development on lots less than 40 ha are yet to be incorporated.

### **3.6.3 Ararat Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2010-2020**

In September 2008 Ararat Rural City completed a Local Environment Sustainability Priority Statement (LESPS) which outlines and commits Council to key Accord Principles and forms the basis of future programs. The Strategy explores environmental themes, prioritises a plan of action and guide's Council's long term environmental management and sustainability commitments over the next 10 years.

There are three main themes that form the goals and priority actions of the Strategy.

- *Responding to Climate Change;*
- *Enhancing and Restoring our Natural Assets; and*
- *Using our Resources Wisely.*

### **3.6.4 Northern Grampians Council Plan 2009-2013**

The purpose of the Council Plan is to provide a framework for undertaking a range of actions that will enable the vision, '*Creating a better lifestyle and environment*' of the Northern Grampians Shire to be achieved.

The plan lists a range of goals and strategies to achieve the shared vision. The goals are:

- *A healthy, supportive and safe community providing a sustainable, quality lifestyle;*
- *A sustainable natural and built environment that meets current and future needs;*
- *A sustainable economy attracting and encouraging new enterprises while supporting existing businesses; and*
- *Progressive leadership, good governance, efficient and cost-effective services.*

### **3.6.5 Northern Grampians Sustainable Living Strategy 2011**

The Northern Grampians Shire Council has developed a Sustainable Living Strategy to:

- *Ensure Council makes the pursuit of sustainable living a priority when undertaking its operations and fulfilling its responsibilities;*
- *Highlight sustainable gaps, concerns and issues;*





- ▶ *Promote collective responsibility for sustainable living by engaging the community and supporting change.*

The Strategy states that the Northern Grampians has some of the State's most stressed ecosystems and that the Strategy has been prepared to help improve environmental management, reduce water use, energy use, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Whilst the Western Highway is not part of the Strategy, improved traffic flow along the highway would assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and indirectly support Council's Strategy.

### **3.6.6 Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy**

The Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy is a blueprint for investment in environmental projects over a five year period. It provides the vision for the future landscape of the Wimmera based on good science and local commitment to a sustainable landscape improvement. The RCS details projects and objectives to enhance and conserve the following regional assets:

- ▶ *Wetlands, streams and terminal lakes;*
- ▶ *Groundwater;*
- ▶ *Agricultural land;*
- ▶ *Heritage sites;*
- ▶ *Parks and reserves;*
- ▶ *State forests;*
- ▶ *Remnant vegetation.*

### **3.6.7 Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Plan**

The Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Plan (WSMRP), June 2010 directly references the importance of the Western Highway as "the Western Highway is the principal road link between Melbourne and Adelaide, serving interstate trade between Victoria and South Australia". The WSMRP acknowledges the need "To improve road safety and enhance road freight efficiency, upgrading the Western Highway to a four lane highway between Stawell and the South Australian border is a long-term aspiration of the Wimmera Southern Mallee".

The WSMRP also states as an action, the "Duplication of the Western Highway to the South Australian border to provide a safe road transport corridor through the region".

### **3.6.8 Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan, June 2010**

The Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan (CHRSP), June 2010 was prepared by member Councils of the Central Highlands Region and co-ordinated by Regional Development Victoria on behalf of State Government. The region encompasses the extent of the Western Highway. The CHRSP enunciates a Regional vision and a set of strategic directions and actions to be pursued. Of direct relevance to the Planning and Land Use directions for the Western Highway the CHRSP comments as follows:

*" 3.3.2 Transport Upgrades - The road and rail east - west transport spine across the region with the further planned improvements to the Western Highway, such as the duplication of the Western Highway from Ballarat to Stawell (funded by Auslink). The VicRoads project scope is to include in the construction the bypasses of Trawalla, Buangor and Great Western and to plan (but not to construct) the bypasses of*



*Beaufort and Ararat. The ultimate construction of these critical aspects of infrastructure will strengthen the region's comparative advantage against other regions in the State. "*

### **3.6.9 Stawell – Ararat – Halls Gap Triangle Rural Zone Review (Draft Report) 2012**

This report was prepared to review existing rural zones and local level strategies and policies within the Ararat and Northern Grampians Shire to:

- ▶ *Establish a strategic vision for the study area;*
- ▶ *Provide clear direction for the staging of use and development;*
- ▶ *Make recommendations regarding effective and seamless planning controls across the municipal boundary; and*
- ▶ *Improve the application of the rural zones across Shire boundaries based on available strategic information.*

The Western Highway forms the eastern boundary of the Rural Zone Review study area and further analysis was undertaken of the current and future tourism opportunities at Great Western arising from the Western Highway Project.

The report acknowledges that there are a range of zones within the Great Western Township and that zones around Best's Winery could be further investigated to protect future operations following finalisation of the alignment for the Western Highway Project. The report also recommends Council 'amend Clause 21.05 of the Planning Scheme to promote the revitalisation of Great Western associated with the Western Highway duplication'.

On balance, the report notes that the duplication of the Western Highway provides an opportunity to revitalise the Great Western town centre and reinforce its role as a key tourism node in the Triangle. It is noted this report is currently out for comment and is yet to be finalised or implemented.

### **3.6.10 Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program- DSE & GWM Water**

The Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program has funded sustainable solutions to improve water and sewerage connections to small towns throughout Victoria. As part of the Program, Great Western has received funding for the Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Authority to provide a sewerage scheme to the town that will comprise a pump well unit on each property that collects wastewater and grey water and pumps it to a central wastewater treatment plant.

The Program will seek to avoid any potential impacts on public health or the environment resulting from faulty or ill maintained septic systems. Provision of a sewerage system within Great Western may also assist in facilitating growth of the township.



## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Existing Conditions

The existing conditions assessment reviewed the whole of the study area, inclusive of the various alignment options, to identify the proposed alignment. The assessment included the following:

- ▶ Desktop methods, involving the review of relevant legislation, policies and strategies;
- ▶ Review of land titles and aerial photography, provided by VicRoads; and
- ▶ Discussions with strategic planning officers of Ararat Rural City Council, Northern Grampians Shire Council and the regional office of the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Numerous site inspections of the study area were also undertaken to better understand the land use and subdivision patterns.

### 4.2 Impact and Risk Assessment

The following impact assessment methodology was used to determine the Planning and Land Use impact pathways and risk ratings for the Project:

1. Determine the impact pathway (how the Project impacts on a given Planning and Land Use value or issue).
2. Describe the consequences of the impact pathway.
3. Determine the maximum credible 'consequence level' associated with the impact. Table 6 provides guidance criteria for assigning the level of consequence. The method for defining these criteria is described in Section 4.2.1.
4. Determine the likelihood of the consequence occurring to the level assigned in step 3. Likelihood descriptors are provided in Table 7; and
5. Use the Consequence Level and Likelihood Level in the Risk Matrix in Table 8 to determine the risk rating.

**Table 6 Planning and Land Use Impacts Consequence Table**

	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<i>Land Use Change</i>	<i>Land use changes that would not result in inconsistency with planning policies</i>	<i>Land use changes that would result in minor inconsistency with local planning policies</i>	<i>Land use changes that would result in significant inconsistency with local planning policies</i>	<i>Land use changes that would result in significant inconsistency with local and State planning policies</i>	<i>Land use changes that would result in extensive conflict with planning policies</i>
<i>Utility and Infrastructure Services</i>	<i>No impact on existing utilities</i>	<i>Temporary impediment to operation and/or maintenance of existing utilities during construction but still able to be adequately operated and maintained with mitigation measures</i>	<i>Impediment to operation and/or maintenance of existing utilities but still able to be adequately operated and maintained with mitigation measures</i>	<i>Significant disruption to the operation and/or maintenance of existing utilities but still able to be adequately operated and maintained with mitigation measures</i>	<i>Utilities of regional or State significance not able to be maintained and/or operated</i>
<i>Acquisition and fragmentation of existing land uses and landholdings</i>	<i>No or negligible fragmentation of land uses or land holdings (such as the acquisition of land within 10m of the existing property boundary)</i>	<i>Some minor fragmentation / acquisition of land but properties still able to be used for existing purposes</i>	<i>Fragmentation of land results in 1-10 properties no longer being viable / accessible / useable for existing purpose (assumes acquisition through the centre of existing parcels of land).</i>	<i>Fragmentation / acquisition of land results in 10-20 properties no longer being viable / accessible / useable for existing purpose (assumes acquisition through the centre of existing parcels of land).</i>	<i>Fragmentation / acquisition of land results in 20+ properties no longer being viable / accessible / useable for existing purpose (assumes acquisition through the centre of existing parcels of land).</i>

**Table 7 Likelihood Guide**

Descriptor	Explanation
Almost Certain	The event is expected to occur in most circumstances
Likely	The event will probably occur in most circumstances
Possible	The event could occur
Unlikely	The event could occur but not expected
Rare	The event may occur only in exceptional circumstances



**Table 8 Risk Matrix**

Likelihood	Consequence Level				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost Certain	Low	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Possible	Negligible	Low	Medium	High	High
Unlikely	Negligible	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare	Negligible	Negligible	Low	Medium	Medium

#### 4.2.1 Consequence Criteria

Consequence criteria range on a scale of magnitude from “insignificant” to “catastrophic”. Magnitude was considered a function of the size of the impact, the spatial area affected and expected recovery time of the value impacted. Consequence criteria descriptions indicating a minimal size impact over a local area, and with a recovery time potential within the range of normal variability were considered to be at the negligible end of the scale. Conversely, catastrophic consequence criteria describe scenarios involving a very high magnitude event, affecting a State-wide area, or requiring over a decade to reach functional recovery.

The consequences on land uses were determined having regard to the severity of impact for ongoing use of the land. If the boundary of a property was impacted, but the balance retained, it was considered a less significant impact, whereas if a property was severed into sub minimal lots and no longer able to be used for its existing purpose, nor developed for a dwelling under the provisions of the planning scheme, it was considered a significant impact. Accordingly, where lots are no longer developable or viable for ongoing farming purposes, the higher the consequence.

Similarly, the impact on infrastructure was considered based on the ability for utility services to be maintained during the construction activities.

## 5. Existing Conditions

The Planning and Land Use Assessment considers the existing land uses within the study area and potential land uses having regard to the existing planning controls. The study area has been divided based on municipal boundaries for ease of description, as outlined below:

- Ararat Rural City: commencing north of Pollard Lane on the western side of Ararat and extending approximately 7 km to the Armstrong Deviation; and
- Northern Grampians Shire: commencing at the Armstrong Deviation and continuing for approximately 17 km to Gilchists Road on the outskirts of Stawell.

Figure 3 illustrates the location of the municipal boundaries in relation to the proposed alignment.

### 5.1 Ararat Rural City

The study area within the Ararat Rural City commences north of Pollard Lane, adjacent to the Ararat Regional Park and extends north for approximately 7 km adjacent to the existing highway corridor. The alignment extends past the locality of Armstrong which was subject to a previous highway bypass (known as the Armstrong Deviation) approximately 10 years ago. The Melbourne-Adelaide railway line extends adjacent to (and under) the highway near Armstrong.

Land which abuts either side of the highway is mainly privately owned (aside from the Ararat Regional Park) and comprises allotment sizes ranging between 1ha and 53ha. The construction of the Armstrong Deviation approximately 10 years ago has resulted in the creation of some smaller landholdings in this location of approximately 2ha in area.

The study area also includes properties that have been developed for an olive grove and vineyards located adjacent to the existing Western Highway. In addition, there are a number of dams which have been constructed within the study area along both sides of the Highway. It is also noted that the entire study area is covered by two current Mineral Exploration Licences: Brimstone Resources Ltd and Range River Gold Ltd.

The Armstrong locality was subject to historic gold mining activity and the remnants of former mining works exist in places alongside the highway and wider area.

### 5.2 Northern Grampians Shire

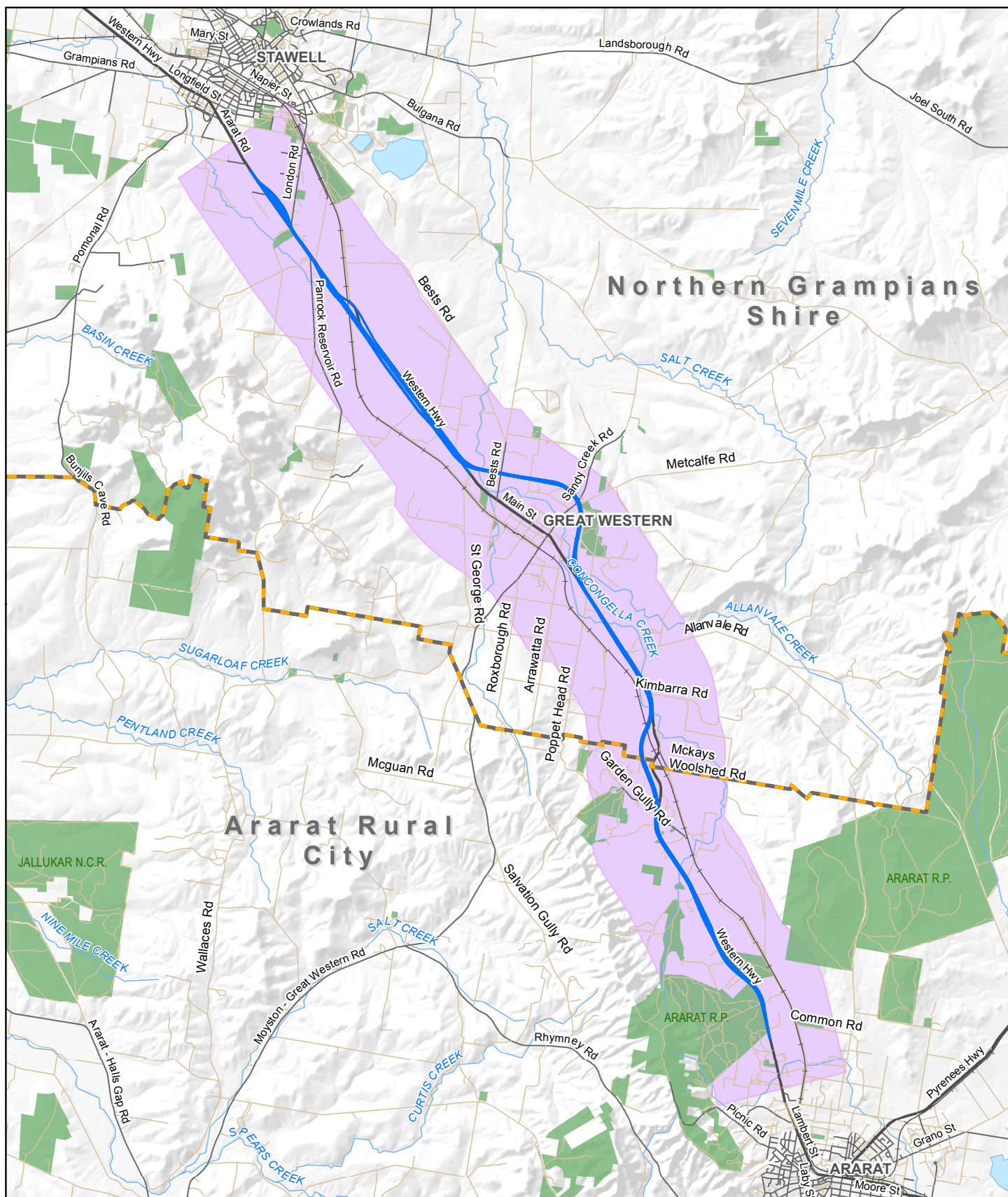
The study area within the Northern Grampians Shire extends for approximately 17 km and includes the proposed bypass of Great Western. The proposed alignment extends adjacent to the existing highway (aside from the bypass) and land adjacent to the highway has been developed for agricultural pursuits including grazing and viticulture.

Within and adjoining the township of Great Western area are several vineyards, including Seppelts, Best's, and Grampians Estate.

The immediate area surrounding the Western Highway is predominantly rural / rural residential, with agricultural land and bush reserves in the surrounding area.

It is noted that the highway extends over a number of creeks, including multiple crossings of the Concongella Creek, which was subject to flooding in January 2011.

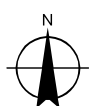




#### LEGEND

- |  |                    |  |                                |
|--|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|
|  | Municipal boundary |  | Highway                        |
|  | Study Area         |  | Sealed road (arterial & local) |
|  | Proposed Alignment |  | Unsealed road                  |
|  | Parks              |  |                                |

Paper Size A4  
 0 0.5 1 2 3 4  
 Kilometers  
 Map Projection: Transverse Mercator  
 Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994  
 Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 54



VicRoads  
 Western Highway Project

Ararat to Stawell  
 Municipal Boundary

Job Number 31-27558  
 Revision B  
 Date 08 Nov 2012

Figure 3

180 Lonsdale Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia T 61 3 8687 8000 F 61 3 8687 8111 E melmail@ghd.com W www.ghd.com  
 G:\3127558\GIS\Maps\Deliverables\Stage 3\RISK AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT\03\_PLANNING\3127558\_S3\_003\_Municipal\_Boundary\_A4P.mxd

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Data source: DSE, VicMap, 2012; VicRoads, 2012; GHD, Design, 2012. Created by: splaird



Land to the east of Great Western includes an operating quarry and former municipal landfill. There are three current Work Authorities for sand / gravel extraction within the proposed alignment.

North of Great Western, the study area is predominantly agricultural land with a number of established dwellings located on rural properties. The Stawell Park Caravan Park and the 18 hole Grange Golf Course are located south of the Western Highway on the outskirts of Stawell.

The road reserve and surrounding area contains substantial amounts of vegetation, as described in the Flora and Fauna Impact Assessment. In addition, there are areas of Cultural Heritage significance, such as Sisters Rocks near the intersection of London Road, have been considered as part of the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment.

### **5.3 Tenure**

Land titles have been reviewed for the study area and the land tenure pattern is illustrated in Figure 4.

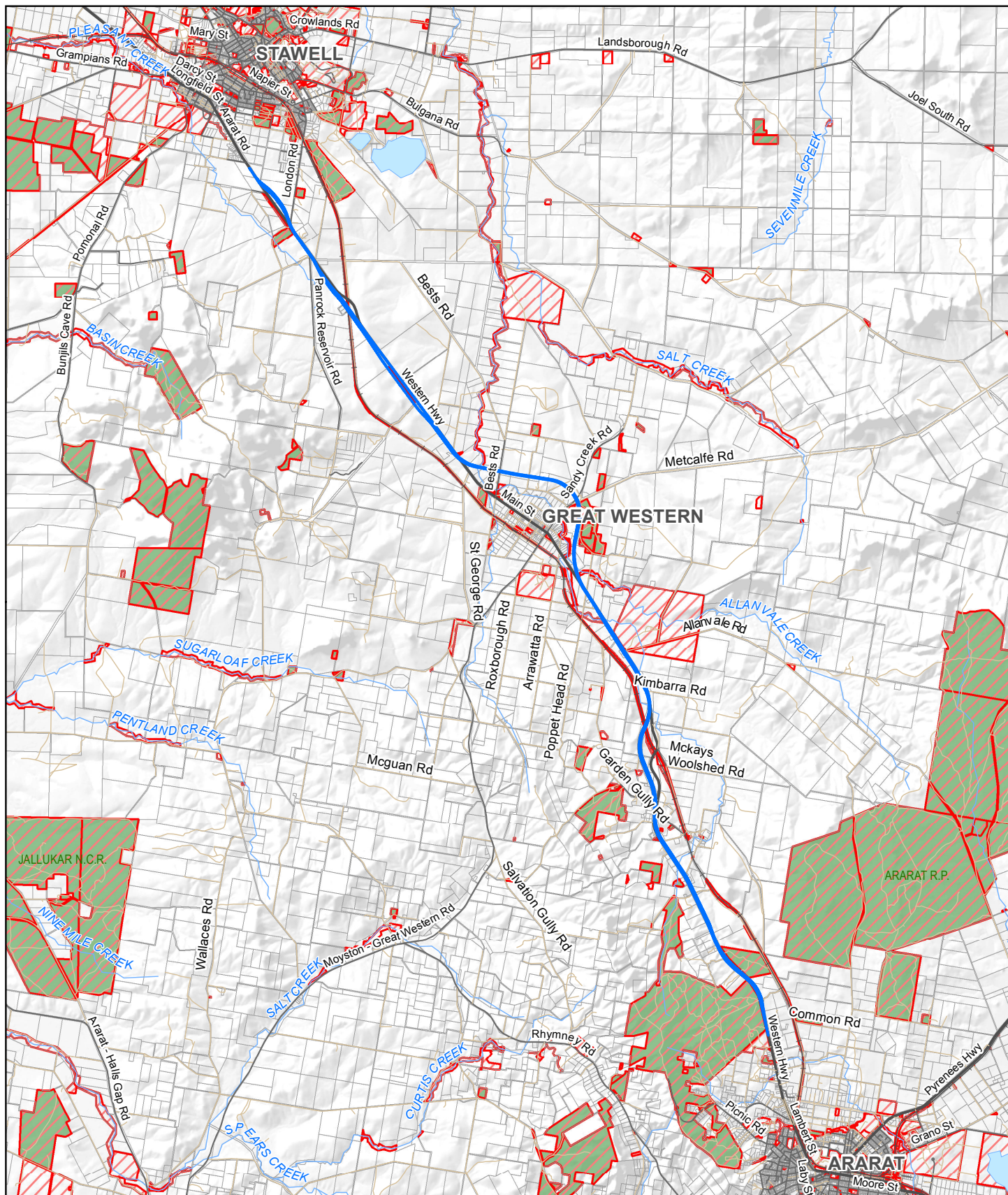
The majority of land within the study area is freehold land, with areas of Crown Land managed by either VicRoads (Western Highway), VicTrack (railway line), or DSE and Parks Victoria (Ararat Regional Park). Local access roads are generally Crown land (government roads) managed by the respective Councils.

It is noted most of the titles adjacent to the highway comprise smaller allotments, such as:

- ▶ The Armstrong township, where allotments are as small as 0.1ha to 8ha;
- ▶ Great Western, where conventional residential lots are located, and lots of approximately 8ha on the edge of the town where the proposed alignment is located;
- ▶ Outskirts of Stawell where allotments range from 2ha to 8ha; and
- ▶ The wider areas including allotments outside the study area and to the west of Great Western are generally larger in area and utilised for agricultural purposes.

Appendix C contains a landowner map book illustrating the alignment and land tenure pattern.

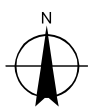




#### LEGEND

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <span style="color: blue;">—</span> Proposed Alignment   | <span style="color: grey;">—</span> Highway                        | <span style="background-color: lightblue; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px;"></span> Major water area |
| <span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px;"></span> Private land                      | <span style="color: grey;">—</span> Sealed road (arterial & local) |  |
| <span style="background-color: red; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px;"></span> Crown land | <span style="color: brown;">—</span> Unsealed road                 |  |
|  | <span style="color: blue;">—</span> Major water course             |  |

Paper Size A4  
0 0.5 1 2 3 4  
Kilometres  
Map Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994  
Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 54



VicRoads  
Western Highway Project

Job Number 31-27558  
Revision B  
Date 08 Nov 2012

Ararat to Stawell  
Land Tenure

Figure 4

180 Lonsdale Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia T 61 3 8687 8000 F 61 3 8687 8111 E melmail@ghd.com W www.ghd.com

G:\31\27558\GIS\Maps\Deliverables\Stage 3\RISK AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT\03\_PLANNING\3127558\_S3\_004\_Land\_Tenure\_A4P.mxd  
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Data source: DSE, VicMap, 2012; VicRoads, 2012; GHD, Design, 2012. Created by: splaird



## 5.4 Infrastructure

A review of existing services was undertaken based on available data which confirms there are no State significant pipelines or power lines within the study area. A detailed services location search would need to be undertaken prior to any work being undertaken on site.

As a result of the infrastructure review, the following roads, rail and community infrastructure have been identified within the study area:

- **Roads** – The study area contains the existing nationally significant Western Highway and a number of roads of either regional or local access status connecting to the Highway in various locations. The key intersections within the study area include:
  - Garden Gully Road / Military Bypass Road / Eaglehawk Road;
  - Kimbarra Road;
  - St Ethels Road / Delahoy Road;
  - Garden Gully Road / Stephenson Street;
  - Sandy Creek Road / Moynston-Great Western Road;
  - Bests Road / Paterson Road;
  - St George Road;
  - Churchill Crossing Road;
  - Panrock Reservoir Road; and
  - London Road.

- **Rail**

The Melbourne to Adelaide railway line extends along the length of the study area in close proximity to the existing Western Highway. The majority of the Melbourne – Adelaide railway services are freight, however; a passenger service, ‘the Overland’ run by Great Southern Rail, operates twice a week.

- **Community infrastructure**

The main concentration of community infrastructure in the study area is located in the township of Great Western. The provision of schools, hospitals and other health services, recreation and community infrastructure in the proximity to the study area is outlined in the Social Impact Assessment undertaken for the Project.

## 5.5 Potential Future Land Use and Development

A summary of potential future land uses and initiatives, identified during discussions with Council planning officers, is provided below.

At the time of writing this report, a number of strategic projects are being developed that may have an impact on the study area due to potential future land use and development. However, it is noted that there are no pending or future planning scheme amendments or planning permits affecting land use along the proposed alignment for the duplication of the Western Highway within this area. Planning permit applications currently being considered by Council include:

- A Planning Permit Application for an eight lot subdivision at 126-194 London Road, Stawell. This property is situated on the north-eastern corner of the Western Highway and London Road. The proposed alignment includes the realignment of London Road in this location and a new interchange.



- ▶ A Planning Permit Application for the extension of the existing winery buildings at 111 Bests Road, Great Western. The proposed alignment extends across part of the Bests landholdings, but does not impact upon the area subject to the planning permit application.
- ▶ An application for extension of an existing gravel pit at the northern end of Mt View Road, Great Western.

The Project has the potential to improve access and visibility of the winery in Bests Road and therefore, the permit application for the expansion of the winery buildings would be complemented by the proposed alignment. The proposed subdivision at London Road would be detrimentally impacted by the proposed alignment and any compensation for the permit applicant would be subject to the provisions of the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*. The application to extend the quarry is north-east of the alignment and therefore not physically impacted. However, the quarry owner could benefit from the Project by provision of materials for the construction of the new highway.





## 6. Impact Assessment

The detailed impact assessment documented in this report outlines the potential planning and land use impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Project. The alignment assessed is a culmination of progressive refinement of the design and consideration of potential impacts. The process for assessment and rationale for selection of the proposed alignment assessed in the EES is described in the 'Western Highway Project Section 3 Options Assessment Report' (February 2012) (Technical Appendix B of the EES).

The proposed alignment assessed in this report is the outcome of progressive refinement through each phase of the Options Assessment process. The proposed alignment was also refined following the initial consideration of the environmental risk assessment.

The environmental risk assessment methodology and complete risk register for all specialist disciplines is presented in 'Western Highway Project Section 3 EES Environmental Risk Assessment' (November 2012) report.

Extracts from the environmental risk register prepared for the EES are provided in this report and the identified impacts of the proposed alignment are considered in detail in the following sections.

The Project provides two lanes in each direction, and associated intersection upgrades to improve road safety and facilitate the efficient movement of traffic. It commences at Pollard Lane, Ararat, and extends northwest for approximately 24km to Gilchrist Road, Stawell. The upgrade assessed in this impact assessment is a freeway standard (AMP1).

From Ararat the existing carriageway is duplicated to the east, crossing the railway via a new bridge adjacent to the existing Armstrong Deviation bridge. A new dual carriageway highway provides for a north-eastern bypass of Great Western, commencing north-west of Delahoy Road and passing through part of the former Great Western landfill and a quarry, re-joining the existing highway alignment near Briggs Lane. The existing carriageway is duplicated on the western side until Harvey Lane. Oddfellows Bridge at Harvey Lane would be maintained to provide access to the highway whilst two new bridges would be constructed for the new duplicated highway.

Overall, the proposed alignment involves two crossings of the Melbourne to Adelaide railway line, four crossings of significant watercourses and 28 minor waterways (tributaries, drainage lines and irrigation channels), and bypasses of both Armstrong and Great Western townships.

The topography is undulating, and the surrounding land use predominately agricultural (grazing, cropping, viticulture), apart from Great Western and the forested area of the Ararat Regional Park and smaller DSE reserves towards the northern end of the alignment.

Apart from the Melbourne to Adelaide railway line, no State significant infrastructure, such as major pipelines, or powerlines are located within the study area.

A mapbook illustrating the proposed alignment is contained in Appendix D.





## **6.1 Key Issues**

The key issues for consideration as part of the Planning and Land Use Assessment, identified as a result of the EES Scoping Requirements and existing conditions assessment include:

- ▶ Temporary disruption to utility services and reduced amenity during the construction of the Project;
- ▶ Potential for longer term land use change and reduced amenity associated with a new road alignment; and
- ▶ Lack of compliance with planning policies due to the fragmentation of impacted properties.

## **6.2 Risk Assessment**

This section identifies and describes the Planning and Land Use cause and effect pathways associated with the construction and operation of the Project. The risk assessment is presented in Table 9.

The development of the Project would not compromise the intent of existing land use zoning in the study area. The impact pathways consider land uses within and surrounding the study area including farming and agricultural / viticultural activities, isolated dwellings (mostly associated with farming operations), and township uses including rural residential and commercial uses within Great Western.

The protection and enhancement of environmental, heritage, social and economic values are considered within the various specialist technical assessments prepared for the EES, consistent with the State and Local Planning Policies.

The impact assessment describes potential impacts that the Project may have on planning and land use, assuming VicRoads standard environmental protection measures and project specific measures (as documented in section 7 of this report) are in place.

The Impact Pathways (which align with the key issues identified above in section 6.1 and summarised in Table 9) for the Planning and Land Use Assessment are:

- ▶ Potential for affects to existing infrastructure or utility services, including the Melbourne-Adelaide Railway Line;
- ▶ Potential short term and long term impacts for farming / agricultural purposes (including vineyards) activities resulting from acquisition; and
- ▶ Potential for inconsistency with planning policies and schemes (Ararat and Northern Grampians).



**Table 9 Planning and Land Use Risk Assessment**

Risk No.	Impact Pathway Description	Description of consequences	Planned Controls to Manage Risk  (as per Project Description, and VicRoads Contract Shell DC1: Design & Construct (April 2012)).	Initial Risk			Additional Controls Recommended to Reduce Risk	Residual Risk		
				Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating		Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating
PLU1	Potential for short term impacts from the Project associated with existing infrastructure, utility services, including fibre optic cables, overhead electricity lines, underground water pipelines, and the Melbourne- Adelaide Railway line	The safe and efficient operation or maintenance of the utility or infrastructure is disrupted during construction, with services being relocated along the new carriage way or median, affecting continued service, and ongoing ability to safely maintain the utility.	Relocation of the assets would be undertaken in accordance with provider requirements consistent with 1140.02 and 1140.03 of VicRoads Contract Shell. Preference is to keep assets within the road reserve. Easements would be sought in private property as necessary.	Minor	Almost Certain	Medium		Minor	Almost Certain	Medium
PLU2	Potential for long term impact on short term and longer term use of land for farming / agricultural purposes, activities resulting from acquisition and potential for land use change	Acquisition would be limited to the edge of property boundaries except for the bypass of Great Western. Properties that would have short term impacts include 2533 (olive grove), 2546 & 25550 (vines), 2590 (trotting track to be relocated), 2710 (vines), 2888 & 2889 (Quarry and former landfill), 2894 & 2895 (quarry), 2899, 2900, 2903, 2904, 2923 & 2928 (vineyard), 3024, 3001 and 3002. In each of these instances, part of the property would be impacted and arrangements may need to be made to address ongoing land use.		Moderate	Almost Certain	High	Alteration of access arrangements, where appropriate.  Compensation for the loss of land where necessary.  Consolidation of allotments where possible.	Minor	Almost Certain	Medium



Risk No.	Impact Pathway Description	Description of consequences	Planned Controls to Manage Risk  (as per Project Description, and VicRoads Contract Shell DC1: Design & Construct (April 2012)).	Initial Risk			Additional Controls Recommended to Reduce Risk	Residual Risk		
				Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating		Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating
PLU3	Potential for inconsistency with planning policies and schemes including the Ararat & Northern Grampians Planning Schemes	The Project would result in severance of some land parcels smaller than the minimum lot sizes and loss of native vegetation, including habitat corridors. The importance of the Western Highway is recognised as a major freight / arterial route through both the Ararat & Northern Grampians Councils. Accordingly, access and connectivity along the highway should be maintained. The Bypass of Great Western has the potential to improve amenity of the town and attract future growth.	Clause 22.02 of the Northern Grampians Planning Scheme seeks to protect the ongoing use of the Western Highway and to minimise potential effects on Great Western township.	Minor	Likely	Medium	Where the small size of the allotment left following acquisition affects the agricultural viability of the land, or the ability to develop a dwelling on the lot consistent with the zoning or Council policy, consider consolidation with adjoining lots. Any necessary compensation can be managed via the <i>Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986</i> .	Insignificant	Likely	Low



## 6.3 Impact Assessment

The impact assessment below outlines potential impacts of the Project on planning and land uses within the study area. This assessment has been undertaken on the basis that VicRoads' mitigation measures outlined in the Risk Assessment and Construction Environment Management Plan are undertaken.

### 6.3.1 Short term impacts

The Project is expected to have minor impacts on utility services over the short term during construction. There are a number of services and infrastructure located within and adjacent to the road reserve. Infrastructure that would be impacted includes overhead electricity lines, underground pipelines on the edge of Great Western, and underground communication lines adjacent to the existing highway. The Project would result in two new crossings of the Melbourne-Adelaide Railway line. The short term impacts can be managed by VicRoads and contractors as part of the construction process in order to minimise impacts on landowners and infrastructure users.

During operation, the immediate relocation of heavy vehicles out of Great Western would have a positive impact on the amenity of the town. The proposed bypass is expected to have a positive impact on the safety of residents and visitors crossing the main road and is expected to reduce the noise impacts in the town.

### 6.3.2 Long term impacts

The project would result in the acquisition of segments of existing landholdings but it is noted that the majority of titles along the alignment are currently below the minimum lot size within both the Ararat and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes. The only allotment which would have reduced development potential is Property No.3001 which is subject to an eight lot subdivision. In this instance, the landowner may request VicRoads to acquire the balance of their land as part of the acquisition process.

The project would result in isolated impacts on some landowners along the alignment where acquisition of land would be required. In addition to land acquisition, some farm infrastructures (such as sheds / dams) and some dwellings are located within the construction footprint and would therefore need to be demolished / removed. Acquisition and compensation for these assets would be undertaken by VicRoads consistent with the provisions of the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*.

Section 3 of the Western Highway Project extends through a vine growing region and accordingly, there was potential for significant impacts. The proposed alignment has therefore been designed and sited with landowner inputs in order to minimise potential impacts. The road frontage of some properties which have either grapes or olives (Property Nos 2533, 2546, 2550, 2710) would be subject to some acquisition, however, the extent of acquisition has been minimised in order to maintain operations for landowners. Potential compensation for any impact on the viability of any businesses would be subject to the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*.

The proposed alignment extends across an operating vineyard on the northern side of Great Western (Property Nos 2899, 2900, 2903, 2904, 2923 and 2928) but has been sited not to directly impact on the vines within the property, and with landowner input.



The proposed alignment would require the acquisition of land from Property No 2590, which has a trotting track adjacent to the existing highway. As part of the Project, the trotting track would no longer be able to function in its current configuration and compensation would be payable for its reconfiguration.

The proposed alignment extends across a former landfill and through land currently being utilised for a quarry. The potential impacts associated with the landfill are related to relocation of waste materials which has been subject to separate analysis in the Soils and Geology Report. Approval from the EPA would be required prior to any material being relocated.

The impact on the quarry would be longer term, however there could be short term benefits for the quarry in the supply of construction materials for the Project. There is an opportunity for the quarry owner to excavate material within the alignment corridor across the property in order to minimise impacts on future operations. This will also assist the Project in establishing the new gradeline level for the highway. Any potential impact on the ongoing viability of the quarry would be subject to compensation.

The Project would result in a minor impact associated with land use change affecting patterns of economic and social activity. Within the project area, social gathering points and areas of economic activity include Great Western, Armstrong, Sisters Rocks, the Ararat Regional Park, the Stawell Park Caravan Park and the Grange Golf Course. The assessment has found that access to these locations is a key consideration and the alignment has been designed to maintain access to each of these key locations. Appropriate signage would assist in maintaining future accessibility for visitors.

Over the long term, the Project, together with the initiatives of the Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Small Towns Sewerage Scheme could result in Great Western being a very appealing town for potential residents who may want the lifestyle that Great Western can offer within easy commute of both Stawell and Ararat for employment. This would assist in developing the community at Great Western, which could in turn benefit the economy and reduce the town's reliance on tourism.

It is considered that the Project would have a minor impact compared to a "Do Nothing" scenario in relation to longer term land use. The extent of land required for acquisition has been reduced to property boundaries where possible and the footprint of the alignment has been varied to accommodate particular land uses, such as vines, that are situated close to the existing highway. Minimisation of the footprint by VicRoads has reduced the potential impacts on landowners whilst assisting the ongoing viability of land uses within the area.

### **6.3.3 Compliance with planning policies**

It is considered that the Project is consistent with the State and Local Planning Policies discussed in Section 3 of this report which recognise the importance of major freight arterial routes to the economy of the State.

The State Planning Policy Framework contained within both the Ararat and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes provides the general principles for land use and development. The Project supports Clause 11.05 (Regional Development) associated with the promotion of sustainable growth within Regional Victoria. When compared with a 'Do Nothing' scenario, the proposed alignment would assist in regional employment during the construction, reduce travel times to regional areas as well as improving access to the Grampians and other tourism destinations.



In relation to Clause 12 (Environmental and Landscape Values), the proposed alignment would require the removal of some native vegetation, however, micro alignments and involvement of the flora and fauna specialists has assisted in reducing the overall impacts.

When assessing the impacts of Clause 14 (Natural Resource Management), the proposed alignment is considered to have some impact on agricultural and extractive industrial (quarry) land when compared to the existing Western Highway alignment. The proposed alignment extends across the quarrying operations off Sandy Creek Road, to the east of Great Western. Materials extracted from the quarry could be utilised for the construction of the new road. In addition, the excavation by the quarry owner would be within the proposed alignment and thereby reducing the amount of cut required by VicRoads during the construction of the road. Accordingly, the quarry is expected to have a short term benefit resulting from the construction of the Project.

The Project supports the Settlement and Housing Clause within the Ararat Planning Scheme in that it provides for improved access and opportunities to the Ararat township. Clause 21.05 of the Ararat Planning Scheme relates to economic development and outlines the importance of the Western Highway for access and exposure to commercial enterprises closer to the Ararat township.

The Project is consistent with and supports Clause 22.02 of the Northern Grampians Planning Scheme in that the policy recognises the importance of the highway to provide access to the region.

The Project cannot be constructed under the current planning provisions and amendments to both the Ararat and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes would be required. Details of the planning scheme amendment requirements are contained in Section 7 of this report.

The Project would have a minimal impact on existing planning policies and strategies and could have a positive impact on the future growth of Great Western by facilitating improved amenity for the township. There are strategic objectives associated with the Western Highway in the planning schemes, which acknowledge the importance of the road as part of the national freight route and connection of towns within the study area.

## **6.4 Benefits and Opportunities**

The Western Highway Project would improve the safety of the existing highway and provide improved connectivity between Ballarat and Stawell. Section 3 of the Project may assist in making tourism destinations in the area more accessible due to improved road connections and could also assist in the growth and development of Ararat and Stawell through improved accessibility.

The Project would improve the amenity of Great Western by removing freight and heavy vehicles out of the town. This would result in improved safety within the residential and recreational areas of the town as the existing Western Highway would revert to a local road. The improved amenity of Great Western may result in additional growth in the town. It is considered there are sufficient residential allotments which are yet to be developed that could cater for potential growth in the short to medium term.



## 7. Planning Scheme Amendment

In order to construct the Project, a number of planning approvals would be required under the current planning scheme provisions. These approvals are outlined in Table 10.

**Table 10: Current Planning Permit Triggers**

Section 3: Planning Controls		Permit required for highway		
Planning Zone	Planning Scheme	Use	Buildings & Works	Vegetation Removal*
Road Zone Category 1 (Western Highway) (RDZ1)	Ararat Planning Scheme	✗	✗	✗
	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	✗	✗	✗
Rural Living RLZ2	Ararat Planning Scheme	✗	✓ (Earthworks)	✗
RLZ5	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	✗	✓ (Earthworks)	✗
Farming Zone (FZ)	Ararat Planning Scheme	✗	✓ (Earthworks)	✗
	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	✗	✓ (Earthworks)	✗
Public Use Zone – Transport (PUZ4)	Ararat Planning Scheme	✗	✗	✗
	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	✗	✗	✗
Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)	Ararat Planning Scheme	✓	✓	✗
	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	Unless exempt under the Acts listed in Clause 36.03-2*	Unless exempt under the Acts listed in Clause 36.03-2*	✗
Township Zone (TZ)	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	✗	✗	✗



Section 3: Planning Controls			Permit required for highway	
Planning Zone	Planning Scheme	Use	Buildings & Works	Vegetation Removal*
Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	✗	✓ Unless exempt under the Acts listed in Clause 36.03-2*	✗
Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)	Ararat Planning Scheme	✗	✗	✗
	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	✗	✗	✗
Vegetation Protection Overlay	Ararat Planning Scheme	✗	✗	✓
VPO1 Significant and Remnant Vegetation		✗	✗	✓
VPO2 Roadside Vegetation Protection Areas		✗	✗	✓
Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO)	Northern Grampians Planning Scheme	✗	✓	✗

\* Indicates approval required in addition to Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation) to remove native vegetation (See Section 3.5.2).

In addition to the planning approvals triggers, VicRoads cannot compulsorily acquire land under the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* unless the land is first reserved via a 'planning instrument'. In a planning scheme, a 'Public Acquisition Overlay' is the appropriate planning instrument to facilitate the acquisition of land.

A Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) can only be included in the Ararat and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes via a 'Planning Scheme Amendment'. In addition to applying a PAO to the study area, the Planning Scheme Amendment for the Project can provide for permit exemptions.

Accordingly, a Planning Scheme Amendment would be required to the Ararat and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes that:

- Applies a PAO over the area to be acquired for the Project;
- Provides for site specific permit exemptions for the Project under Clause 52.03; and
- Introduces an Incorporated Document under Clause 81.01 that details approvals requirements.

Once the road has been constructed and gazetted a subsequent amendment would be required to rezone the land contained within the PAO to a Road Zone Category 1 (RDZ1).



A draft Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) has been prepared for exhibition along with the EES, and has been included in Appendix E. The amendment documents have been drafted assuming the Amendments proposed by Section 2 of the Project (Beaufort to Ararat) are yet to be gazetted. Following exhibition of the Section 3 (Ararat to Stawell) EES and draft PSA, minor changes may be required to the draft Amendment to accord with recommendations from the Inquiry Panel. Once the recommendations from the Panel have been incorporated, the revised PSA is proposed to be gazetted and incorporated into the Ararat and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes. Once the highway has been constructed, the new road would ultimately be rezoned to RDZ1 and the PAO deleted from the planning schemes.



## 8. Mitigation Measures

### 8.1 Management of Planning and Land Use Effects

VicRoads would require the construction contractor to develop and implement a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the Project in response to the Environment Management Framework. VicRoads standard environmental protection measures and some additional project specific controls have been incorporated in the Environment Management Framework for the Project, which is documented in the Project Environment Protection Strategy (PEPS). The PEPS is a VicRoads document that details the environmental management arrangements for the design, construction and operation of the Project. VicRoads would require the construction contractor to incorporate all of these measures from the Environment Management Framework into the CEMP. Refer to Chapter 21 of the EES for further explanation of the environmental management framework and documentation proposed for the Project.

VicRoads standard protection measures for the Planning and Land Use impacts, which would be adopted for this Project, include the following Clauses of the VicRoads DC1 contract specifications:

- Clause 1140 associated with rail and infrastructure; and
- Clause 1210 and sub clauses associated with community interaction.

There are several additional project specific controls recommended to avoid, mitigate and manage potential Planning and Land Use effects. These are outlined below.

#### 8.1.1 Detailed Design

Suggested mitigation measures to be implemented as part of the detailed design phase include:

- Reduce the widths of road reserves, medians, construction areas and clear zones where possible, where not conflicting with other values such as the need to protect significant flora and fauna during detailed design to minimise extent of land acquisition.
- That access requirements for severed parcels of land be provided in consultation with the affected landowners.

#### 8.1.2 Construction

Suggested mitigation measures to be implemented as part of the construction phase of the Project include:

- Existing structures such as dwellings, sheds, dams and driveways that require removal to be relocated, or compensation provided in accordance with the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* as appropriate.
- Minimise impacts to utility services through relocation and design in accordance with owner requirements. Seek to relocate services within the road reserve where possible to minimise impacts on adjoining properties.
- Where properties would be acquired or partly acquired, provide for compensation in accordance with the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*.



### 8.1.3 Summary

Table 11 presents a summary of the mitigation measures that are recommended to avoid, reduce or minimise impact risk. The measures comprise both relevant requirements of the VicRoads standard environmental protection measures as well as the additional measures (VicRoads Contract Shell requirements: 1140.02 and 1140.03) identified by this impact assessment. The aim is to satisfy the relevant EES objectives described in chapter 2.

**Table 11 Environmental Management Measures**

Risk No.	Risk Description	Management Measures	Responsibility
PLU1	Potential for short term impacts associated with existing infrastructure	Relocation of the assets would be undertaken in accordance with provider requirements consistent with 1140.02 and 1140.03 of VicRoads Contract Shell. Preference is to keep assets within the road reserve. Easements would be sought in private property as necessary.	VicRoads
PLU2	The Project has for long term impact on short term and longer term use of land for farming / agricultural purposes, activities resulting from acquisition and potential for land use change	Alteration of access arrangements, where appropriate.  Compensation for the loss of land where necessary.  Consolidation of allotments where possible.	VicRoads
PLU3	The Project is inconsistent with the Ararat & Northern Grampians Planning Schemes	Clause 22.02 of the Northern Grampians Planning Scheme seeks to protect the ongoing use of the Western Highway and to minimise potential effects on Great Western township.  Where the small size of the allotment left following acquisition affects the agricultural viability of the land, or the ability to develop a dwelling on the lot consistent with the zoning or Council policy, consider consolidation with adjoining lots. Any necessary compensation can be managed via the <i>Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986</i> .	Ararat & Northern Grampians Councils  VicRoads



## 9. Conclusion

The Project has been designed so as to avoid or minimise impacts on planning and land use wherever possible, consistent with planning policy. The EES draft evaluation objective relevant to the Planning and Land Use Assessment outlined in the EES Scoping Requirements is as follows:

- ▶ *“To avoid or minimise disruption and other adverse effects on infrastructure, land use (including agriculture) and households, as well as road users resulting from the construction and operation of the highway duplication.”*

It is considered the Project is consistent with the objectives of the *Transport Integration Act 2010* in that transport and land uses are considered together when determining the duplicated highway alignment. In particular, the Project would assist in facilitating better access to, and greater mobility within local communities and the options considered have been designed to minimise impacts on landowners to retain existing land uses where possible.

The proposed alignment utilises the existing road corridor for significant portions of the study area and therefore seeks to reduce potential impacts on surrounding planning and land use. The alignment has been designed to minimise impacts on existing land uses by varying the corridor width to accommodate land uses on private property and/or to avoid significant vegetation where possible. It is expected that there would be limited change to existing agricultural land use patterns or to future planned land uses and developments as a result of the Project given the proximity of the proposed highway adjacent to the existing highway alignment and existing subdivision pattern.

The Project is expected to have a positive impact on the future amenity of the township of Great Western by removing heavy vehicles and improving the safety of existing and future residents. The Western Highway Project together with other local initiatives may result in increased population within the township and improved viability for existing businesses.

The Project would have a temporary minor impact on existing utility service provision requiring consultation with relevant service providers and operators prior to works commencing. This would allow services to be realigned with minimal impact on landowners. This impact would be appropriately managed by the Construction Environmental Management Plan prepared for the Project.

The conclusion from a planning and land use perspective is that the Project would result in a benefit for the region and to Victoria, principally in relation to enhancing existing road infrastructure and its associated safety benefits at a local and regional level. Whilst there are some disbenefits, these are generally minor, short term or localised to the immediate environs of the study area, or could be mitigated and managed as outlined in this and other related specialist technical reports.





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