

Echuca Low Density Residential and Rural Living Land Review

Prepared for Campaspe Shire Council

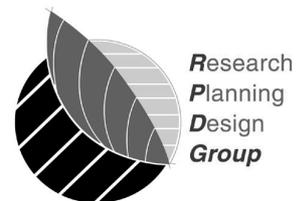
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RPD Group

PO Box 2750

Bendigo 3554

www.rpdgroup.com



Executive Summary

Echuca is a regional centre which is experiencing healthy population growth. Rural residential and low density residential development is a significant and popular component of the local residential property market that accommodates this population growth. Local markets have demonstrated a preference for lots of around 0.4ha for this form of development. Council wishes to continue to support this form of residential development as an element of Echuca's urban form.

Echuca has three key areas of low density residential development (described in this report as Wharparilla Drive, Fehring Lane and South East), which contribute to the options available, and along with areas to the north and west of Moama, form the local supply. All areas have experienced considerable development, and although have some capacity for further growth this is limited to around five years at current development rates.

As well as providing a reasonable level of supply of land for this type of development, other considerations form a part of the planning for low density residential development. These considerations include accommodation of other elements of urban growth including conventional residential growth and industrial growth, availability of infrastructure and environmental values and constraints. It is also important that this form of development is distinctly different in form, character and amenity from other forms of residential development offered in Echuca.

The three areas all offer opportunities for expansion, but other considerations provide some parameters for this growth. Densities and lot sizes in these areas need to be of a size that provides a character different to the conventional residential expansion planned for Echuca West. This parameter dictates lot sizes in the vicinity of 0.4ha, but averaging opportunities could provide for some variety in these developments. Industrial expansion in the south east of Echuca, will limit development type and density in order to protect buffers and long term growth opportunities in this area. Flooding and water quality considerations provide some constraints to all of the area. Infrastructure provision, largely water, sewer and roads will also determine the viability, attractiveness and sustainability of any proposed expansion. Full servicing is available to Wharparilla Drive and Fehring Lane, albeit with some capacity upgrades, but sewer is currently not available to the south east, which introduces considerations of appropriate lot sizes for effluent disposal or the need for alternative, neighbourhood based systems. Obviously, areas over and above that needed for current growth projections needs to be defined and determined to be beyond current growth plans and provided with certainty for other uses.

The strategy for low density residential growth in Echuca involves;

1. The extension of Low Density Residential Zoning in each of the study precincts with the aim of providing a choice of location and development type. The future focus for Low Density Residential growth should be to the north west, consistent with the strategy for conventional residential growth.
2. A focus on high quality, serviced development with mixed lot densities, accessible open space provision and reticulated services.
3. Design for water efficiency.
4. Development that reflects the natural riverine landscape of the district.
5. Limiting the existing oversupply of rural living land in the south east area as this area has experienced limited development, is comparatively peripheral and is a less desirable housing form.
6. Protection of other urban growth opportunities, in particular industrial operation and expansion adjacent to the south east area.
7. Managing the release of land in each of the three areas to ensure that supply does not exceed the estimated demand for a 10 year period.

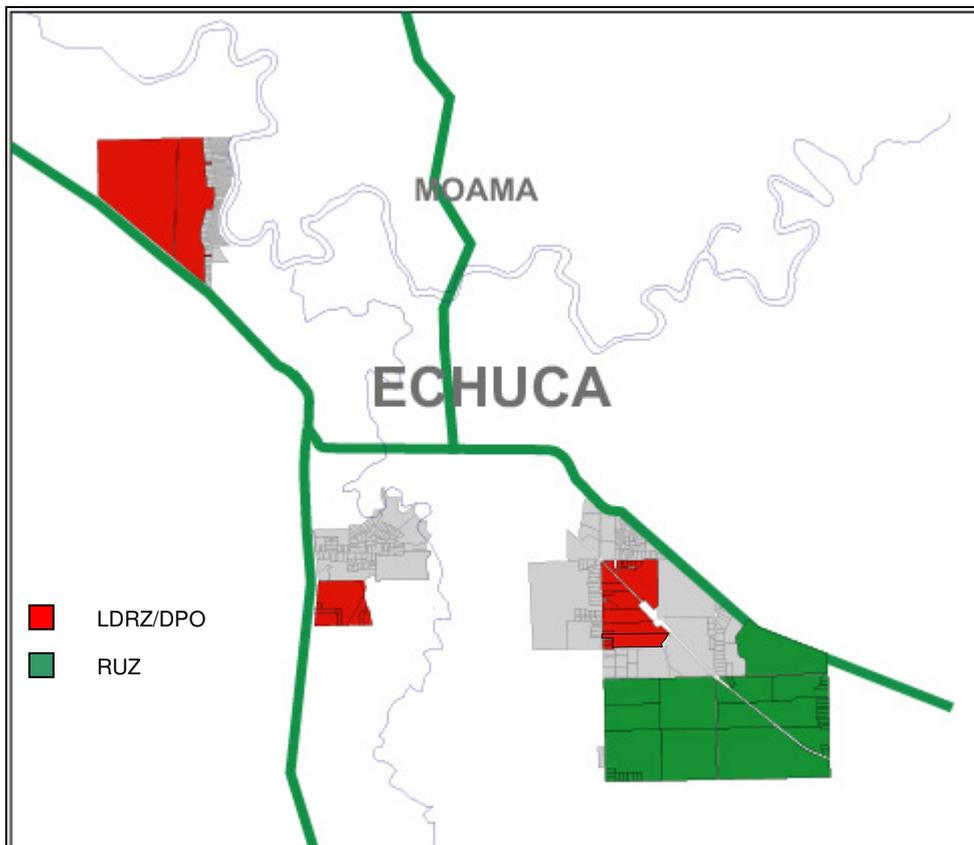
Recommendations

Strategy	Objectives	Approach
Whole Study Area		
<p>Provision of low density residential development as a legitimate and ongoing element of the broader residential housing provision around Echuca</p> <p>A focus on quality, serviced development linked to existing areas of low density development</p> <p>A focus on low density development to the west of Echuca (in line with other residential growth)</p>	<p>The provision of additional land within the LDRZ in areas that are consistent with residential growth strategies.</p> <p>Provision of reticulated services, mixed lot densities, appropriate retention of accessible open space, design for water efficiency and enhancement of natural landscapes.</p> <p>The provision of a reasonable and sustainable supply of land for low density residential development which caters to a variety of markets with a choice of location.</p>	<p>Rezoning of land to LDRZ or RLZ, limiting the broad extent of RLZ</p> <p>The use of the DPO requiring the preparation of Development Plans to address yields, design, environmental impacts, and development sequencing.</p> <p>Establish a monitoring system to manage supply levels of low density residential land.</p>
Wharparilla Drive Area		
<p>Development of staged extension to the west of the existing area (in the area bounded by the Braund Road, the Murray Valley Highway and Latham Road)</p>	<p>To ensure development does not replicate residential densities</p> <p>To ensure a range of lot sizes, within the context of low density development</p> <p>To enhance the natural landscape through revegetation and development form.</p> <p>To encourage water sensitive development.</p> <p>To ensure development contributes to the amenity of this entrance to Echuca.</p> <p>To be the main focus for future low density residential growth.</p> <p>To ensure that supply of land does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand.</p>	<p>Rezoning of the area to LDRZ or RLZ</p> <p>Application of a DPO to the area requiring the preparation of a Development Plan specifying design, lots densities, environmental impacts, stormwater management, enhancement of natural landscapes, main road frontage management and the lot yields at various stages to ensure supply does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand scenario.</p> <p>Establish a monitoring system to manage supply levels of low density residential land.</p>
Fehring Lane (Chelsworth Park) Area		
<p>Development of staged extension to the south of the existing area (bounded by Matheson Rd and the existing Environmental Rural Zone.)</p> <p>Limit development to areas to the east of the Northern Highway and south of the defined growth area.</p>	<p>To ensure development does not replicate residential densities</p> <p>To ensure the maintenance of open space and access to the Campaspe River Corridor.</p> <p>Design and landscaping to address water efficiency.</p> <p>To enhance the natural landscape through revegetation and development form.</p> <p>To ensure development contributes to the amenity of this entrance to Echuca.</p> <p>To ensure that supply of land does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand.</p> <p>To limit expansion of this area to the growth area defined to prevent further elongation of Echuca's urban form.</p> <p>To ensure appropriate buffers are maintained between low density residential development and adjoining rural land.</p>	<p>Rezoning of the area to LDRZ</p> <p>Application of a DPO to the area requiring the preparation of a Development Plan specifying design, lots densities, environmental impacts, buffers to adjoining farmland, main road frontage management and the lot yields at various stages to ensure supply does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand scenario.</p> <p>Establish a monitoring system to manage supply levels of low density residential land.</p>

South East Area

<p>Extension of low density development opportunities south of Scott Road.</p>	<p>To enable opportunities for the south east low density residential area to consolidate through development of vacant land adjoining existing developed areas.</p> <p>To limit expansion of this area to the growth area defined as the focus for residential expansion of Echuca is to the west.</p> <p>To ensure development does not replicate residential densities</p> <p>Design and landscaping to address water efficiency.</p> <p>To enhance the natural landscape through revegetation and development form.</p> <p>To ensure that supply of land does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand.</p>	<p>Rezoning of the area to LDRZ</p> <p>Application of a DPO to the area requiring the preparation of a Development Plan specifying design, lots densities, environmental impacts and the lot yields at various stages to ensure supply does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand scenario.</p> <p>Establish a monitoring system to manage supply levels of low density residential land.</p>
<p>Removal of extensive and undeveloped Rural Living Area south of Bensons Road and east of Lady Augusta Road.</p>	<p>To address significant oversupply of rural living land, a less desirable residential form in an area that is largely undeveloped and comparatively peripheral.</p>	<p>Rezone area to RUZ</p>
<p>Appropriate development of remaining Rural Living Zoned land.</p>	<p>To provide for efficient land use and development and protect long term development opportunities.</p> <p>To support rural living type activities that capitalise on proximity to the racecourse.</p>	<p>Rural Living with Local Policy to provide a direction for development, including restructure.</p> <p>Rural Living with a Local Policy specifying the specific purpose of this area.</p>
<p>Protect buffers to existing and future industrial areas.</p>	<p>To support other growth and urban development opportunities in Echuca.</p>	<p>Retain as Rural or at the most rezone to Rural Living but prevent further subdivision. Ensure appropriate dwelling setbacks are maintained.</p>

Map of Recommendations



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1. Introduction

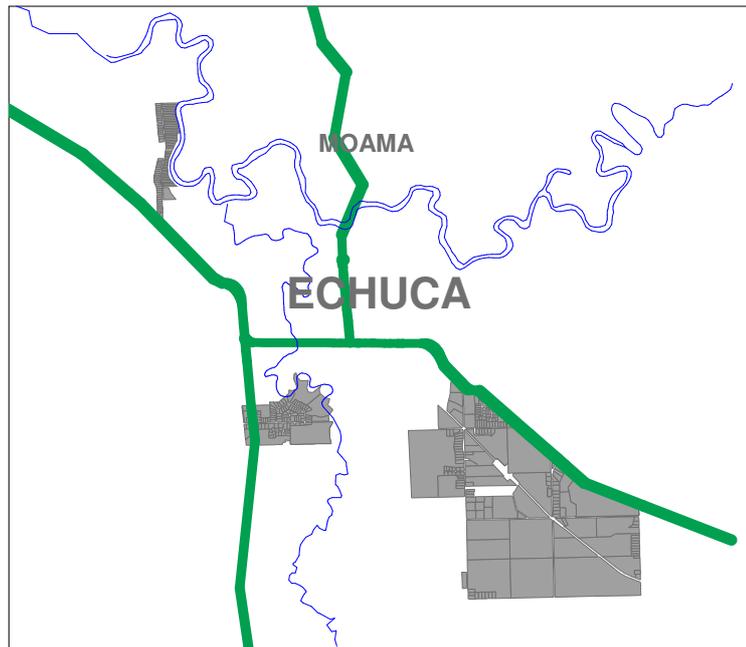
Echuca is a rapidly growing city and, along with Moama, forms a significant regional centre. The population and subsequent residential growth being experienced in this centre is some of the highest in regional Victoria, with attractive living opportunities along with a healthy economy stimulating and supporting this activity. Over the next twenty five years the combined population of these two centres is expected to increase considerably placing pressure on housing and services.

Campaspe Shire Council is supporting and facilitating this growth through pro-active economic development initiatives and the provision of a range of residential opportunities. Council has provided a considerable supply of land for conventional residential development to the west of the City to accommodate this form of development into the future, but is also aware there is a market for lower density residential living opportunities and they wish to continue to accommodate this demand. This project seeks to provide;

- an understanding of the market for low density residential or rural residential property in and around Echuca. Although Moama is outside the study area, it obviously plays a significant role in the local property market and its impact and relationship with Echuca's low density residential growth will be considered as a part of this research;
- an assessment of the suitability and level of supply of existing low density residential or rural residential property precincts in and around Echuca;
- a strategy for sustainable low density residential or rural residential development as a component of residential growth in and around Echuca.

The critical outcome of this project will be a plan for the provision of a sustainable supply of low density residential land around Echuca.

Map 1: Study Area



The project focuses on the three existing precincts of low density and rural residential development around Echuca.

1. Wharparilla Drive and surrounding area;
2. Fehring Lane and surrounding area; and
3. The area to the south east of the city, in the vicinity of Mary Ann Rd, Murray Valley Hwy, Simmie Rd and Kelsh Rd.

1.1 What is Low Density or Rural Residential Development?

This project primarily seeks to determine an appropriate supply of low density residential land for Echuca. While the focus of the project will be on low density residential land supply, the use of larger lots of land for residential purposes will also be considered in the assessment of residential growth management on the fringe of Echuca.

In general terms and for the purposes of this study **low density residential development** is considered to consist of lots of approximately 0.4ha (1 acre) – 2ha where residential activity is the main function of the property.

Pursuant to Ministers Direction No. 6 Rural Residential Development, a planning guideline and assessment tool for considering new development, rural residential development is defined as;

- i. The subdivision of land into one or more lots which have an area of between 0.4ha and 2.0ha if the lot is or lots are intended primarily for a residential use; or
- ii. The construction of a detached house on a vacant lot which has an area of between 0.4ha and 2.0ha.

Rural living development is considered to be larger properties, which may or may not have another function in conjunction with the residential use, such as sub-commercial agriculture, animal keeping or environmental values.

This form of land use, which is considered by many to be important in terms of its contribution to choice of living environments is, by its nature, a less efficient and more costly means to accommodate residential growth. In determining to offer this form of residential land, Council must balance the community demand and the desire to offer residential choice and attractive living opportunities with the cost arising from such development, including the opportunity cost of reduced land supply for standard residential densities. Cost of such development includes less efficient use of land, less efficient use of infrastructure, loss of land from agriculture and even sometimes environmental impact through vegetation clearance and water quality decline through lack of appropriate effluent disposal.

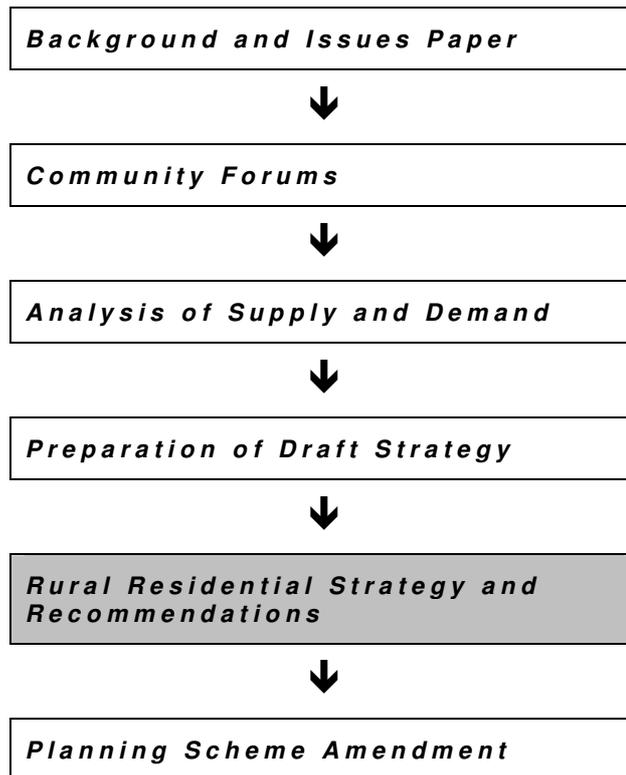
Low density residential development is a key element in the growth of Echuca, with its form dictated by landscape and environment. The demand for less conventional residential development in Echuca appears to be focussed on lots that are larger than standard “suburban” sized lots, offering more space. However lots larger than approximately 0.5ha (1.2 acres) also appear less desirable, largely due to real and perceived management issues. The attraction of lots in the 0.4ha-0.5ha range is considered to be a result of the desire to capture the country living environment, in an areas where landscape values are not a key market feature (proximity to riparian environments aside). Unlike many other areas in the region, larger lots which take advantage of specific landscape features and semi-rural land use opportunities do not form a component of the property market in this study area.

Across the River Murray, in Moama, similar trends are apparent, although a number of smaller semi-rural holdings, including some grape plantings, have been developed for rural residential development to the north west of the urban residential areas of Moama. Generally this form of development within Murray Shire has not occurred in the same contained estates which typify the development near Echuca.

1.2 Study Process

The preparation of this assessment of the ongoing supply of low density residential land has included research, site assessment, community input and consideration of the policy requirements at local and state government level.

The project has involved the following steps, with this report forming Step Five:



2. Strategic Context

The strategic context for undertaking this review includes a range of policy parameters, previous investigations, existing development patterns and trends in supply and demand for this form of housing and other residential land.

2.1 State Policy

In determining to allow rural land to be developed for a rural residential use Council must consider and act within the context of State Policy. The State Planning Policy Framework (which forms a part of the Campaspe Planning Scheme) provides the following framework for managing rural residential development;

Land should only be zoned for rural living or rural residential development where;

- *It is located close to existing towns and urban centres, but not in areas that will be required for fully serviced urban development;*
- *It can be supplied with electricity and water and good quality road access.*

Land should not be zoned for rural living or rural residential development if it will encroach on high quality productive agricultural land or adversely impact on waterways or other natural resources.

Moreover, the requirements of Minister's Direction 6 *Rural Residential Development* provide a clear framework for the assessment of the suitability of rezoning land for this style of development. Critical elements of this Direction include:

- ❑ The need to manage development within the broader context of land supply;
- ❑ The need to manage the environmental impacts of development, and
- ❑ The need to manage development within the context of other residential development and the provision of infrastructure.

A more detailed consideration of the application of this direction to development within the study area is included later within this report.

2.2 What is Council's Vision for Echuca?

The directions for planning and development in an around Echuca are shaped by Council's policy contained within the Corporate Plan and the Campaspe Planning Scheme. Council has developed and adopted a *Corporate Vision* and a *Land Use Planning Vision* in their Corporate Plan and Municipal Strategic Statement (a component of the Planning Scheme) respectively.

General

The Council Corporate Plan *Balancing the Focus (2000-2003)* promotes the following vision for the Campaspe Shire:

People choose to live and come to Campaspe because of the lifestyle and opportunities that are sustainable and challenging.

In this document Council also acknowledges that it has inherited a Shire that has outstanding environmental, social and economic attributes and makes a commitment to passing on the Shire to the next generation in as good, or better, condition as when they inherited it.

Council has recently revisited its land use planning vision and prepared an amendment to its planning scheme to incorporate this refined direction. Although this amendment to the Campaspe Planning Scheme has not yet been approved by the Minister for Planning, it has been subject to a Panel hearing and has been adopted by Council. The following discussion of Council's planning direction relates to the revised Municipal Strategic Statement.

Council's *Land Use Planning Vision* seeks to build a better future for the Shire based on:

- Serving people*
- Providing leadership*
- Enhancing environment*
- Encouraging industry*
- Providing infrastructure*

Council's *Land Use Planning Strategic Framework* is based on the five key themes of:

- Environment: to protect and improve water quality, to reverse salinity, to protect native vegetation, and to improve the condition of the environment.*
- Agriculture: to support viable and sustainable agriculture.*
- Settlement: to ensure the Shire's towns provide for efficient and sustainable residential, commercial and industrial growth.*
- Heritage: to protect sites and precincts of historic, cultural and natural significance.*
- Tourism: to develop an integrated approach to tourism for and throughout the whole Shire.*

In making decisions about land use and development Council will balance the directions of these themes and will strive for net community benefit and sustainable development. This provides an important context for determining the future of low density and rural residential development in Echuca. Broader strategic issues, such as the role of Echuca, and its growth, in the context of other towns in the Shire and the region are also important considerations.

In terms of growth of Echuca, Council proposes that residential expansion will occur to the west of the existing urban area and that industrial expansion will occur to the east.

Low Density and Rural Residential

Specific to rural residential and low density residential development in and around Echuca, the Campaspe Municipal Strategic Statement includes the following strategic directions;

- Provide a range of residential living opportunities from low density to medium density within existing towns.
- Restrict low density residential development to areas that:
 - are on marginal agricultural land as determined by land capability assessment with a suitability score of 2) or 3);
 - are not liable to flooding;
 - are adjacent to urban areas so that services and utilities are developed in an efficient manner;
 - are capable of integrating residential development in an environmentally sound manner;
 - do not negate long term options for the growth of existing urban centres;
 - is identified on the *Town Structure Plan* as future or long term low density residential.

- Longer term prospects for low density residential land should dovetail with existing low density estates and should be located on poor quality agricultural land especially to the north west of the town in the vicinity of Wharparilla Drive.
- The Echuca Town Structure Plan identifies the area to the west of Wharparilla Drive as being for short to medium term low density residential growth, Fehring Lane as accommodating infill low density residential growth and the area south of Fehring Lane as being for medium term low density residential growth. The Echuca Town Structure Plan is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

These directions provide a context for this review and are consistent with broader policy objectives from within and beyond Campaspe Shire, however a reconsideration of any of these elements may form a component of the final strategy document.

2.3 Low Density and Rural Residential Development in Echuca

Low density and rural residential development is already an integral part of the Echuca urban form and living environment. Trends in rural residential and low density residential development in Echuca have been driven by overall population growth and the preferences and opportunities offered by the town's location and environment. Like so many regional centres, low density and rural residential housing has become a part of the character of and options offered in new residential growth, however Echuca has seen this growth contained to a small number of locations, unlike the dispersed and fragmented growth occurring in other regions. The existing development meets a range of market segments; comparatively smaller lots in a low density setting, lots with a distinct landscape and environmental character, and larger lots in a characteristically "rural" setting. Development trends over recent years indicate a preference in the area around the City for low density residential lots (around 0.4ha) as opposed to larger "hobby farm" sized lots, which are provided away from the city.

Echuca is located in an agricultural landscape on the River Murray. The riparian environs offer an outstanding landscape with water and substantial vegetation. Rural residential properties are popular in this area, and this demand would be attributed to the high landscape quality. Development opportunity is limited in this area, though, due to the extent of flooding from both the Murray and Campaspe. Beyond the river environs the rural environment consists of agricultural plains with limited landscape quality. The limited landscape quality around Echuca, beyond the rivers, is considered to be a factor in the preference for low density residential properties as opposed to larger lots which offer the opportunity to purchase a landscape.

The pattern of low density and rural residential development around Echuca has been inherited from the predecessors of the Shire of Campaspe – the City of Echuca and the Shire of Deakin. The city of Echuca provided for low density residential development at Wharparilla Drive and Fehring Lane and the Shire of Deakin supported rural residential development to the south east of the City. The Shire of Deakin had a considerable area to the south east of the city zoned to permit cluster subdivision, in an attempt to provide low density and rural residential development, popular due to the proximity to Echuca, and at the same time maintain agricultural activity in this area. The planning controls in this area have resulted in the somewhat adhoc scattering of isolated clusters of housing on small lots amongst larger lots and have limited agricultural opportunities due to the proximity of residential areas.

This study focuses on the three main areas of rural residential development around Echuca;

Wharparilla Drive: This is a well established estate located to the north west of Echuca, between the Murray River and the Murray Valley Highway. The lots along Wharparilla Drive are zoned Low Density Residential and there is a pocket of Residential zoned land to the south east. The land to the north and north west, along Latham Road is subdivided in a rural living fashion and is zoned Rural.

Council's current strategic thinking for this area is expansion of this form of low density residential development to the west. The type, timing and density of development in this area has been extensively debated in the past as a result of previous development proposals. Local residents appear

keen to protect the low density nature of the area, and it is envisaged that this area will retain an identity that is separate to the standard residential growth planned in the longer term on the western side of the Northern Highway.

Fehring Lane: This estate style development (also referred to as Chelsworth Park) is located to the south of Echuca, abutting the Northern Highway, and is a relatively recent development. The area is within the Low Density Residential Zone. This precinct is an “estate style” development with access to Northern Highway, and a distinct character within the Campaspe River environs. A further stage is proposed to the south of the existing development.

There are a number of other pockets of Low Density Residential development between the Campaspe River and the railway south of Echuca. Little scope exists for further housing development in these areas.

Echuca South East: There is a considerable area of land within the Low Density Residential Zone and the Rural Living Zone to the east and south east of Echuca. The area of Rural Living zoned land is quite extensive and includes a number of cluster type developments and larger balance lots. This area has developed in a dispersed manner with existing housing and vacant blocks scattered over the entire precinct.

The minimum lot size specified by the Campaspe Planning Scheme for the Rural Living Zone is 8ha. Much of this area was subdivided under the previous provisions of the Deakin Shire Planning Scheme that allowed small lots to be subdivided, based on a lot size average of 6ha, and a larger balance to be retained ostensibly for continuing agricultural use. The opportunity for lot averaging is still being used under the current controls to achieve a number of smaller lots and a larger balance lot where the land has already been marginalised by previous approvals.

3. Strategic Assessment

The objective of this project is to provide for sustainable low density residential development as an element of the broader urban form in Echuca. The research is based on an assessment of the suitability of the existing areas to continue to be developed in such a manner, based on State and local planning considerations, and a level of understanding about appropriate levels of supply in the different areas to respond to local market trends.

Providing for such development requires consideration of the issues such as;

- i. Maintaining a reasonable level of supply. State Government Policy requires a level of supply of no more than ten years;
- ii. Community aspirations and concerns;
- iii. Environmental values and constraints, such as waterways, native vegetation, landscape values and areas subject to flooding;
- iv. Protecting the integrity of existing land uses such as agriculture and industry; and
- v. Cost effective and equitable provision of infrastructure and services.

In the case of Echuca-Moama the direction and scale of development occurring north of the River Murray and the role this plays in the context of the twin towns is also an important consideration.

3.1 Ministerial Directions

Ministerial Direction No. 6 (*Rural Residential Development*) is a policy direction released by the Minister for Planning. This direction outlines the preconditions for considering zoning for new low density residential development.

Ministerial Direction No. 6 requires that any amendment that rezones land Low Density Residential to provide for rural residential development comply with *Guidelines for Rural Residential Development*, (October 1997), prepared by the Department of Infrastructure. Amongst other things, these Guidelines require that any land to be rezoned for rural residential development (low density residential);

- Does not cause a supply of rural residential land in excess of 10 years demand;
- Is not of high agricultural quality (and hence will not result in the loss of high quality land);
- Is integrated with an urban area;
- Is supplied with essential infrastructure including quality roads and water supply;
- Does not contain significant flora and fauna;
- Is not subject to flood and fire hazard; and,
- Does not threaten a significant landscape.

The aim of these guidelines is to prevent the development of fragmented, dispersed and inappropriate development, and to ensure services and facilities are adequate for growth. Importantly the guidelines require a consideration not only of site specific issues, but also of the context of development within the broader context of residential development and settlement planning issues in the area. Within this study this assessment must include consideration of the consequences of development in each of the three study areas, as well as broader settlement and residential development issues in Echuca and Moama.

3.2 Supply of Low Density Residential Land

As identified earlier in the report, Echuca has three key areas of low density residential development. These areas are each of different age, stage of development, size and character, but each contributes to the supply of low density residential land in Echuca and provides for different market segments. This section of the report provides an assessment of the existing supply of low density residential land in Echuca. In addition to assessing the current and potential supply of low density residential land in Echuca, consideration will also be given to the supply of low density residential land in Moama, as although this centre is outside the study area, in reality it plays an important part in the local low density residential property market.

Wharparilla Drive

The existing area zoned Low Density Residential on Wharparilla Drive is largely developed. Of the approximately 100 blocks in this area, there are some 12 vacant. Blocks are generally in the range of 0.3ha-0.5ha, with a number of larger blocks including an area of floodplain, restricting any further development potential. On the western side of Wharparilla Dve an area of land within the existing Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) remains undeveloped with the owner anticipating this to form access to a stage of subsequent development to the west of existing housing.

Fehring Lane and Surrounds

The Fehring Lane area includes low density residential development that has occurred in several stages with about 150 lots presently in the low density residential size range. This area includes several larger lots, although few of these lots have opportunity for further subdivision due to flooding from the Campaspe River and Council imposed restrictions on title preventing further subdivision. Of the existing smaller lots approximately 10 remain undeveloped, a number of which would require access from beyond the existing road network to enable development at rural residential densities.

South East

As previously explained the area to the south east of Echuca has two parcels of Low Density Residential zoned land and a considerable area of Rural Living zoned land which includes clusters of low density residential development. Much of this area includes small lots and remaining "balance" lots ostensibly used for ongoing agriculture.

Within the existing Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) and Rural Living Zone (RLZ) area there are 139 lots within the general rural residential / low density residential size range. There are a further 70 larger lots in this area ranging from around 4ha to almost 100ha.

Existing Parcels by Study Area and Lot Size

	<0.2ha	0.2-0.4ha	0.4-1ha	1-2ha	2-10ha	>10ha
Wharparilla*	1	43	53	0	0	0
Fehring	2	9	150	1	5	6
S. East	1	18	101	18	18	36

Source: Campaspe Shire

*This area includes undeveloped floodway on several blocks

If the existing vacant blocks are considered, it is evident that a number of lots remain available for development in each of the study areas. Additionally, a number of larger lots with a potential for further subdivision to enable rural residential development exist in the South East area, some vacant and some with an existing residence.

Vacant Parcels by Study Area and Lot Size

	<0.2ha	0.2-0.4ha	0.4-1ha	1-2ha	2-10ha	>10ha
Wharparilla*	1	10	9	0	0	0
Fehring	2	3	21	0	3	5
S. East	0	7	32	3	5	26

Source: Campaspe Shire

*This area includes undeveloped floodway on several blocks

Given this pattern of land holdings (and based on this data), the following points regarding the potential land availability can be made:

- ❑ The existing Wharparilla Drive estate has no real potential for the creation of further lots, but has potential for a further 20 dwellings;
- ❑ The existing Fehring Lane (Chelsworth Park) estate has approximately 10 existing and impending vacant low density residential lots;
- ❑ The South East Area has potential for a further 43 dwellings on existing small lots and potential for an additional 20-25 lots in the LDRZ area and 50-60 lots (approximately) in the RLZ area given present planning controls¹.

These assumptions do not include proposals for the rezoning of additional land, and do not include strategic considerations of the appropriateness of enabling development at these densities, although this matter is dealt with later in the report. They do show, however, the potential for approximately 120 new dwellings to be constructed on small lots and a further 100 lots to be created within the present planning provisions.

Moama and Areas East of Echuca

There are also considerable areas of low density residential housing in Moama. This type of growth has formed a large component of housing growth in the town over the last decade. While these areas are outside of this study, future trends across the border will continue to have significant impact on housing markets in both towns. The history of development of serviced low density lots in Moama, and the predominance of new housing at standard residential densities in Echuca is an important characteristic of development in both towns.

In Moama, extensive low density development is expected to be developed along Perricoota Road to the west and north west of the town. Additional residential land is proposed to the north of Moama. It can be assumed that low density development will include a considerable proportion (up to 50%) of the approximately 100 new dwellings forecast per year in Moama². Present planning controls and strategy do not allow a clear assessment of potential development within a defined area in Moama.

¹ As this area is not serviced, site constraints play a role in potential lots yields. Notwithstanding past planning controls relating to the maintenance of larger balance lots, the present Rural Living Zone enables the creation of lots to an 8ha minimum. All of these estimates are based on existing planning controls and the densities of surrounding subdivision. Topography and other design issues will of course influence lot any eventual yields.

² This level of development, and the share of low density, development in Moama was proposed by Murray Shire in discussion and submissions relating to the recent *Murray River Crossing Environmental Effects Statement*.

To the east of Echuca a considerable area within the existing Rural Zone has been developed in a characteristic rural residential manner (Echuca Village and surrounds); typically smaller lots and a mixture of purely residential and semi-agricultural land uses beyond the urban fringe. While topography and location suggest that this is an inappropriate area for further development (and Council's existing strategic direction and planning controls support this) historical planning decisions have resulted in this area contributing to the overall supply of rural residential housing, albeit catering to a different market to other areas within the area of this study.

3.3 Demand for Development

Demand for low density residential land will be influenced by population and household growth, as well as local market trends and conditions. Echuca is experiencing healthy population growth and this is expected to continue. Importantly, sectors of the community that are attracted to low density residential environments, young family and retiree age groups, are increasing. Population growth will not be the only factor in increased demand, as opportunities will also exist in conventional housing estates to accommodate this growth. The demand for additional low density residential land in Echuca will also be influenced by availability of developed property, availability and comparability of land elsewhere (mainly Moama) and the amenity of land available.

Population and Housing

Obviously, population and household growth will contribute to the demand for low density and rural residential housing.

Population growth in Echuca and Moama has been accompanied by significant growth in housing development in urban and rural residential settings. Since 1976 Echuca has grown by almost 3,000 people and 2,000 households.

Population: Echuca and Moama, 1976-2001

	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	Annual Change 76-01
Echuca	7,873	7,943	8,409	9,438	10,014	10,717	1.2%
Moama	1,202	1,507	1,924	2,258	2,469	3,573	4.5%
Total	9,075	9,450	10,333	11,696	12,483	14,290	1.8%

ABS Census

Household growth has exceeded levels of population growth. This is consistent with other parts of Australia where average household sizes are declining, however the demographic characteristics of Echuca, including an identified retirement population, enhance this phenomena.

Population and Households: Echuca, 1976-2001

	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
Population	7,873	7,943	8,409	9,438	10,014	10,717
Households	2,368	2,569	2,930	3,368	3,770	4,206
Average Household Size	3.32	3.09	2.87	2.80	2.66	2.55

ABS Census

This pattern of growth is anticipated to continue, with a forecast population growth of over 2,000 additional people in the next decades. Accounting for trends in smaller households, this would suggest continued considerable demand for new housing. High levels of population and household growth are also forecast to continue in Moama. For this reason, trends in development over the past 5 years should be considered to be below rates that may be anticipated over the next decades.

Local Market Trends

The capacity of these proposed areas to meet demand for new housing is dependent not only on levels of population growth, but also on predominant market trends. Presently it appears that in Echuca-Moama there is a reasonable supply of residential land (both zoned and identified through strategy), however at present this follows previous patterns where the bulk of low density residential land is in Murray Shire. Moreover, even within Echuca on its own, the market for this style of housing includes areas within the riparian (river) environment, areas within a traditional rural setting and low density estates. Each of these meets the needs of different sub-markets, and the future trends in each are not identical.

Development patterns indicate steady development of new housing in residential and rural residential areas of Echuca-Moama. Since the mid 1990s there has been over 800 new dwellings approved in Echuca and around 100 per annum in Moama. While these have generally been in urban settings, and include medium density housing, which is an increasing feature of housing in an area with an ageing population, it does indicate a significant scale of growth with the low density and rural residential housing market forming a strong element of this, as detailed in the analysis of building approvals below.

Additionally, the turnover of existing, established rural residential properties is a key consideration in assessing the level of demand for additional low density residential land. In Echuca, like many other markets, there is often a higher turnover of rural residential and low density residential houses, as often the market for this housing is linked to life-cycle, and perceptions of lifestyle advantage that may eventually dissipate.

Through discussions with estate agents it is evident that a strong market for both urban and rural residential housing has been maintained in both Echuca and Moama for the past 3-5 years, it is clear that established housing forms a significant component of the housing market. However, unlike many areas where fragmented and dispersed development are the key characteristics of rural residential development, rural residential housing around Echuca and Moama is generally accessible and on comparatively small lots. As a consequence many of the drivers of higher turnover (including land management and transport issues) are less evident.

Building Activity

Healthy building activity in all three study areas is one demonstration of a level of demand for different styles of low density residential property and different markets. As discussed, building activity in both Echuca and Moama has remained at high levels over the past 5 years. In terms of Echuca overall, the three study areas provided 19% of all new residential building activity from 1996-2002. In Moama the proportion of rural residential development has, to date, been less significant, but is anticipated to increase as a proportion of all development as areas on the fringes of the established urban area are fully developed. This is significant in Moama where scope for urban expansion is restricted by topography and existing non-residential development.

Dwelling Approvals 1997-2002

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
Wharparilla Drive	1	2	6	9	-	-	18
Fehring Lane Area	9	15	14	18	4	1	61
South East Area							
Scott Rd Lagoon Dve*	1	4	7	11	-	1	24
Mary Ann Rd/Brecon Crt**	-	6	5	3	1	3	18
Lady Augusta Rd	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Kelsh Rd	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Simmie Rd	1	1	2	1	1	1	7
Total South East	2	11	14	15	3	6	51

Source: Campaspe Shire

*LDRZ area

**Generally small (0.8ha) lots

Over the five year period the pattern of development has risen and declined. To some extent this relates to broader cycles in the housing construction market, but also (as supported by community comment) as a consequence of patterns of land release and availability. There is strong evidence that land availability is a key factor in determining development patterns in Echuca as a strong demand is evident for all residential forms.

The lot size preference of recent dwellings is consistent with patterns of development over the past decades, including in the south east area where the greatest lot size range is available, but preference has still dictated the construction of dwellings on smaller lots. This has been the case in the LDRZ area north of Scott Road, as well as areas within the RLZ that are characterised by smaller lots in the 0.4-1ha size range, such as Brecon Crt.

Dwelling Approvals 1997-2002 by Lot Size

	<0.2ha	0.2-0.4ha	0.4-1ha	1-2ha	2-10ha	>10ha
Wharparilla	-	10	8	-	-	-
Fehring	-	5	53	1	1	1
S. East	-	8	39	-	1	5

Source: Campaspe Shire

Development Horizon and Projections

Some assumptions can be made about a likely future pattern of lot take up and, as a consequence, a horizon for development of existing available land. Over the past five years 103 new dwellings have been approved within the LDRZ (Wharparilla Drive, Fehring Lane area and Scott Rd area), an average of 20.6 per year, and a further 27 dwellings approved in the RLZ south east of Echuca (5.4 per year). Given these trends the following assumptions can be made:

- That the existing available lots will be developed at or before 2006. Issues such as land availability and personal development priorities of owners will only bring this horizon closer to the present;

- That at maximum subdivision potential (based on present planning controls) all available land would be developed by around 2013, a ten year horizon³.
- Demand for new housing may in fact be higher than that demonstrated by building figures, as land release has been a strong determinant in annual trends in building approvals, and anecdotal evidence suggests potential buyers are unable to find available land, particularly in the Wharparilla Drive and Fehring Lane area.
- This suggests that the current land supply is not in excess of demand in these areas overall, however in the RLZ portion of the South East area demand has not been as high, and given current levels of land supply and potential land supply this area would not be expected to fully develop (based on recent development trends) for at least 12 years (2015). It could, however, be anticipated that the level of demand in this area would increase to levels more consistent with the rates of development in smaller lot areas if the lot average provisions of the RLZ were used in this area. In this instance, and if the Scott Road area is taken as an example, rates of demand could be anticipated to be much higher than the trend over the past 5 years would indicate, reducing the horizon for full development. There is estimated to be about 35 large lots which could be involved in some form of realignment, with a yield of about 60 lots at 8ha, or a similar figure if subdivision and subsequent realignment was undertaken, although a number of these would remain large “balance” lots. Demand could also increase if water and sewer were made available.

However, as discussed, rates of growth anticipated for Echuca have the capacity to increase forecast rates of growth, in other words the rates experienced in the past 5 years may be lower than demand over the next decades, meeting the supply horizons at slightly faster rates.

3.4 Implications for Planning Directions

While trends in supply and demand only form one component of the overall assessment of the appropriateness of any additional land development, these trends do provide an important background to consideration of further land release, or any changes to existing controls. In the case of low density development around Echuca it appears evident that a level of genuine demand exists for this form of housing and that existing land supply will not meet this potential beyond 2012, or sooner. In the specific example of the Rural Living Zone area south east of Echuca, while development rates are considerable, land supply levels suggest that full development would not occur until beyond the 10-year horizon if land is offered as larger, *Rural Living*, lots. Given these factors, it is clear that if Council wishes to support this form of housing additional land will need to be made available. If lot average provisions are utilised, providing smaller lots and retaining a balance, while no more lots will be created than the maximum allowable, the rate of development may be anticipated to increase. Based on the growth rates experienced in Scott Road/Brecon Court (8.4 approvals per year), this would mean that full development of the potential small lots in the area (ie those of between 0.4ha and 1ha created, along with a balance lot, through lot averaging), estimated to be between 40 and 50 would occur with a 10 year horizon. A consequence of this approach would of course be a fragmented and dispersed pattern of development and the creation of “balance” lots with minimal usefulness for residential or agricultural land use. Ongoing future development pressure for these lots may be anticipated.

³ This is based on the 5 year trend of 26 houses per year in these areas and a potential for 150+ new lots within existing planning controls.

3.5 Other Strategic Considerations

Urban Growth and Land Use Compatibility

Echuca is predicted to experience considerable residential growth. Associated with this growth and arising from proactive strategies of Campaspe Shire Council it is also predicted Echuca will experience considerable commercial and industrial growth. In planning for the location of an ongoing supply of rural residential land, consideration must be given to protecting opportunities for residential, commercial and industrial expansion.

Residential Growth

Echuca's population is expected to be at least 12,800 by 2020, an increase of nearly 2000 on present figures. Significant growth is also anticipated for Moama. Conventional residential growth in Echuca is planned to extend west, beyond the Northern Highway. There is considered to be sufficient land here to provide for at least 50 years growth. Low density residential development should be integrated with this area, but not compromise its use for conventional and possibly medium density residential development.

The key directions of future growth include:

- The majority of Echuca's urban residential growth to occur on the western side of the Northern Highway, extending to Stratton Road in the longer term. Some urban development will continue on the towns' eastern fringe;
- Additional low density residential development is proposed for the area to the west of Wharparilla Drive, bounded by Latham and Braund Roads;
- Additional low density residential development is proposed for the area to the south of the existing Fehring Road development; and,
- Scope exists for further development of existing lots in the Rural Living Zone around Mary Ann and Scott Roads.

Industrial Growth

Echuca has a substantial industrial precinct in the south east of the township. There is approximately 70 hectares of industrially zoned land in this area, part of which is developed, with substantial areas yet to be developed. It is considered there is sufficient land available here to accommodate foreseeable growth demands. The *Town Structure Plan* in the Campaspe Planning Scheme has identified land east of the airport and south of the existing industrial area in the land bounded by Denmark Road, Mary Ann Road, Echuca-Kyabram Road (McKenzie Road) and Benson Road for potential long-term major expansion or for accommodation of a large scale industry wishing to locate in the town. There is also land suitable for a modest expansion of the zone on Murray Valley Highway opposite Mitchell Road.

Appropriate buffers between residential areas and even dwellings and industry must be provided to ensure an appropriate standard of amenity is delivered to residents and the ability for industry to operate unhindered (within acceptable standards) is protected. Ministers Direction No. 6 suggests a buffer of 300m between Industrial 1 and 3 Zone areas and low density residential areas.

Echuca's main industrial precinct, which is zoned Industrial 1, is located adjacent to the south east study area. Food processing is a major activity in this area. Presently a parcel of land zoned Rural provides a buffer between the industrial area and low density residential zoned land on the east side of Mary Ann Road. This buffer land has been subdivided and consists on five lots. The land is presently used in a limited way for pasture and has a depth of about 300 metres. There have been approaches to Council to rezone this land to Low Density Residential Zone. It is considered it would be inappropriate to rezone this land to permit further residential development so close to a viable industrial area, when appropriate alternative locations for low density residential development exist.

Longer term industrial expansion is proposed to extend south behind Brecon Crt. Although this area is zoned Rural Living, there is significant development of a low density residential nature in this area, and the principles of Ministers Direction 6 should still apply. Further development adjacent to this future industrial area should be limited and appropriate buffers should be protected. A legal agreement (Section 173 Agreement pursuant to the Planning and Environment Act 1987) exists between Council and the landowners that these lots will not be further subdivided.

Airport

The Echuca Aerodrome is located to the south of Echuca in close proximity to the Fehring Lane area and the south east area. Any expansion of these areas should not compromise a buffer around the aerodrome.

Environment and Resources

A range of environmental and resource management issues are important considerations in planning for future low density and rural residential development: particularly, water quality protection, the maintenance of native vegetation and the protection of the agricultural land resource.

Water Quality Protection

Echuca is located on the Murray and Campaspe Rivers. Two of the three low density residential areas are located in close proximity to these water bodies; Wharparilla Drive is located adjacent to the Murray River and the Fehring Lane area is located adjacent to the Campaspe. Although the south east area is located further from the waterways, it still has the potential to impact on water quality through local drainage.

Protection of the quality of water in these rivers is an objective at the State, regional and local level. Low density residential development has the potential to impact on water quality through inadequate effluent disposal and management and sediment runoff from cleared properties, building activity and roads. A fundamental consideration in determining to accommodate further low density residential growth in any of the three areas will be effluent disposal. Low density residential development does not necessarily have to be provided with reticulated sewer, but should this not be available lots must be of a size to adequately contain treated effluent. Neighbourhood treatment systems, which provide for local reuse, would be an appropriate option to provide for smaller lots where reticulated effluent disposal was not available. Other initiatives that should be incorporated into any low density residential environment to protect water quality is appropriate revegetation and innovative storm water management.

Native Vegetation and Fauna

The management and enhancement of native vegetation is an important planning issue, especially in riparian environments. Planning for new development needs to include consideration of local and regional objectives to maintain and improve native vegetation.

Within the study areas there is no particularly significant remnant vegetation, although any remnant vegetation has a degree of value. Remnant native vegetation in the study areas generally consists of scattered mature trees. These should be preserved as a component of any future development and revegetation with appropriate species as a component of land use change would be a valuable strategy in improving aesthetics, amenity and value of low density and rural residential areas.

Limited fauna values in the study area are associated with the minimal remnant native vegetation.

Landscape and Heritage

The areas around Echuca offer an attractive, but common rural landscape. The river environs have more unique attributes and any development in the vicinity of either of the two rivers should seek to incorporate the elements of this landscape.

There are no identified places of European heritage within any of the study areas that would be affected by further development. There are a considerable number of places of Aboriginal heritage significance in and around Echuca. The highest concentration of places is close to the rivers. Additional low density development should be limited where there is a high risk of places of Aboriginal heritage significance. Appropriate protocols should also be adopted when undertaking this form of development to ensure any inadvertent site disturbance is managed appropriately.

Agricultural Land

The study areas are located in an agricultural landscape. Any expansion of these areas requires land use change and loss of agricultural function. High quality agricultural land or agricultural land that has substantial agricultural infrastructure investment, such as irrigation land, is generally considered unsuitable for rural residential development given the opportunity cost of land use change. Maintaining scope for ongoing agriculture not only requires the protection of agricultural land, but actions to minimise conflicts with non-agricultural land uses, and the need to retain scope for changes in agricultural production and practice. The off-site impacts of standard agricultural practice, and the effects of this on the amenity of rural areas are an important consideration, and supporting ongoing agriculture is often directly at odds with the maintenance of desirable rural residential environments.

The land around Echuca is not considered to be of high quality for agricultural purposes, and while some areas have irrigation infrastructure it is considered to be at the end of its useful life. Agricultural activity around Echuca and in the vicinity of the study areas is generally limited to grazing and cropping, with minimal off site impact. Regardless, the provision of appropriate buffers between low density residential development and agricultural land is an important component of providing an appropriate living environment.

Public Land

Minister's Direction No. 6 Rural Residential Development requires buffers between rural residential development and Crown Land.

These buffers are;

- 500m to National Park, Reference Area, Wilderness, Marine Park or State Park;
- 200m to other Crown Land, including stream reserves.

In the context of this review, this is specifically relevant to the Fehring Lane area (Campaspe River) and the extension of development beyond Wharparilla Drive (between the Murray Valley Highway and the River Murray). Ideally any future development would maximise access and open space on the rivers, providing a landscape feature, and it is clear that a requirement to meet these buffers through the location and design of subdivision should be a component of any amendment to the Campaspe Planning Scheme.

Flooding and Drainage

Flooding from the Murray and Campaspe Rivers is a considerable issue in and around Echuca. Deep flooding occurs along both rivers, and considerable areas of land around Echuca are subject to flooding, in particular to the east and south. The impacts of any new residential development in and around these environments also present challenges for addressing drainage and water quality issues.

Future low density residential development will not be located in areas subject to flooding.

Salinity

Large areas of Campaspe Shire are affected, or potential affected by salinity. Any further development of the study areas must be done with recognition of the impact of the land use on the water table, and incorporation of appropriate management solutions.

Soil Contamination, Erosion and Land Slip

There is no documented evidence that soil contamination is a risk in and around any of the study areas. As the study areas are generally flat, there is limited risk of erosion and no risk of land slip.

Infrastructure Needs

The ordered and efficient provision of social and physical infrastructure is a central element to planning for residential development in urban and low-density settings. While the costs associated with this are, in part, components of any development, there are additional infrastructure issues associated with increased traffic, water and sewerage needs and the provision of social services to a more dispersed community. Many of these requirements will emerge regardless of whether projected population growth is accommodated at urban or rural residential densities, however there is some evidence that dispersed development limits the cost efficiencies associated with higher densities of housing.

One critical difference between low density residential development in Echuca and Moama is the level of services provided to a property. Moama offers fully serviced (ie. road, water and sewer) low density residential properties as a matter of course. Not all of Echuca's low density residential areas share the same level of servicing.

Roads

Good quality, all weather roads are a fundamental requirement of any low density or rural living development. All three low density residential areas have access to quality roads and are close to local major transport routes. Any further growth in most of these residential areas would require additional road infrastructure to be provided, but this would only be at the local area. Although there is no requirement for roads to be sealed, the community of many of these areas is requesting sealed roads to address dust generated by road traffic.

Water Supply

Reticulated water is required for low density residential development in and around Echuca. Coliban Water is the water supply authority. Water is presently supplied to Wharparilla Drive, Fehring Lane area and the northern part of the south east area, along Mary Ann Road and into Wallingford and Village Courts. The community have expressed concern about the reliability of the water supply in certain areas, including Fehring Lane. Coliban Water is presently undertaking works to address these issues.

A "raw" water supply is also provided to part of the Fehring Lane area to provide for garden use.

Large lots with large garden areas (including a predominance of "water thirsty" garden designs and plantings) in these low density residential contribute to high water demands. A strategy for sustainable low density residential development must minimise garden water usage through education in appropriate planting for the local climate and provision of appropriate lot sizes.

Coliban Water is presently reviewing its infrastructure capacity in Echuca with a view to developing upgrade and growth plans. At this time they are not able to inform this review of any obvious constraints to expansion of their network, although recommendations of this review could be integrated into Coliban Waters future plans.

Effluent Disposal

Coliban Water is also responsible for reticulated effluent disposal. Reticulated effluent disposal is not required for low density residential or rural living development. Should reticulated effluent disposal not be provided, lots must be of a size that can treat and contain effluent on site. Reticulated effluent disposal is available to Wharparilla Drive and Fehring Lane area. A pressure sewer system is presently being planned for the Mary Anne Road area.

The land in the south east area is capable of accommodating on site effluent disposal. Any further subdivision of the south east area would need to create lots of a size that were capable of treating and containing effluent on site (generally 0.4ha and above) or incorporate a neighbourhood treatment facility should smaller lots be sought. On site package treatment plants could also be required as a component of such developments and such a facility would also address the issue of providing garden water.

As with water, Coliban Water is reviewing the capacity and constraints of the effluent disposal network with a view to developing future plans. At this time they are not able to inform this review of any obvious constraints to expansion of their network, although recommendations of this review could be integrated into Coliban Waters future plans.

Electricity and Telephone

Power and telephone is available to the study areas, although there are some problems with reliability of supply in some area. The community of the Fehring Lane area has conveyed concerns about the reliability of power supply and residents in the south east area have advised that phone connections are not available to some parts of the south east area.

Garbage Collection

Regular garbage collection is available to the three study areas and to areas beyond.

Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure for these areas of residential growth is provided within Echuca. Additional social infrastructure will be incorporated into the residential growth area to the west of Echuca. While dispersed residential development will invariably place some pressure on the efficient provision of services, the development around Echuca is comparatively contained, especially when the large areas of fragmented and dispersed development around many other towns and regional centres.

3.6 Community Aspirations

Community input via a number of group and individual meetings, and written submissions has informed the development of this strategy. The community was looked to to provide input regarding issues faced by existing low density residential development, to provide an insight into what they believed to be an appropriate form of low density and rural residential development for Echuca in the future and to gauge ongoing demand and supply.

Residents of the three key low density and rural living areas were specifically invited to participate in this study. As such the views expressed in this section of the report are from a specific section of the community, and do not necessarily represent the views of the overall Echuca community. Given that these people have already expressed their values with respect to this form of residential development through living or owning land in this area any comments arising from this consultation should be considered in this context. It is vital, though, that these people were involved in the project as it is their living environment that this strategy seeks to manage.

Community Meetings were held in Echuca on the evening of 27 August 2002 to provide for input into this project. One meeting involved residents from Wharparilla Drive and the Fehring Lane area and a second meeting involved residents from the South East area. Attendees of these meetings are included in Appendix 1 to this report.

As well as consulting with residents of the study area, meetings were also held with local real estate agents and property developers to gain an insight in local market trends.

The consultation component of the project revealed the following;

- The preferable lot size in and around Echuca for rural residential development is in the range of 2000m² to 4000m². Larger lots are considered to be a “waste of land” and can look “untidy” as they are more land than is useful and more difficult to manage. This view of the community is supported by the development industry and the trend for “cluster” type subdivisions;
- Within the study area there appears to be a limited market for hobby farm size lots;
- There appears to be a lack of planning with respect to infrastructure supply in some areas. In particular water supply in the Fehring Lane area is inadequate.
- Infrastructure provision and servicing expectations by residents in these areas are high, eg. expectation of sealed roads;
- Use and development of these lots is very urban. In particular, considerable garden areas with high water demand plants is exacerbating water supply problems;
- Many owners of larger properties in and around the study area have a desire to subdivide;
- Turnover of low density residential development is higher than conventional residential development in town. Anecdotally, the average turnover of low density residential property is 3-4 years. The high turnover of low density residential property is largely due to increased time and cost associated with property maintenance and travel to town.
- Development of low density residential or rural living area needs to provide more than just infrastructure. Landscape setting, vegetation and water features are required to provide a higher standard of development and amenity.

Specific Development Proposals

Five specific development proposals were received during the study process. Each of these proposed enabling further rural residential development focussing on the density and development type which, as

discussed, has been most popular in the area in recent years; serviced lots that are generally in the 0.4ha size range. The proposals are as follows:

- i. The extension of development to the west of Wharparilla Drive. A proposal to develop this area has been raised several times in the last decade, with one proposal being the subject of a Planning Scheme Amendment. The current concept proposes serviced lots in a landscape setting which incorporates a water feature. Lot sizes are proposed to average 0.25ha with 37% of the site being open space. The proposed lot yield is 535 lots. The total site is over 220 hectares in size
- ii. The second proposal involves the rezoning of land south of the present Fehring Lane (Chelsworth Park) area to LDRZ to facilitate the development of this site to similar densities to the existing low density residential estate. The site is over 44ha in size, or about 30% of the existing estate area.
- iii. The third proposal involves the rezoning of land to the west of the present Fehring Lane (Chelsworth Park) area, across the Northern Highway, from RUZ to LDRZ to facilitate the development of this land as a further area of development at similar densities to the existing low density residential estate. This site is about 70ha in total, half the size of the existing estate.
- iv. The fourth proposal involves the rezoning of land which currently forms the industrial buffer north of Scott Road and west of Mary Anne Road (an area of 17.5ha) from RUZ to LDRZ to facilitate an extension of low density residential development to abut the existing industrial zone area.
- v. The fifth proposal involves the subdivision and development of land south and west of the racecourse area as low density residential land. This proposal includes the rezoning of land from RLZ to LDRZ. This involves an area of approximately 75ha.
- vi. The final proposal involves a subdivision and development adjacent to the racecourse, particularly for the purpose of race horse trainers. This development seeks to capitalise on the racecourse facility and provide lots for trainers on which to develop a dwelling and stables, while using the racecourse for training. This proposal provides an additional 22 lots ranging in size from 0.8ha to 2.7ha. This development is not considered to contribute significantly to the overall supply of low density / rural residential land in Echuca as it not aimed at the broader market, but it quite specific in terms of its purpose.

Each of these proposals has potential to increase the supply of land available for low density development, both overall and in each of the study precincts. Moreover, they each have implications for broader land use and settlement issues including the future supply of residential land in general and the character of existing development, particular on established estates.

The proposal to further develop the Wharparilla Drive area to the west would, based on current trends of demand provide, in itself, a supply in excess of 20 years. The proposal to develop land south of the existing Chelsworth Park/Fehring Lane estate would possibly result in 80-100 new lots, or an additional 4-5 years supply, as would the proposal to rezone land to the west of the Northern Highway. The rezoning of land within the existing RLZ area to facilitate more intensive development would, at current growth patterns, add an additional 4-5 years of land supply (although this would decrease if boundary realignment was the dominant method of increasing land supply).

These proposals, in effect, add a further 35-37 years supply to the present land supply, based on the present trends of 20.6 new dwellings per annum on low density residential lots. If anticipated increases in overall development are realised, and the share of low density residential housing developed in Moama is diminished by increased supply south of the river (an area of apparent preference), rates of development may increase to 40-50 new dwellings per year (a 50% share of Moama's current rate and an overall 25% increase on current rates of development) resulting in a supply of only 15-20 years supply)

Consideration should of course be given to the likely increase in overall housing demand in Echuca-Moama over the next decade as population growth (and a general decline in average household sizes) affect trends in development. It is likely that, as a result of this increasing rate of demand, that the supply horizon would be reduced, but would still remain beyond a 10-year horizon – the supply horizon stipulated in Minister’s Direction No. 6. For this reason a staged approach to development is recommended, one which apportions development to be generally in accordance with Council’s residential growth strategy, and which requires the preparation of Development Plans in each of the development precincts.

4. Recommendations for Change

Central to addressing recommendations for changes to the present planning provisions are the twin aims of the provision of an appropriate level of land supply, and meeting strategic considerations including the maintenance of an appropriate location and character of new development.

In relation to land supply, an appropriate staging of new development could, given recent and anticipated levels of demand, involve at least some of the proposed expansion of the Low Density Residential Zoned area. Broader strategic considerations including density of development, the character of growth and the locational distribution of new development are also central to any change to planning controls. A range of issues need to be considered in relation to each of the proposals for change:

- ❑ The proposed expansion of the LDRZ area to the west of Wharparilla Drive involves some development at densities at or close to some fringe residential areas. It is important that any development of this area is distinctly low density residential in character and function so it does not detract from the conventional residential role of “Echuca West”. It is also important that release of land in this area is carefully managed so as not to result in excessive supplies of low density residential land.
- ❑ The extension of the Chelsworth Park/Fehring Lane estate to the south is a logical extension of low density development as development demand is strong in this area.
- ❑ The extension of the Chelsworth Park/Fehring Lane estate to the west of the Northern Highway risks compromising options for development of this area at residential densities (in the long term) or for other non-residential uses.
- ❑ The provision of further, limited LDRZ land in the south east is consistent with demand and current land use, although this should be contrasted with the extensive, undeveloped area of land zoned RLZ in this area which is a less desirable area for development, and, given current provisions is unlikely to be developed.
- ❑ Development of some of the rural living land in the south east, adjacent to the racecourse, in a form suitable for racehorse trainers is appropriate given proximity to this facility. Appropriate assessment of the development needs to be conducted to ensure that the size and layout of the lots is suitable for the purpose of racehorse keeping. Appropriate controls also need to be developed to ensure that the purpose of this development is protected. These lots would not be considered to be part of the broader low density / rural residential housing market due to their specific purpose.
- ❑ The maintenance of a buffer to the existing industrial land north of Scott Road is an important element of supporting certainty for industrial development around Echuca. Given both the level of demand in this area, and the present and future risk present to industrial land users, the proposal is unnecessary and inappropriate.
- ❑ It is difficult to accurately assess a sustainable supply of low density residential land consistent with Ministers Direction No. 6 in Echuca. Ministers Direction No. 6 specifies that supply of rural residential land not exceed 10 years based on estimated demand. It is considered that demand levels within Echuca have been suppressed due to a lack of suitable supply. The areas that have been recommended for rural residential / low density residential growth are based on their relationship with the existing urban form and suitability for future development. In determining land to be rezoned at any one time, or the staging and sequencing of development Council needs to consider current supply and demand levels. Appendix 3 includes some guidelines for Council in developing a strategy for the release of low density residential land.

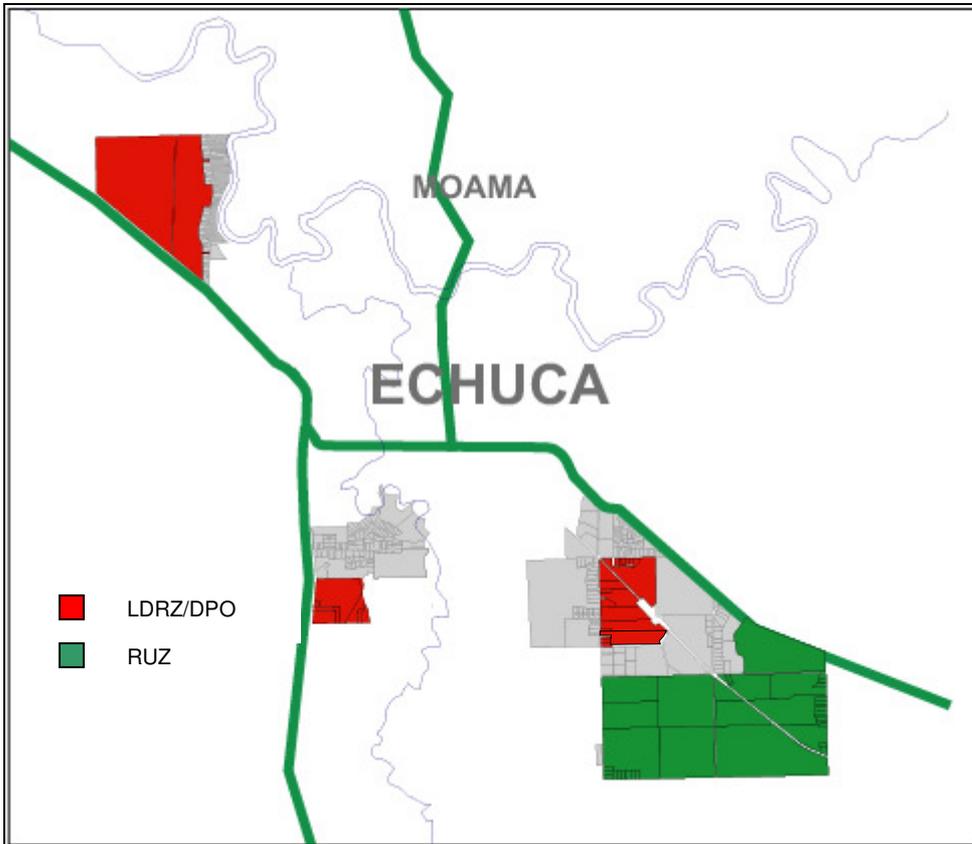
Recommendations

Strategy	Objectives	Approach
Whole Study Area		
<p>Provision of low density residential development as a legitimate and ongoing element of the broader residential housing provision around Echuca</p> <p>A focus on quality, serviced development linked to existing areas of low density development</p> <p>A focus on low density development to the west of Echuca (in line with other residential growth)</p>	<p>The provision of additional land within the LDRZ in areas that are consistent with residential growth strategies.</p> <p>Provision of reticulated services, mixed lot densities, appropriate retention of accessible open space, design for water efficiency and enhancement of natural landscapes.</p> <p>The provision of a reasonable and sustainable supply of land for low density residential development which caters to a variety of markets with a choice of location.</p>	<p>Rezoning of land to LDRZ or RLZ, limiting the broad extent of RLZ</p> <p>The use of the DPO requiring the preparation of Development Plans to address yields, design, environmental impacts, and development sequencing.</p> <p>Establish a monitoring system to manage supply levels of low density residential land.</p>
Wharparilla Drive Area		
<p>Development of staged extension to the west of the existing area (in the area bounded by the Braund Road, the Murray Valley Highway and Latham Road)</p>	<p>To ensure development does not replicate residential densities</p> <p>To ensure a range of lot sizes, within the context of low density development</p> <p>To enhance the natural landscape through revegetation and development form.</p> <p>To encourage water sensitive development.</p> <p>To ensure development contributes to the amenity of this entrance to Echuca.</p> <p>To be the main focus for future low density residential growth.</p> <p>To ensure that supply of land does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand.</p>	<p>Rezoning of the area to LDRZ or RLZ</p> <p>Application of a DPO to the area requiring the preparation of a Development Plan specifying design, lots densities, environmental impacts, stormwater management, enhancement of natural landscapes, main road frontage management and the lot yields at various stages to ensure supply does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand scenario.</p> <p>Establish a monitoring system to manage supply levels of low density residential land.</p>
Fehring Lane (Chelsworth Park) Area		
<p>Development of staged extension to the south of the existing area (bounded by Matheson Rd and the existing Environmental Rural Zone.)</p> <p>Limit development to areas to the east of the Northern Highway and south of the defined growth area.</p>	<p>To ensure development does not replicate residential densities</p> <p>To ensure the maintenance of open space and access to the Campaspe River Corridor.</p> <p>Design and landscaping to address water efficiency.</p> <p>To enhance the natural landscape through revegetation and development form.</p> <p>To ensure development contributes to the amenity of this entrance to Echuca.</p> <p>To ensure that supply of land does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand.</p> <p>To limit expansion of this area to the growth area defined to prevent further elongation of Echuca's urban form.</p> <p>To ensure appropriate buffers are maintained between low density residential development and adjoining rural land.</p>	<p>Rezoning of the area to LDRZ</p> <p>Application of a DPO to the area requiring the preparation of a Development Plan specifying design, lots densities, environmental impacts, buffers to adjoining farmland, main road frontage management and the lot yields at various stages to ensure supply does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand scenario.</p> <p>Establish a monitoring system to manage supply levels of low density residential land.</p>

South East Area

<p>Extension of low density development opportunities south of Scott Road.</p>	<p>To enable opportunities for the south east low density residential area to consolidate through development of vacant land adjoining existing developed areas.</p> <p>To limit expansion of this area to the growth area defined as the focus for residential expansion of Echuca is to the west.</p> <p>To ensure development does not replicate residential densities</p> <p>Design and landscaping to address water efficiency.</p> <p>To enhance the natural landscape through revegetation and development form.</p> <p>To ensure that supply of land does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand.</p>	<p>Rezoning of the area to LDRZ</p> <p>Application of a DPO to the area requiring the preparation of a Development Plan specifying design, lots densities, environmental impacts and the lot yields at various stages to ensure supply does not exceed the estimated 10 year demand scenario.</p> <p>Establish a monitoring system to manage supply levels of low density residential land.</p>
<p>Removal of extensive and undeveloped Rural Living Area south of Bensons Road and east of Lady Augusta Road.</p>	<p>To address significant oversupply of rural living land, a less desirable residential form in an area that is largely undeveloped and comparatively peripheral.</p>	<p>Rezone area to RUZ</p>
<p>Appropriate development of remaining Rural Living Zoned land.</p>	<p>To provide for efficient land use and development and protect long term development opportunities.</p> <p>To support rural living type activities that capitalise on proximity to the racecourse.</p>	<p>Rural Living with Local Policy to provide a direction for development, including restructure.</p> <p>Rural Living with a Local Policy specifying the specific purpose of this area.</p>
<p>Protect buffers to existing and future industrial areas.</p>	<p>To support other growth and urban development opportunities in Echuca.</p>	<p>Retain as Rural or at the most rezone to Rural Living but prevent further subdivision. Ensure appropriate dwelling setbacks are maintained.</p>

Map of Recommendations



APPENDIX 1-

Community Meeting Attendees

Echuca Low Density Residential and Rural Living Land Review

Meeting Attendees – Wharparilla Drive and Fehring Lane Area – 27 August 2002

Salutation	Firstname	Surname	Address	City	State	Postcode
Mr/Mrs	Jenny & Rob	Morris	Fehring Lane	Echuca	Vic	3564
Ms	Lynne	Wadsley	7 Kirby Street	Cohuna	Vic	3568
Ms	Jackie	Deola	175 Wharpiralla Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	Ron & Pam	Chandler	167 Wharparilla Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	Gary & Raelene	Nye	112 Wharparilla Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Ian	Gebhardt	36 Schoeffel Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Neil	Domais	29 Wharparilla Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Geoff	Waters	Northern Highway	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Russell	Reddie	Lot 39, Ainsley Court	Echuca	Vic	3564
Ms	Judi	Lawler	Mayfield Court	Moama	NSW	2731
Ms	Jenny	Mayes	31 Schoeffel Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Mark	Inglefinger	191 Wharparilla Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Alf	Grigg	152 Wharparilla Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Geoff	Kirchhofer	16 Schoeffel Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Damian	Smith	36 Ainsley Court	Echuca	Vic	3564

Echuca Low Density and Rural Residential Review

Mr/Mrs	Brian & Chris	Harrison	87 Schoeffel Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	P	Mayes	31 Schoeffel Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	M	Little	203 Wharparilla Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mrs	M	Monahan	41 Schoeffel Dve	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	G	Watson	106 Wharparilla Dve	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mrs	M	Santilla	51 Fehring Lane	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Oliver	Moles	Fisher Stewart 108 Wyndham Street	SHEPPARTO N	VIC	3630

Meeting Attendees – South East Area – 27 August 2002

Salutation	Firstname	Surname	Address	City	State	Postcode
Mr	Darryl	Ravery	455 MaryAnn Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Keith	Hart	Simmie Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	Murray & Marg	Thompson	8941 Murray Valley Highway	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	Max & Shirley	Blackford	509 Lady Augusta Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	Kevin & Judy	Murphy	209 Benson Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	Greg & Kaye	Taylor	43 Hovell Street	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	Peter & Janine	Ferrier	652 Lady Augusta Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Ian	McIntosh	160 MaryAnn Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	Lucas & Shannon	Walker	5 Rutley Crescent	Echuca	Vic	3564
Ms	Suzanna	Barry	280 MaryAnn Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Brian	Quinn	85 Scott Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Ms	Rhonda	Hewitt	37 Haverfield Street	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Steve	Gale	451 MaryAnn Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Russell	Oliver	PO Box 461	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Don	O'Brien	C/- Nerebio Motor Inn	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Frank	Millar	Wharparilla Drive	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	Kevin & Karen	Pascoe	189 Benson Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Anthony	Kavanagh	573 Lady	Echuca	Vic	3564

Echuca Low Density and Rural Residential Review

			Augusta Road			
Mr/Mrs	R & P	Paten	55 Scott Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	Lindsay & Jan	Rank	108 Scott Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Tony	Meakes	601 Lady Augusta Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Brian	Hubbard	332 MaryAnn Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Ms	Kerry	Podmore	209 High Street	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Daryl	Archard	361 MaryAnn Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Kurt	Merryfull	64 McKenzie Street	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Robert	O'Connor	276 MaryAnn Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	John & Lyn	Hill	417 MaryAnn Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr/Mrs	John & Margaret	Orso	89 Mitchell Street	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Allan	Mills	121 Kelsh Road	Echuca	Vic	3564
Mr	Andrew	Broadhead	23 Shaw Street	Moama	NSW	2731
Mr	Mark	Langenbacher	PO Box 586	Planright	VIC	
Mr	Brian	Harland	PO Box 586	Planright	VIC	

APPENDIX 2-

Echuca Town Structure Plan

APPENDIX 3-

**Guidelines for Managing the Release of
Low Density Residential Land in Echuca.**

Guidelines for Managing the Release of Low Density Residential Land in Echuca.

These guidelines seek to provide some assistance in determining an appropriate strategy for the release of low density residential and rural residential land in Echuca, given the requirements of Ministers Direction No. 6. Ministers Direction No. 6 includes a guideline that the supply of land in the range of 0.4ha – 2ha should not exceed 10 years. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Echuca Low Density and Rural Residential Land Review.

The Echuca Low Density and Rural Residential Land Review identifies the future location of low density and rural residential development. This strategy seeks to capitalise on existing low density residential development, provide a choice of locations and provide land for different markets. This strategy provides for approximately 500 additional low density / rural residential lots for the Echuca housing market. Based on current demand figures this represents approximately 20 years supply.

Demand figures for Echuca are not considered to completely reflect demand for low density residential land as there has been limited supply / infrequent supply of fully serviced low density residential land. The average development rate for low density residential lots is 20-25 lots per year across Echuca. There has been a development rate of 18 lots per annum in one particular neighbourhood on release of such land.

Release of this land supply needs to be carefully managed to prevent significant oversupply across Echuca or in any one location.

In determining the appropriate amount of land to be released within each area, demand across Echuca and demand within each area needs to be considered. The existing supply and capacity for development under this strategy also needs to be considered. Council should undertake monitoring of each area to ensure an appropriate land release strategy is maintained.

The following factors should be considered when determining the appropriate level of supply of low density residential land in each of the three locations;

- There appears to be a higher level of demand for fully serviced land;
- Demand figures for the areas are not considered to be completely reflective of the market as supply has not been constant. Ongoing demand monitoring needs to be undertaken with the first stage release of land to provide a better understanding of land take up.
- The three locations will cater to different markets, as such a supply of land should be provided in each area.
- The distribution of supply amongst the three locations could be based on historical demand for land in each area, historical demand for low density residential land in Echuca and capacity of each area for development.
- Current take up rates (development rates) for low density residential land are 20 – 25 lots per year. Within the period of these figures, the highest development rates were in the South East area and Fehring Lane area. This is largely due to land being available in these areas. There has been no new land released in the Wharparilla Drive area in recent years.

Dwelling Approvals 1997-2002 by Lot Size (under 2ha)

	<0.2ha	0.2-0.4ha	0.4-1ha	1-2ha	Total	Average per year
Wharparilla	-	10	8	-	18	3.6
Fehring	-	5	53	1	59	11.8
S. East	-	8	39	-	47	9.4

Source: Campaspe Shire

The current strategy provides for the greatest potential supply at Wharparilla Drive. This supply will largely be fully serviced lots. There is a much lower potential supply in the Fehring Lane area. The strategy also provides for a reasonable level of supply in the south east area. This area already has a level of supply.

Vacant Parcels by Study Area and Lot Size (under 2ha)

	<0.2ha	0.2-0.4ha	0.4-1ha	1-2ha	Total
Wharparilla*	1	10	9	0	20
Fehring	2	3	21	0	26
S. East	0	7	32	3	43

Source: Campaspe Shire

*This area includes undeveloped floodway on several blocks

Supply by Study Area - Current and Proposed

	Current	Estimated Proposed	Total
Wharparilla*	20	535	555
Fehring	26	70	96
S. East	43	150	150

Source: Campaspe Shire

Estimates of Supply Based on Historical Demand

Wharparilla	40
Fehring	120
S. East	100

The above table provides an indication of the amount of land that should be supplied in each locality based on historical demand. As discussed above, the Wharparilla Drive figure is not considered to reflect demand as there has been a limited supply of land in this area. The table also indicates that there is a limited amount of land in the Fehring Lane area for the estimated demand. Further expansion of this area is not considered appropriate as it will further elongate Echuca's urban form and there are environmental constraints in this area. The supply shortfall in this area can be redirected to the Wharparilla Drive area as this area can provide a similar development form (fully serviced development).

In conclusion the following table provides an indication of the approximate level of supply that should be provided in each location. Obviously monitoring should be conducted to enable review of this should development rates change.

Approximate First Release of Low Density Residential Land

	Existing Vacant lots	10 year supply based on demand	Additional supply required	Supply provided by Strategy	Estimated appropriate first release
Wharparilla	20*	40	20	400+	50**
Fehring	26	120	94	70	70
S. East	43	100	57	150	57

Source: Campaspe Shire

*This area includes undeveloped floodway on several blocks

** Additional lots have been included here to pick up unmet demand at Fehring Lane and as some existing vacant lots are not suitable for development. This area could also possibly accommodate a slightly higher number of lots again as demand in this area has historically been suppressed.

Echuca Low Density Residential and Rural Living Land Review