

16 Key Issues and Challenges

The Study has so far outlined the major issues for rural land in the Yass Valley LGA. While many of these issues are related to factors influenced by market trends or seasonal changes and therefore beyond the control of Council, this section of the Study outlines the key issues affecting the Yass Valley LGA that need to be considered when determining planning recommendations for rural land.

The issues are discussed according to the following themes:

- Agriculture;
- Industry;
- Settlement; and
- Natural environment and Heritage.

The discussion of each theme provides a summary of the existing situation, the planning challenges and opportunities created. Community and agency responses are also provided to inform the discussion.

This section outlines a discussion of the key issues and challenges of the themes of this Study. In the context of this discussion, the issues raised during the community consultation sessions and government agency consultation is also outlined (refer to Appendices 6, 8 and 10 for information about this consultation).

16.1 Agriculture

16.1.1 Existing situation

The Yass Valley LGA has traditionally been associated with extensive agriculture and grazing, particularly fine wool production. In recent times, emerging intensive enterprises have been developed, particularly in the area of viticulture. As outlined in Section 5, agriculture is a significant contributor to the economy of the Yass Valley LGA.

Employment in the agricultural sector has declined marginally relative to other industries, but still remains a significant employment industry within the Yass Valley LGA. The decline in employment in agriculture can be attributed to the combination drought conditions, declining terms of trade in agriculture and proximity to employment opportunities in the ACT.

Employment in agriculture however is not evenly distributed across the Yass Valley LGA with the level of employment in the agriculture sector declining in areas within close proximity to the ACT. There is also an increasing reliance of off farm income across all areas of the Yass Valley LGA.

Agricultural suitability varies across the Yass Valley LGA. The majority of rural land in the Yass Valley LGA falls under the class 3, 4 and 5 categories. Class 3 land is generally located along the Barton Highway between Yass and Canberra, Gundaroo Rd

between Gundaroo and Canberra and in the north of the LGA, between Bowning, Binalong and Boorowa. The least suitable (Class 5) land is located in steep areas of the LGA in the Wee Jasper and Gundaroo precincts.

The largest agricultural land use is livestock grazing. Sheep account for approximately 80% of grazing pressure on a dry sheep equivalent basis. Cattle comprise the remainder, except for a small number of horses, deer and pigs.

Forestry and viticulture also a significant land uses. Forestry occurs in the south west of the LGA around Wee Jasper and viticulture occurs primarily around Murrumbateman and in other areas between Yass and the ACT border.

The significance of agricultural land in the Yass Valley LGA has been identified by the Sydney to Canberra Corridor Strategy in its natural resource mapping.

16.1.2 Planning opportunities and constraints

Agricultural land resources

Agricultural land is a finite resource and the future production of primary produce depends on, amongst other things, its ongoing availability. Land can be lost to agriculture for a number of reasons, but most significantly in the Yass Valley LGA, to rural living. Where agricultural land is subdivided for residential purposes as the key objective, as is currently occurring throughout the Yass Valley LGA, this land is generally lost to sustainable agricultural production.

Population and employment data outlined in this Study indicate an increasing trend towards a “non agricultural” population in the rural areas of LGA in proximity to Canberra. While this trend creates benefits to the Yass Valley LGA in a variety of ways, the implications of this trend need to be considered against the long term impacts on agricultural land resources as a significant economic and employment generating resource.

State Government rural planning policy seeks to ensure the following objectives through the Rural Lands SEPP:

- the promotion and protection of opportunities for current and potential productive and sustainable economic activities in rural areas,
- recognition of the importance of rural lands and agriculture and the changing nature of agriculture and of trends, demands and issues in agriculture in the area, region or State,
- recognition of the significance of rural land uses to the State and rural communities, including the social and economic benefits of rural land use and development,
- in planning for rural lands, to balance the social, economic and environmental interests of the community,
- the identification and protection of natural resources, having regard to maintaining biodiversity, the protection of native vegetation, the importance of

- water resources and avoiding constrained land,
- the provision of opportunities for rural lifestyle, settlement and housing that contribute to the social and economic welfare of rural communities,
- (the consideration of impacts on services and infrastructure and appropriate location when providing for rural housing,
- ensuring consistency with any applicable regional strategy of the Department of Planning or any applicable local strategy endorsed by the Director-General

A key issue to be determined by this Study is the minimum lot size for rural land for the erection of a dwelling. Consideration of this issue will need to take into account the need to preserve agricultural land while providing rural lifestyle opportunities.

Water

As already outlined reporting this Study, the use of water beyond its estimated sustainable yield level is of significant concern across the LGA, particularly in the Yass River catchment. The information used in the report was obtained from a study of the Yass River catchment but it is generally acknowledged that water scarcity is an issue that applies across the LGA due to the ongoing drought and decline with groundwater resources in some areas.

The issue of future water availability and quality is a primary consideration in determining zoning and minimum lot sizes in rural lands.

Land use conflicts

In addition to conflicts that exist between agriculture and other land uses in rural areas (particularly rural residential uses), land use conflicts can also exist between different forms of agriculture, such as those between intensive and extensive forms of agriculture, and organic and non-organic enterprises. Issues include chemical spray drift, dust, odour, and noise. Traditional agricultural activities may also compete with expectations of management of sensitive environmental areas. Forestry activities also have the potential to change the amenity value of adjacent lands.

16.1.3 Community consultation

The community consultation recognised that agriculture is a significant part of the economy of the Yass Valley LGA, but at the same time there is a view that agriculture in the region is becoming less viable. Off-farm income was seen as an essential requirement for viability on the smaller holdings to the south and east of Murrumbateman. Larger holdings in the north of the LGA have increased potential for operation as commercial businesses, but owners in this area were also concerned about the impact of declining terms of trade and poor seasonal conditions.

The strategy of increasing farm size to take advantage of economies of scale was not considered to be financially feasible in the south of the LGA because of the high cost of purchasing land. High land values, particularly in the south of the LGA, are largely

influenced by demand for lifestyle blocks by people from Canberra and do not necessarily reflect the agricultural productivity of the land.

Two of the major industries in the LGA, wool and viticulture, are currently suffering severe market downturns and this is putting added pressure on the performance of agriculture in the area. Alternative agricultural enterprises have been, and will continue to be adopted but the generally high capital cost of entry to these industries increases the risk.

The community was concerned about conflicts between different agricultural enterprises and also with increased rural residential development in the rural areas. There was a request that planning mechanisms be included to manage or prevent such conflict from occurring, as well as the need to increase awareness by land owners of the potential conflicts.

There were competing arguments as to whether the current provisions in relation to minimum lot size in agricultural areas are too high or too low. Arguments that the minimum lot size is too high centre on intensive forms of agriculture where larger lots are not required, while arguments that it is too low centre on the viability of extensive agriculture in the LGA. However, there was reluctance to increasing the minimum lot size to reflect the size required for commercial farm operations without off-farm income, especially given the poor market and seasonal conditions.

16.1.4 Government Agency responses

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) states that agriculture is an important industry in the Yass Valley LGA, but also acknowledges that is the LGA is characterised more by its large number of hobby farms than for broadacre farming. As a result, DPI recognises that there is not much full time farming in the LGA at present, especially south of the Hume Highway.

DPI has a policy of retaining access to resources – minerals, forests and agricultural land – and to minimise land fragmentation. It recognises that there is already considerable land fragmentation and is concerned with how this could best be managed, including any possibilities of consolidating productive land into larger parcels. The DPI supports the strategic intent of protecting the agricultural land resource base and allowing current and future generations the opportunity to undertake agriculture in a genuine commercial sense.

Although diversity of enterprises will assist to improve viability, DPI also recognises that all enterprises are subject to market swings. Increased diversity also requires management of land use conflict.

The Department of Natural Resources (now the Department of Water and Energy) identified the drastic shortage of water and the implications for this on future development, particularly of intensive agricultural industries as its major concern. There was also concern that ecologically sustainable principles were promoted, especially

when considering future development of land affected by salinity. The Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority (MCMA) expressed the concern that increasing fragmentation of land increases the difficulty of natural resource rehabilitation because a greater number of roads, fence lines and buildings interrupt regional rehabilitation programs.

The Department of Planning (DoP) recognises that rural areas have a number of functions including agricultural production, water catchment values, aesthetic/cultural values, tourism and ecological values. Each of these respective values needs to be considered in future planning including the need to ensure an appropriate minimum area for rural subdivision where a dwelling is envisaged.

16.2 Industry in rural lands

16.2.1 Existing situation

The Yass Valley LGA benefits from a variety of industries associated with agriculture, including value added industries such as wineries and tourist industries that rely on the rural character of the region. Proximity to Canberra and road transport via the Hume and Barton Highways provide access to the LGA's vineyards and associated wineries with cellar door sales. Guided tours provide information on the full range of winemaking. Accommodation for visitors is available at a variety of bed and breakfast establishments located throughout the LGA.

An emerging industry for the Yass Valley LGA is wind farming which takes advantage of the area's consistent wind patterns and proximity to electricity grid infrastructure. The favourable wind farm conditions are located primarily in the northern part of the LGA. The trend to wind farming in these locations is expected to continue as renewable energy sources are invested in.

16.2.2 Planning challenges and opportunities

There is a demand for opportunities for developing industries in the rural areas of the LGA, but the challenge will be to ensure that these activities are compatible with surrounding land uses, including agriculture and existing rural small holdings development. In particular, conflicts that such development might create will need to be considered and managed. Rural tourism, particularly associated with the wine industry, is likely to continue as a major industry in rural areas. Opportunities for tourism development in rural areas need to be encouraged, and zoning provisions should enable appropriate forms of tourism development to be carried out.

The availability of utility services (water, electricity, gas, communication) along with road infrastructure are key considerations for establishing industries in a rural environment. Water is already in limited supply and may restrict the location and size of industry activities. Improved water use and recycling technologies may help to overcome any constraints.

The type of rural industries envisaged will not be required to be located in specifically zoned land. However, the relevant zones will need to include reference to the range of permitted industries that are low impact in nature. Other types of industries are better located in industrial zones identified by the Industrial Lands Study.

16.2.3 Community response

The community was generally supportive of employment generating activities in the rural areas and recognised the value of tourism in association with agriculture and viticulture. There was support for a range of low impact activities that could add diversity to existing enterprises and improve the tourist potential of the LGA.

The need for managing conflict between industry and agriculture was also acknowledged, as was the need to ensure that the industry was compatible with the existing rural landscape.

16.2.4 Agency response

The agencies had no specific objections to the establishment of compatible industries in rural areas apart from ensuring that natural resource issues, especially water, were fully examined during a development approval process.

The Department of State and Regional Development in its written submission stated that it was keen to support sustainable business and industry developments in regional areas that will result in new investment and employment opportunities.

16.3 Settlement

16.3.1 Summary of existing situation

In the rural areas of the Yass Valley LGA, population growth between 2001 and 2006 has centred around the town of Yass and in the areas within close proximity of Canberra. This growth is reflective of the popularity of these areas for rural lifestyle and their popularity for subdivision opportunities.

16.3.2 Planning challenges and opportunities

Impacts of rural living

Rural living involves the use of rural land for primarily residential purposes. In most instances, the main source of income is not from a pursuit carried out on the land. Most residents move there for lifestyle reasons rather than for the land's productive potential. As a result, the household may not necessarily have any affinity with the productive potential of the land nor understand the issues associated with agriculture. This lack of understanding often leads to rural land use conflict with the adjoining or near agricultural uses (Sinclair, 2001a).

Subdivision for rural living allotments results in agricultural land being permanently alienated from agricultural use and can reduce the total input to the economy from agricultural production.

Rural living allotments can have disadvantages where inappropriately sited or developed in isolation from existing settlements. These disadvantages can include:

- Increasing competition for quality agricultural land, often resulting in agriculture being pushed to more marginal lands;
- Creating conflict with agricultural land uses and production;
- Creating conflict with nearby landowners who do not use the land for intensive agriculture where intensive land use is proposed;
- Increasing costs of services and infrastructure;
- Lack of services, facilities and infrastructure;
- Creating possible constraints on village expansion;
- Demand for economic activities if settlement is removed from employment centres; and
- Adverse environmental and landscape impacts (eg. soil erosion, land degradation, clearing of native vegetation).

At the same time, rural living can provide positive benefits including:

- Attracting new residents and investment and employment opportunities to rural areas;
- Providing greater diversity in housing and lifestyle choice;
- Enhancing the environment through actions such as rehabilitation, management and reservation of river foreshores and other environmental features;
- Protection of existing remnant vegetation; and
- Support for small rural communities improving their viability and sustainability.

Balancing the competing demands of rural lifestyle opportunities with the maintenance of agricultural production and appropriate consideration of environmental factors is a key challenge of this study.

Competing Demands for Rural Land

The Yass Valley LGA, like other areas that adjoin metropolitan areas, is experiencing increasing demand for rural living opportunities within close proximity to the advantages that cities provide.

This trend can result in the subdivision and fragmentation of productive agricultural land, affecting the ability of farmers to undertake agricultural activities in a sustainable and viable way. Where agricultural production becomes unviable, this can further increase the desire and need to realise the value of the land for its rural living capacity.

While there is no one “tree change” demographic, in general they share the following characteristics:

- Diverse in character;
- Display urban values and environmental orientation;
- Actively pursue lifestyle goals; and
- Derive the majority of their income from off farm income;

Land use conflict

Land use conflicts arise when incompatible uses locate in close proximity to each other and where there is inadequate separation between the uses. Problems may arise in such situations due to noise, odour, dust, spray drift, and feral animal and weed invasion to name a few.

The most significant source of conflict is the introduction of residential uses into rural areas, which can result in significant conflict between the new residents and adjoining primary producers. Agricultural activities routinely involve use of pesticides and often generate noise, odour or dust. In addition, some farm activities often need to be undertaken in the early hours of the morning or late at night, which can conflict with the occupation pattern of non-farming residents.

Conversely, residential use of land can impact on agricultural activities. In a majority of cases, the people who buy a lot used for rural residential are not aware of the issues associated with living in a rural area. Problems can arise on rural living allotments in relation to weed and pest control, often resulting in weed spread and invasion of feral animals onto adjoining farms. Domestic animals, such as dogs and cats, also can create problems for adjacent agricultural activities.

This land use conflict may have the effect of forcing primary producers to either reduce activities or cease farming altogether, which in turn results in a change in the predominant land use of the area from farming to small holdings. It is interesting to note that people often move to a rural area because of the open spaces and agricultural character, yet when agricultural activities start to influence their lifestyle, they start complaining and the agricultural use is forced to alter its operations or cease altogether.

Economic Cost of Rural Subdivision

There have not been any recent studies into the costs of providing lifestyle development in Australia. However, a study in the United Kingdom compared clustered and dispersed growth. This found that overall; the annual costs would be one third higher for the dispersed settlement pattern than a concentrated one. The study also found that, in terms of public costs, a scattered settlement pattern is 395% more expensive for capital and 236% for ongoing costs than a concentrated one (Sinclair 2001).

In relation to roads, residents of rural lifestyle allotments may pay for initial construction of roads to service the subdivision and contribute to the road network via Section 94

development contributions, but ongoing maintenance is paid for from general Council revenue. When measured as a cost per ratepayer, rural road users are heavily subsidised. Another consideration is that once rural roads are upgraded to bitumen, there is less opportunity to make efficient use of the high cost of road construction as potential traffic generation will remain well below the carrying capacity of such roads.

The dispersed settlement pattern associated with lifestyle allotment, smallholdings and concessional allotment development is generally more expensive and costly to service in terms of health, education and community service provision than a centralised pattern, and the quality of these services is generally lower. Increased travel costs are associated with servicing a dispersed population. In some cases, duplication of social services occur, which would not be necessary in a more consolidated subdivision pattern.

Providing services to rural areas is often difficult and expensive due to lower population densities and a dispersed settlement pattern. As a general rule, servicing costs will be higher the more remote a subdivision is, the more distant it is from existing services, and the larger the allotments are within the subdivision.

Increased population results in greater demands on services and facilities provided by Council, such as community halls, roads, waste management, library services, school bus routes, and recreation facilities.

New residents to rural areas often expect a level and standard of services comparable to those available in urban areas. As the trend towards cost recovery for services continues, the subsidisation of servicing costs to rural residents is likely to decrease and rural residents will be forced to pay for more of the real servicing costs that are generated thereby reducing the economic viability and attractiveness of the properties.

Small holdings

Smallholdings play an important part in providing opportunities for intensive forms of agriculture, which generally rely on irrigation.

Small holding irrigated agriculture typically consists of cash crops with high yields per hectare, such as viticulture. This form of production should be distinguished from larger lot irrigation where returns are lower and land uses are generally less intensive.

As discussed previously, intensive agriculture can often result in land use conflicts on adjoining extensive or broadacre agricultural activities, as well as on residential forms of development. These conflicts need to be recognised and appropriate planning responses need to be developed.

In Yass Valley, smallholdings of less than 40 hectares are more likely to be used for rural residential use than agricultural use, particularly in areas close to Canberra.

16.3.3 Community Response

There was a strong desire to see population growth in and around the existing villages, to contribute to the sustainability of individual communities and allow provision of better community facilities

Some suggested that subdivision for smaller lots should be permitted everywhere, and that landholders should be able to subdivide if they choose. However, others suggested that areas that are suitable for subdivision should be identified and that development confined to those locations.

The community recognises that land use conflicts exist between agriculture and residential use of land in rural areas. From the non-farming neighbour's perspective conflicts are noise, odour, spray drift, farming vehicles using roads, whilst from the farmer's perspective, conflicts include weeds, feral animals, and domestic animals.

At a number of the community meetings, issues relating to the ability to construct dwelling houses on existing lots that are below the minimum lot size were raised. There was a view that dwelling houses should be permitted on existing small lots, and allowing this was, in some cases, preferable to allowing for more subdivision.

The provision of services to residential and rural subdivisions was identified as a critical issue, especially water.

16.3.4 Government Agency Response

The DoP is of the view that additional settlement should generally be located around existing centres, which is considered to be the most sustainable option for future growth.

DoP recognises that rural areas have a number of functions, including agricultural production, water catchment values, aesthetic and cultural values, tourism and ecological values. Council will need to consider these respective values and determine what provisions should be contained in the new LEP that will maintain or enhance these. This includes ensuring that an appropriate minimum area for subdivision where a dwelling is permitted.

DoP does not support concessional allotment provisions, particularly given the potential for land use conflicts with existing agricultural operations.

Rural residential development is generally not considered by DoP to be a sustainable form of land use, and has the potential to cause land use conflicts and the inappropriate fragmentation of rural lands. Council should consider the appropriateness of those existing areas zoned for rural residential development, and whether it is appropriate for those areas to remain zoned for this use in the future.

The DPI would like to see the agricultural land resource retained in large lots. DPI agrees that smaller blocks without dwelling entitlements may lead to less productive land

and poorer natural resource outcomes, and that it may be better to allow dwellings on these existing blocks instead of allowing further subdivision.

DNR and the CMA consider that the water shortage is drastic, and has been caused by rural residential allotments with a high density of dams and bores. There is currently an embargo on new bores as a result of water shortages. DWE is currently developing a draft policy to determine minimum allotment size for subdivision based on water availability (it should be noted that this policy has not been released publicly). Because of the water situation, rural residential development is going to need to be on larger blocks, which impacts on greater areas of agricultural land.

DWE would prefer all low density and rural living areas to be supplied with reticulated water and sewer services. However, where reticulated services are not available, DWE believes that Council should determine what they believe to be an adequate potable and non-potable water supply for living purposes, and demonstrate that each new allotment created as a result of subdivision has access to nominated water requirements. This will ensure efficient and sustainable use of water resources throughout these areas as they grow.

DWE has advised that access to adequate water supplies is a matter of state significance, and DWE does not support the reliance on rainwater tanks as a stand-alone water supply. Rainwater tanks are suitable for potable supplies but are unlikely to meet the non-potable demands of an average allotment. This results in dam and bore proliferation in geographically small areas, which causes localised stress to surface water catchments and groundwater aquifers.

The DWE advised that the Murray-Murrumbidgee Regional Policy for Water Access in Low Density and Rural Living Areas (endorsed June 2006) considered a minimum non-potable water supply of 1.1 megalitres per allotment in Tablelands areas. To satisfy this requirement using surface water would require about 16 hectares of land under the maximum harvestable right dam capacity for the region, which is 0.07 megalitres per hectare.

16.4 Natural Environment and Heritage

16.4.1 Existing situation

The major threats to the health of natural resources in the Yass Valley LGA are considered to be:

- Dryland salinity;
- Declining surface water quality;
- Declining health and abundance of native vegetation;
- Degradation of riparian and wetland ecosystems; and
- Deterioration of the soil resource.

The rural landscape itself has important cultural and tourist value, and there are areas within the LGA that are of high scenic and recreational value.

The Yass Valley region is widely recognised for its rich and diverse heritage. There are a number of known European and Aboriginal heritage objects and places within the Valley, in addition to a number of items that are listed on the Register of the National Estate and the State Heritage Register.

A number of villages also have distinctive features that contribute to their “sense of place”.

16.4.2 Planning Challenges and Opportunities

State Government legislation and policy, including threatened species and native vegetation legislation and Catchment Action Plans, clearly advocate the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. The trade off is limitation on development in areas identified as being of significance.

Water resources

Agriculture in the Yass Valley LGA is based mainly on rain fed agriculture with limited areas of irrigation. Irrigation is important to vineyards with the water for those generally provided by local farm dams and bores.

There is likely to be an increased demand on water resources as industries develop and population increases and as the community demands more water for the environment. This will affect both quantity and quality of future water available and will also increase the importance of considering effluent disposal.

Currently a “macro” water-sharing plan is being prepared for the region that will provide guidelines on future water availability in different areas of the catchment.

Effluent disposal and consequent impacts on land and water resources is also a significant issue.

Vegetation and biodiversity

The maintenance of biodiversity enables ecosystems to withstand pressures from cyclical natural events (eg. drought) thus improving the resilience of an area to cope with such pressures. The Yass Valley has a diverse vegetation base as evidenced by the range of agricultural (including forestry) enterprises and natural areas.

Remnant vegetation has an important role in sustainable rural development, and is critical for:

- Assessment and comparison of modified vegetation;
- Genetic seed reserves for natural flora and fauna;
- Slowing the spread of feral flora and fauna;

- Stabilising climate patterns;
- Social, recreational and cultural value;
- Nutrient and pollutant cycling; and
- Harvesting of biomass.

With the pressure of further development, including clearing for agriculture, lifestyle blocks and smallholdings subdivision, as well as increased competition from introduced animals, some of the remaining vegetated areas must still be considered to be under threat.

In addition to their conservation value, these areas are important to tourism, which results in an indirect benefit to the economy.

Biodiversity is the variety of all species of life in any given area including the way the systems operate to maintain fresh water, air, soil, health, nutrient cycling and waste breakdown. Another important function of a diverse ecosystem is the provision of raw materials for agriculture, medicine, industry, ecotourism and amenity values.

Specific threats to biodiversity within the Yass Valley LGA include:

- Habitat loss and fragmentation;
- Altered fire regimes;
- Incorrect grazing;
- Erosion and land degradation;
- Declining water quality;
- Feral species;
- Incorrect chemical use; and
- Inappropriate farm management.

Scenic quality

The manner in which development is carried out is a strong influencing factor on the scenic quality of an environment. More particularly, the natural, heritage and cultural environment of an area needs some level of protection.

Some development in the past has adversely impacted on scenic quality, such as houses built on ridgelines, and communications towers. Intensification of development, such as the conversion of large agricultural properties to rural living allotments and small holdings can also impact on scenic quality.

Heritage

The protection of items of national and state heritage significance, as well as Aboriginal heritage, is provided to varying degrees by existing legislation. However, the location of

known and potential heritage items will need to be addressed when considering the location of future development.

16.4.3 Community Response

The community recognises the reasons why people move here in the first place – the views, the lifestyle, and the rural landscape. There was a strong desire to maintain the rural atmosphere of the district and preserve the rural landscape, and future development should be compatible with rural landscape.

The heritage values and “charm” of villages were also identified as being an important asset in the area, contributing significantly to its character and appeal. There was a strong view that care should be taken to ensure the maintenance of these qualities, particularly in terms of protection of the built environment and streetscape.

There was also a desire to ensure the protection of biodiversity and natural resources, and concerns were raised as to the sustainability of natural resources, such as water, particularly if development is to intensify.

The importance of Aboriginal heritage was also recognised.

16.4.4 Government Agency Response

In their submission, DECC refers to initiatives by State and Commonwealth Governments in natural resource management (NRM), which aim to:

- Stop broad-scale clearing;
- Halt species decline; and
- Revegetate over-cleared vegetation types and habitats.

DECC considers that it is important for Council to incorporate these NRM principles into the Non Urban Lands Study and LEP by firstly identifying and protecting significant vegetation types, and secondly by aiming to enhance the size, condition, connectivity and security of significant vegetation types/habitats in the Yass Valley LGA.

DNR has identified the following NRM issues that should be investigated by Council as part of the Study:

- Determining an adequate potable and non-potable water supply for all living areas in the LGA, with particular reference to low density and rural living areas where no reticulated water supply is available;
- Outlining the effluent disposal mechanisms for living areas within the LGA;
- Identifying and managing native vegetation, vulnerable, threatened and endangered flora and endangered ecological communities within the LGA;
- Protecting water courses and wetlands and identifying how they can be protected from degradation;

- Protecting riparian vegetation;
- Addressing natural hazards such as flood liable lands;
- Identifying soil types that might be unsuitable for certain types of development (i.e. saline, acid and sodic soils);
- Identifying landscapes that might be unsuitable for development (i.e. steep lands in excess of 18 degrees); and
- Identifying areas with high groundwater table or high groundwater vulnerability and outlining how groundwater resources will be protected from degradation.

To ensure the infrastructure associated with development does not increase degradation of existing high value native vegetation, the Murrumbidgee CMA recommends that any areas containing Regionally Endangered, Regionally Vulnerable or high quality native vegetation communities should be considered for environmental protection zones.

DWE and the CMA consider that the water shortage is drastic, and has been caused by rural residential allotments with a high density of dams and bores. There is currently an embargo on new bores.

The DoP advises that Council will need to demonstrate that it has in place appropriate provisions for manage the significant environmental values of the LGA. This may take the form of identified zonings, overlays or particular matters for consideration when assessing development proposals.

DoP also advises that those areas of the LGA with significant heritage values should be identified and appropriate provisions put in place to manage these.