

Hepburn Shire Council: Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Survey

Introduction

We have heard from the community over various engagements about the importance the protection of our rural land and environment. People highly value the Shire's the beautiful landscapes, the native flora, fauna and vegetation and agricultural produce.

Key engagement questions have been developed that need to be explored in the development of this strategy. To support your participation in this survey references to sections of the Background Paper have been included.

We thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and look forward to developing this strategy with the community.

What do you value?

The following questions help us to understand the thoughts, preferences, and priorities of our community and what they value most about our agricultural and rural land. This information will guide the development of the Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy.

See Background Report: Section 1 (Pgs. 1-3) for more information about the project.

1. What do you value most about living in a rural area?

- Sense of community
- Relaxed lifestyle
- Open space and clean environment
- Natural features and landscapes
- Other (please specify)_____

2. Listed below are some objectives that Council is looking to address through the Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy. Please rank the following from most important (1) to least important (8).

- _ Protecting productive agricultural land.
- _ Identifying if and where residential growth can occur.
- _ Responding to the risks of climate change.
- _ Identifying significant landscapes and environmental features.
- _ Protecting significant cultural heritage sites.
- _ Recognising the role of Traditional Owners in land stewardship.
- _ Identifying areas for small scale agriculture.

3. What value do you place on our rural landscapes and environmental features? Do they need to be protected?

4. Which places in our rural areas do you feel a strong connection with?

5. If you live, work or have a particular interest in a rural locality, name your top 3 places and infrastructure priorities. E.g Roads, water supply, power, telecommunications, or community facilities.

- Place & Infrastructure priority:

- Place & Infrastructure priority:

- Place & Infrastructure priority:

Housing in our rural areas

See Background Report: Sections 4 & 5 (Pgs. 33-49) for information about rural settlements and housing.

6. When considering housing in farming areas, please rate the following statements from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Dwellings should not be allowed on agricultural land unless required to support agriculture.					
Subdivision of land in rural areas should not be allowed unless required to support agriculture.					
Dwellings not associated with farming should not disadvantage the continuation and expansion of farming activities in the area.					
New development on farming land should minimise visual impact, particularly from key landscape vantage points.					

7. What opportunities and issues do you see for residential land use in rural areas?

8. With an increase in demand for housing in rural areas what priorities should Council consider in its future planning for rural settlements? Please rank the following from most important (1) to least important (8).

- ☐ Provide housing that responds to our changing demographics.
- ☐ Create new rural residential lifestyle lots.
- ☐ Provide transport connections between townships.
- ☐ Expand township boundaries to accommodate more rural housing.
- ☐ Protect agricultural land as a priority.
- ☐ Encourage growth in areas where physical and community growth already exist.
- ☐ Provide infill housing within settlements.
- ☐ Protect biodiversity and natural assets within our environment.

9. Would you like to move to a rural area but are unable to find suitable land?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Business in our rural areas

There are many businesses that operate in our rural areas outside our townships including farming, small scale agriculture, agritourism and other rural industries.

See Background Report: Sections 5 through 9 (Pgs. 50 – 88)

10. What types of activities do you consider appropriate in our rural areas? Choose as many as appropriate.

- ☐ Farm stays and accommodation.
- ☐ Restaurants or cafes.
- ☐ Breweries/wineries/distilleries/cellar door sales.
- ☐ Farm based workshops and experiences e.g. pick your own produce, makers experiences.
- ☐ Large events e.g. festivals.
- ☐ Places of assembly e.g. function spaces, wedding venues.
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

11. When thinking about size, location and types of farming, artisan agriculture and rural industries what opportunities and issues exist for these businesses in the Hepburn Shire?

12. Choose the option best describes your situation:

- I currently operate a business in a rural area.
- I currently operate a business and looking to expand into a rural area.
- I am looking to establish a business in a rural area.
- I work in a rural based business.
- I do not operate a rural based business.

The next group of questions are specific to people looking to establish, expand or currently operate a business in a rural area or work in a rural based business. These businesses may be agriculturally based like farms or artisan agriculture businesses or other types of rural industries.

If you do not operate a rural based business, please go to Question 23.

Please complete these questions only if you operate or work in a rural based business.

An understanding of the trends, opportunities and challenges rurally based businesses face will help Council to plan for the future. If you would like to know more about these please see Sections 7, 8 & 9 (Pgs. 63 -88)

13. What type of activities do you undertake in your business? Circle the options that best apply.

- Farming e.g. livestock, crops etc
- Agritourism
- Artisan agriculture
- Small scale agriculture
- Processing and manufacturing
- Rural industries
- Tourism activities
- Animal husbandry
- Other (please specify)_____

14. At what stage is your business?

- Start-up stage
- Expansion stage

- Steady stage.
- Transitioning.
- Prefer not to say/can't say.

15. Thinking about the past three years and the effects that Covid-19 pandemic had on your business, choose the statement that best describes your experience.

- My business didn't change much.
- I pivoted and diversified into new business areas.
- My business thrived.
- My business consolidated.
- My business struggled.
- My business closed.
- Other (please specify) _____

16. What challenges did your business face during the pandemic?

17. Are you looking to operate or diversify your business to include any of the following categories? Choose all that apply.

- Farm stays or accommodation e.g. Bed & Breakfast, group accommodation or glamping.
- Produce sales from goods grown, produced or processed on the land.
- Restaurant or cafés.
- Breweries, wineries, distilleries, cellar door sales.
- Place of assembly e.g. camp, function centre, wedding venue.
- Workshops and farm tours.
- Rural industry e.g. Abattoir.
- Mining and extractive industries.
- Other (please specify): _____
- None of the above.

18. What sustainable practices have been employed in your business, do they include the following? Choose options as appropriate or add your own comments.

- Erosion control.
- Water conservation.
- Organic farming practices.
- Habitat restoration, revegetation or weed control.
- Climate change management measures.
- Pasture improvement.

- Fire preparedness.
- Other (*please specify*): _____
- Not applicable.

19. How long have you owned/lived at your property?

- Less than 5 years.
- 5 to less than 10 years.
- 10 to less than 15 years.
- Over 15 years.
- Intergenerational ownership.
- Prefer not to say.

20. What is the total land area where you perform your business operations?

- Less than 2 hectares.
- 2 to 4 hectares.
- 4 to 10 hectares.
- 10 to 40 hectares.
- 40 to 100 hectares.
- 100 to 500 hectares.
- 500 hectares or more.

21. How do you mostly manage the land area on your property? (Choose the option best applies to your circumstances)

- Managed by myself/my family.
- Managed by a third party (leased, share farming arrangement, caretaker).
- Managed with help from employees or contractors.
- Leasing to other businesses.
- Other (*please specify*): _____

22. What proportion of your business inputs are sourced from within the Hepburn Shire?

- None
- Less than half
- More than half
- Prefer not to say/can't say.

23. Do you have any other comments about issues and opportunities for agricultural and rural land within Hepburn Shire?

A few final questions...

We all experience things different and diverse voices are important. Demographics are important to ensure that we gain a broad representation of community views. Please share with us the following:

22. I identify as:

- Female.
- Male.
- Non-binary.
- Prefer to not say.

23. What is your age?

- 0-19 years of age.
- 20-39 years of age.
- 40-59 years of age.
- 60-79 years of age.
- 80+ years of age.

24. What part of Hepburn Shire are you from?

- Birch Ward, including Daylesford, Hepburn, Basalt, Kooroocheang, Leonards Hill, Musk Vale, Sailors Falls, Shepherds Flat, and Yandoit.
- Cameron Ward, including Clunes, Campbelltown, Evansford, Glengower, Lawrence, Mount Beckworth, Smeaton, Ullina, and Werona.
- Coliban Ward, including Trentham, Bullarto, Fern Hill, Little Hampton, Lyonville, Musk, Newbury, North Blackwood, Spring Hill, Trentham East, and Tylden.
- Creswick Ward, including Creswick, Allendale, Blampied, Broomfield, Cabbage Tree, Creswick North, Dean, Eganstown, Kingston, Langsdon Hill, Mollonghip, Mount Prospect, Newlyn, Smokey Town, Springmount, Sulky, and Rocklyn.
- Holcombe Ward, including Glenlyon, Coomoora, Clydesdale, Denver, Drummond, Drummond North, Guildford, Mount Franklin, Porcupine Ridge, Strangways, and Wheatsheaf.
- I am a Hepburn Shire Council ratepayer but live outside the Shire.
- I work or participate in Hepburn Shire but live outside the Shire.
- None of the above.

Thank you for supporting the development of the Agricultural Land and Rural Settlement Strategy survey. Once you have completed this survey, please drop it off to one of Council's Customer Service Hubs or alternatively post it to our mailing address: Hepburn Shire Council, PO Box 21, Daylesford VIC 3460.

This survey closes **Friday May 12, 2023**. Your responses will be analysed and be used to develop a draft strategy. An engagement report detailing the results will be shared on Participate Hepburn. There will be more opportunities to participate in this project and we encourage you to subscribe to Hepburn Life or visit

www.participate.hepburn.vic.gov.au.

Hepburn
SHIRE COUNCIL