



Golden Plains Food Production Precinct Concept Plan

ABN: 35 154 629 943



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THE CONCEPT PLAN IN SUMMARY

The Golden Plains Food Production Precinct is Victoria's first precinct designated for intensive agriculture. Strategically located 30 kilometres north of Geelong, it encompasses around 4,000 hectares of land zoned for agriculture with significant opportunities for greenfield development.

The Precinct provides significant advantages for intensive agriculture:

- Close proximity to Geelong and Melbourne.
- Ready access to all forms of transport: road, sea and air including the Lethbridge Airport.
- Land with zoning and planning policy to support intensive agriculture and complementary uses.
- Extensive supply of unfettered land to enable compliance with Codes of Practice, accommodate buffer zones and ensure separation from sensitive uses.
- Infrastructure, including a new secure potable water supply and supporting road network.
- Access to a highly skilled workforce.
- Proximity to processing and waste management facilities.

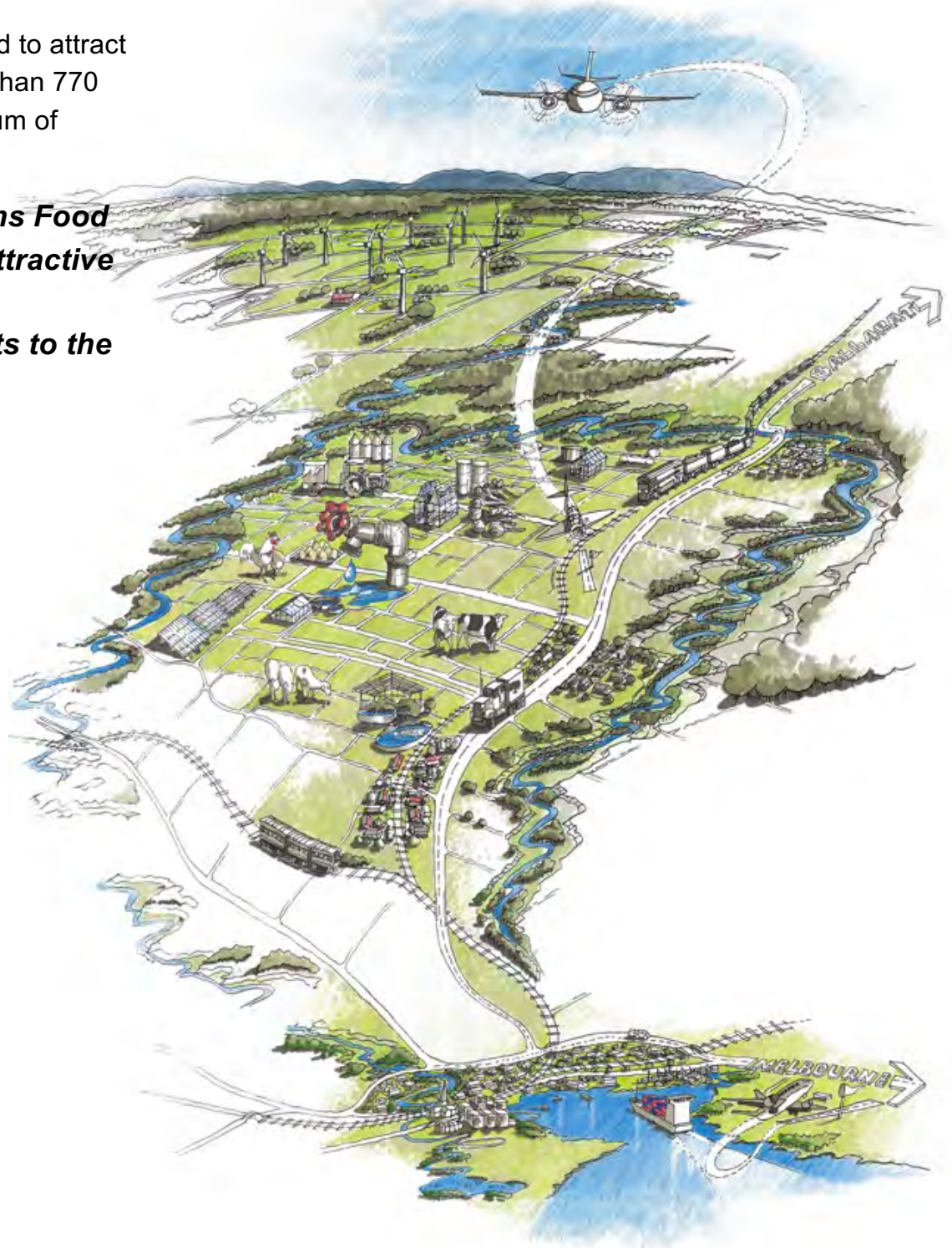
When fully developed the Precinct is anticipated to attract over \$160m of agribusiness investment, more than 770 jobs and generate an additional \$50m per annum of regional output.

The strategic intent for the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct is to be the most attractive and productive location for intensive agriculture providing significant benefits to the local community, broader region and participating industry.

The purpose of the Concept Plan is to detail how the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct will be developed to ensure its long term sustainability, productive potential is maximised and land and infrastructure use is optimised.

The Concept Plan provides a framework for delivering on the strategic intent for the Precinct by:

- Identifying land with potential for intensive agriculture development.
- Listing a range of intensive agriculture and complementary uses suited to the Precinct.
- Outlining planning policy recommendations to ensure the long term sustainability of the Precinct for intensive agriculture.
- Providing concept models to illustrate how development of intensive agriculture and complementary uses could be rolled out in the Precinct.
- Outlining the development process for new investment within the Precinct and how Council will support land owners and investors to achieve their business goals.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE CONCEPT PLAN

Golden Plains Shire has a long and proud history of agriculture. The industry continues to be the Shire's largest employer and single biggest contributor to the local economy and underpins the prosperity of Golden Plains' townships and services.

Council has been proactive in ensuring Golden Plains remains a strong and viable region for farming. A key element of Council's economic development and planning strategies has been protection of agricultural land to enable agribusiness to confidently invest for the long term.

To support growth and build on demonstrated strengths and comparative advantages in intensive agriculture, Golden Plains has undertaken extensive research and planning to facilitate the establishment of the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct. This has resulted in identification of around 4,000 hectares of land with significant potential for intensive agriculture and the securing of \$11.78 million for construction of a dedicated potable water supply.

This Concept Plan sets out the objectives and implementation measures for the successful roll out of intensive food production and complementary enterprises.

The Concept Plan details how the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct will be developed to ensure its long term sustainability. The Concept Plan aims to help deliver on this objective by providing models or examples of development of intensive agriculture and complementary uses within the Precinct.

The Concept Plan includes a review of background material and highlights factors that need to be considered to support intensive agriculture including the regulatory

framework, environmental values and risks and compatible uses. The Concept Plan also highlights how Golden Plains Shire will work with landholders and prospective investors to facilitate optimal development of the Precinct.

Golden Plains has protected land for farming, particularly intensive agriculture

1.2 THE GOLDEN PLAINS FOOD PRODUCTION PRECINCT

Golden Plains is located in south west Victoria between Geelong and Ballarat. The Shire is predominantly rural with population centres at Bannockburn, Smythesdale, Inverleigh, Lethbridge and Teesdale.

The Golden Plains Food Production Precinct comprises around 4,000 hectares of freehold land zoned for Farming, with eleven established intensive agriculture businesses, primarily broiler producers. The land is mostly unencumbered, large allotments that is substantially cleared of vegetation and historically used mainly for agriculture.

The Golden Plains Food Production Precinct is ideally situated on the Midland Highway 100km west of Melbourne between Geelong and Ballarat close to the town of Lethbridge (Fig. 1).

Golden Plains is building on existing strengths to expand intensive agriculture, taking advantage of the proximity to markets and ports and access to a resident workforce.



Figure 1

1.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT PLAN

Development of the Concept Plan is the culmination of ten years of research and analysis undertaken by Golden Plains Shire Council. Investigations that have been completed include:

- *Developing Suitable Areas for Intensive Agricultural Industries in Golden Plainsⁱ*.
- *Investing in Intensive Agriculture: Demand and Infrastructure Requirements for Intensive Agricultural Industries and Identification of the Economic and Social Benefitsⁱⁱ*.

In late 2011 a business case was drafted based on these studies, including economic modelling on a reframed context of food production and economic development. This initial business case identified that a lack of key infrastructure was putting at risk the potential to expand intensive agriculture and realise the investment, jobs and output benefits for the region.

Through consultation with the local farming community,

Potable water supply has been secured for agriculture in the Precinct

industry and other stakeholders a high quality and secure water supply was identified as the most critical infrastructure requirement. The final *Supporting Intensive Agriculture for Food Security and Economic Development Business Caseⁱⁱⁱ* was prepared and Council worked to secure \$11.78 million from across Federal, State and Local Government and Barwon Water to construct an 18 kilometre pipeline on farm land west of Lethbridge.

A four-stage approach was undertaken to develop the Concept Plan including review and analysis and consultation to identify preferred development models and implementation strategies. The approach included:

1. Desktop analysis and review of existing information and mapping.
2. Targeted consultation with existing businesses and prospective investors.
3. Assessment of land use options for the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct.
4. Development of the Concept Plan and models for implementation.

Key outcomes to be delivered through implementation of the Concept Plan include:

- Optimising the use of land and infrastructure for intensive agriculture.
- Maximising the productive potential of the Precinct.

The development of the Concept Plan therefore included careful consideration of the conditions that are prerequisites for the operation of intensive food production businesses including:

- The regulatory framework for intensive food production including Codes of Practice, guidelines and biosecurity.
- The planning policy framework including zones and policy.
- Environmental features and risks.
- Cultural heritage features.
- Infrastructure.

1.4 STRATEGIC INTENT

The strategic intent for the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct is to be the most attractive and productive location for intensive agriculture providing significant benefits to the local community, broader region and participating industry.

Successful implementation of the Concept Plan is anticipated to attract over \$160m of investment by agribusiness, more than 770 jobs and an additional \$50m per annum of regional output.

1.5 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct Concept Plan are:

- To encourage and support intensive agriculture in the Precinct.
- To support uses complementary to intensive agriculture.
- To promote efficient use of infrastructure and resources to enhance intensive agriculture.
- To ensure compliance with intensive agriculture Codes of Practice and Guidelines.
- To ensure that settlement planning supports and reinforces the long term use of the land for intensive agriculture.
- To ensure consistency with environmental and heritage strategies and plans to ensure that these values are protected and enhanced.
- To strongly discourage fragmentation and uses that will compromise intensive agriculture.

2 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

2.1 GOLDEN PLAINS

Golden Plains is a rural municipality and includes the main settlements of Bannockburn, Smythesdale, Teesdale, Lethbridge, Meredith and Inverleigh.

Population

Golden Plains Shire has a population of around 21,000 that grew by 22% between 2006 and 2016. Growth is projected to continue at around 2% a year taking the population to a total of 28,964 by 2031. The majority of population growth has been in the south west and north east of the Shire, in the areas closest to Geelong and Ballarat. The main township of Bannockburn has been growing consistently at around 7% per year. Around 70% of the local workforce travel out of Golden Plains for employment.

Growing local townships provide a stable workforce for rural enterprises and attractive lifestyle choices

Economy

Agriculture is the most significant industry in terms of employment. It provides around a quarter of local jobs, followed by the construction, education, retail and manufacturing sectors (Fig.2). The gross value of agricultural products is around \$183 million or 22% of the Shire's economic output.

2.2 INTENSIVE AGRICULTURE

Intensive agriculture in Golden Plains comprises four key commodities: broilers, eggs, pigs and goat dairy and has experienced significant growth in the last 10 years. The gross value of intensive agriculture doubled between 2006 and 2011 to \$100million. The Shire produces over 20% of the State's eggs and 10% of broilers.

Intensive agriculture is supported by a number of supply chain businesses located within Golden Plains including a grain handling facility, poultry hatchery and waste incinerator disposing of animal carcasses.

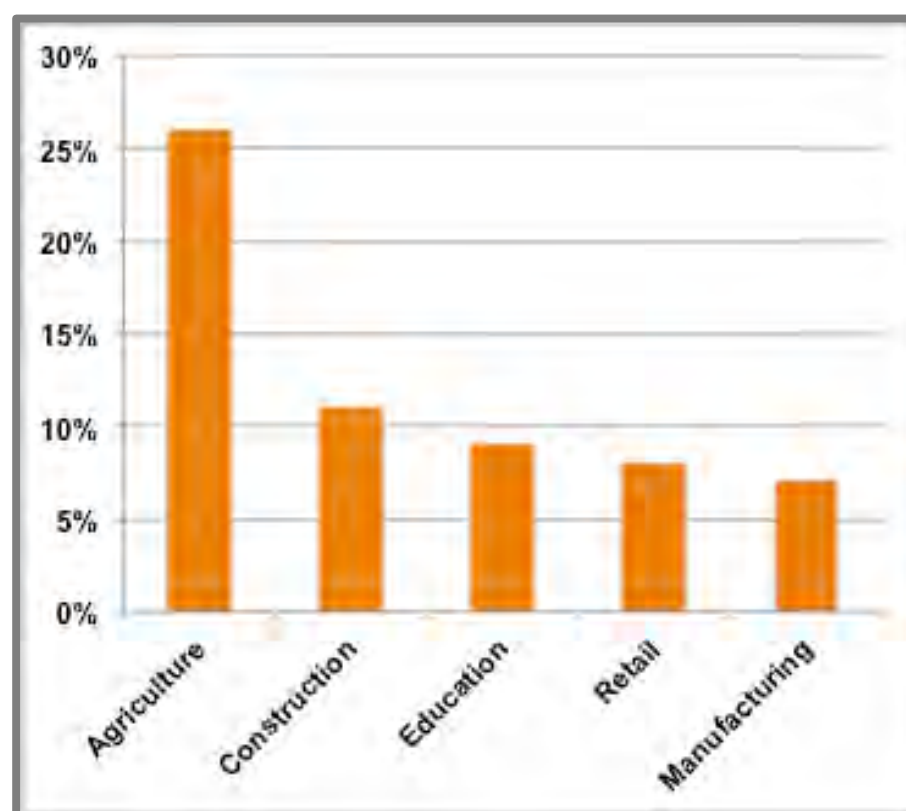
The future outlook for intensive agriculture is strong as consumers increase their demand for white meat

productⁱⁱⁱ. Per capita consumption of chicken meat across Australia increased by 25% between 2004 and 2011.

The Golden Plains Food Production Precinct is an excellent location for investors in intensive agriculture providing greenfield sites that have:

- Sufficient physical scale to comply with industry Codes of Practice and guidelines and provide for free-range production.
- Planning protection to reduce risks on future rights to operate.
- Secure water supply for drinking and cooling.
- Close proximity to suitably skilled labour.
- Good transport networks.
- Close to markets and the supply chain.
- Access to processing plants (broiler sector) within 150km.

Figure 2 Top 5 employment sectors in



Golden Plains

Golden Plains produces over 20% of the State's eggs and 10% of broilers

2.3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Strategic support for the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct from State Government and Golden Plains is provided by the:

- G21 Regional Growth Plan^{iv} and the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan^v – that identify the area near Lethbridge as a major agricultural node focusing on intensive agriculture.
- Council Plan 2017-2021
- Golden Plains Economic Development & Tourism Strategy 2017-2021
- Golden Plains Rural Land Strategy – that has a strategy to *“Support and facilitate sustainable intensive animal industries that can be sited so as to minimize amenity impacts and contain their buffer requirements within their own development.”*

2.4 PLANNING POLICY

Council has been rigorous and consistent in its assessment of planning permit applications for development on land within the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct to actively protect the land for intensive agriculture.

State and Local Planning Policy guide land use and development within the Precinct and provide strong support for intensive agriculture.

Of particular relevance to the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct are the following objectives and strategies at Clause 14 of the State Planning Policy Framework:

- Protect productive farmland, which is of strategic significance in the local or regional context.
- Encourage sustainable agricultural land use.
 - Ensure agricultural and productive rural land use activities are managed to maintain the long-term sustainable use and management of existing natural resources.
 - Encourage sustainable agricultural and associated rural land use and support and assist the development of innovative approaches to sustainable practices.
 - Support effective agricultural production and processing infrastructure, rural industry and farm-related retailing and assist genuine farming enterprises to adjust flexibly to market changes.
 - Facilitate the establishment and expansion of cattle feedlots, piggeries, poultry farms and other intensive animal industries in a manner consistent with orderly and proper planning and protection of the environment.

Within the State Planning Policy Framework, Council’s Municipal Strategic Statement recognises the

importance of long term sustainable agriculture within the Shire. In particular Clause 21.04-3 seeks to:

- Ensure that the use and development of rural land is both compatible and complementary to agricultural activities.
- Encourage agricultural diversity and promote opportunities for new farming enterprises.
- Protect the efficiency and safety of the Shire’s transport infrastructure to support economic activities.
- Facilitate more intensive and diversified use of rural land for higher value products, including timber plantations and agroforestry.
- Ensure agricultural land is protected and used as an economically valuable resource.

These provisions position Council well in determining intensive agricultural activities and provide a clear directive to both the industry sectors and local communities.

Zoning and policy support has been established for intensive agriculture

Local policy

A Local Policy for Intensive Agriculture (Clause 22.03) provides guidance on siting and location of new intensive animal facilities not covered by a Code of Practice, to protect residential amenity and environmental quality.

The key objectives of the policy are:

- To ensure intensive animal husbandry uses are suitably located.
- To ensure the use and development of land for intensive animal husbandry does not impact on the environment.
- To protect and maintain residential amenity in Residential Zones through the use of buffer areas and setbacks.
- To encourage quality design and appropriate siting of intensive animal husbandry developments.
- To achieve consistency with State policy.

This is achieved through a range of design guidelines including setback distances, waste management and landscaping.

Council is committed to supporting intensive animal operations in appropriate locations like the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct.

Zones

Land within the Precinct is zoned Farming (Fig. 3) and the lot size schedule prevents creation of small, rural lifestyle lots that are incompatible with intensive agriculture. The minimum subdivision area is 100 ha and the minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling is 100 ha.

The Special Use Zone has been applied to land used for medical incineration of veterinary waste and the Lethbridge Airport. Both industries are complementary uses within the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct and provide opportunities to investors.

Overlays

A number of Overlays (Fig. 4) apply to land within the Precinct including:

- Land Subject to Inundation (Native Hut Creek and Bruces Creek).
- Vegetation Protection 2 (Lethbridge / Scanlon Road) – for protection of significant remnant vegetation.
- Salinity Management Overlay has been applied to some discrete locations around the Lethbridge township.

Lethbridge Structure Plan

The Lethbridge Structure Plan nominates a town boundary and sets out 15 to 20 year directions for town growth. The Plan acknowledges the proximity of a number of intensive animal businesses close to the town boundary and the importance of maintaining separation between intensive agriculture and residential development.

Lethbridge is an example of Golden Plains protecting land for agriculture by planning the town around farming, rather than farming around the town - being sensitive to and strategic about both uses.

The structure plan reveals a supply of land for further residential development, accommodating a growing local labour force.

Codes and Guidelines

Planning must consider as relevant:

- Victorian Code for Cattle Feedlots
- Victorian Code for Broiler Farms
- Code of Practice: Piggeries
- Planning Guidelines for Land Based Aquaculture in Victoria

Strategic implications

The current policy position supports intensive agriculture. However, the Golden Plains Planning Scheme is silent on the Food Production Precinct, the strategic intent and objectives. Therefore to ensure the long term sustainability of the Precinct for intensive food production as well as to provide clear guidance on

appropriate uses, the current policy position will need to be strengthened. Recommendations for strengthening the policy position are outlined in Section 5.3.

Cultural heritage

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* requires the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for high impact activities in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity, as defined by the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations, 2007*. Establishment of an intensive agricultural facility is regarded as a high impact activity.

While there are no *registered sites* of cultural heritage sensitivity within the Precinct, areas of cultural heritage sensitivity have been mapped (Fig 5) as prescribed in Part 2, Division 3 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007*. These maps provide indicative information about the location and extent of areas of cultural heritage sensitivity. Proposals for intensive agriculture on land mapped as having cultural sensitivity will need to include a cultural heritage assessment to determine if a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is required.

Topography and soils

The Golden Plains Food Production Precinct has predominantly flat land, highly suited to intensive agriculture such as animal sheds and glasshouses. The main soil type in the Precinct is fine clay associated with basalt plains. While the soils themselves are suited to various forms of agriculture, the presence of surface and shallow rock makes it generally unsuitable for soil-based agriculture such as cropping and perennial horticulture, but suited to intensive agriculture such as animal sheds, glasshouses as well as grazing.

Climate

The Golden Plains climate is mild with an annual rainfall ranging from 500 to 700mm, mean maximum temperature of 23°C and mean minimum of 8°C. The hottest month is January with an average of 25°C and the coldest are July and August with a mean minimum of 5°C.

Native vegetation

A number of ecological assessments have been undertaken within the Precinct and found that the majority (80%) of the area has exotic vegetation.

On land that has native vegetation, a permit may be required to remove native vegetation. The *Permitted clearing of native vegetation - Biodiversity assessment guidelines*^{vi} outline the application, decision making and offset arrangements to meet the requirements for native vegetation removal.

The native vegetation permitted clearing regulations are designed to manage the risk to biodiversity associated with removing native vegetation. Two factors – extent risk and location risk – are used to determine the risk-

based pathway of an application for a permit to remove native vegetation.

Council will work with developers to determine the level of risk relevant to each site specific proposal. Most of the vegetation within the Precinct is categorised as Location Risk A and will fall into a low risk-based pathway for permit applications (Fig. 6).

The areas of significant native vegetation found within the Precinct offer opportunities for securing offsets for new agricultural developments as part of medium and high risk based pathways for permit applications.

Note: The Golden Plains Local Planning Policy Framework and Municipal Strategic Statement are being undated in 2017 and will include the Food Production Precinct within the Strategic Framework Plan.

2.5 LAND USE

Current land uses

Most land within the Precinct is currently being used for broadacre grazing. There are fourteen established

intensive agriculture businesses producing broilers, eggs and pigs (Fig. 7).

Property size

Land within the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct is predominantly freehold. Property sizes are generally large and Council has maintained this position by consistently applying the 100 ha minimum lot size for subdivision (Fig. 8).

The State minimum for Farming Zone land subdivision is 40 ha highlighting Golden Plains' competitive advantage with mostly contiguous, unfragmented large land parcels in the Precinct.

Surrounding land uses

The surrounding land is primarily rural and used for a mix of broadacre and intensive agriculture. Significant to future intensive agriculture is the proximity of a waste incineration facility with capability for incineration and composting of waste from intensive agriculture.



Figure 3 Planning zones

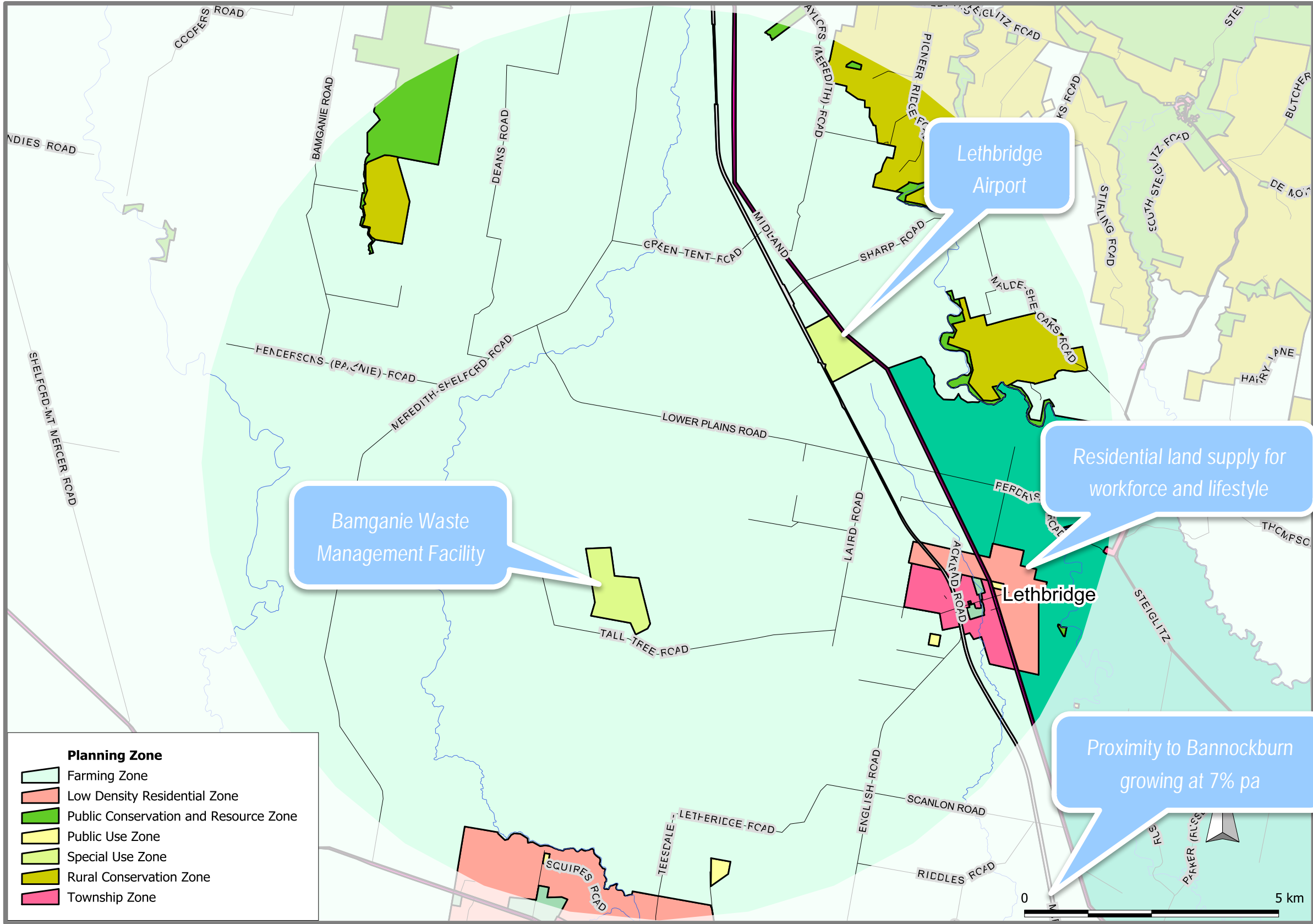


Figure 4 Planning overlays

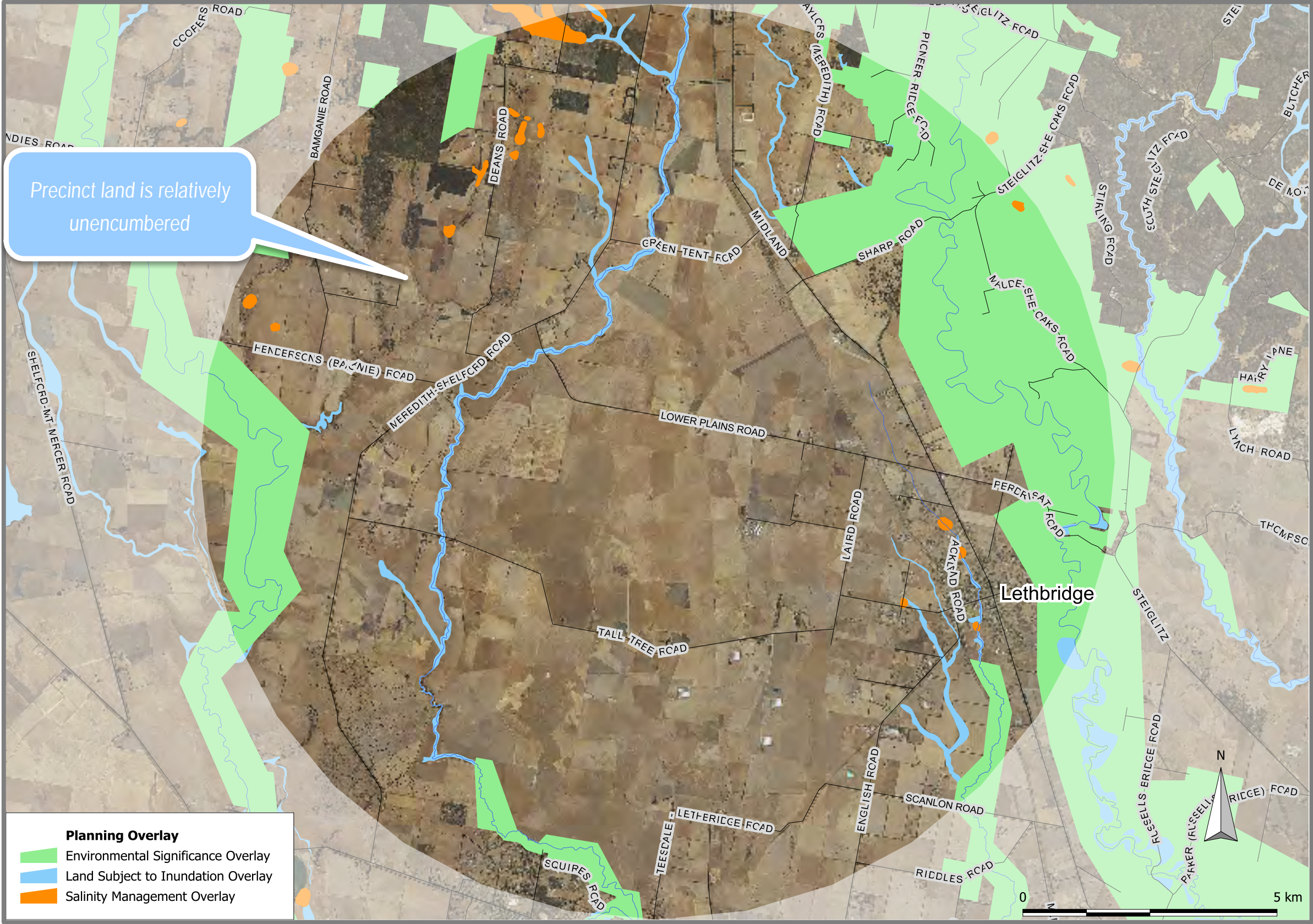


Figure 5 Cultural sensitivity



Figure 6 Native vegetation location risk

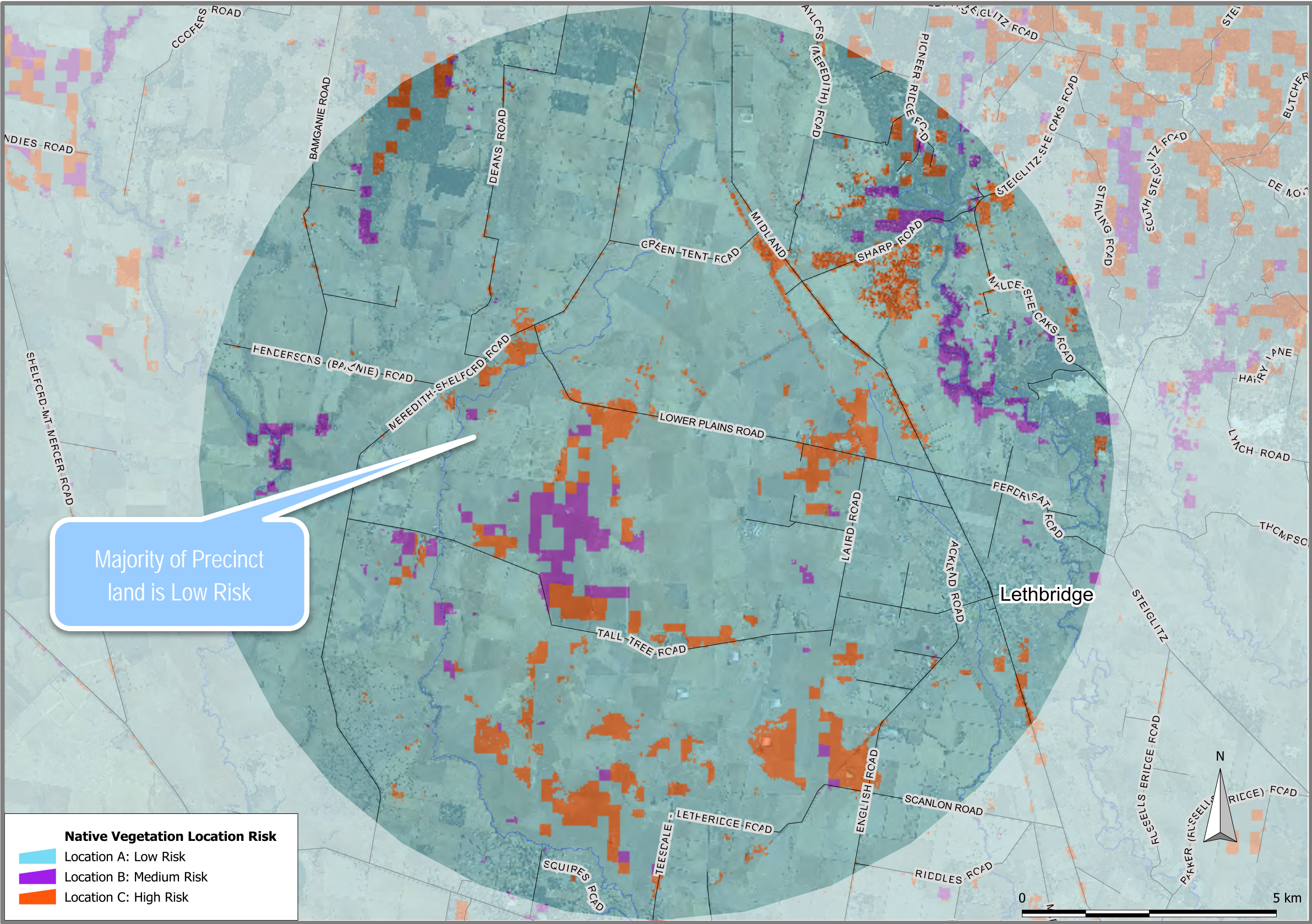


Figure 7 Existing intensive agriculture operations

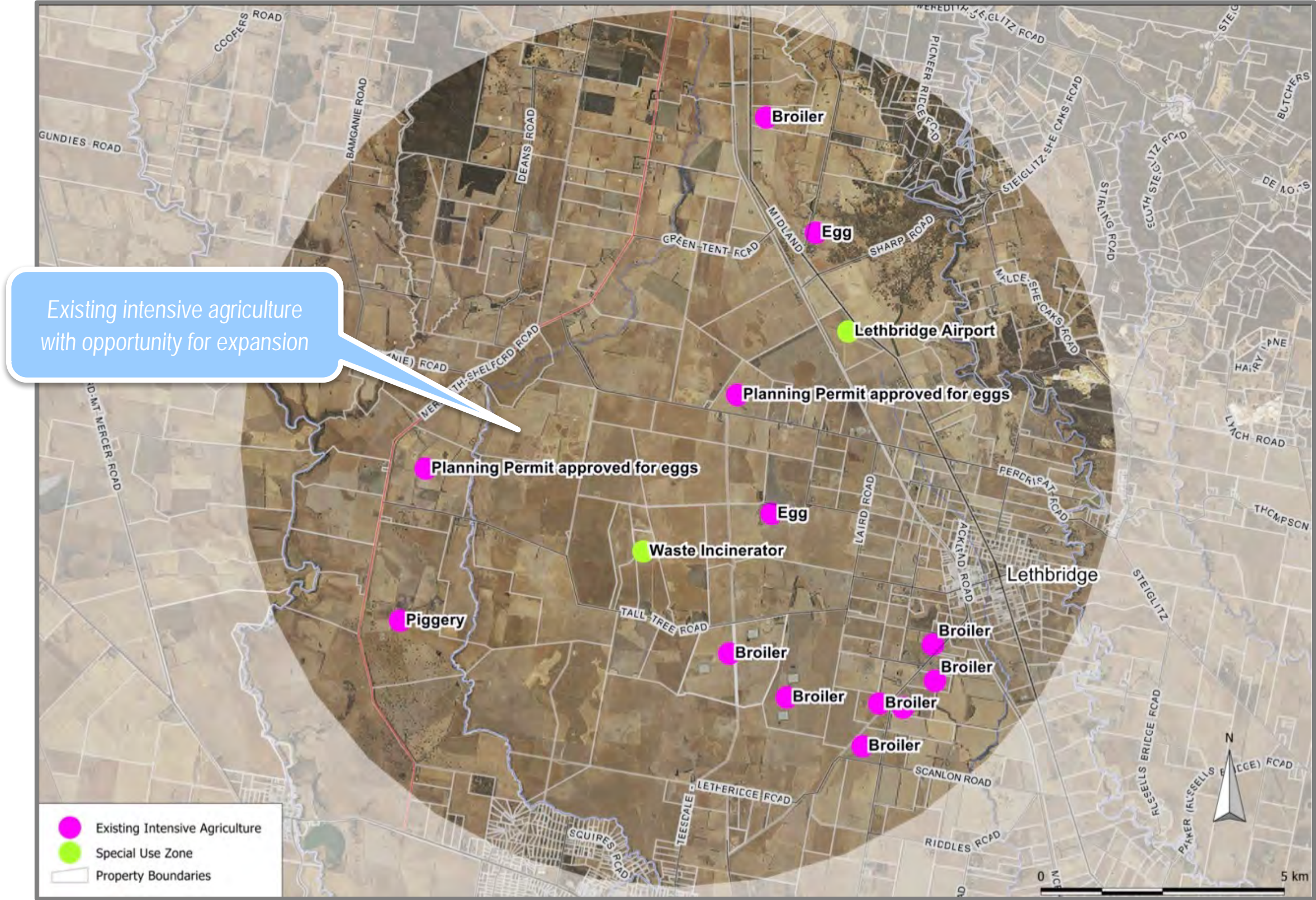
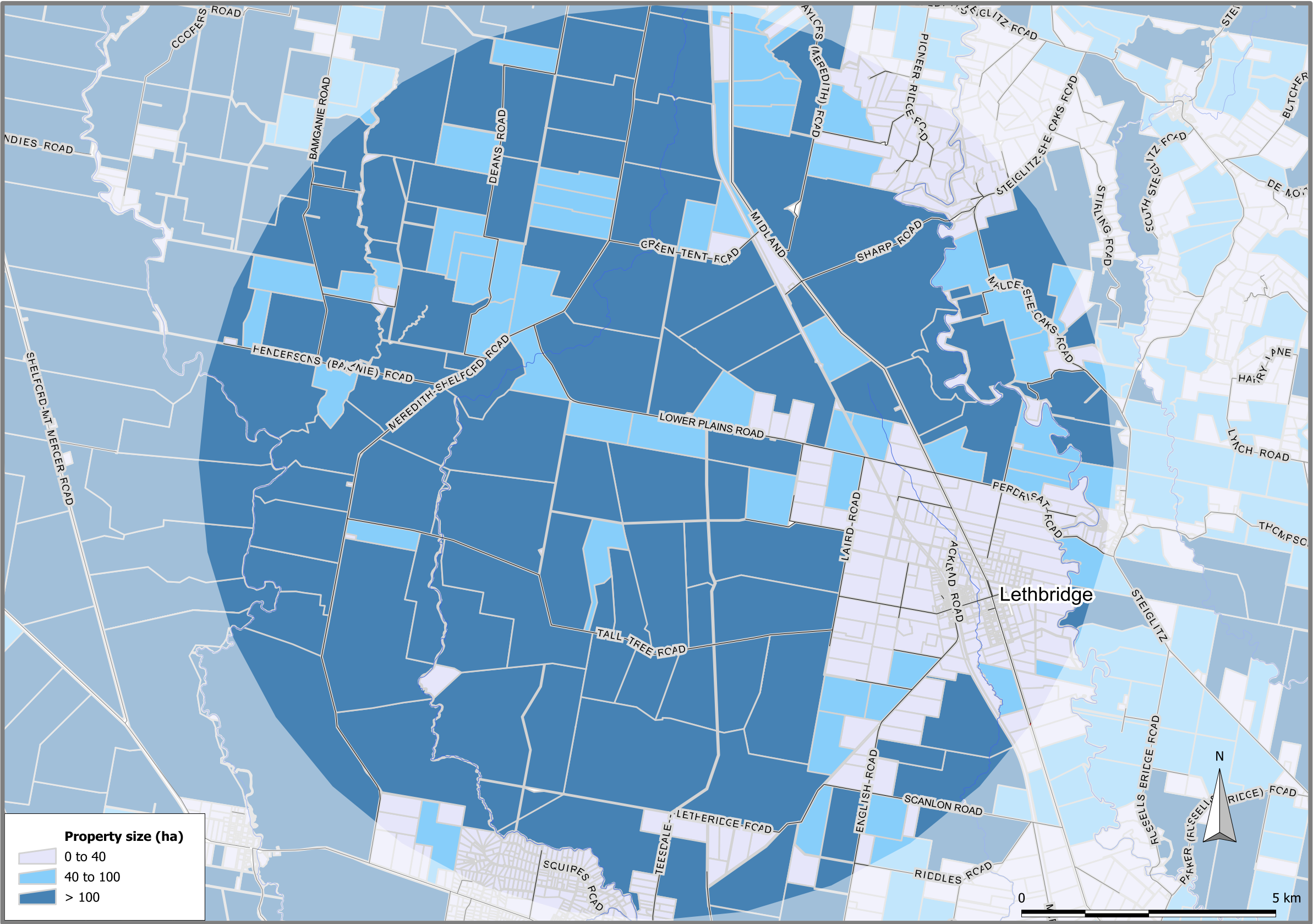


Figure 8 Property size



2.6 STRATEGIC LOCATION AND TRANSPORT

The Golden Plains Food Production Precinct is strategically located for ready access to national and international markets, workforce, supply chain business and services in Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat (Fig. 9).

Road

The Precinct is well connected to Geelong and Melbourne by a network of national and state highways and major roads:

- Geelong is 31 kilometres via the Midland Highway.
- Melbourne CBD 100 kilometres via the Princes Freeway.
- The Western Ring Road links the Princes Freeway to the Tullamarine (Calder) Freeway and Hume Freeway (to Sydney) creating a road link free of traffic lights between the Precinct and New South Wales.
- The Midland Highway connects to the Geelong Ring Road and the Princes Freeway West to Colac, Ballarat and the Hamilton Highway and through to South Australia.
- Heavy vehicles such as B-Doubles can access the Precinct.

Transport corridors provide easy access to road, rail, sea and air

Sea

The Geelong Port is a dedicated bulk handling facility for a range of products, and is located 30 kilometres from the Precinct. The Port of Melbourne is 90 kilometres from the Precinct and offers state of the art shipping and logistics facilities.

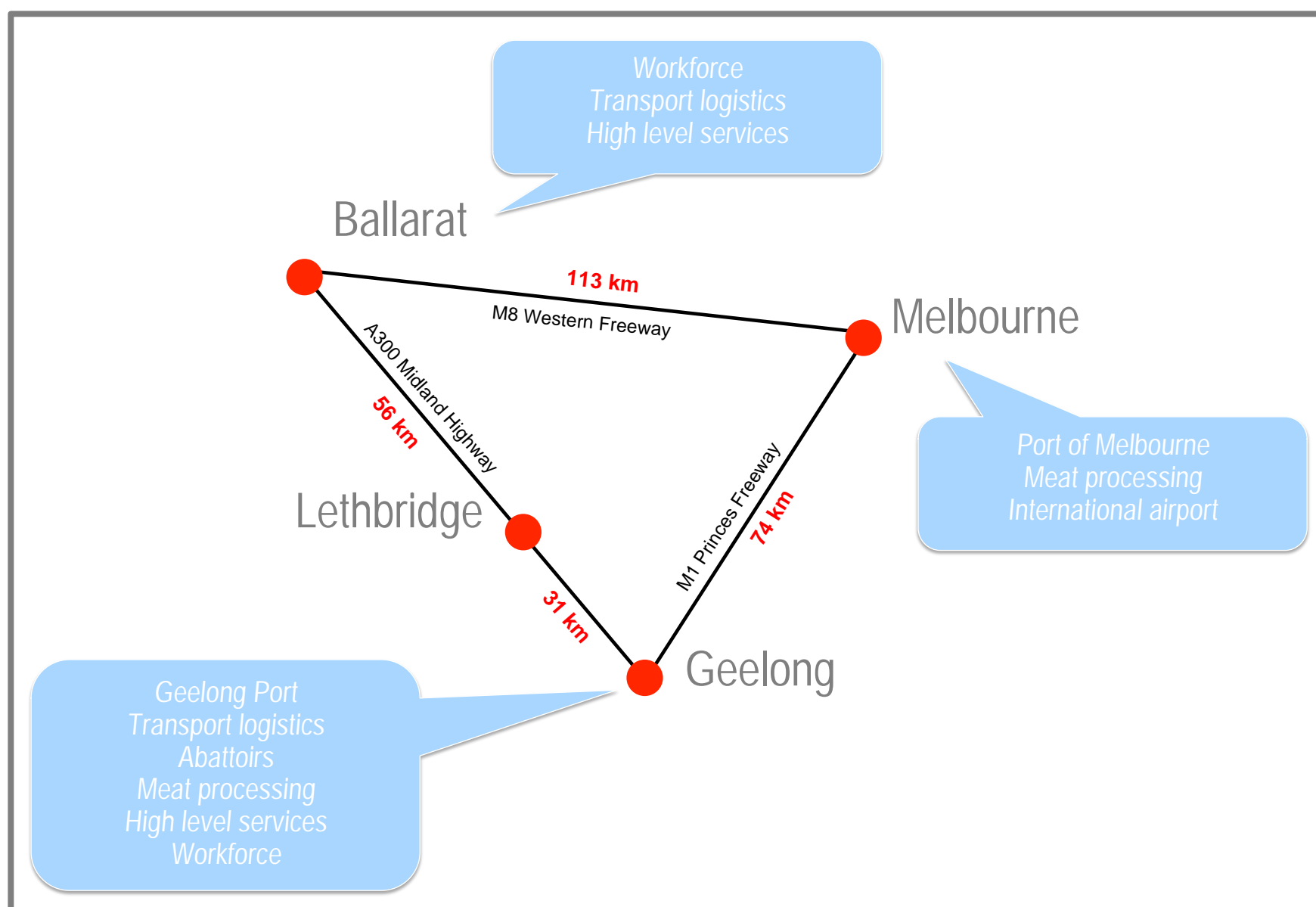
Air

Lethbridge Airport, located 6 kilometres north of Lethbridge, is privately owned and operated providing for light aircraft movements, aircraft repairs and fuel. The airport has undergone a series of upgrades and developments, including upgrading the runway, installation of fuel pumps, and development of a hanger block.

Avalon Airport is 43 kilometres from the Precinct in the Geelong – Melbourne corridor providing domestic passenger flights. The airport is working to establish itself as a major international airfreight centre.

Melbourne International Airport and associated freight facilities is only 110 kilometres away via the Western Ring Road and Tullamarine Freeway.

Figure 9 Strategic location



2.7 INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITY SERVICES

Water

Until recently, a secure supply of potable water was a key limiting factor for intensive animal production in the Precinct. Barwon Water, with support from the Federal and State Governments and Council, is investing \$11.78 million in construction of a water supply that will significantly increase access to potable water throughout the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct. Figure 10 shows the existing potable water supply in blue, with stage one of the new water pipeline in red. Once demand for water from the new pipeline reaches a trigger level, Barwon Water will invest \$3.44 million to build stage two of the water pipeline.

Wastewater

Sewerage services are currently not available in Lethbridge. In the longer term, there is potential for a gravity connection to the wastewater management facility in Bannockburn.

Power

Lethbridge township is supplied with electricity from the Geelong substation via 22kV high voltage lines along the Midland Highway. A low voltage network radiates to supply power to the surrounding rural areas (Fig. 11). Air conditioning, dairies, cooling and packing sheds, intensive animal facilities, wineries etc. require three phase power and necessitate upgrade of the transmission infrastructure. Council will continue to advocate for this upgrade.

The availability of reliable and cost effective energy is critical for business, particularly for certain types of energy intensive industry. Converting from electricity energy to gas can provide significant costs savings and improve business competitiveness. Natural gas is being delivered to Golden Plains and will be reticulated throughout Bannockburn by 2018. If there is sufficient demand, extending the natural gas to Lethbridge and into the Precinct could be investigated.

Telecommunications

The mobilenet coverage is 1.1 – 20 Mbps. The National Broadband Network will result in Very Fast Broadband being supplied.

Roads

Intensive agriculture typically requires the services of B-double freight trucks, with the frequency of vehicle movements geared to production cycles. The principal roads through the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct are a mix of local sealed and gravel roads (Fig. 12). A priority access road network to the Precinct from the Midland Highway is located north of the Lethbridge township.

The existing major road network is fit for purpose and has an appropriate maintenance regime. Minor roads may need some upgrades appropriate to the proposed enterprise.

While the road infrastructure is capable of meeting the anticipated frequency of transport movement, the size of the vehicles requires that intersections of main roads with local access roads needs to be designed for safe turning movement.

2.8 WORKFORCE

Geelong is home to a large number of food processors and food and beverage product suppliers. A significant proportion of Geelong's workforce is employed in the processing of food products including chicken and supplying supermarkets, take away food and specialty chicken stores. These processors are located just 20 minutes from the Precinct.

The region's workforce is up-to-date with service, policy and technological advancements, with access to education and training providers in the region. Deakin University has two campuses located in Geelong, offering a range of graduate and postgraduate education. The Gordon (TAFE) offers a range of certificate, diploma and short courses. Marcus Oldham College provides agriculture specific education. All institutions work with local organisations to deliver targeted and practical education and training. There are also numerous local registered training organisations and employment agencies available to assist employers find the workforce that meet their needs.

Figure 10 Potable water supply and electricity infrastructure

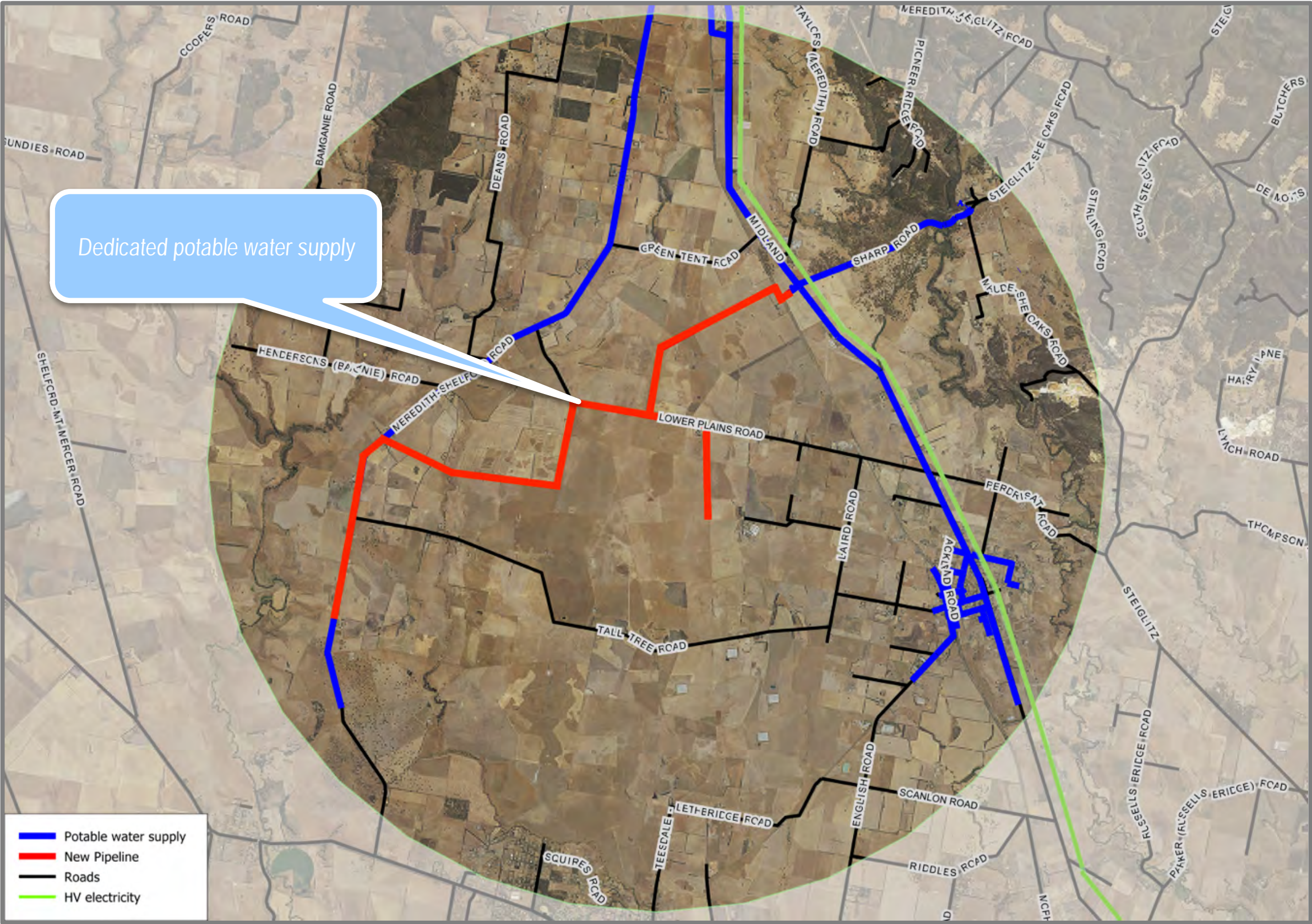


Figure 11 Golden Plains Food Production Precinct power infrastructure

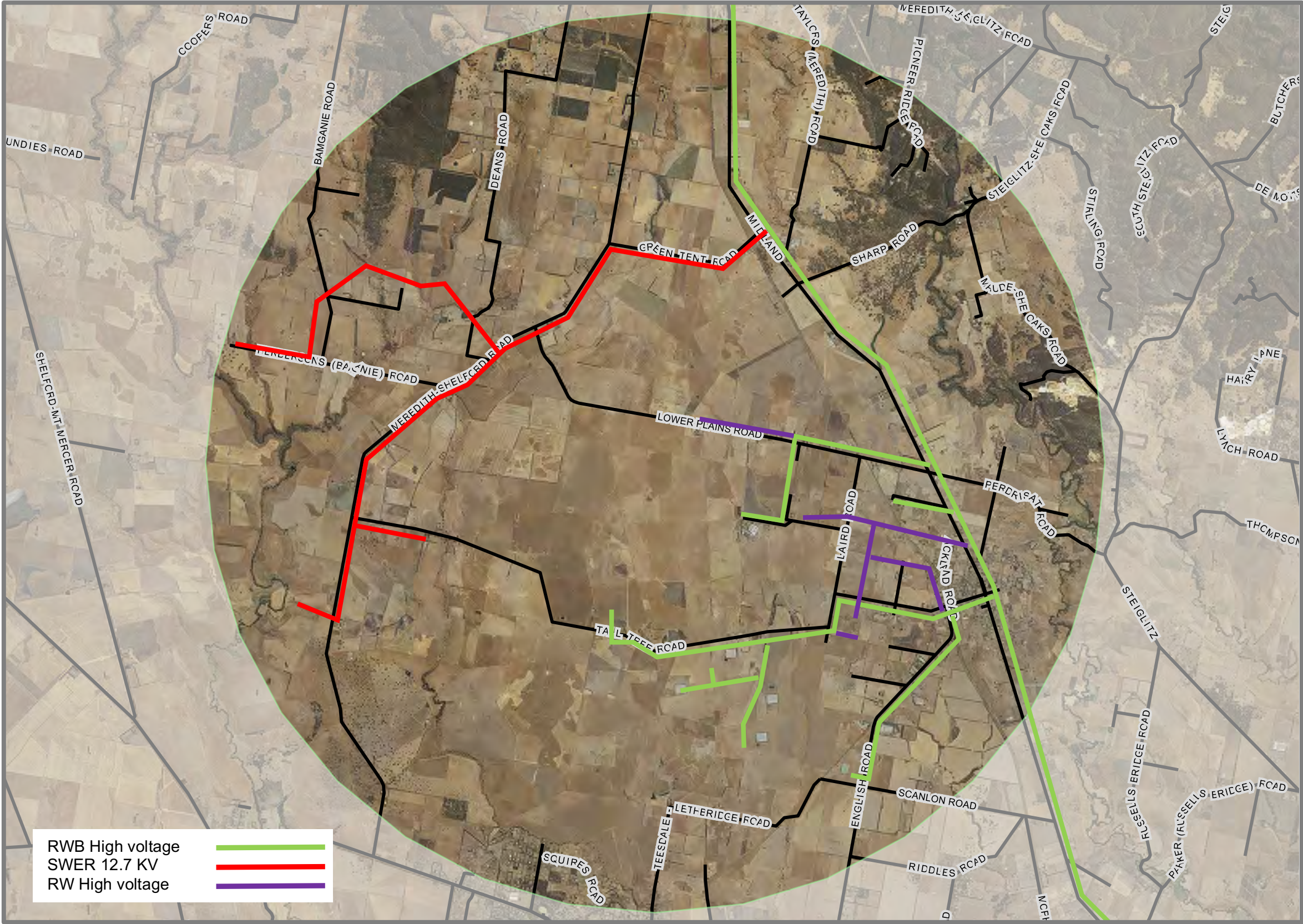
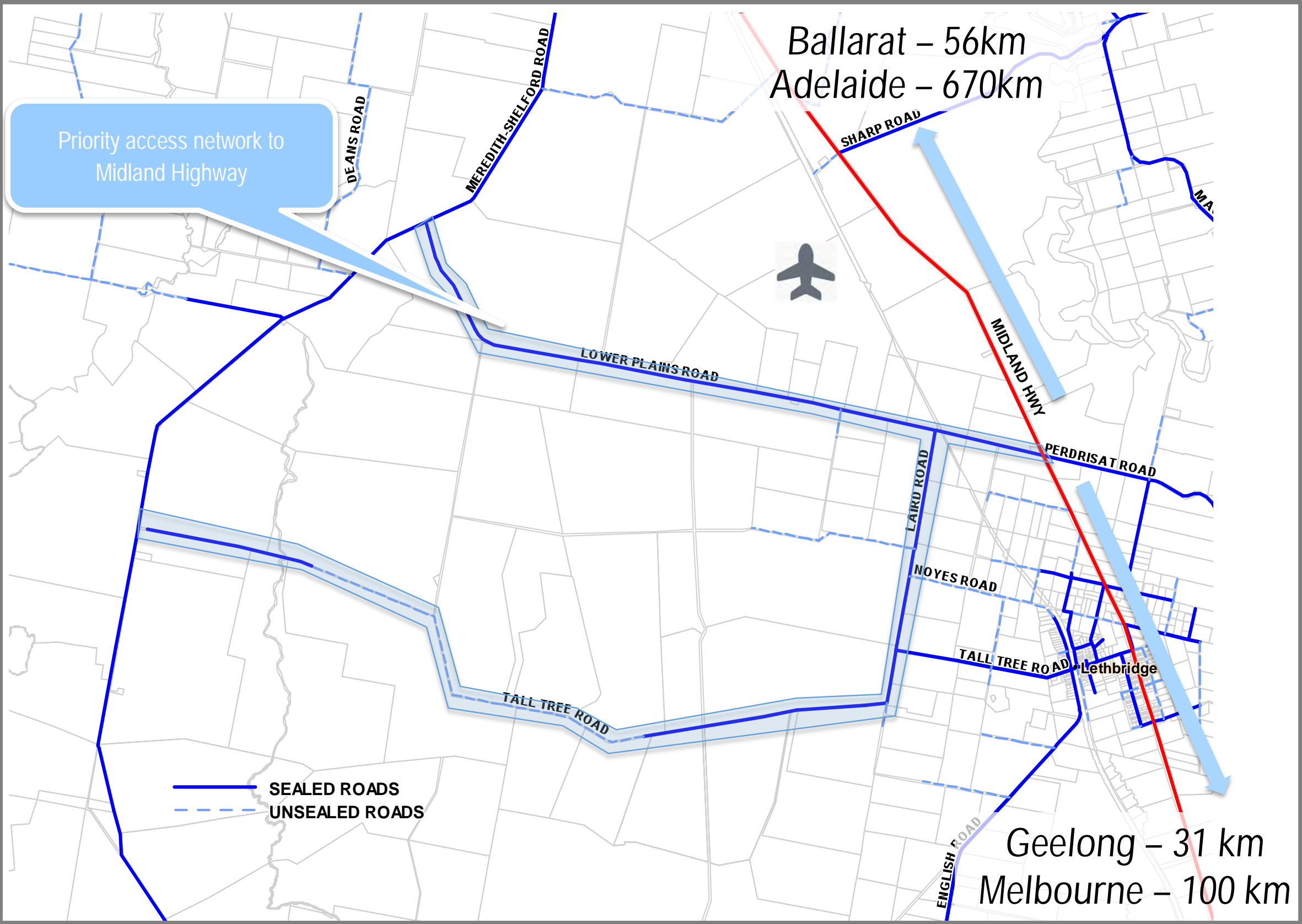


Figure 12 Golden Plains Food Production Precinct priority transport network



3 INDUSTRY CODES AND GUIDELINES

Critical to the long term sustainability of the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct will be compliance with the regulatory framework for intensive food production comprising:

- Industry Codes of Practice (Codes) for broiler farms, piggeries and cattle feedlots, incorporated in the Victoria Planning Provisions
- National Industry Guidelines

To successfully execute a food production precinct, attention must be given to the siting of intensive livestock farms in relation to nearby sensitive land uses (e.g. houses, towns), other intensive livestock farms, other industrial or processing facilities and environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. watercourses, shallow groundwater).

Intensive livestock facilities, even with good design and environmental management, will produce air-borne emissions including odour, dust and noise emissions. The potential impacts of these are minimised by good siting, design and management coupled with the provision of required separation distances.

The potential for a disease outbreak in one facility to spread to others also needs to be considered, even where facilities within a precinct contain different species. Provision of buffers around facilities, and planning transport routes carefully, reduces the risks. In addition, suitable buffers to surface waters and bores must also be provided.

Codes of Practice

Three Codes of Practice pertaining to intensive animal husbandry are incorporated into the Victoria Planning Provisions and are considered when assessing planning permit applications for intensive animal production. These are:

- Victorian Code for Broiler Farms^{vii}
- Victorian Code of Practice - Piggeries^{viii}
- Victorian Code for Cattle Feedlots^{ix}

These codes aim to facilitate the establishment and expansion of broiler farms, piggeries and cattle feedlots in a manner that is consistent with orderly and proper planning and the protection of the environment. All use and development of these facilities must comply with the relevant code to the satisfaction of Council. At this point in time, there are no incorporated codes for other intensive animal husbandry e.g. sheep feedlots, egg farms and goat dairies.

The Codes must be read in conjunction with other parts of the planning scheme including:

- Relevant land use and development policies contained in the State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks.
- The purpose of zones, any overlays or other local controls, and relevant decision guidelines.

These Codes provide the minimum requirements that must be met by proposals. They outline the management strategies to ensure that there are no adverse affects to the environment. While they were not specifically created to assist with precinct planning, certain aspects of the Codes are of particular importance such as the provision of separation and buffer distances.

Guidelines

A number of national guidelines have been developed to provide operators of intensive livestock facilities with guidance on environmental best practice in relation to siting, design, construction and management. They also provide guidance on separation distances to sensitive land uses.

Although the guidelines are not incorporated into the Victoria Planning Provisions, they will be considered by Council in the assessment of planning permit applications for industries for which no Victorian codes have been developed and because they provide more up-to-date information for some of the industries that do have codes such as piggeries and cattle feedlots.

Relevant guidelines include:

- Environmental Guidelines for the Australian Egg industry^x
- National Environmental Guidelines for Piggeries, 2nd Edition^{xi}
- The National Guidelines for Beef Cattle Feedlots in Australia 3rd Edition^{xii}
- The National Procedures and Guidelines for Intensive Sheep and Lamb Feeding Systems^{xiii}

Biosecurity Considerations

Biosecurity standards play a vital role in protecting intensive livestock industries. In Victoria, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) is the key agency in animal health and welfare. To help protect their industry, some intensive livestock sectors have specified minimum recommended separation distances to other similar facilities for biosecurity reasons.

A summary of the codes and guidelines are provided in Appendix 1.

4 COMPLEMENTARY USES

Council undertook an assessment of a range of potential uses and enterprises to identify those that could co-locate with broiler production (the existing intensive agriculture in the Precinct) within the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct or could be undertaken on land within a buffer around intensive agriculture.

Uses were evaluated against the following questions:

- Whether the use would value add to broiler production?
- Whether the use was a sensitive use and has the potential to limit growth of intensive agriculture?
- Whether the use would compromise compliance with codes and guidelines?
- Whether there were any constraints or ‘show stoppers’ to the activity being undertaken in the Precinct?
- Whether the use posed an unacceptable biosecurity risk?

- Whether the use would result in increased diversification of land use?
- Whether additional employment would be generated?
- Whether gross food production from the Precinct would increase?
- Whether use of water infrastructure was optimised?

The findings of the assessment are summarised in Table 1. Uses with a green tick are suited to co-location and/or land within buffers around intensive agriculture. Uses with a red cross are either unlikely to be supported or not suited to co-location and /or land within buffers around intensive agriculture.

The list is not exhaustive. Council will therefore consider other uses however compliance with the assessment criteria will need to be clearly demonstrated.

Buffers around intensive agriculture are opportunities for complementary land uses

Table 1. Assessment of uses for the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct - Benchmarked to broiler production*

Use	Co-location	Buffers	Use	Co-location	Buffers
Abattoir	✓	✗	Piggery – free range	✗	✗
Aquaculture (shedded)	✓	✓	Piggery - shedded	✗	✗
Broadacre cropping	✓	✓	Quarry – stone extraction	✓	✓
Broadacre grazing	✓	✓	Rearing & production poultry breeders	✗	✗
Broiler – free range	✓	✗	Renewable energy – solar	✓	✓
Broiler - shedded	✓	✗	Transport, logistics, mechanical services	✗	✗
Composting animal litter	✗	✓	Turkeys	✓	✗
Dairy – shedded cattle	✓	✗	Waste treatment	✓	✗
Dairy – goats	✓	✗	Wastewater treatment	✗	✗
Ducks	✗	✗	Workers accommodation	✗	✗
Eggs	✓	✗	Hatchery	✗	✗
Farm dwellings	✓	✓	Horse keeping	✗	✗
Farm gate sales	✗	✗	Horticulture – shedded	✓	✓
Feedlot – cattle, sheep	✓	✗	Horticulture – soil based	✗	✗
Grain storage, milling,	✗	✗	Office or consulting rooms	✗	✗

* ✓ likely ✗ unlikely

5 CONCEPT PLAN IN DETAIL

5.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Concept Plan has been developed based on three guiding principles:

1. All uses and development must comply with the regulatory framework for intensive food production and should not compromise the ability of other businesses within the Precinct from doing so.
2. Use of all land, including land within buffers around intensive agriculture, and water infrastructure should be optimised.
3. The productive potential of the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct should be maximised.

5.2 FOOD PRODUCTION PRECINCT CONCEPT PLAN

The opportunities for expansion and development of intensive agriculture are highlighted in Figure 13. This synthesises the findings from Section 2.

5.3 PLANNING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

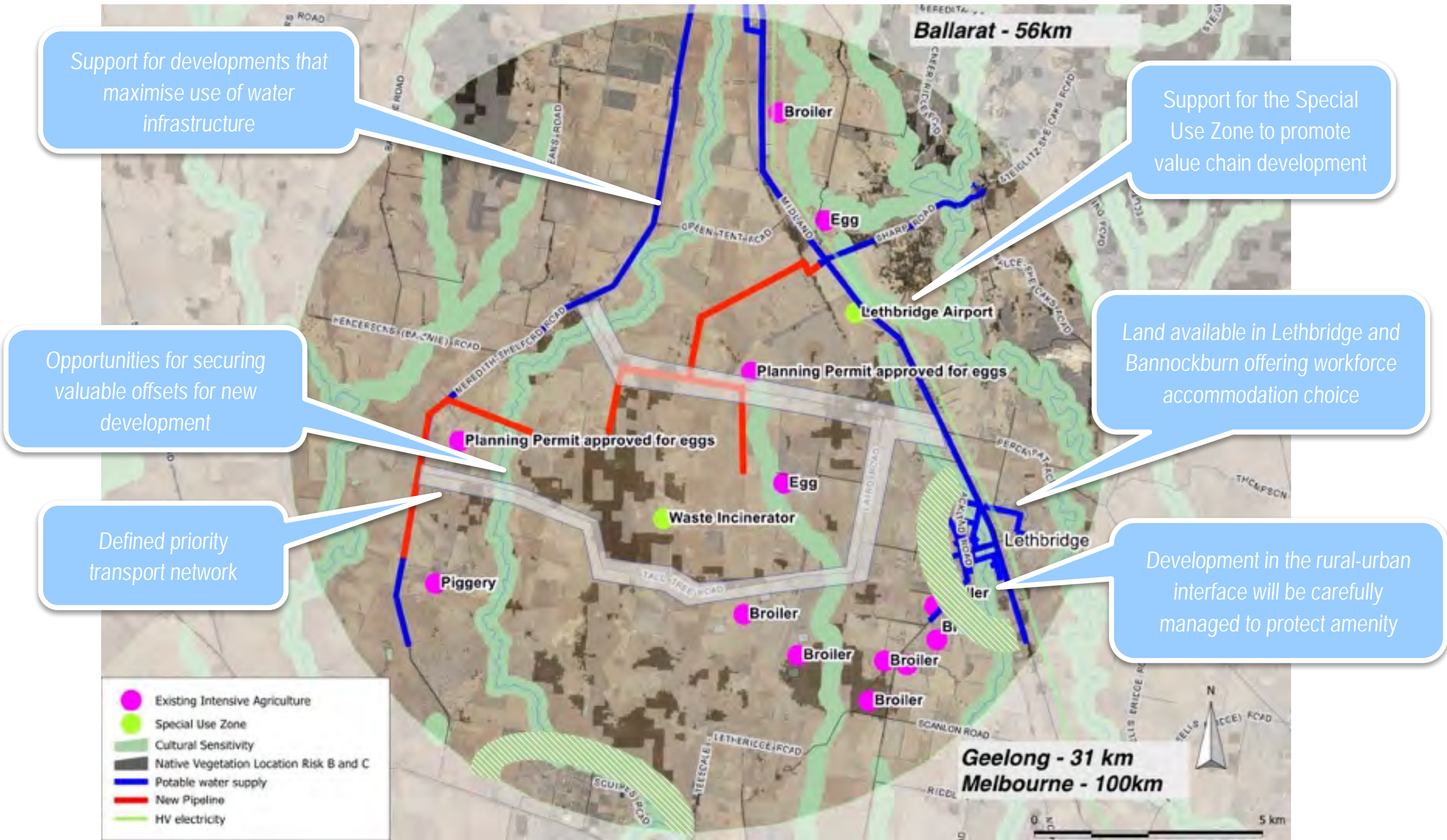
To further strengthen the current policy position and ensure the long term sustainability of the Precinct for intensive agriculture, a number of planning policy changes are recommended including:

- Include strategic objectives and supporting discussion for the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct in the Municipal Strategic Statement.
- Retain the current suite of Zones as they are applied to land within the Precinct.
- Retain the current 100 ha minimum lot size provision in the Schedule to the Farming Zone for subdivision.
- Introduce a local policy for the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct to:
 - Detail precinct objectives and strategies.
 - List uses to be encouraged, such as intensive agriculture and associated, complementary rural industries (including those listed in Table 1.
 - List uses to be discouraged that have the potential to compromise the sustainability of the Precinct such as dwellings unrelated to agriculture and sensitive uses such as residential development.
 - Detail decision guidelines for assessing planning permits for dwellings.

The Golden Plains Food Production Precinct abuts the town of Lethbridge. Clear separation of the town and Precinct will be critical to the long term viability of the Precinct and the township amenity. It is recommended that the Lethbridge Structure Plan be reviewed to include consideration of:

- The town boundary and maintaining buffers around intensive animal industries.
- Maintaining a clear separation between the Precinct and town.
- The need to screen the Precinct to protect the visual amenity of Lethbridge and its surrounds.

Figure 13 Golden Plains Food Production Precinct Concept



6 MODEL CONCEPTS

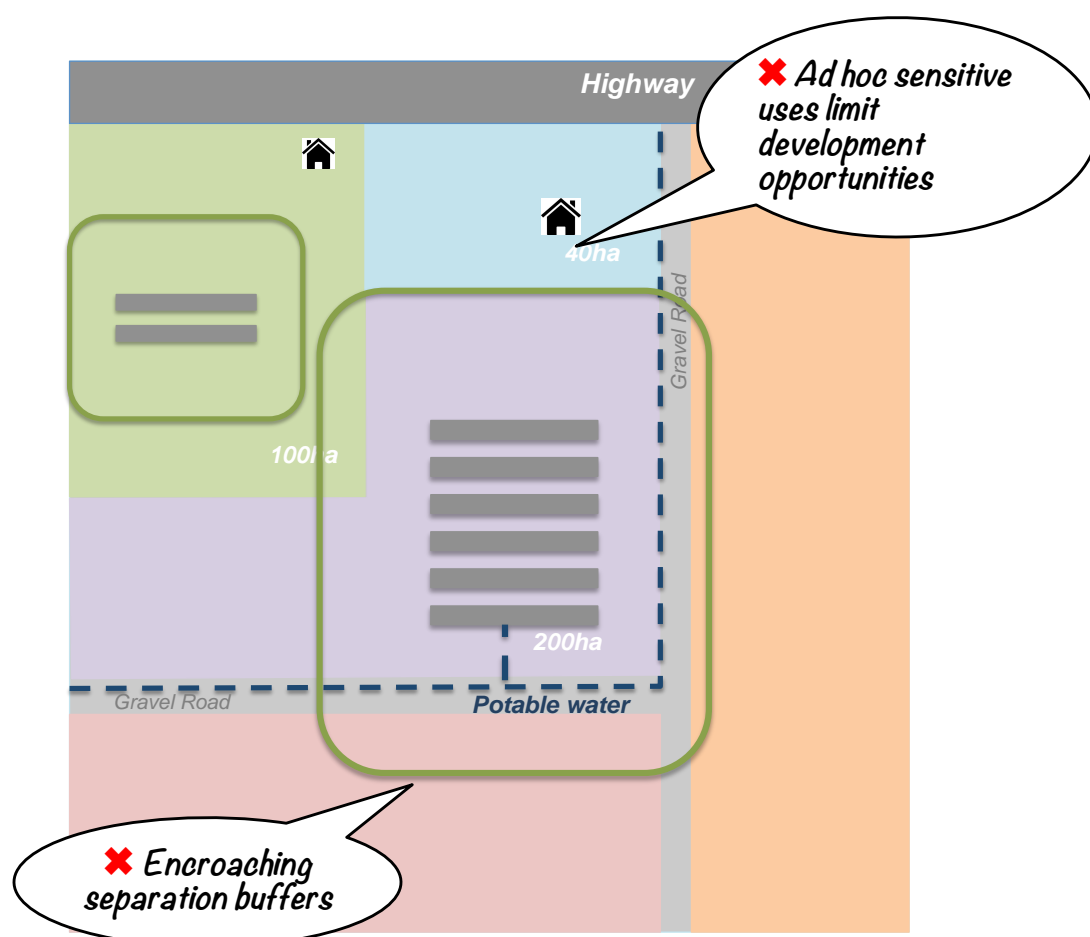
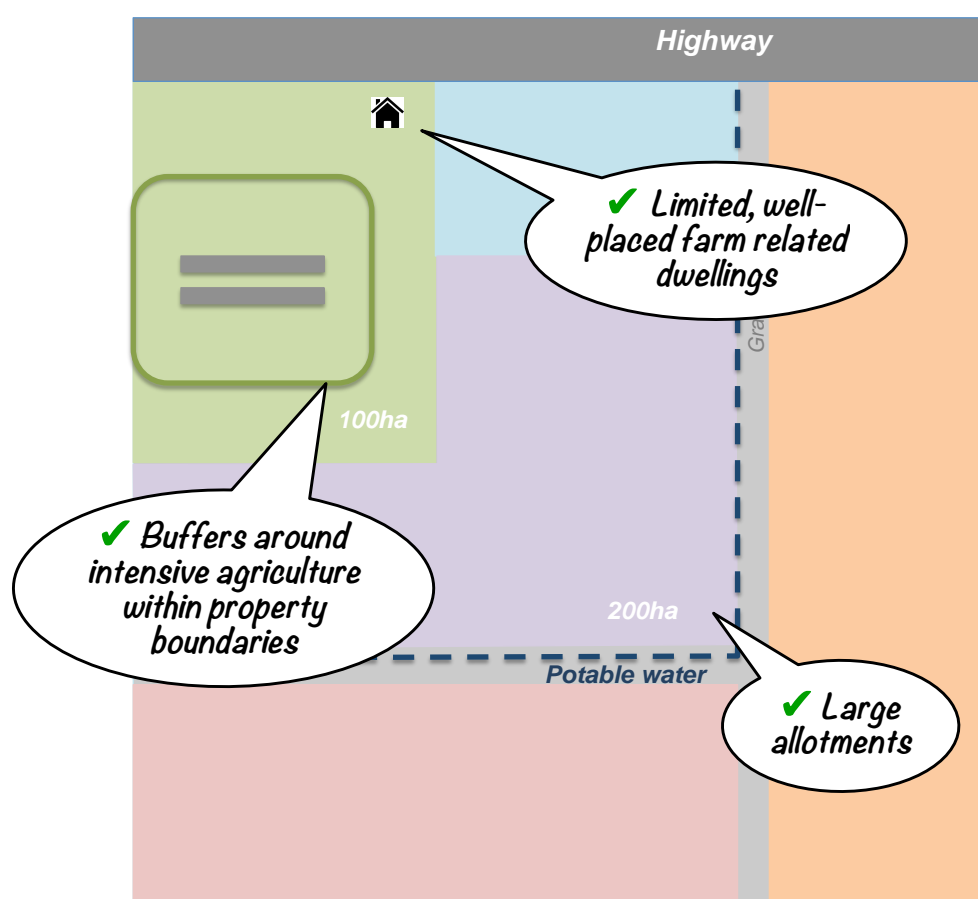
To assist landowners and prospective investors, a number of Model Concepts have been developed to illustrate Council's strategic intent for the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct. These models highlight land use outcomes and development that Council is seeking to encourage (✓) or discourage (✗).

CONCEPT MODEL 1 - Existing Land use

The Golden Plains Food Production Precinct offers land with unrivalled opportunity for intensive agriculture.

Model 1 highlights the features that make it attractive for new investment in intensive agriculture including:

- Large, mainly vacant allotments
- Capacity to accommodate prescribed separation distances and biosecurity guidelines
- Existing intensive agriculture
- Infrastructure including potable water, high voltage power and an established network of local roads with highway access
- Flat topography with few environmental constraints



CONCEPT MODEL 2 – Least preferred development

The Concept Plan seeks to ensure that the productive potential of the Precinct is maximised and to promote investor confidence.

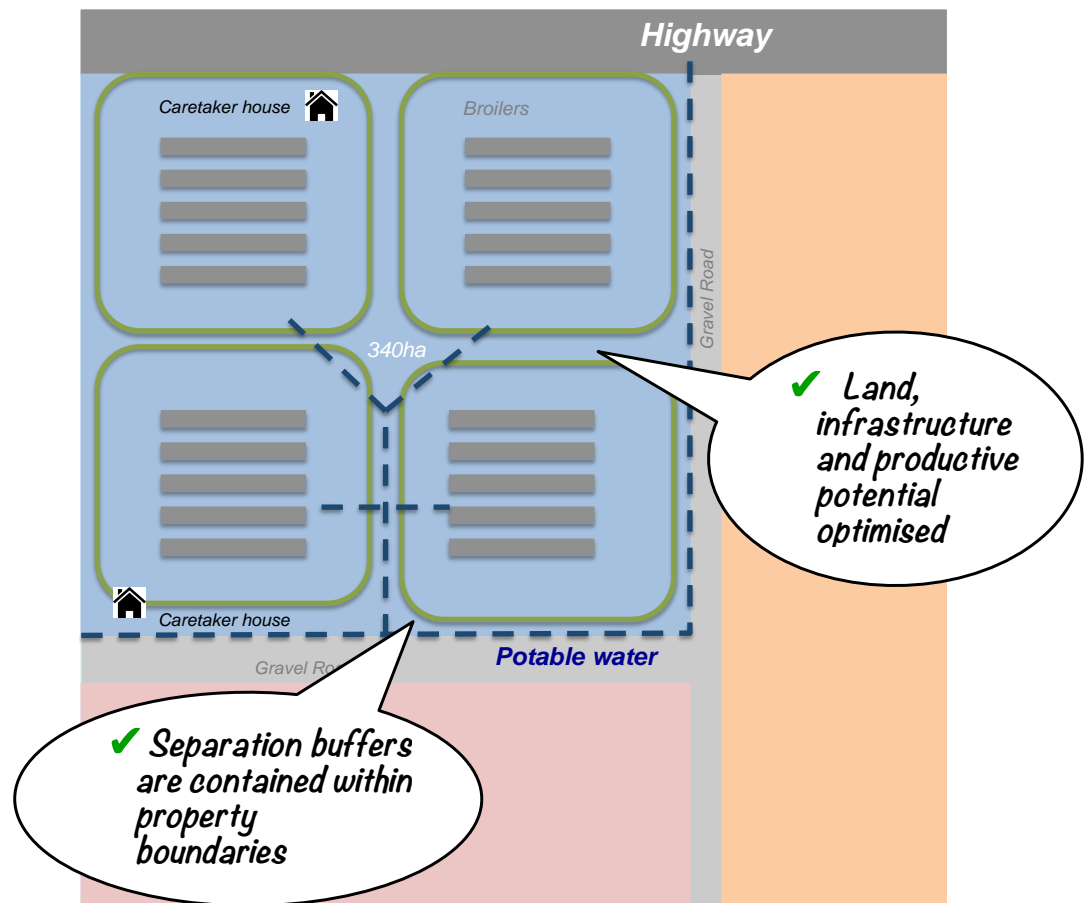
Model 2 illustrates that poor siting of intensive agriculture and poor planning decisions could result in less than optimum development of the Precinct.

Council is strongly committed to enforcing the planning policy position and industry codes and guidelines that support intensive agriculture. Development that optimises land use for intensive agriculture and complementary enterprises will be encouraged.

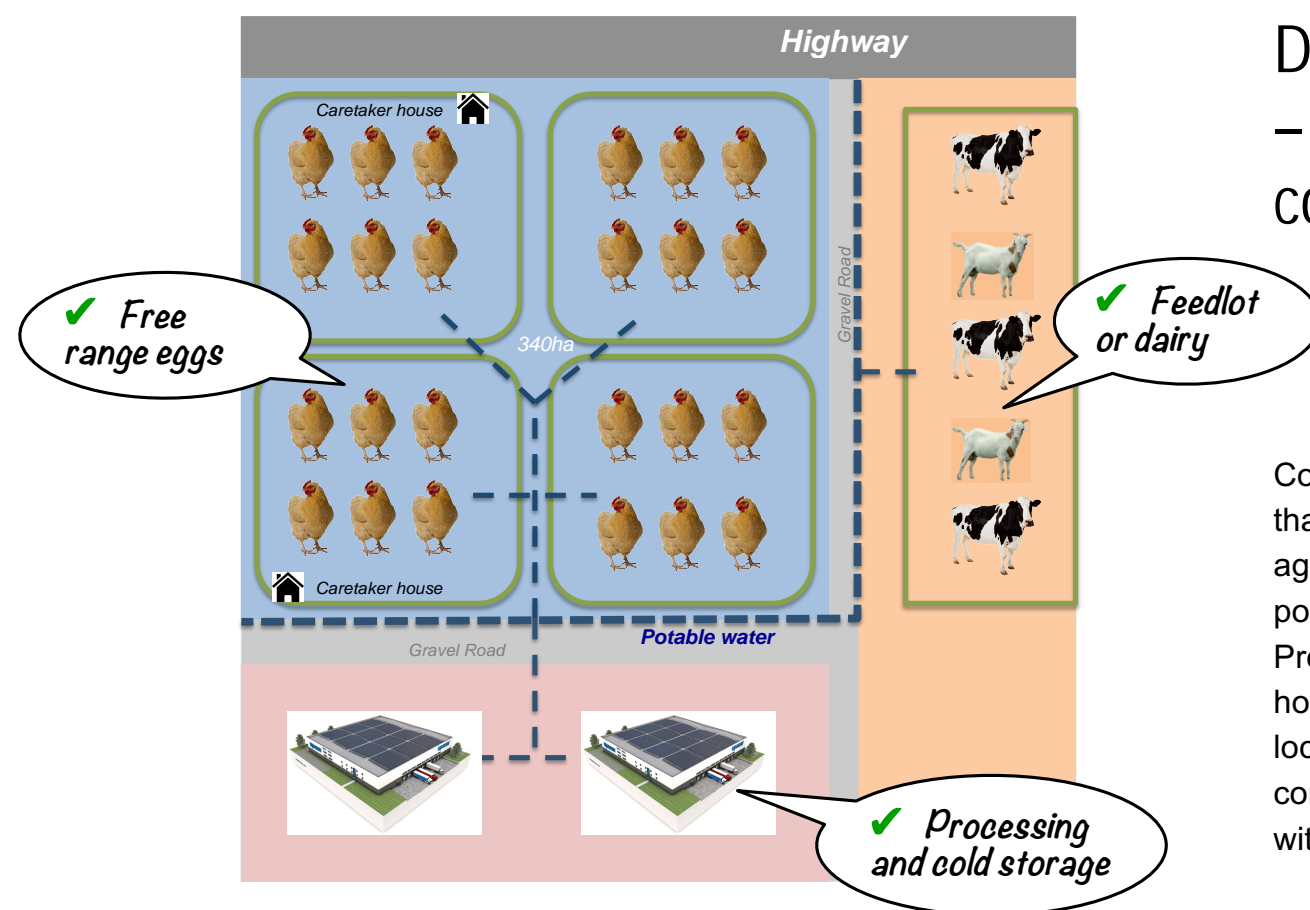
CONCEPT MODEL 3 – Preferred development

Model 3 illustrates preferred development within the Precinct. Golden Plains will achieve optimal use of land and infrastructure and maximise the productive potential of the Precinct by:

- Consistent and robust application of planning policy that supports intensive agriculture
- Ensuring compliance with industry codes and guidelines to ensure the sustainability of intensive agriculture in the Precinct
- Facilitating cooperation between landowners and investors to achieve efficient land use and development outcomes.



CONCEPT MODEL 4 – Diversified development – Co-location of complementary uses

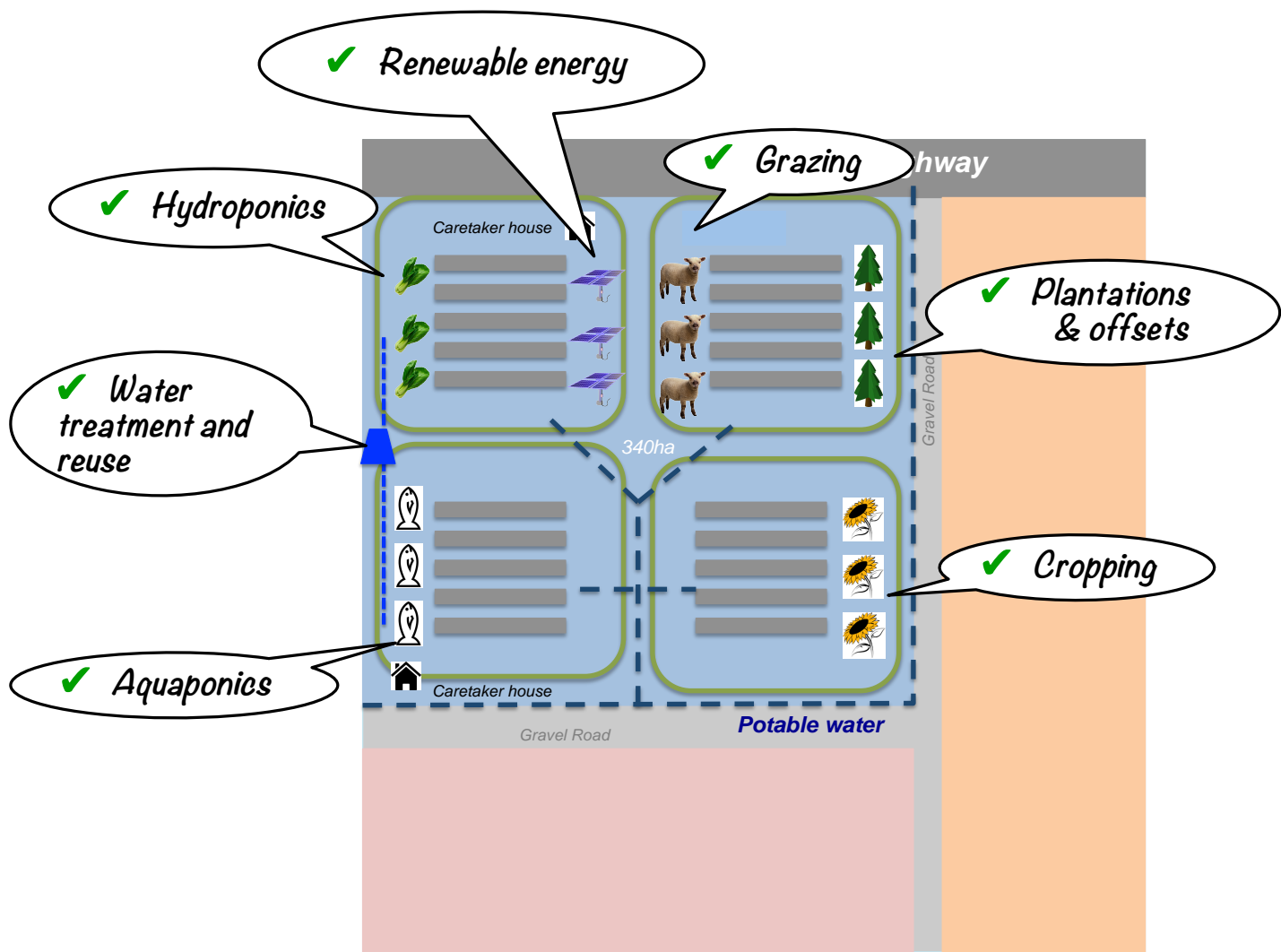


Council has identified a number of uses that will complement intensive agriculture and maximise the productive potential of the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct. Model 4 illustrates how a mix of land uses could be co-located within the Precinct without compromising biosecurity or compliance with industry codes and guidelines.

CONCEPT MODEL 5 - Diversified development - Complementary uses within buffers

Diversified development can also be achieved by appropriate use of land within buffers around intensive agriculture such as alternative energy production, horticulture, cropping and grazing. Model 5 illustrates how these could be accommodated within the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct.

Compliance with industry codes and guidelines will be paramount in assessing proposals for development within buffers.



7 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

To achieve the optimum land use and most productive commercial outcomes, Council is committed to working with investors to support and facilitate the development process. Pre-application meetings are encouraged with Council's Investment Taskforce.

The following checklist is provided as a guide for proponents considering investing in the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct.

Step 1 Pre-proposal

An initial meeting with Council is recommended to discuss the type of activity you would like to undertake within the Precinct. Council will be available to provide guidance on:

- Landowner/stakeholder communications.
- The suitability of the proposed activity.
- What restrictions may apply.
- Whether planning permits will be required.
- Information that may be required as part of a planning permit application.
- Input required from referral authorities or other agencies.

Step 2 Proposal

Once the type and scale of activity has been confirmed and a site selected, a follow-up meeting with Council is recommended to confirm:

- Whether the proposal will meet Codes of Practice and/or National Guidelines, particularly in relation to separation distances and biosecurity.
- If a planning permit is required for native vegetation clearance, any exemptions that may apply and whether additional information is required.
- If a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is required.

Step 3 Prepare planning permit application

Compile all the relevant information and submit to Council with the Planning Permit Application form.

Step 4 Council review of permit application

Council will check that all the required information has been submitted and if it needs to be referred.

Step 5 Council will assess the permit application

Consider any submissions that may have been lodged and referral comments.

Assess the proposal against the planning scheme provisions.

A meeting may be organised with the permit applicants to address referral comments and planning scheme provisions.

Step 6 Council decision made.

Council welcomes development proposals that maximise the potential of the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct

8 CONTACTS

Council welcomes enquiries for the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct.

The Shire is committed to working with investors to support and facilitate the development process and is available for:

- Planning advice and assistance including:
 - Subdivision and consolidation of land.
 - Requirements for reports and referrals.
- Consistency in decision making:
 - Council is strongly committed to protecting land within the Precinct for intensive agriculture and will ensure rigorous and consistent assessment of planning permits.
- Strategic communications:
 - Council is able to facilitate connections between the intensive food sector and landholders within the Precinct.

For further information on the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct and this Concept Plan, contact:

Investment Taskforce

Golden Plains Shire Council

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business@gplains.vic.gov.au

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Bannockburn, Victoria, 3331

<http://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au>

Council's Investment Taskforce can provide assistance
to facilitate the development process

9 REFERENCES

- i Developing Suitable Areas for Intensive Agricultural Industries in Golden Plains (2004)
- ii Investing in Intensive Agriculture: Demand and Infrastructure Requirements for Intensive Agricultural Industries and Identification of the Economic and Social Benefits (2006)
- iii Australian Chicken Meat (2012), The Australian Chicken Meat Industry: Industry Profile
- iv G21 Geelong Region Alliance (2013) G21 Regional Growth Plan
- v Department of Planning and Community Development (2013) Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan
- vi Permitted clearing of native vegetation - Biodiversity assessment guidelines (2013) Department of Environment and Primary Industry
- vii Department of Environment and Primary Industry (2009) Victorian Code for Broiler Farms
- viii Health Commission of Victoria and Department of Agriculture (1992) Victoria Code of Practice Piggeries
- ix Department of Agriculture, Energy & Minerals (1995) Victorian code for cattle feedlots.
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- xi Australian Pork Limited (2010) National Environmental Guidelines for Piggeries, 2nd Edition
- xii The National Guidelines for Beef Cattle Feedlots in Australia, 3rd Ed
- xiii The National Procedures and Guidelines for Intensive Sheep and Lamb Feeding Systems