

11. SPECIAL STUDY AREAS

11.01 Regional Overview

The Region contains a number of 'old and inappropriate' subdivisions in Township, Landscape Living and Rural Policy Areas. These small lot subdivisions were generally created early this century and are a problem, particularly in the Dandenong Ranges and parts of the Upper Yarra Valley.

In many cases these 'old and inappropriate' subdivisions are located in environmentally sensitive areas and are especially inappropriate if they are also in an area prone to flooding, with high fire hazards, prone to soil erosion or in a situation where pollution and landscape degradation may result from development or where provision of social and physical services would be too costly or not feasible.

Investigations into many of these problems has resulted in various public acquisition and restructure programs being introduced. These programs are designed to jointly satisfy the environmental impact question, and also to help landowners facing difficulties with these problem subdivisions.

To a large extent, the implementation of restructure and management programs has been carried out. Further work is required in some areas to arrive at appropriate solutions. The Regional Strategy Plan recognises this need by maintaining the identification of these areas, as Special Study Areas. The policies now in place will ensure the on-going implementation of the Special Study Areas previously identified and will provide for the resolution of further areas that may be identified as needing similar management programs.

11.02 Primary Purpose

The primary purpose for the Special Study Area policies is to ensure that potentially serious environmental and social impacts resulting from inappropriate subdivision development are overcome.

11.03 Regional Policies

Subdivision restructure programs, as identified in local sections of planning schemes should be continued. Further studies should be undertaken and solutions developed for those subdivisions where serious problems may still exist or may emerge, or where investigatory studies have not yet taken place.

Additional subdivision restructure programs should be initiated where it can be demonstrated that serious environmental and/or social detriment will occur through the development of an area in its present subdivided form.

Additional subdivision restructure programs may be identified where groups of small lots (usually 0.4 hectares or less) exist and where one or more of the following are present:

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- services such as road, water supply and sewerage cannot be provided without excessive cost and where the provision of services would have serious detrimental environmental implications;
- any development will cause serious environmental damage irrespective of the degree of servicing;
- accessibility is poor and the lots are in an isolated location with regard to community facilities and other services;
- the danger from wildfire is acute;
- development of the land would cause a detrimental visual impact on the landscape character of the area;
- development will jeopardise the maintenance or enhancement of a Site of Natural Significance or a Site of Cultural Significance; and
- where development of the area would cause significant traffic problems.