



Department of **Planning,
Lands and Heritage**



Western
Australian
Planning
Commission

Greater Bunbury Region Scheme

Priority Agricultural Land Policy 2017

July 2017



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Published by the
Western Australian Planning Commission
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140 William Street
Perth WA 6000

Locked Bag 2506
Perth WA 6001

Published July 2017

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Agricultural production is important to the wellbeing of Western Australia. It provides essential food and fibre products, employment and value-adding opportunities. Continued agricultural productivity minimises the State's reliance on imports and maximises export earnings.
- 1.2 In recognition of the ongoing loss of agricultural land close to cities and towns, the Western Australian Planning Commission's (WAPC) *State Planning Strategy 2050* (2014) highlighted the need for measures to secure land for future agricultural and food industry production. These included the strategic identification of future land areas and precincts, defined buffers, provision of land for infrastructure corridors, and innovation to improve the general status of food security.
- 1.3 Priority agricultural land areas have been identified within the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme area. This policy aims to protect these areas by preventing development that may adversely affect their use for agricultural production now and in the future. The policy also addresses environmental limitations on conventional in-ground agricultural activities in the part of the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment lying within the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme area.

2. Background

- 2.1 This Policy was first adopted by the WAPC in 2005.
- 2.2 The original mapping and methodology used to define the priority agricultural land areas are set out in the report *Strategic Resource Areas for the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme* (WAPC, 2000). These areas principally cover the main coastal horticultural land in the Myalup area; the irrigation areas within the shires of Harvey and Dardanup; and the dairy and grazing areas within the Shire of Capel. The policy area map was updated in 2015 with the assistance of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. **Figure 1** shows the priority agricultural land areas (policy areas).
- 2.3 This policy recognises the importance of protecting the Peel-Harvey estuarine system. It takes into consideration the environmental and associated land use planning constraints of the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment as described in *State Planning Policy 2.1: Peel-Harvey Coastal Planning Catchment*.
- 2.4 This policy is intended to complement other relevant policies and planning instruments and should be read in conjunction with these. In particular, this policy should be read in conjunction with:
 - *Statement of Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning*
 - *State Planning Policy 2.1: Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment*
 - *Statement of Planning Policy 4.1: State Industrial Buffer*
 - *Development Control Policy 3.4: Subdivision of Rural Land*
 - *Greater Bunbury Region Scheme Strategic Minerals and Basic Raw Materials Resource Policy*



3. Application

- 3.1 This policy applies to land in the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme area that is:
- within the priority agricultural land areas shown in **Figure 1**
 - adjacent to, or in close proximity (500 metres) to the priority agricultural land areas shown in **Figure 1**, and where the WAPC or the local government considers that the type or form of the proposed land use or development could be incompatible with, or sensitive to agricultural activities within these areas or vice versa
 - rural land within the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme area of the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment.
- 3.2 The priority agricultural land areas identified in **Figure 1** are aligned with cadastral boundaries or the configuration of major physical features. It is acknowledged that portions of these areas may be affected by site-specific considerations that could reduce the extent of agricultural activities on portions of individual lots.

4. Objectives

- 4.1 Identify priority agricultural land within the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme area considered to be of State or regional significance.
- 4.2 Protect the agricultural base of the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme area from the unplanned loss of high-quality productive agricultural land due to subdivision and/or permanent changes of land use.
- 4.3 Encourage and support development of ecologically sustainable, nutrient-wise agriculture in the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme area of the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment.

- 4.4 Minimise land use conflicts between agricultural activities and other land uses within, adjacent to, or within close proximity to the identified priority agricultural land areas.
- 4.5 Ensure the protection of priority agricultural land is taken into account in preparing regional and local planning schemes and amendments, and in assessing subdivision and development applications.
- 4.6 Minimise nutrient export from agricultural activity in the priority agricultural land and rural lands within the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme portion of the Peel Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment consistent with the Environmental Protection Authority's *Water Quality Improvement Plan for the Peel-Harvey System*.

5. Policy statement

- 5.1 The WAPC will give due regard to this policy when considering amendments to the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme, local government local planning schemes and amendments, and subdivision and development applications within, adjacent to, or in close proximity to priority agricultural land identified in **Figure 1**; and on rural land within the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme area of the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment.
- 5.2 Local governments should give due regard to this policy when preparing local planning schemes and scheme amendments; and in making decisions about the use or development of land within, adjacent to or in close proximity to the priority agricultural land identified in **Figure 1**, and on rural land within the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme area of the Peel- Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment.
- 5.3 Local governments should ensure local planning schemes and amendments are compatible with the objectives and specific requirements of this policy.



- 5.4 Agricultural activities have been identified as a significant source of the nutrients entering the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary due to the combined effect of fertilizer use, low nutrient retention capacity of soils and high groundwater levels across much of the catchment. Accordingly, the areas of priority agricultural land identified by this policy are located on soils with greater nutrient retention capacity and access to suitable water resources. These areas should be classified as 'priority agriculture' on maps adopted for policy purposes under local planning schemes, and zoned as 'priority agriculture' in local planning schemes.
- 5.5 The following land uses are appropriate (subject to the individual local schemes development permissibility categories) for the rural and related land uses in any current rural zones within priority agricultural land areas, and within that part of the Peel-Harvey Catchment located within the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme area to ensure nutrient management and other land use planning considerations are addressed through the development application process.
- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Agriculture – Extensive | P |
| Agriculture – Intensive | P |
| Animal husbandry – Intensive | P or D |
| Industry – Extractive | D or A |
| Industry – Primary production | D or A |
| Rural worker's dwelling | D or A |
| Single dwelling/house | P |
| Stockyards | D or A |
- (Definitions for the development permissibility categories 'P', 'D' and 'A' are in **Section 9**).
- 5.6 There is a presumption against rezoning, subdivision and development that would result in the establishment of sensitive land uses on land within, adjacent to, or in close proximity to the priority agricultural land areas, which could prejudice current or potential agricultural activities and production.
- 5.7 Rural lands outside of priority agricultural land are generally constrained by soils with a low capability to retain nutrients and proximity to sensitive waterways, and may not be able to support conventional agricultural activities. However, it should not be implied or interpreted from the policy that such rural land does not have agricultural value. This land is still subject to the relevant WAPC rural land use planning policies, such as *State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning Policy*.
- 5.8 To reduce the risk of nutrient export to the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary, the use of closed (hydroponic) and zero-discharge production systems is encouraged throughout the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment. Likewise, there is a presumption against any further 'inground' intensive agricultural activities that are likely to pose a significant risk to catchment water quality and, therefore, likely to be inconsistent with the objectives and provisions of *State Planning Policy 2.1: Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment*.
- 5.9 Proposals for new or expanded agricultural activities must be supported by a land capability assessment. If proposed on high-risk land (determined with reference to clause 5.11 of this policy), a quantitative nutrient budget for phosphorus and nitrogen is also required, to the satisfaction of local government in consultation with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, demonstrating the proposal and nutrient management practices will not contribute to an increase in nutrient levels in surface or groundwater.
- 5.10 Additional guidance for horticultural agriculture proposals is provided in the model local planning policy Horticultural Developments in Local Governments of the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment¹.

¹ The policy is available via www.peel-harvey.org.au



- 5.11 Decision-makers should give consideration to regional scale land capability mapping prepared by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development in determining the nutrient export risk of proposals for new or expanded intensive agricultural activities.
- 5.12 Notwithstanding clause 5.6 of this policy, decision-makers may consider approving rezoning, subdivision or development within, adjacent to, or in close proximity to priority agricultural land areas where, following detailed investigations and consultations with relevant government agencies, it can be demonstrated that the proposed rezoning, subdivision or development would not prejudice current or potential agricultural activities and production within those areas. The acceptability of any proposed rezoning, subdivision or development within, adjacent to, or in close proximity to the priority agricultural land areas will be determined with due regard to:
- advice from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development on matters referred to in clauses 6.1 and 7.2 of this policy
 - any other planning or environmental considerations, including WAPC policies and local government policies adopted under their local planning schemes.
- 5.13 Proposals to rezone, subdivide or develop priority agricultural land for any non-agricultural use must comply with the requirements of *State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning*.

6. Buffers

- 6.1 Land uses with the potential to create conflict with agricultural activities should be separated from such activities by buffers, to protect the primacy of agricultural activities within the priority agricultural land areas and, in doing so, protect people from emissions such as spray drift, noise, dust and odours. These buffers should be determined in accordance with *State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning*.

7. Referral and applications

- 7.1 When preparing amendments to the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme, local planning schemes and scheme amendments that include land within, adjacent to, or in close proximity to the priority agricultural land areas, and which are likely to have a significant impact on the agricultural potential of the land, the WAPC and relevant local governments should consult with, and give due regard to, the advice and recommendations of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.
- 7.2 In providing advice on regional and local planning schemes and amendments to these schemes, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation will take into account:
- the potential impact of proposed land uses on existing or potential agricultural activities and production
 - whether the proposed land use is associated with, or will complement the agricultural activities within the priority agricultural land areas
 - the buffers required for particular agricultural activities or any proposed incompatible land uses



- the suitability and capability rating of the land for one or more agricultural activities
- the potential for nutrient export into the Peel-Harvey Estuary
- the requirements set by *State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning*.

8. Implementation

- 8.1 This policy will be implemented by the WAPC and relevant local government through the administration of:
- *Planning and Development Act 2005*
 - Greater Bunbury Region Scheme
 - local planning schemes
 - relevant subdivision and development control processes
 - a resolution of the WAPC under clause 27 of the Greater Bunbury Region
 - arrangements for delegation of certain decisions to local governments.
- 8.2 The WAPC will review this policy after a period of five years, or sooner if appropriate, and make any amendments that may be required.
- 8.3 The Priority Agricultural Land policy areas depicted in **Figure 1** will be reviewed as more up-to-date land capability mapping becomes available and is endorsed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

9. Definitions

A

As per the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* (Interpreting zoning table)

Agriculture – Extensive

As per the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

Agriculture – Intensive

As per the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

Animal husbandry – Intensive

As per the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

Buffer

As per *State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning*.

Closed system

(as in closed-system hydroponics)

Means a hydroponics system in which the nutrient solution is recirculated and the nutrient concentrations are monitored and adjusted accordingly, and where there is zero or minimal discharge of the solution or water to the environment.

D

As per the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* (Interpreting zoning table)

Greater Bunbury Region Scheme – Strategic Minerals and Basic Raw Materials Resource Policy

Means the Greater Bunbury Region Scheme – Strategic Mineral and Basic Raw Materials Policy adopted by the WAPC in June 2017, together with any amendments to, or new version of that policy that may be adopted by the WAPC.



Hydroponics

Means the process of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions without soil. Although hydroponic systems do not involve soil, these may involve a wide variety of growing media such as perlite, gravel, peat, sand, rockwool and other.

Industry – Extractive

As per the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

Industry – Primary production

As per the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

Local government

As per the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

P

As per the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* (Interpreting zoning table)

Priority agricultural land

As per *State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning*.

Rural worker's dwelling

Means a dwelling located upon land on which there is already erected a single dwelling/house, where:

- (a) the dwelling is occupied by persons substantially engaged in intensive agriculture, or similar rural land uses on the same land; and
- (b) all such dwellings are located within close proximity to the existing single house and share services where practical.

Sensitive land use

As per *State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning*.

Single dwelling/house

As per *State Planning Policy 3.1: Residential Design Codes*.

State Planning Strategy 2050

Means the *State Planning Strategy* published by the WAPC in June 2014.

State significance

As per *State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning*.

Stockyards

Means any land building or other structure used for holding and/or sale of livestock.



Greater Bunbury Region Scheme Priority Agricultural Land Policy 2017

Figure 1: Greater Bunbury Region Scheme: Priority Agricultural Land Policy map

