Town Planning Report

Development of land for a Service Station and creation of access to a Road Zone Category 1.

1305 Inverloch - Kongwak Road, Inverloch VIC 3996 Lot 1 TP887789

Application Reference: 180335

11 February 2019
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1. Introduction

We act on behalf of the permit applicant and enclose a town planning report for the consideration of Council.

This report has been prepared in response to items 3 and 4 included within Council’s Request for Further Information (RFI) dated 10 October 2018, and is to accompany the previously submitted planning permit application (reference number 180335).

This report addresses the relevant requirements of the Bass Coast Shire Council Planning Scheme for the use and development of the land for a service station and creation of access to a Road Zone Category 1.

It is noted that the original planning permit application has been amended to remove reference to Business Identification Signage. This change to the permit application is due to the extent of signage commonly associated with service station developments being prohibited by the Farming Zone. The provision of signage specific to the subject site is therefore intended to be addressed by way of a subsequent planning scheme amendment in accordance with Section 20 (Part 4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. This opportunity is to be further explored following Council’s assessment of the proposed use and development.

This assessment concludes that on balance, the proposal is supported by the Planning Policy Framework PPF is so far as:

- The proposal represents the opportunity to establish a complimentary single use retail services on major tourist and freight corridor being the Bass Highway;
- The proposal will complement identified upgrades to Bass Highway from Anderson to Leongatha in order to improve outcomes for a number of food-related sectors, visitors and local communities as is escribed by the Gippsland Freight Strategy;
- Supporting population growth and movement locally and across the broader region.
- The use of land for the purpose of a service station is enabled within the Farming Zone;

The proposal is considered to support, on balance, the achievement of a number of Local Policy objectives including:

- Improving pedestrian movement within the town centre as described at Clause 21.08-2;
- Improved access to fuel services for large vehicles, car and trailer combinations and agricultural related machinery in a safe location will support the functionality of the town;
- The provision of 24 hour fuel service availability for residents and visitors to Inverloch and broader region;
- Establishing pedestrian linkages to Kongwak Road in accordance with the Inverloch Parks and Trails plan (Map 2);
- Introducing new and ongoing employment opportunities;

2. Proposal

The proposed Service Station will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. No car wash or mechanical repairs are proposed to operate from this site.

A single storey building with a maximum height of 4.450m is proposed on the site. The building is setback approximately 14.8 meters from the southern property boundary (30 meters from the Bass Highway road pavement) and an average of 70 meters from the western boundary (or approximately 100 meters form the Kongwak Road pavement).

The proposed building area is 430 square meters with an ancillary waste storage area of 24 square meters.

The proposed truck canopy has an area of 190 square meters. The proposed car canopy and area of 616 square meters.
There is one public entry to the building on western side fronting the car refuelling canopy and one on the eastern side of the building.

Both the car refuelling canopy and truck refuelling canopy will have a maximum height of 6.2 m providing weather protection to the petrol pump forecourt. Proposed pumps, fuel refill points and underground fuel storage tanks are shown indicatively on the plans.

Internal traffic movements have been carefully considered to minimize potential conflicts between heavy /large vehicles, passenger vehicles and vehicles towing boats, trailers and caravans. Measures to reduce conflict include the provision of dedicated parking for different types of vehicles and alternate routes for vehicle circulation post re-fueling.

A total of 13 car parking spaces (including one disabled space and an air and water space) are proposed and are located on the western side of the building. An additional five (5) parking bays are now provided for recreation vans, caravan and boat parking. Four (4) truck parking areas are also to be provided.

Vehicle access to the site will be via new crossovers located on both the Bass Highway and the Inverloch Kongwak Road. The proposed crossovers will allow for both entry and exiting to and from the site. The attached vehicle turning template in the traffic report and location of the indicative underground fuel filling points demonstrate that a 21m fuel tanker is located wholly on the site while filling the tanks and that all vehicles can enter, circulate and exit the site safely.

Rubbish collection will occur on average once a week and convenience store deliveries will occur between zero and 3 times daily. Fuel deliveries will be 2-3 times per week, 7am until 10pm via 21m semi trailer.

Mechanical plant is to be screened from the primary approaches to the site, as shown on the amended plans.

The provision of associated signage with the development does not form part of the revised planning permit application, rather is to be considered by a separate future planning scheme amendment. This application therefore seeks to establish the use and development of the subject site only. A copy of elevation plans including possible future signage is however provided for information purposes only, which are intended to assist clarity of the intended development outcome.

1444 Sqm of landscaping is provided on the site as shown on the accompanying landscaping plans now provided with the amended planning permit application.

3. Planning Permit Trigger Summary

3.1. Land Zoning

The subject site is included within the Farming Zone. Pursuant Clause 35.07-1, the use of land for a Service Station is not listed within the Table of uses and therefore is a Section 2 Use (i.e. planning permit required).

A planning permit is also required by Clause 35.07-4 for undertaking building and works associated with a Section 2 Use; and the construction of a building to be located within 100 meter setback from a Road Zone Category 1(Bass Highway and Kongwak Road).

3.2. Overlays

The land is not affected by any overlays.
3.3 Particular Provisions:

In addition to the zone and overlay provisions of the Scheme, the following particular provisions are also relevant to the proposal.

Clause 52.06 Car Parking:

The provision of car parking in relation to the proposed service station is not specified in the Table provided at Clause 52.06-5. The provision of car parking is therefore to be provided to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

A total of 13 car parking spaces are proposed to be provided. An additional five (5) parking bays are now provided for recreation vans, caravan and boat parking. Four (4) truck parking areas are also to be provided.

The absence of specified parking requirements within Table 1 to Clause 52.06-5 is considered to reflect the nature of car movement and parking associated with service station developments. In most instances, service station users will park their vehicle at the bowser to refuel and not relocate to their vehicle until leaving the facility.

Further information regarding traffic movement and car parking is provided within a separate assessment traffic movements completed in support of the proposed use and development.

Clause 52.07 Loading and Unloading of Vehicles:

The proposal is considered to be consistent with the requirements of Clause 52.07 in so far as a dedicated loading bay is to be provided on the subject site.

A Building with a floor area of 2,600 sqm or less in a single occupation and associated with the manufacture servicing, storage or sale of goods or materials required a loading bay with a minimum length of 7.6m and a width of 3.6 m, resulting in an area of 27.4 sqm.

The specifications for the proposed loading bay comply with the requirements of Clause 52.07. No height restrictions to vehicles able to use the loading bay area will be present.

The proposed loading bay is to be cited adjoining the northern extent of the building, ensuring easy access to the waste storage area whilst not impacting upon other vehicle movements. This location will also be screened from the major road frontages.

Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to a Road Zone Category 1:

This Clause requires a planning permit for the creation of access. Two crossovers are proposed to both the Bass Highway and Kongwak Inverloch Road.

The subject planning permit application will require referral to VicRoads (Regional Roads Victoria) due to the creation of two access points to roads classified as a Road Zone Category 1.

Clause 52.34 Bicycle Facilities:

Table 1 to Clause 52.34-3 does not specify that any bicycle facilities are required in conjunction with a service station. However, given the minor retail / convenience store component associated with the proposed development (and new pedestrian linkages to be provided residential areas south of the subject site), a bicycle parking area is now provided on the landscape plan (drawing 180810 L1) provided with this application.

Bicycle parking facilities are provided in location which provides convenient access and security, ensuring these facilities are visible and adequately lit at all times.
4. Site Analysis

The subject site is formally described as Lot 1 on Title Plan 757364Y (formerly known as part of Crown Allotment 13 Section 12 Parish of Konong Wootong). Aerial imagery of the subject site is highlighted, with the approximate location of the proposed service station development shown below:

Image 1: Subject site aerial imagery.

The land is located within the Farming Zone and no overlays apply to the land. See zone map below.

Image 2: Land Zoning map.
The subject land has a total area of 117.1 acres, of which 2.1 acres or 8876.00 sqm is proposed to be utilised for the use and development a service station. No subdivision of the subject land is proposed.

The proposed service station area is rectangular in shape with 80 meters frontage to Wonthaggi Road (Bass Highway) and 45.8 meters frontage to the Inverloch Kongwak Road. The remaining side boundaries measure 119.4 on the North and 85.0 meters on the east. A roundabout intersection (which also provides a primary entrance to the Inverloch town centre) adjoins the south western corner of the subject land.

The subject site is fully fenced, with improved pastures and contains three farm dams. A small-scale milking shed is also present on the land along with ancillary shedding.

A review of the property title indicates that there are no relevant caveats or encumbrances applying to the land.

The subject land adjoins a major roundabout intersection of the Bass Highway and the Inverloch – Kongwak Road, both roads being classified as a Road Zone Category 1.

The site is considered to be situated on what is a ‘gateway’ location to the Inverloch township, with the urban area situated immediately to the south.

In recognition of the prominent location of the site, the landowner is interested to explore with Council the opportunity to provide town name signage within a landscaped area fronting the intersection. This opportunity, if considered appropriate by Council, may be satisfactorily designed and delivered as a planning permit condition. Further discussion of this opportunity is included at Section 6.1 of this report.

5. Bass Coast Planning Scheme

5.1. Planning Policy Framework (PPF)

Relevant to this application, an assessment of the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) is provided as follows.

Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Gippsland

Support the continuing role of towns and small settlements in providing services to their districts, recognising their relationships and dependencies with larger towns.

Create vibrant and prosperous town centres that are clearly defined and provide commercial and service activities that respond to changing population and market conditions.

Plan for increased seasonal demand on services and infrastructure in towns with high holiday home ownership.

The proposed development of the land for a service station and convenience store on the subject land is considered to positively respond to the above planning policy directions.

The Gippsland Regional Plan also provides policy to ‘Support Growth’ of the Inverloch township area. The provision of fuel and convenience needs will support such growth, whilst providing an improved entrance to the township on what is the major transport corridor in the region.

The proposal will ensure safe and accessible access to what is a necessary service to the township, surrounding rural community, broader region and visitors alike. In particular the resident population and surrounding rural industry will be positively affected by the proposed development given accessibility difficulties experienced during busy visitor periods due to the location constraints of existing fuel services within the town center.
Conversely, the traffic assessment completed in support of this proposal demonstrates that the subject site is able to safely cater for all vehicle types (including large vehicles). The proposed service station development is therefore expected to aid in reducing traffic congestion from the inner commercial area of the town during holiday periods, while providing a safe alternative location for refueling of car and trailer/boat combinations, large vehicles (trucks, tourist buses) and agriculture machinery (tractors).

Additionally, it is observed that there are presently no truck rest stops available within surrounding district, nor the availability of 24 hour fuel services within the Inverloch locality.

Clause 11.03-4S Coastal Settlement

Support a network of diverse coastal settlements that provide for a broad range of housing types, economic opportunities and services.

Identify a clear settlement boundary around coastal settlements to ensure that growth in coastal areas is planned and coastal values are protected. Where no settlement boundary is identified, the extent of a settlement is defined by the extent of existing urban zoned land and any land identified on a plan in the planning scheme for future urban settlement.

Direct new residential and other urban development and infrastructure to locations within defined settlement boundaries of existing settlements that are capable of accommodating growth.

The proposed development of a service station on the subject land is considered to positively respond to the above policy direction in so far as it supports a broad range of economic opportunities and services.

The subject site adjoins the northern settlement boundary for the township which is formed by the Bass Highway. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed development is outside this boundary, the siting of a service station within the Farming Zone on a major highway (freight corridor and tourist route) is not uncommon. This is due to such locations often being better suited on the outskirts of a town in order to alleviate traffic congestion from town center streets and avoidance of large vehicle interaction with pedestrian zones, and more broadly; avoidance of residential amenity issues which may arise from 24 hour fuel services.

This aspect is particularly relevant to the Inverloch township during busy tourist seasons, when the number of vehicles seeking fuel services whilst towing caravan and boats etc. significantly increases. Similarly the re-fueling of larger vehicles (including the re-fueling of farm machinery) is difficult during periods of high traffic congestion within the town center.

In this way, the provisions of Clause 11.03-6 and 17.02-2S (see further discussion below) provides specific policy to enable place based planning and give preference to locations in or on the border of an urban area / activity center for expansion of single use retail, to which the proposed development is considered to directly align.

Clause 11.03-6S Regional and local places

Objective:

To facilitate integrated place based planning.

Strategies

Integrate relevant planning considerations to provide specific direction for the planning of sites, places, neighborhoods and towns.

Consider the distinctive characteristics and needs of regional and local places in planning for future land use and development.
The above policy provides for the consideration of place-based planning specific to sites and towns. This is considered particularly relevant to the subject land given the site’s attributes and interaction with the township and broader region including:

- The proposed siting of the proposed service station on the subject land is considered to aid local policy objectives for the township, regional economy and functionality of the road network by integrating land use and transport.
- Opportunity to formalise and entrance to the Inverloch township on what is considered to be a ‘gateway’ intersection;
- Site location fronting the Bass Highway (the major connecting roadway for regional freight, agriculture industry and visitor economy);
- Adjoining urban area immediately south of the land including the nearby Industry estate to the south west of the subject land;
- Opportunity to reduce traffic congestion and associated pedestrian conflict from the town centre (this objective also described at Clause 21.08-2 of the Bass Coast Planning Scheme).
- Support road safety by providing large vehicles with a rest stop, noting there are no other nearby opportunities for large vehicles to stop, refuel and refresh. This is expected to result in benefits with fatigue reduction, which is particularly important given the Bass Highway’s function as a major freight corridor.

Clause 13.07-1S Land use compatibility

**Objective**
To safeguard community amenity while facilitating appropriate commercial, industrial or other uses with potential off-site effects.

**Strategies**
Ensure the compatibility of a use or development as appropriate to the land use functions and character of the area by:
- Directing land uses to appropriate locations.
- Using a range of building design, urban design, operational and land use separation measures.

Service stations are often better suited to locations catering for all types and sizes of vehicles. Such locations are preferably situated on major roadways separated from sensitive uses such as residential uses, in particular where 24 hour fuel services are proposed.

Considering the above, the subject land is considered to be well suited to the proposed development.

Clause 14.01-1 Protection of agricultural land directs that in considering a proposal to subdivide or develop agricultural land that:

“...the impacts of the proposed subdivision or development on the continuation of primary production on adjacent land, with particular regard to land values and to the viability of infrastructure for such production.” and;

“The compatibility between the proposed or likely development and the existing uses of the surrounding land.”

It is submitted that the proposal satisfies the above objectives of the PPF in so far as the majority of the land is to continue to be utilised for grazing.

Further information and assessment of the proposed use and development on existing and future agriculture operations is provided at Section 6.2 of this report.
15.01-1S Urban design

Objective
To create urban environments that are safe, healthy, functional and enjoyable and that contribute to a sense of place and cultural identity.

Strategies
Require development to respond to its context in terms of character, cultural identity, natural features, surrounding landscape and climate.

Ensure that the design and location of publicly accessible private spaces, including car parking areas, forecourts and walkways, is of a high standard, creates a safe environment for users and enables easy and efficient use.

Ensure that development provides landscaping that supports the amenity, attractiveness and safety of the public realm.

Ensure that development, including signs, minimises detrimental impacts on amenity, on the natural and built environment and on the safety and efficiency of roads.

Promote good urban design along and abutting transport corridors.

Amended building design and landscape drawings have been prepared in order to better respond to the sites surrounds, its prominent position and opportunity for place making on the subject land which fronts a major intersection and entrance to the township.

The revised landscape design is considered to compliment the location and demonstrates good design suited the major transport corridor and town entrance position.

Further discussion of the revised development design and associated landscaping is provided in the remaining sections of this report.

15.01-6S Design for rural areas

Objective
To ensure development respects valued areas of rural character.

Strategies
Ensure that the siting, scale and appearance of development protects and enhances rural character.

Protect the visual amenity of valued rural landscapes and character areas along township approaches and sensitive tourist routes by ensuring new development is sympathetically located.

Site and design development to minimise visual impacts on surrounding natural scenery and landscape features including ridgelines, hill tops, waterways, lakes and wetlands.

The amended development siting and landscape design is considered to positively respond to the visual amenity of the area and provides the opportunity to the township entrance and approaches of what is a primary transport and tourist corridor.

Clauses 17.01-1S Diversified economy

Objective
To strengthen and diversify the economy.
Strategies
Protect and strengthen existing and planned employment areas and plan for new employment areas.

Facilitate growth in a range of employment sectors, including health, education, retail, tourism, knowledge industries and professional and technical services based on the emerging and existing strengths of each region.

Improve access to jobs closer to where people live.

Support rural economies to grow and diversify.

The proposed use and development is not considered to compromise the commercial centre of Inverloch, rather will aid in the achievement of local policy objectives to strengthen the commercial core and improve safety of pedestrian zones within the town by reducing traffic congestion (in particular ensuring large trucks, car and trailers are able to safely access fuel services).

The introduction of 24 hour fuel services to the township and broader district will positively contribute to local business and industry, in particular agriculture operations (i.e. refuelling farm machinery) and associated freight distribution (i.e. milk tankers).

The proposed use of the land will result in the creation of local employment opportunities both during construction and ongoing.

An estimated 80 – 100 construction jobs will required, including project management, sub-contractors and professional services such as architects, engineering design, surveyors. Ongoing employment is estimated to generate 40-50 full time and part time jobs across transport & logistics sectors, as well as maintenance and retail sectors.

The total value of investment in construction is estimated at approximately $4 million.

17.02-1S Business

Objective
To encourage development that meets the community’s needs for retail, entertainment, office and other commercial services.

Strategies
Plan for an adequate supply of commercial land in appropriate locations.

Ensure commercial facilities are aggregated and provide net community benefit in relation to their viability, accessibility and efficient use of infrastructure.

Provide new convenience shopping facilities to provide for the needs of the local population in new residential areas and within, or immediately adjacent to, existing commercial centres.

Provide small scale shopping opportunities that meet the needs of local residents and workers in convenient locations.

It is considered that the proposed development supports the above objectives, in particular the accessibility of the site for road users. In contrast, the establishment of 24 hour fuel service station developments designed to cater for large vehicles are not considered to be well suited or compatible with a town centre position or residential setting. This is primarily due to issues arising from potential off-site amenity impacts (i.e. waste light, odour, noise), and the promotion of car and other large vehicles (including tourist buses) interacting with high volume pedestrian traffic.

17.02-2S – Out-of-centre development
Give preference to locations in or on the border of an activity centre for expansion of single use retail, commercial and recreational facilities.

Ensure that out-of-centre proposals are only considered where the proposed use or development is of net benefit to the community in the region served by the proposal or provides small scale shopping opportunities that meet the needs of local residents and workers in convenient locations.

The above policy describes circumstances in which out of center development is to be considered and supported. The proposed development is considered to directly align with this policy direction, in so far as it is a complimentary single use retail service located on a major tourist and freight corridor that will be of net community benefit.

More specifically, the proposed use and development of a service station on the subject land is considered to provide net community benefit in the following ways:

- Removing traffic congestion from the commercial core of the township,
- Provision of 24 hour fuel services to support the needs of local workers (including those of the nearby industry area),
- Aid freight transport needs of the district and broader region,
- Assist in the achievement of objectives to promote pedestrian access and safety within the town centre,
- Providing improved access and availability of services to support increasing tourism visitation being experienced throughout the year, in particular during holiday periods.
- Creation of new local employment opportunities during construction and operation.

17.04-1S Facilitating tourism

Objective
To encourage tourism development to maximise the economic, social and cultural benefits of developing the state as a competitive domestic and international tourist destination.

Strategies
Encourage the development of a range of well-designed and sited tourist facilities, including integrated resorts, accommodation, host farm, bed and breakfast and retail opportunities.

Encourage investment that meets demand and supports growth in tourism.

The proposed use and development will support visitors to Bass Coast with the availability of 24 hour fuel services. More importantly the proposal will alleviate traffic congestion from the town center during busy holiday seasons (in particular providing safe and easy access to fuel for vehicles with caravan / boat trailers and tourist buses).

18.01-2S Transport system

Locate and design new transport routes and adjoining land uses to minimise disruption of residential communities and their amenity.

Plan or regulate new uses or development of land near an existing or proposed transport route to avoid detriment to and where possible enhance, the service, safety and amenity desirable for that transport route in the short and long terms.

The location and revised design of the proposed use and development will minimise disruption to community amenity experienced during holiday periods and in this way improve pedestrian safety of the commercial core of the township. The location of current fuel services is shown in the below Image 3.
18.02-3S Road system

Objective
To manage the road system to achieve integration, choice and balance by developing an efficient and safe network and making the most of existing infrastructure.

Strategies
Plan and regulate the design of transport routes and nearby areas to achieve visual standards appropriate to the importance of the route with particular reference to landscaping, the control of outdoor advertising and, where appropriate, the provision of buffer zones and resting places.

The proposed location provides the opportunity to provide fuel, convenience needs and a rest stop for road users. This includes trucks and tourist buses. No other such rest places are available on the Bass Highway corridor for a considerable distance – extending west to Wonthaggi or further north to Leongatha.

The proposed development is therefore expected to result in benefits with fatigue reduction, which is particularly important given the Bass Highway’s function as a major freight corridor.

Clause 18.02-4S Car parking

Objective
To ensure an adequate supply of car parking that is appropriately designed and located.

Strategies
Allocate or require land to be set aside for car parking subject to the existing and potential modes of access including public transport, the demand for off-street car parking, road capacity and the potential for demand management of car parking.

Design and locate local car parking to:
- Protect the role and function of nearby roads.
- Enable easy and efficient use.
- Enable the movement and delivery of goods.
- Achieve a high standard of urban design and protect the amenity of the locality, including the amenity of pedestrians and other road users.
- Create a safe environment, particularly at night.

Provision of car parking on the site has been increased, including the addition of long – bay car parking to cater for car and trailer combinations, tourist buses and larger vehicle stopover opportunities including trucks.

In this way it is noted there is presently limited opportunities for larger vehicles to stop within or adjoining the Inverloch Township. The opportunity to allow cars and trucks to stop at rest areas located on major transport and tourist routes will aid in road user safety.

18.05-1S Freight links

Objective
To develop the key Transport Gateways and freight links and maintain Victoria’s position as the nation’s premier logistics centre.

Strategies
Support major Transport Gateways as important locations for employment and economic activity by: Encouraging adjacent complementary uses and employment generating activities.

Improve freight efficiency and increase capacity of Transport Gateways while protecting urban amenity.

Minimise negative impacts of freight movements on urban amenity.

The provision of fuel services located on what is the major transport corridor within region is considered to support the achievement of the above policy objectives, in particular the servicing of freight vehicles.

The Bass Highway is a strategic link in Victoria’s road network providing access for local agriculture and forms part of the Melbourne/Sydney coastal tourist route. It also provides connectivity between the towns of Leongatha, Inverloch, Wonthaggi and other small towns to the Anderson turnoff to Phillip Island.

The highway carries high volumes of freight transport, business travel, tourism travel and private commuters. Important industries served by the highway include tourism and agriculture, dominated by dairy, beef production and horticulture (Source: Gippsland Freight Strategy – Gippsland Local Government Network June 2013).

The Southern Gippsland Food Futures report Economic Analysis (2016) identifies Bass Highway improvements as a priority project, as it is the main highway that passes through the Wonthaggi region, with the road connecting Wonthaggi with other regional centres including Phillip Island, Inverloch and Leongatha.

In 2011, the Wonthaggi CBD Traffic Impact Study found that the existing road network would soon be operating at capacity and with unacceptable queue lengths, this demonstrating the importance of the Bass highway corridor to industry freight movements (agriculture, dairy, etc) as well as tourists visiting the Bass Coast and Southern Gippsland region.

The Bass Highway, Anderson to Leongatha upgrade is identified in the Gippsland Freight Strategy and is considered to be ‘a project of industry importance.’

Upgrade of this road would therefore improve outcomes for a number of food-related sectors, visitors and local communities. Key elements of the Bass Highway corridor project include:
- Overtaking lanes between Anderson and Inverloch.
- Widen narrow pavement between Inverloch and Leongatha.
- Progress planning for alternate truck route for Wonthaggi.
As is demonstrated by the above policy documents and strategic plans, the importance of improved functionality of the Bass Highway to better cater for increased vehicle movements from Anderson to Leongatha cannot be overstated.

The provision of additional fuel services on this important transport corridor is considered to also support functionality and support road safety by providing large vehicles with a rest stop.

5.2. Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF)

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) identifies that Bass Coast is predominantly a coastal municipality defined by the unique foreshore habitats of Bass Strait, the Bunurong Coast, Western Port and Anderson Inlet.

Discussion of relevant local policy to the proposed use and development of the subject land for a service station follows.

Clause 21.01-2 – Settlement Pattern

The major population centres are Wonthaggi, Cowes, San Remo and Inverloch. Aside from Wonthaggi the larger centres are coastal communities with large population fluctuations during holiday and summer periods.

The majority of the future urban growth within the municipality will be concentrated in Wonthaggi, in particular in the north east growth area. The growth area will accommodate approximately 8,000 people in a high amenity residential area.

Increased population growth to the north of Wonthaggi – will result in greater service demands and in – turn likely result in increased traffic movements along the transport corridor to Inverloch and Leongatha to the north. The provision of fuel and rest stop on this transport route will aid increased vehicle movements and likely support road user safety.

Clause 21.01-4 Bass Coast Council Plan 2013 – 2017

The Bass Coast Shire’s Council Plan provides a vision that states; Bass Coast Shire will be recognised as a unique place of environmental significance where our quality of life and sense of community is balanced by sustainable and sensitive development, population and economic growth.

The current Council Plan includes five Strategic Objectives that shape Council’s vision for land use planning including:

Sustainable Development and Growth
Our built environment complements our landscape, lifestyle and climate.

Clause 21.01-5 The Vision

Settlement:

The specific visions for the Municipal Strategic Statement are:

Residential development and related urban land uses contained to existing activity nodes and designated growth areas.

Landscape and Built Form:

A quality urban environment and well-functioning towns that benefit both residents and visitors.
Architecture and building design responding to the environment, character and coastal setting.

Development consistent with Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles.

New developments designed and sited to complement the specific context in which they sit and take account of existing land form, vegetation and urban character.

The rural farmed landscape, combined with coastal views and beach access, as a significant element in the identity, image and livability of Bass Coast.

Improved appearance of advertising signage across the municipality.

Infrastructure:

High quality services and facilities that accommodate future growth of the towns and visitors to the area.

Effective and efficient road, pedestrian, cycling and drainage networks provided throughout the Shire.

Water sensitive urban design, stormwater management and improved stormwater quality throughout the municipality.

The above vision statements are considered to be supported by use and development of the subject location for the purpose of service station, on what is a primary activity node and transport corridor adjacent the Inverloch settlement.

The provision of fuel services, minor convenience needs and rest stop for road users (in particular large vehicles, car and trailers and tourist buses) is considered to positively contribute to the functioning of the town center which will benefit both residents and visitors.

Clause 21.02-1 Growth of towns

A Settlement Hierarchy has been developed which sets out the strategic directions and development opportunities in the Shire. Relevant to the Inverloch township, the table at Clause 21.02-1 provides:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inverloch</th>
<th>Town: A settlement with moderate population levels and seasonal fluctuations. Access to basic services. Sewer connections vary. Moderate to high levels of holiday home ownership in settlements closer to Melbourne or regional centres.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|           | - Low spatial growth capacity  
|           | - Encourage growth within existing urban or appropriately zoned land, primarily through infill capacity and defined settlement boundaries |

The Strategic Directions Framework Plan identifies that Inverloch has moderate spatial growth capacity. Wonthaggi is located to the west of Inverloch and shares the major transport corridor of the Bass Highway. Wonthaggi is identified as the only settlement area within Bass Coast Shire as having high spatial growth capacity.

Increased population growth to the north of Wonthaggi – will result in greater service demands and in – turn likely result in increased traffic movements along the transport corridor to Inverloch.
Clause 21.03-1 Economic Development Overview

Discussion within Clause 21.03-1 explains that Inverloch, along with other business centres, provide retailing and community facilitation for the local and wider community. The role and function of these commercial areas are changing in line with increased population and visitation rates.

Clause 21.03-2 Commercial

The role and function of commercial areas is changing as population and visitation increases. Smaller commercial centres provide the day to day needs of the local community as well as acting as a social gathering point.

Key issues relevant to the proposal include:
- Growing the local economy and encouraging local employment.
- Providing for business services that cater to both residents and visitors.
- Managing the implications of being a premier tourist destination.

Objectives and Strategies relevant to the proposal are:

Objective 1 To support the development of new and existing businesses within the municipality.

Strategy 1.1 Provide opportunities for increased business diversification and expansion, including the development of export income streams.

Strategy 1.2 Facilitate the establishment and further development of new enterprises and provide opportunity for increased business diversification.

The proposal is considered to support the above objectives and strategies by enabling the establishment of new local employment opportunities (during both construction and operation) and diversifying fuel station services to cater for a range of vehicle types (in particular large vehicles including trucks, tourist buses, car and trailers).

The proposed development will also be complimentary to large vehicles (trucks) servicing industry related transport needs of the nearby Industrial 3 Zoned land located to the south – west of the subject land (see below image).
Clause 21.03-4 Tourism

Tourism is the pillar of the Bass Coast economy with internationally recognised tourism attractions.

A range of accommodation, eating establishments, and shops contribute to the visitor’s experience and to the economy providing local job opportunities, investment, and facilities for residents.

Encourage tourist facilities and services that are compatible with and add value to the existing built and natural attractions of the municipality.

Development on major tourist routes should be sited and designed to ensure that it does not detract from the visual values and vistas that are enjoyed by motorists, passengers, cyclists and pedestrians.

The amended development siting and design arrangement (in particular increased setbacks and orientation of buildings), is considered to positively respond to the visual amenity of the area and provides the opportunity to enhance the township entrance and approaches along the primary tourist route.

The proposed development demonstrates good urban design on what is a major tourist corridor and is expected to minimize existing traffic congestion and large vehicle, car and trailer traffic interactions within the busy pedestrian area of the Inverloch town center.

The availability of alternative fuel services to be accessed outside of the commercial core of the town center will greatly assist township residents, surrounding rural residents and visitors.

Clause 21.03-5 - Agriculture

Agricultural activities, particularly dairy and beef cattle farming are a significant contributor to the local and regional economies and a major source of local employment. Agriculture is the main land use of the Shire’s hinterland and as such creates an attractive landscape backdrop to the coastal areas.

The majority of the subject site is to be retained for productive agricultural use. The proposed development of the southern portion of the site for the purpose of a fuel service station is not considered to conflict with agricultural land use or policy objectives of the scheme.
Alternatively, the proposed development is considered to support the ability of large vehicles (servicing agriculture uses in the surrounding district and region) to source fuel and access a rest stop in a suitably located site adjoining the Bass Hwy freight corridor. Fuel services presently available within the township are problematic for large vehicles (i.e. milk tankers).

The amended design of the proposed development is considered to better respond to the surrounding rural character of the site.

Clause 21.05 – 1 Landscape and Built Form

The coastal landscapes and hinterlands are highly valued by the community for their visual, environmental and cultural qualities, as well as being productive agricultural land. Many residents are attracted to this region by the rolling hills leading down to the coast.

The landscapes and views of the municipality need protection from inappropriate development.

Bass Coast Shire’s rural and coastal setting, historic development patterns, and residential architecture, combine to give the municipality its unique appearance and character.

The Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study provides the following description and directions for the landscape character areas in eastern Bass:

Bunurong Coast and Hinterland
The Character Area will continue to be characterised by an open rural hinterland and an undeveloped coastal edge offering outviews to scenic coastal features free of built development. Development in the near-coastal hinterland will be restricted to the settlement of Cape Paterson or set a sufficient distance back from the coast to be nestled in topography and screened from views by landscaping and increased vegetation on the inland side of coastal viewpoints.

An open and uncluttered hinterland offering occasional outviews to the Bass Hills, Mt Liptrap, Mt Hoddle and the Venus Bay dunes will be interspersed with native vegetation corridors. Extensions to existing urban areas will be sensitive to views from key viewing corridors, maintenance of open rural character and protection and enhancement of the wild, natural coastline.

The table at Clause 21.05-2 Character Areas identifies that Inverloch is a major settlement included within the ‘Bunurong Coast and Hinterland Character Area’, stating:

This Character Area includes the diverse and rugged Bunurong coastline between Kilcunda and Inverloch and a largely cleared, rolling pastoral hinterland extending inland to the Strzelecki Range and east to Cape Liptrap (including the Bald Hills).

Objectives and Strategies included at Clause 21.05-3 considered directly relevant to the proposal are included below:

Objective 1: To ensure that development is subordinate to the natural, visual and environmental landscape character and significance.

Strategy 1.2 Strongly discourage development that is unsympathetic to significant landscape areas.

Strategy 1.4 In open rural areas, set buildings back long distances from roads and/or group buildings together among substantial landscaping.

Objective 3: To protect locally significant views and vistas that contributes to the character of the coastal and coastal hinterland region.

Strategy 3.1 Strongly discourage development from locating on hilltops and ridgelines.
Objective 4 To minimise the impact of infrastructure on the landscape and viewpoints.

Site infrastructure away from highly scenic locations, key views and near-coastal locations.

Locate power lines, access tracks and other infrastructure in areas of low visibility, and avoid the use of materials that contrast with the landscape.

Strategy 4.3 Use vegetation to screen infrastructure from key viewing corridors and public use areas.

The subject site is not elevated to its surrounding rural area, and is separated from coastal views.

The introduction of built assets infrastructure on what is largely an open, cleared setting will change the landscape vista. Development can be undertaken in a manner which is responsive to the setting by ensuring landscape values are not negatively impacted.

This is primarily achieved on the proposed site with landscaping, which uses a selection of indigenous plants and other rock materials resonant of the Bunurong coastline.

Clause 21.05-4 Design and Built Form

The strategies and objectives outlined in this clause apply to all forms of development, including residential, commercial and industrial development.

Objectives and Strategies included at Clause 21.05-4 and considered directly relevant to the proposal are included below.

Objective 1 To achieve a high standard of architecture and urban design for built form and public spaces throughout the municipality.

Strategy 1.1 Encourage high quality buildings and public spaces that are environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

Strategy 1.2 Design and site development to complement the context in which it sits.

Strategy 1.3 Ensure the siting of buildings contributes positively to the public realm and respects the character of the area.

Strategy 1.5 Development proposals should be assessed against the following requirements:

- All roof elements, including plant, lift over-runs, and other building services should be absorbed within the overall building form, or included as part of overall roof design.
- Visible service areas (and other utility requirements) of a building should be treated as an integral part of the overall design and fully screened from public areas.
- All visible facades (including the rear and sides of buildings) should provide a positive contribution to public areas and interact with the public realm.
- Long expanses of solid walls should be avoided.
- Buildings should incorporate design elements and a variety of materials that create articulation and visual interest.
- Development along main traffic routes should incorporate design elements that add visual interest to the front and rear of the buildings.
- Commercial, public or large residential developments should incorporate public art.
- The built form and materials used for development should reflect the coastal setting and coastal architecture (where relevant).

Objective 2: To maximise energy saving, water conservation, and the principles of Environmentally Sustainable Design.
Strategy 2.1. Ensure development considers energy, water and natural resource efficiency in the construction and operation.

Strategy 2.2 Encouraging passive solar design, especially where there are views to the north or south.

The amended plans showing new siting, design and materials to be used is considered to better complement the rural and coastal setting. In particular the re-orientation of buildings to provide greater setbacks and siting is considered to reduce the visual impact of the proposal. The development is further enhanced by landscaping designs which now accompany the proposal.

Clause 21.05-6 Landscape Architecture

Landscape architecture is an integral component of the built and urban environment. Good landscape design contributes to the character of an area and can enhance the quality of the urban environment.

Objectives and Strategies included at Clause 21.05-6 and considered directly relevant to the proposal are included below.

Objective 1 To increase vegetation across the municipality.
   Strategy 1.1 Increase landscaping within public areas.
   Strategy 1.2 Identify and enhance the landscape values in urban areas.
   Strategy 1.3 Encourage the use of local native plants in landscaping.

Objective 2
To ensure that development creates and maintains a high quality landscape setting.
   Strategy 2.2. Consider landscape architecture as an integral part of an overall concept for development and provide opportunities to enhance the landscape features of the area.
   Strategy 2.5. Ensure that long term management of existing vegetation, or areas of newly planted vegetation, is integral to the development of a site.

Landscaping design which has now been prepared is considered to respond positively to the above objectives. This is achieved with a selection of indigenous plants and other placement of local rock materials, providing a connection of the site to the Bunurong coastline. The importance of this ‘gateway’ setting to the township was a key consideration in the preparation of the landscape plan.

Clause 21.05-8 Advertising Signs

Advertising signage has a significant visual impact on the built environment and rural landscape within the municipality.

It is noted that the provision of signage as part of the proposed use and development does not form part of the current application, rather is to be considered by way of a future planning scheme amendment, as has previously been discussed with Council officers.

Objectives and Strategies included at Clause 21.05-8 and considered directly relevant to the future planning scheme amendment process will likely include:

Encourage the consolidation and reduction in number of signs for businesses

Discourage large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage, and advertising signage at settlement entrances and exits.
Clause 21.08 Moderate Growth Settlements

Clause 21.08-2 - Inverloch

Inverloch is a small coastal town and a popular holiday destination. Its character is defined by natural features, including the Andersons Inlet entrance, a foreshore reserve which provides opportunities for passive and active recreation, surf beaches, vegetated waterways and inner residential areas dominated by dense indigenous vegetation.

The vision for Inverloch is for a consolidated and sustainable coastal village that optimises the existing natural assets and character, and services the lifestyle and recreational needs of residents and visitors.

The Inverloch Strategic Framework Plan establishes clear strategic direction for the future physical form by containing residential development within a defined settlement boundary.

Local area implementation

Settlement
Manage growth within the settlement boundary, as defined in the Inverloch Strategic Framework Plan.

Land uses
Support the provision of convenience shops in designated areas to meet the convenience needs of local residents within a short walk from home.

Support ongoing local job opportunities through the protection of the industrial area.

Encourage a compact commercial town centre within boundaries defined in the Town Centre Re-Structure Plan.

Support an additional 3,000 m² of commercial floor space within the area defined in the Town Centre Re-Structure Plan.

Landscape and built form
Support the re-structuring of the town centre to improve circulation and pedestrian priority.

Incorporate indigenous trees and vegetation into landscaping of both the public and private space in new development.

The proposed development is not considered to be consistent with the Inverloch Strategic Framework Plan and local area implementation plan, in the following ways:

- The provision of 24 hour fuel services to residents and visitors to the township, whilst improving the functionality of primary regional road corridor;
- The proposal does not subdivide land outside the township boundary;
- No residential land use is proposed;
- The proposal will support local job opportunities, and indirectly assist in the functionality of the industrial precinct to the south of the subject land (i.e. support large vehicle movements, transport requirements);
- Enable improved vehicle and pedestrian movement within the town centre by reducing traffic congestion associated with vehicles accessing the existing service station (in particular removal of large vehicles);
- Landscaping design includes indigenous trees and vegetation that will positively contribute to the town entrance position of the subject site.
Improving pedestrian movement and priority within the town centre as described at Clause 21.08-2, in particular during busy visitor periods is considered to be key outcome should the proposed service station use and development receive approval.

As is previously described by this report, this is due to the opportunity to reduce traffic congestion by providing an alternative for the re-fueling of large vehicles and truck and trailer combinations from the town center.

In order to compliment the proposed shared path connection as shown in the above image, pedestrian linkages will be provided from the proposed development to the Inverloch residential area to the south of the subject site.

Clause 22.01 Stormwater Management Policy

This policy explains that more extreme weather events induced by the climate change phenomenon will likely impact on both stormwater quantity and quality.

As the principal catchment manager for urban stormwater, Council aims to protect the environmental, amenity, cultural and economic values of the waters of the Bass Coast Shire.

Stormwater will be managed on a sub-catchment basis in accordance with the Shire’s Stormwater Management Plan, with development design having regard to the adopted Urban Stormwater Best Management Practice (2005) and other recognised codes and practices.

Relevant directions from this policy include:

**Objectives:**
*To incorporate stormwater management considerations in the decision-making for the use and development of land.*
To maintain and enhance stormwater quality introduced to the drainage and waterway environment of the Shire.

A stormwater management plan or report should be submitted for any subdivision with works or any development proposal.

Extent of disturbed areas and if applicable, the proposed method of revegetation.

Envisaged timeframe for reducing impacts during staged developments.

Containment of sediment during the construction phase through the appropriate type and location of storage facilities such as cut off drains, temporary sediment ponds and other structures.

Proposed method of builders waste collection during construction.

Location of proposed permanent stormwater treatment structures to be used prior to discharge to receiving waters.

Overall compliance with the Bass Coast Stormwater Management Plan (2003).

Compliance with the urban Stormwater Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines (CSIRO 1999).

An emergency response plan detailing the drainage system, location of ecologically sensitive areas, notification protocol for other emergency services, the council role and the appropriate use of equipment.

Amended stormwater design and report is provided separately to this report. This includes discussion of how the stormwater design responds to Clause 22.01 and Council’s Urban Stormwater Best Management Practice (2005)

Clause 22.06 Non-agricultural uses in the farming zone policy

This policy applies to all land within the Farming Zone (FZ).

The Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy (2014) discourages uses in the Farming Zone that are not directly related to, or that have an adverse impact on, agriculture and future agricultural opportunities.

The preferred mix of uses in the Farming Zone includes those that support agricultural activities and associated rural industries that maintain and build the economic base of the Shire.

The following objectives are considered to be relevant…

To identify a preferred mix of land uses in the Farming Zone.

To promote appropriate land use in the Farming Zone.

To discourage non-agricultural uses in the Farming Zone, other than those that support agriculture.

It is policy to discourage establishment of a Convenience shop and Service Station.

Whilst both uses are discouraged therefore allowing the discretion of Council in the application of its local planning policy on balance with other policy objectives and provisions of the PPF and LPPF.
It is however understood that agricultural related machinery and associated freight movements are not able to source fuel services safely or on a 24 hour basis within the Inverloch township. This issue is compounded during high visitor periods. In this way it is considered that the proposal does support the operation of local agriculture enterprise, as directed by Clause 22.06.

Consideration of broader policy directions included within the Bass Coast Planning Scheme and to which the proposal is considered to positively respond are detailed previously within the introduction of this report. In particular, place based planning is enabled at Clause 11.03-6, states:

Integrate relevant planning considerations to provide specific direction for the planning of sites, places, neighborhood and towns.

and; Clause 17.02-2S – Out-of-centre development, which states

Give preference to locations in or on the border of an activity centre for expansion of single use retail, commercial and recreational facilities.

Ensure that out-of-centre proposals are only considered where the proposed use or development is of net benefit to the community in the region served by the proposal or provides small scale shopping opportunities that meet the needs of local residents and workers in convenient locations.

It is considered that the proposed development will also contribute to improving pedestrian movement within the town center as described at Clause 21.08-2;

It is the assessments of this report therefore that the proposal, on balance, achieves the objectives of the Bass Coast Planning Scheme, whilst acknowledging the proposed use and development of a service station is discouraged by local policy at Clause 22.06. In this way, it is noted that Clause 22.06 does not prohibit such a proposal and that use of land for service station is enabled by the Farming Zone as a Section 2 Use.

6. Additional Considerations

6.1. Landscape design and township signage opportunity

As outlined earlier in this report, the subject land is considered to be situated on what is a ‘gateway’ location to the Inverloch Township, with the urban area situated immediately to the south.

Recognizing the prominent location, the provision of ‘town based’ signage being included within an agreed landscaped design, may be included as part of the proposed development of the site.

Should this opportunity be considered appropriate by Council, this may be satisfactorily designed and delivered as a planning permit condition and may form part of a signage proposal to be facilitated by way of a future planning scheme amendment.

It is appreciated that this opportunity does not form part of Council’s planning assessment and is not intended to influence decision making. Rather it is a feature of the site which the landowner and permit applicant is interested to explore with Council.

6.2. Agriculture Context and Impact

In response to Council’s request for information regarding current agricultural land use and implications of the proposed use and development of part of the land for a service station, an assessment of agricultural context and impact of the proposed development is provided below.
Regional Context:

Gippsland contributes significantly to Victoria’s overall food production, with high amounts of milk; meat; wool; eggs and fruit produced in the area. The Gippsland Regional Growth Plan has identified that the region wants to grow to its food production capacity. Bass Coast contains large areas of valuable agricultural land which is to be protected for current and future needs, taking into account future changes such as climate change, emerging technologies, advances in agricultural and land management practices.

The Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy (July 2014) sets out the long-term vision for the Shire’s rural areas and aims to protect the opportunity for agriculture and rural landscapes, maintain green breaks between towns and provide for rural tourism.

Agriculture is an important part of the local economy generating around 7% of total economic output and 8% of all jobs. The largest commodity groups by value of production are dairy ($52 million) and meat ($28 million). Much of the rural land in Bass Coast is considered to be productive agricultural land with areas west of the Bass Highway being of strategic significance due to its contribution to the nationally significant Gippsland dairy industry.

Tourism is the pillar of the Bass Coast economy with internationally recognised tourism attractions particularly on Phillip Island. Tourism is annually estimated to generate around $620 million in direct expenditure, over $1 billion in value added and supports around 1,400 jobs (Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy 2014).

There is potential for further development of tourism in the Shire’s rural areas, but this should not come at the expense of the landscape, amenity, environmental, agricultural values and liveability of the Shire.

The Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy sets out a long term vision for the Shire’s rural areas to:

- Protect the opportunity for agriculture
- Protect rural landscape and maintain green breaks between towns
- Provide for rural based tourism
- Ensure that environmental values are protected and enhanced
- Protect the liveability of Bass Coasts’ rural areas.

Key directions established by the strategy considered relevant to the consideration of agriculture include:

- Support agricultural activities and associated rural industries that will maintain and build on the economic base of the Shire
- Protect and maintain areas of environmental and landscape significance by strongly discouraging inappropriate development and uses
- Provide for a range of tourism uses in appropriate areas.

The land in Eastern Bass (to which the subject land is located) is generally used for broad acre farming including dairy, horticulture and grazing. The area is relatively sparsely settled with limited proximity to neighbours and farms are generally well buffered from residential, large scale tourism and industrial activities. This aspect is not descriptive of the subject site as it adjoins the Inverloch urban area.

The Southern Gippsland Food Futures report Economic Analysis (2016) explains that in order to maximise the food sector growth opportunities a number of road infrastructure improvements are necessary to assist milk tankers and other heavy vehicles, as well as to reflect changing industry needs in terms of productivity measures (e.g., use of high-performance freight vehicles, more efficient pick-up and distribution patterns) and increasing overall volumes of vehicles using roads and bridges in the region. Key investments include:
- Improved road and bridge infrastructure to enhance efficiency of movement and reduced business costs for producers, processors and distributors, as well as improving road user and non-road user safety.

- Road infrastructure capable of accommodating High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFV) which will be increasingly used in future years and underpin industry efficiencies i.e., reduced costs per km.

The provision of accessible fuel services catering for heavy vehicles located on the Bass Highway freight corridor is considered to aid in the objective of supporting heavy vehicle movements in the region, in particular agriculture related transport needs.

Agricultural capability, productivity and profitability

An assessment of the current agricultural activity, capability and current profitability of the subject land has been prepared in response to each of the items included within Council’s request for further information as follows.

- **Assessment of the land capability for agricultural production**

Agricultural land capability is determined by a number of factors. For an area to be identified as having ‘very good’ agricultural capability it must have a suitable topography, adequate water supply and have soil that is characterised as good quality.

The Soil Conservation Authority published *Guidelines for Land Capability Assessment in Victoria* (Rowe et al, 1981), takes into account the physical nature of land (e.g. geology, soils, slope) plus other factors (e.g. climate, erosion hazard, land management practices) which determine how that land can be used without destroying its long-term potential for sustainable agricultural production. It also takes into account limitations that might affect agricultural use, e.g. stoniness, drainage, salinity or flooding (Grose, 1999).

The Victorian LCA guidelines use a standard five-class capability rating system with a range of subclasses to indicate the nature and number of limitations found. Essentially, land is classified based on limitations to production with class 1 land being flat, free of rocks, with deep fertile soils capable of any use from cropping to pasture to horticulture. Class five (or seven) land is usually strongly undulating, rocky, with thin soils of low fertility. Land classification aims to categorise the limitations of the land so that uses reflect those limitations and land is used sustainably.

Referring to the below table, the subject land is generally considered to Class 2 with good agricultural capability, due to the need for pasture improvements and fertilisers. The absence of irrigation opportunity on the land was also considered.
Good productive agricultural land generally has one or more of the following characteristics:

- Suitable soil type;
- Suitable climatic conditions;
- Suitable agricultural infrastructure, in particular irrigation and drainage systems; and
- Pattern of subdivision favourable for sustainable agricultural production.

Further information regarding each of the above characteristics as they relate to the subject land’s agriculture capability is outlined below.

### a. Soil type:
Soil classification is commonly constructed on six different soil factors that each explains the soils integrity and ability to perform a certain land use. The six soil factors that are used to map the soil classifications include: **Permeability, Profile water holding capacity, Soil texture profile, Soil reaction class (pH), Nutrient status and Soil depth.**

Each one of these factors when combined tells a story on the ability of the soils capability.

The soil map below is taken from the Victorian Soil Atlas sourced from the Victorian resources Online (2003). The soils and landforms of the Wonthaggi 1:100 000 map sheet (extract below) were mapped and described by Ian Sargeant and Mark Imhof during 1994/95.

**Image: Inverloch soil landform mapping showing subject site** *(source: Victoria Resources Online).*
As can be seen on the above soil map, the subject site is defined as having a Riverine (riv) soil classification. This soil classification is made up of tertiary sediments deposited by the presence of former streams abandoned channels and natural levees. The surface soils of this unit are all very dark grey to dark greyish brown and usually clay loams to very fine sandy or silty loams. The subject land and surrounds features a shallow mantle of sand overlaying the original soil profile where sand from the dunes to the west has been blown eastwards.

According to the Australian Soil Classification framework, this soil type is generally saturated for a number of months and is therefore suited to grazing, with capacity to support summer grazing (following normal winter rainfall) due to the high permeability and water holding capacity of the soil profile.

The soil profile to the north and south of the subject site comprise areas of coarse sandy and gravelly soils. Apart from soils in drainage depressions the surface soils range from very dark grey clay loams to gravelly loams and occasionally loamy sand. A detailed explanation of the above soil map can be sourced online from website at: http://vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/wgregn.nsf/pages/wg_soil_detailed.

It is noted that no soil samples of the subject land were undertaken as part of this assessment. However, the soil profile as described above was confirmed in consultation with the current land owner / farm manager who explained that the subject land has had little soil profile development.

More recently however pasture improvements have been implemented by way of direct seeding with perennial pasture and the application of fertilizers. The original vegetation on the subject site has been cleared, which reduces the presence of natural organic material occurring within the upper levels of the soil profile.

b. Rainfall and Climate:
The Bureau of meteorology provides data explaining climate forecasts and past information on rainfall.
Water availability is a key factor when determining productivity of agricultural land. Where no irrigation opportunity is present (as is the case on the subject site) rainfall is a critical consideration.

For the purpose of establishing regional context in comparison to other parts of Victoria, the below map shows that the eastern Victoria has greater rainfall, with Inverloch (area south of Leongatha) shown to have an average annual rainfall of up to 1000 mm.

![Average rainfall map](image)

Projections show that climatic shifts will lead to lower rainfall across south-eastern Australia generally (CSIRO, 2010), with the Gippsland region facing a lower rainfall in many districts and a higher temperature environment. As rainfall is predicted to decline, water becomes the most limiting factor for any agricultural/horticultural enterprise.

Local changes in the Bass Coast region are summarised as follows:

- The average annual air temperature across the region has increased by 0.8°C to 1.0°C over the last century and more rapidly since 1960
- High-confidence predictions show further temperature rises of similar magnitude by 2030. By 2050, cold years could be warmer than most of the region's current climate’s warm years.
- Rainfall losses have been most pronounced in Autumn-Winter with progressive losses in winter-spring rainfall also expected to continue.
- Soil moisture and catchment runoff are confidently predicted to decline; driven largely by changes to rainfall and evapotranspiration. This is however complicated by the fact that rainfall intensity – particularly summer rainfall – is likely to be of higher intensity.

The below table outlines recorded rainfall averages from 1961 – 1990. The median value is usually the preferred measure of ‘average’ rainfall from the meteorological point of view, particularly for the shorter timeframe. Annual median rainfall previously recorded at Inverloch is 963.1 mm.
Considering the above rainfall data, whilst rainfall patterns are set to change, annual recorded rainfall remains positive albeit rainfall events are likely to be less frequent but of greater intensity. The ability of soil to capture and store moisture therefore will greatly influence its productivity in dryland farming environments.

Temperature is also a key component when determining agricultural land capability (cropping, horticulture, grazing etc.).

The property lies in Southern Gippsland with an annual rainfall in the order of 800-1000mm per annum. Mean summer maximum temperatures of 24°C are complemented by mean minimum winter temperatures of 6°C (Bass Coast Shire Council).

![Temperature and rainfall changes in Gippsland since 1950](image_url)

**Figure 5. Temperature and rainfall changes in Gippsland since 1950 (Climate Ready Gippsland, 2015)**

c. **Agricultural infrastructure**

The subject land is cleared for grazing and is generally flat. A small scale hemmingbone dairy shed exists on the land. Two dams are present for stock watering. An effluent capture dam is also present on the land. No irrigation opportunity is available to the land due to the absence of irrigation water licensing. Minor swale drains are present on the land to reduce the impact of localised flooding.

d. **Pattern of subdivision**
The subdivision pattern of the subject land is generally supportive for agriculture to the east, west and north. The Inverloch urban area is located to immediately south of the property.

- **Provide specific details about the current agricultural use of the land**

The subject land is currently used for dairy cattle, with a small scale milking shed (Herringbone Dairy) located on the site.

The subject land is farmed in conjunction with adjoining farm land made up of a 60 acre allotment and 40 acre allotment which is leased. Combined, a total of 130 head are supported across three land parcels which together cover an area of approximately 217 acres, of which the subject land contributes 117 acres.

Information provided by the current landowner indicates that the due to the small size of the dairy herd and land area, that the dairy is to cease operations within 12 – 18 months, at which time the land is to be transitioned to beef grazing. The current dairy herd is to be redistributed across three other large dairy’s operated by the owners.

- **Outline the current productivity of the farm, in terms of profitability.**

Current dairy operations on the land are supplemented by income earned off farm, drawn in from other non- farm related business (i.e. warehousing/bulk storage) and the three larger scale dairy operations undertaken by the landowner in the region.

In the most recent financial year, current dairy operations undertaken on the land (and supported by adjoining allotments described above) resulted in a zero profit margin (evidence of which can be provided if necessary).

The landowner explained that the current dairy operation was re-established on the land approximately 2 years prior (2016), in order to provide the landowners son to undertake what has been effectively been an ‘apprenticeship’ in managing a small dairy herd and milking shed prior taking up the management of a larger herd and milking operations undertaken by the landowner on other farms.

- **Provide specific details about the current management procedures that allow for the current agricultural productivity**

As explained above, the current dairy herd of 130 head is sustained on the land, by adjoining allotments of 60 acres and 40 acres respectively. To further sustain the current herd size, supplementary feeding is provided by hay and grain which is bought onto the farm.

The subject land is a dryland farming operation with no irrigation undertaken on the land due to lack of access to licensed water for irrigation. A dam exists on the land for stock watering purposes only.

The land has been seeded with pasture grasses with considerable amounts of fertilisers applied in recent years to improve grazing productivity and carrying capacity. When able, silage has been cut from the subject land as part of ‘topping’ spring pasture growth to encourage understory pasture productivity.

Swale drains present on the land assist with on-farm drainage; however following heavy rainfall periods (events) flooding occurs at the eastern extent of the farm as a result of adjoining roadside drain stormwater entering the property.
• **Outline the projected agricultural productivity of the farm if the current management procedures were to remain in place**

• **Outline the projected productivity of the farm with the addition of the proposed development**

Given the relatively minor reduction in land available for agricultural use, the proposed development is not considered to significantly impact the overall productivity of the subject land or result in a measurable reduction in stocking rates.

As explained above, the current productivity of pasture on the land has been improved through direct seeding and application of fertilizer which has improved perennial pasture productivity.

Potential stocking rates are determined by assessing annual feed supply and demand, and its variability both within and between seasons. Achieving greater profit from dryland land perennial pastures requires efficiency in pasture consumption and rotation, lower supplementary feed expenses and greater overall livestock production per hectare. Factors affecting how far stocking rate can be increased include pasture utilisation and the impact on financial and environmental risks, rainfall, time of calving, timing of extra pasture growth, reproductive performance and the type of cattle enterprise being undertaken.

Whilst stocking rates are best understood on a monthly basis and by individual paddock area, for the purpose of this assessment a whole farm annual average stocking rate is provided. It is noted that the current stocking rate provided considers the whole of the land area being farmed (217 acres) of which the subject land contributes 117 acres.

The current dairy herd size of 130 head is sustained by adjoining allotments, which combined represent an additional 100 acres of grazing area and allow stock rotation to support pasture regrowth. Should the subject land be farmed in isolation (not supported by adjoining allotments) the carrying capacity of the subject land would likely be reduced to an annual average of approximately 40 – 50 head due to the need for strip grazing methods being applied (whereby the land is not grazed in full, rather cattle are rotated across the subject land in order to allow pasture growth). Should supplementary feeding be provided, stocking rates would have the opportunity to increase according to productivity return.

The area of land on which the proposed service station use and development is proposed represents approximately 1.7% (2.1 acres) of the subject land area of 117.1 acres. If the total farmed area of 217 acres is considered (i.e. including the adjoining 60 acre and 40 acre allotments required to sustain the current dairy herd size of 130 head) – the total area of productive land loss to the current dairy operation represents approximately 1%. The reduced land area is therefore considered to be negligible in terms of area of lost productivity or reduced stocking rate.

As explained earlier in this report, the projected productivity of the farm is expected to change with the current farm operation transitioning from dairy to beef cattle. Beef cattle farming is considered to provide a greater return on investment, due to the marginal nature of operating a small scale dairy which requires significant time and resource inputs. This experience is not uncommon in the region, with small scale dairy operations consistently being consolidated into larger operations, as will be the case in the instance (landowner to consolidate current dairy herd across three other dairy farms which the family currently operate).

Once the transition of the farm from dairy to beef is completed, the reduction of 1.7% of productive land area as a result of the proposed use and development to the future beef cattle operations is considered to be negligible and would not equate to a measurebale reduction in the possible stocking rate achievable on the subject land.
• **Provide a clear recommendation as to whether the proposal complements agriculture use of the site and is required to manage the agricultural productivity of the land.**

The proposed use development is not required to directly manage agricultural productivity on the subject land.

The proposed development is however considered to support regional agriculture freight distribution efficiencies by providing access to fuel services in format which caters for large vehicles.

Anecdotally, the current landowner and farm manager explained that accessing fuel for tractors and other on-farm machinery was not possible during busy visitor periods within Inverloch due to vehicle and pedestrian traffic increasing within the proximity of the fuel service station situated within the town centre. It was explained that he, and other farmers in the area, were therefore required to bring fuel on farm due to difficulty in accessing the current fuel service station.

• **Outline the impacts of the proposed development on the continuation of primary production on adjacent land, with particular regard to land values and to the viability of infrastructure for such production.**

The proposed development is not considered to detrimentally impact upon the continuation of primary production on adjacent land. No impact to land values is envisaged, however it is noted that the determination of land value is influenced by a number of factors beyond the scope of this assessment and are subject to change and influences beyond the immediate site conditions.

• **Any expected impacts the siting of the proposal may have on current or future agricultural activities on adjoining land.**

• **The compatibility between the proposal and the existing uses of the surrounding land.**

The proposed development is not considered to detrimentally impact upon the continuation of agriculture (grazing) continuing on adjacent land. The proposed development and use will be managed in accordance with the conditions of the subject permit, including the continued maintenance and management of waste storage and disposal.

It is noted that the land adjacent to the subject site (west) is in the same ownership.

7. Conclusion

The proposed service station use and development on the subject land is considered to aid local policy objectives for the township, regional economy, functionality of the road network and the Inverloch township center.

It is considered that the proposal represents genuine benefits for the local and broader regional economy both directly and indirectly. The proposal represents a total construction of cost of approximately $4 million dollars with an estimated 80-100 jobs created during construction, and approximately 40-50 ongoing full time and part time employment opportunities.

The design is of a contemporary built form that responds to the scale and form of the subject land’s prominent location which is considered to be a ‘gateway’ to the Inverloch Township. The open forecourt of the development and the siting of the crossovers allow for clear view lines to be maintained along both roadways thereby maintaining acceptable safety standards for vehicles and pedestrians.

The accompanying drawings showing the swept path diagrams have been designed to facilitate the safe, efficient and functional movement of vehicles and maintain clear view lines for the safety of pedestrians.

On behalf of the applicant it is requested that Council, for reasons outlined by this report and additional information submitted (including amended development design and siting), support the use and development of service station on the subject land.