



# Planning Meeting Agenda

8 July 2025 at 1pm

COPACC Meeting Rooms 1 & 2

# COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 8 July 2025

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Declaration of Opening of Meeting .....	3
2 Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country .....	3
3 Meeting Administration .....	3
3.1 Present .....	3
3.2 Apologies .....	4
3.3 Confirmation of Minutes .....	4
3.4 Declarations of Interest .....	5
4 Officer Planning Reports .....	5
4.1 PP226/2024-1 - 25 Whytcross Lane Birregurra - Use and development of the land for a dwelling .....	5

# COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

NOTICE is hereby given that the next **PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL** will be held at COPACC on Tuesday 8 July 2025 at 1:00 PM.

## **AGENDA**

### **1 DECLARATION OF OPENING OF MEETING**

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

*Almighty God, we seek your  
blessing and guidance in our  
deliberations on behalf of the  
people of the Colac Otway Shire.  
Enable this Council's decisions to be  
those that contribute to the true  
welfare and betterment of our community.*

*AMEN*

### **2 WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

Colac Otway Shire acknowledges the original custodians and law makers of this land, their elders past, present and emerging.

#### **RECORDING AND PUBLICATION OF MEETINGS**

Please note: All Planning Committee meetings are live streamed and recorded when the meeting is held either at COPACC or online. When meetings are held in other locations, Council will endeavour to make an audio recording of the meeting for community access. Matters identified as confidential items in the Agenda will not be live streamed or recorded regardless of venue or mode.

By participating in open Planning meetings, individuals consent to the use and disclosure of the information they share at the meeting (including any personal and/or sensitive information).

As soon as practicable following each open Council and Planning Committee meeting, the live stream recording will be accessible on Council's website. Recordings are also taken to facilitate the preparation of the minutes of open Council and Planning Committee meetings and to ensure their accuracy. Recordings will be retained by Council for a period of four years.

As stated in the Governance Rules, other than an official Council recording, no video or audio recording of proceedings of Council Meetings will be permitted without specific approval by resolution of the relevant Planning Meeting.

This meeting will be livestreamed to the public via Council's YouTube channel (search Colac Otway Shire Council at [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) ).

### **3 MEETING ADMINISTRATION**

#### **3.1 Present**

#### **3.2 Apologies**

#### **3.3 Confirmation of Minutes**

##### **Recommendation**

***That the Planning Committee confirm the minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 13 May 2025.***

#### **3.4 Declarations of Interest**

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken.



Item: 4.1

## PP226/2024-1 - 25 Whytcross Lane Birregurra - Use and development of the land for a dwelling

<b>ADDRESS AND PROPERTY DETAILS</b>	25 Whytcross Lane BIRREGURRA Lot 1 TP: 17242 V/F: 10516/697 Parish of Birregurra	<b>APPLICATION NUMBER</b>	PP226/2024-1
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Use and development of the land for a dwelling		
<b>PERMIT TRIGGERS</b>	Clause 35.07-1 - use of land for a dwelling in the Farming Zone Clause 35.07-4 – construction of a dwelling and associated works in the Farming Zone		
<b>TRIGGER FOR DETERMINATION BY COMMITTEE</b>	An application for a dwelling in the Farming Zone		
<b>ZONE</b>	Farming Zone	<b>OVERLAYS</b>	Part Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO1) - 41.02%
<b>COVENANTS</b>	None		
<b>CULTURAL HERITAGE</b>	The site within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity; however, the proposal is not defined as a high impact activity and therefore a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is not required.		
<b>OFFICER</b>	Helen Evans	<b>GENERAL MANAGER</b>	Ian Seuren
<b>DIVISION</b>	Community and Economy		
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proposed Site Layout [4.1.1 - 1 page]</li> <li>2. Dwelling Plans [4.1.2 - 5 pages]</li> <li>3. Planning Report [4.1.3 - 8 pages]</li> <li>4. Farm Management Plan [4.1.4 - 23 pages]</li> </ol>		

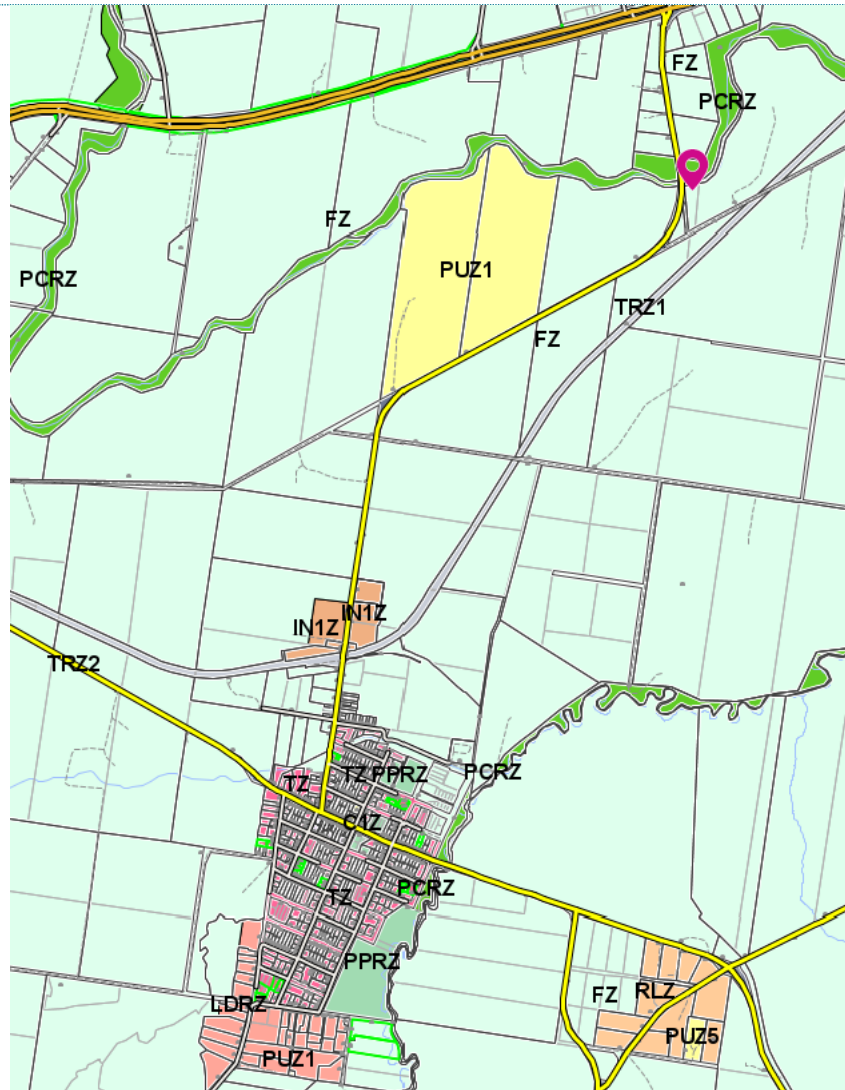
Consideration of this application was deferred at the Council meeting held on 24 June 2025, to allow Councillors to undertake a site visit before determining the application. That site visit will take place on 4 July.

The resolution allows the decision on the application to be made at either a Council or Planning Committee meeting.

The report below remains the same as that put to the Council meeting in June 2025.

## 1. LOCATION PLAN / AERIAL PHOTO

### LOCATION PLAN



*Subject site marked with pink pin, with the township of Birregurra to the south-west*

## AERIAL PHOTO



## 2. RECOMMENDATION

### RECOMMENDATION

***That Council resolves to issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit for the use and development of land at 25 Whytcross Lane, Birregurra (Lot 1 TP17242 V/F: 10516/697 Parish of Birregurra) for a dwelling, on the following grounds:***

- The proposal is contrary to clauses 02.03-4 (Natural Resource Management), 02.04 (Strategic Framework Plans), 14.01-1S and 14.01-1L (Protection of Agricultural Land) and 16.01-3S (Rural Residential Development) of the Colac Otway Planning Scheme, which seek to limit rural residential development that impacts on viable agricultural land; to protect productive agricultural land from unplanned loss due to permanent changes in land use; and to discourage dwellings on lots that do not meet the minimum lot area of the zone or relevant schedule unless it is required for an intensive agricultural activity on the land or to achieve the environmental protection of the land.***
- The proposal does not accord with the purpose and relevant decision guidelines of the Farming Zone set out in Clause 35.07 of the Planning Scheme, given that:***

- *It has not been demonstrated that a dwelling would enhance agricultural production based upon the land unit described in the application.*
  - *The proposal has the potential to limit the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agriculture uses.*
  - *The application has not demonstrated that a dwelling would not lead to a concentration or proliferation of dwellings in the area, which would impact on the use of the land for agriculture.*
3. *The proposal does not accord with Council's adopted Rural Land Strategy 2007 or its Rural Living Strategy 2011, not being within an area nominated in these documents for rural living purposes.*

### 3. PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the use and development of a single-storey, four-bedroom dwelling with attached double garage on a 1.6-hectare lot on the northern side of Whytcross Lane in Birregurra. The lot forms part of a larger agricultural landholding of nearly 48ha.

The intention is to sell the larger lot that forms the balance of the landholding if planning permission is granted for the proposed dwelling on the 1.6ha lot. The larger 46.3ha lot already contains a dwelling.

The subject lot is shown outlined in red in Figure 1 below, with the larger lot being that to the east (as identified in the aerial image above).

It is proposed that the dwelling (shown yellow in Figure 2 below) be sited generally in the middle of the lot, being 8.6m from the east boundary and 147.6m from the southern (front) boundary. The dwelling would be 250.6sqm in area and its siting would be just south of the boundary of the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) shown on Council's planning scheme mapping (shown hatched in Figure 1 below).



Figure 1 – subject lot (outlined in red)



Figure 2 – site plan



An agricultural shed is also proposed, which would be sited 61.7m from the front boundary and 10.4m from the western boundary. A planning permit is not required for the shed, as the use would be for agriculture and the minimum specified setbacks would be met.

The site is serviced with reticulated power and would rely on rainwater tanks for water. An appropriate area would be provided for the treatment of wastewater, consistent with the requirements of Clause 35.07-2 (Use of Land for a Dwelling, Small Second Dwelling or Rural Worker Accommodation) of the Farming Zone.

The submitted Farm Management Plan (copy attached) states that it is proposed to relocate the proponent's existing horticultural activities to this smaller lot and expand those activities, which would allow the adjoining larger lot with the existing dwelling to be sold to new owners. The proposed horticultural activity on the 1.6ha lot would comprise the production of garlic, flowers and fruit. Horticulture, which is a Section 1 (permit not required) use in the Farming Zone, is defined as:

*“Land used to propagate, cultivate, or harvest flowers, fruit, vegetables, vines, or the like.”*

It is considered that the proposed growing of garlic, flowers and fruit would – dependent on the scale – either be within this definition or would be ancillary to the dwelling and, as such, the horticultural use does not require planning permission.

The extract from the Farm Management Plan below shows the relatively small garlic growing area on the existing 48ha agricultural landholding, and the location for garlic growing proposed on the subject lot, with the submitted Planning Report stating that:

*“The flower and garlic growing will be relocated from the main farm body and re-established at a significantly higher production intensity at the proposal site. The grazing farm with the established dwelling can then be sold intact to another farmer.”*

Map 3: Current Production Area



The current application seeks a permit solely for the use and development of the proposed dwelling, with the submitted application seeking to justify the dwelling on agricultural grounds.

#### 4. SUBJECT LAND & SURROUNDINGS

The subject site, which is 1.6ha in area, abuts Birregurra Creek to the north. The lot is generally triangular in shape, with a relatively narrow frontage of 37.36m to Whytcross Lane.

The subject lot forms part of a larger two lot farming property of approximately 48 hectares, with the larger lot in the holding located to the east. That lot is developed with a dwelling and used for grazing purposes. Land to the south and west of the site is also used for agricultural purposes. To the north, and separated from the subject lot by the creek, is a cluster of rural living residential properties in the Farming Zone. That residential cluster is quite distinct from surrounding land, including land south of the creek (where the subject site is located) which is generally in agricultural use, as shown in the aerial image below.





Councillors may recall that a dwelling was recently permitted on a lot at 205 Birregurra Road to the south-west of the current application site, in accordance with the officer recommendation. In that case, considered at the Council meeting in April, the proposal was considered acceptable as the lot, which is 20ha in area, was to remain in agricultural use; the owners in that case own another 59 hectares and hold a long-term lease of a further 46.8 hectares; the Farm Management Plan submitted as part of the application demonstrated that the use of the land for a dwelling would be tied to an agricultural use; and the owners agreed to enter into a s173 agreement preventing the erection of a dwelling on other land in their ownership at 150 Birregurra Road. As such, that recent permit for a dwelling in the vicinity of the current application site is not comparable to the application under consideration.

Note: there are discrepancies between the submitted site plan for the dwelling currently proposed and the title plan. The applicant was asked to provide a feature site survey, to which they responded:

*A feature survey is submitted, this uses the actual land area as per Lassi Spear\* which does not agree with the title. The title is the legal definition of the property and so effectively creates "lost land" which is of course extremely common. Resurveying and submission to the subdivision's office would be required to resolve this one way or the other (they will favour Lassi Spear dimensions), but is not required.*

\* Land and Survey Spatial Information (LASSI)

*The Land and Survey Spatial Information (LASSI) mapping service is provided by Land Use Victoria to search property details. The LASSI mapping service can be used to find a parcel of land or property online. It can be used to identify the boundary of a property and those of surrounding properties. Using LASSI a user can attain the approximate measurements of the land parcel, view or download a basic property report or find out about surrounding infrastructure such as roads and railways and natural features like rivers and lakes.*

Given this it is considered that, if the Council resolution is to grant a permit for the dwelling, the land should be surveyed to ensure that any development would be consistent with the endorsed plans.

## Planning Policy Framework

- 02.01 - Context
- 02.02 - Vision
- 02.03 - Strategic Directions
- 02.04 - Strategic Framework Plans
- 11.01-1S, 11.01-1R and 11.01-1L - Settlement
- 13.03 - Floodplains
- 14.01-1S and 14.01-1L - Protection of Agricultural Land
- 14.01-2S and 14.01-2R - Sustainable Agricultural Land Use
- 15.01-6S and 15.01-6L - Design for Rural Areas
- 16.01-3S - Rural Residential Development

### Colac Otway Shire Rural Land Strategy 2007

Colac Otway Shire's *Rural Land Strategy* 2007, a background document under the schedule to clause 72.08 (Background Documents), identifies the agricultural capability of farmland within the shire – categorising agricultural land as 'high', 'medium' or 'low' agricultural capability. This site, whilst not within the area identified as 'Farmland of Strategic Significance', is of medium agricultural capability. In a VCAT decision relevant to Colac Otway Shire – *Irrewarra Estate Ltd v Colac-Otway SC* [2021] VCAT 358 – it was observed that “*read sensibly and harmoniously with all other relevant provisions of the planning scheme, the reference to 'productive farmland' and 'productive agricultural land' in clause 14.01-1S includes all land identified as having agricultural capability under clause 02.03-4 whether classified 'low', 'medium' or 'high'.*”

The *Rural Land Strategy* notes, amongst other things, that:

- Agriculture is one of the greatest economic contributors to the Shire with the dairy and beef industries the most significant in terms of land use and economic contribution to the Shire.
- There has been an increase in demand for rural lifestyle properties.
- The diversity of land uses resulting from change in rural land use may bring conflict between agriculture and land uses.
- Proliferation of dwellings for lifestyle/hobby farm purposes in the Farming Zone will compromise the long term viability of farming in Colac Otway Shire.

The *Rural Land Strategy* recommended that consideration be given to the following:

- *Identify candidate areas for rural residential development and consider the introduction of the Rural Living Zone focusing on areas with moderate to low agricultural capability, immediately adjacent to townships and that meet the requirements of Minister's Direction 6.*
- *Consider appropriate dwelling and subdivision provisions for rural areas of the Shire that ensures a strict interpretation of the Farming Zone provisions to ensure incompatible land uses (including dwellings) do not negatively impact on the ability to farm. This will include use of the schedule to the Farming Zone to introduce appropriate minimum subdivision area and an appropriate minimum area for which no permit is required for a dwelling.*
- *Introduce the Rural Activity Zone to selected areas, which better provide for uses and development, which are compatible with agriculture and the environmental and landscape characteristics of the area with a focus on areas with moderate to low agricultural capability and in close proximity to the coast to provide for tourism. (page 2)*

The *Rural Land Strategy* observed a general increase in average farm size and decline in total farm numbers throughout the shire which reflected a state-wide trend.

Part 6.1 (Agricultural Capability) defines land of high agricultural capability as follows:

*Land of high agricultural capability is generally suited to a wider range of agricultural uses than land of medium and low agricultural capability. Land of high agricultural capability can generally support more intensive uses e.g., dairying, horticulture, whereas land of medium agricultural capability is more suited to less intensive industries such as grazing and cropping and low agricultural capability land has few options other than grazing.*



The *Rural Land Strategy* notes that:

*The clear evidence of farm amalgamations and the need to increase farm sizes to remain economically viable indicates that policy and provisions relating to dwellings and small lot subdivisions in rural areas will require a strict interpretation of the Farming Zone provisions to ensure incompatible land uses (including dwellings) do not negatively impact on the ability to farm.* [emphasis added]

The *Rural Land Strategy* identified potential rural living candidate areas which were considered further in the *Rural Living Strategy* 2011.

#### Colac Otway Shire Rural Living Strategy 2011

The subject site and the surrounding area are not identified as a potential rural living area within the *Rural Living Strategy*, which was adopted by Council in December 2011 and is a background reference document under the schedule to clause 72.08.

The Strategy identified that the further expansion of a township would result in a net loss of productive agricultural land and recommended that settlement boundaries around all Township zoned land be introduced to provide a defined boundary to restrict future residential growth and development. This would also ensure that a clear distinction is drawn between productive agricultural land and established residential development. The subject site is far outside any township boundary, as shown in the location plan at the start of this report.

#### Zone

The subject site is located within the Farming Zone (FZ). The key purpose of this zone is to provide for the use of land for agriculture and to ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.

#### Overlays

Approximately 41% of the lot is covered by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). This overlay applies to the northern section of the land, adjacent to Birregurra Creek. The proposed dwelling would be located outside the LSIO area. The central plan below shows that “revegetation” and some of the proposed horticultural use is proposed within that part of the site covered by the LSIO.



Extent of LSIO (hatched)



Farm Plan from Farm Management Plan

Legend	
	Boundary
	Roads
	Contours 10M
	Watercourses
	Farm Dam
	Revegetation
<b>Proposed</b>	
	Dwelling
	Effluent Field
	Access
	Farm Shed
	Garlic Plantings
	Fruit Trees
	Flower Rows
	Water Tanks

## Other relevant provisions

Nil

## Relevant Planning Scheme amendments

Nil

## 6. REFERRALS

### Internal Referrals

The application was referred internally to Council's Health Protection Unit and Infrastructure Department. No objections were raised, subject to conditions being imposed in the event a permit is issued.

### External Referrals

The location of the proposed dwelling is outside of the area covered by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay. However, the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) were notified of the application and asked for comment due to the proximity of Birregurra Creek and the adjacent Crown reserve. The CCMA raised no objection to the proposal and DEECA advised that it is not anticipated the proposed dwelling would impact on the adjoining Crown land.

DEECA also noted a mapped Current Wetland (52400) is present in the northern part of the property. It has been confirmed by DEECA that the northern site boundary's inconsistency between the title plan and both the applicant's site plan and Council's mapping system

includes, in its current form, part of the Birregurra Creek wetland. Again, this confirms that there are issues with the site plan being inconsistent with the title plan, which should be clarified prior to a permit being issued if Council elects to support this application. It is noted that DEECA acknowledges that the application, aerial imagery and the mapped Current Wetland extent indicate the proposed works, as detailed in the Farm Management Plan (EnProve Ag & Environment, 16 February 2025), would be unlikely to directly impact this area.

DEECA also advised that, if native vegetation removal is required to facilitate the agricultural development, this may require a planning permit. DEECA suggested that Council may elect to seek more information to confirm the presence of, and potential impacts to, native vegetation. DEECA deferred to Council to determine planning permit triggers and referral authority roles. In the event it is resolved to grant a permit for the proposed dwelling, a note would need to be included on any permit issued advising that the permit does not allow the removal, destruction or lopping of any native vegetation.

DEECA did not object to the granting of the planning permit and suggested wording for a permit condition relating to sedimentation and pollution control measures to prevent offsite impacts to waterways and wetlands, and a note advising that adjacent Crown land cannot be used for works, storage or access.

## 7. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION & RESPONSE

### COMMUNICATION

Notification of the application was sent to the owners and occupiers of surrounding properties, and a notice was displayed on site for a period of 14 days. No objections were received.

## 8. OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

The key issue for consideration in the determination of this application is whether the proposal is in accordance with planning policy for the Farming Zone, including whether justification has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed dwelling is reasonably required to support agricultural production on the land. The proposed agricultural use on the 1.6ha lot is the production of garlic, flowers and fruit, which would come under the definition of 'horticulture'.

Horticulture is a section 1 (permit not required) use in the Farming Zone which, as noted earlier in this report, is defined as *"land used to propagate, cultivate, or harvest flowers, fruit, vegetables, vines, or the like"*. It is considered that the growing of garlic and flower would come under this land use classification.

The horticultural use of the land is not the subject of this application and does not require a planning permit. The use and development of the dwelling does require a planning permit.

For the reasons outlined below, it is considered that it has not been demonstrated that a dwelling is required on the land to undertake the proposed horticultural activity. The proposal is not considered consistent with the objectives and policies of the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.

In this case, it is considered that the proposal is incompatible with the following clauses in the Colac Otway Planning Scheme:

- 02.01 Context
- 02.03-4 – Strategic Directions – Natural Resource Management
- 02.04 – Strategic Framework Plans
- 14.01-1S and 14.01-1L – Protection of Agricultural Land



- 16.01-3S – Rural Residential Development
- Clause 35.07 - Farming Zone

Clause 14.01-1S (Protection of Agricultural Land) applies to all land in the Farming Zone. It seeks *“to protect the state’s agricultural base by preserving productive farmland”*. Strategies designed to assist in the achievement of that objective include, inter alia, to:

- Protect productive farmland that is of strategic significance in the local or regional context.
- Prevent inappropriately dispersed urban activities in rural areas.
- Protect strategically important agricultural and primary production land from incompatible uses.
- Limit new housing development in rural areas by:
  - Directing housing growth into existing settlements.
  - Discouraging development of isolated small lots in the rural zones from use for dwellings or other incompatible uses.
  - Encouraging consolidation of existing isolated small lots in rural zones.
- In considering a proposal to use, subdivide or develop agricultural land, consider the:
  - Desirability and impacts of removing the land from primary production, given its agricultural productivity.
  - Impacts on the continuation of primary production on adjacent land, with particular regard to land values and the viability of infrastructure for such production.
  - Compatibility between the proposed or likely development and the existing use of the surrounding land.

Clause 14.01-1L (Protection of Agricultural Land) is a local policy that applies to all land in the Farming Zone. Relevant strategies include to:

- *Discourage dwellings that do not meet the minimum lot area of the zone or relevant schedule unless it is required for an intensive agricultural activity on the land or to achieve the environmental protection of the land.*
- *Avoid localised concentration of dwellings in agricultural areas.*
- *Ensure that small lot subdivisions or excisions facilitate sustainable rural production and do not prejudice surrounding rural activities.*

Clause 02.03-4 (Natural Resource Management) is another local policy where Council seeks to manage its natural resources by:

- *Protecting high quality agricultural land.*
- *Limiting rural residential development that impacts viable agricultural land.*
- *Supporting grazing and cropping farming practices as preferred land uses in areas designated as ‘Farmland of Strategic Significance’.*
- *Supporting farm consolidation and expansion.*

Clause 16.01-3S (Rural Residential Development) includes the following as strategies:

- *Manage development in rural areas to protect agriculture and avoid inappropriate rural residential development.*
- *Demonstrate need and identify locations for rural residential development through a housing and settlement strategy.*

- *Ensure land is not zoned for rural residential development if it will encroach on high quality productive agricultural land or adversely impact on waterways or other natural resources.*
- *Discourage development of small lots in rural zones for residential use or other incompatible uses.*

The *Rural Land Strategy*, a background reference document under the schedule to clause 72.08, undertook a thorough assessment of agricultural land capability within the shire and the implications of residential encroachments into such land.

It is noted that the subject site is outside that part of the shire identified as being Farmland of Strategic Significance. However, as stated above, land of medium agricultural capability is suited to less intensive agricultural uses such as grazing and cropping.

In VCAT cases *Kennedy v Baw Baw SC [2022] VCAT 787* and *Strachan v Latrobe CC [2022] VCAT 35*, consideration was given to proposals for dwellings on small lots in the Farming Zone. Concerns were expressed by the Tribunal Members about any proposed dwelling performing the function of supporting a rural lifestyle rather than being a necessity in the operation of a commercially viable business, and about proposals being attempts to have a rural living arrangement masked as an agricultural use within a Farming Zone. Amongst other policies, the Tribunal Members drew attention to Clause 14.01-1S (Protection of Agricultural Land) which seeks to limit new housing development in rural areas by directing housing growth into existing settlements and discouraging the development of isolated small lots in rural zones from use for dwellings. In addition, the Tribunal Members noted that Clause 16.01-3S (Rural Residential Development) discourages development of small lots in rural zones for residential use and encourages consolidation of existing isolated small lots in rural areas.

Agriculture is a key economic contributor to the shire with dairy and beef industries the most significant in terms of land use and economic contribution (Clause 02.01). The submitted Farm Management Plan states that the subject site would continue to be used for horticultural purposes, which is an acceptable use; however, it is considered that a dwelling is not reasonably required on the land for the horticultural use to occur and that the dwelling use would be the dominant use of the land. In effect, the horticulture on the land, if it occurs, would be ancillary to the rural residential use.

The proposed property layout as demonstrated in the Farm Management Plan indicates that the dwelling would be the predominant use - given the dwelling location, the shed location, the length of the driveway and the spread of the different horticultural uses. The lot is 1.6ha and it is noted that the area proposed to be set aside for revegetation is 5000m<sup>2</sup>, the flower beds is 1825m<sup>2</sup>, fruit trees is 490m<sup>2</sup> and the garlic beds 1670m<sup>2</sup>.

The area to be used for agriculture would be around 25% of the 1.6ha, some of which would also be within the Land Subject to Inundation area. The planting of flowers within the area of inundation also indicates that the agricultural use would not be the dominant use of the land; otherwise, all agricultural activity would be located outside the LSIO. The applicant argues that the CCMA 1% AEP flood extent should be used rather than the LSIO area. The LSIO would need to be altered through a planning scheme amendment for it to be disregarded. Having said that, as shown on the 1% AEP flood extent below, whilst the dwelling would not be within that area some of the flower beds would be within the 1% AEP flood extent, and therefore would be susceptible to water damage and/or plant loss. There would also be potential risk of fertilisers and increased nutrient loads entering the waterways in a flood event.

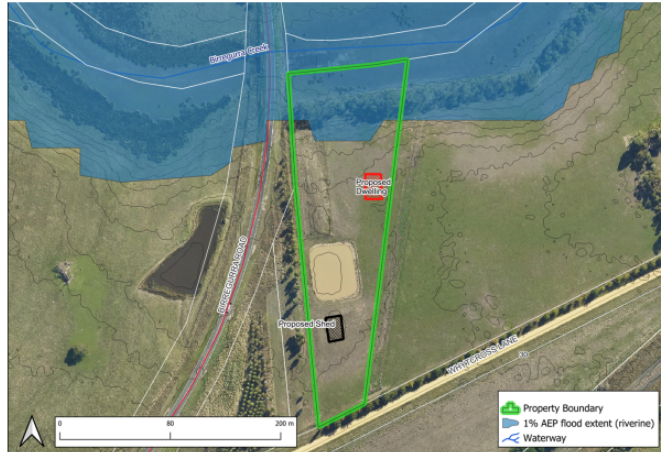


Figure 1. Subject property (green outline) showing the applicable 1% AEP flood extent.

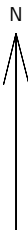
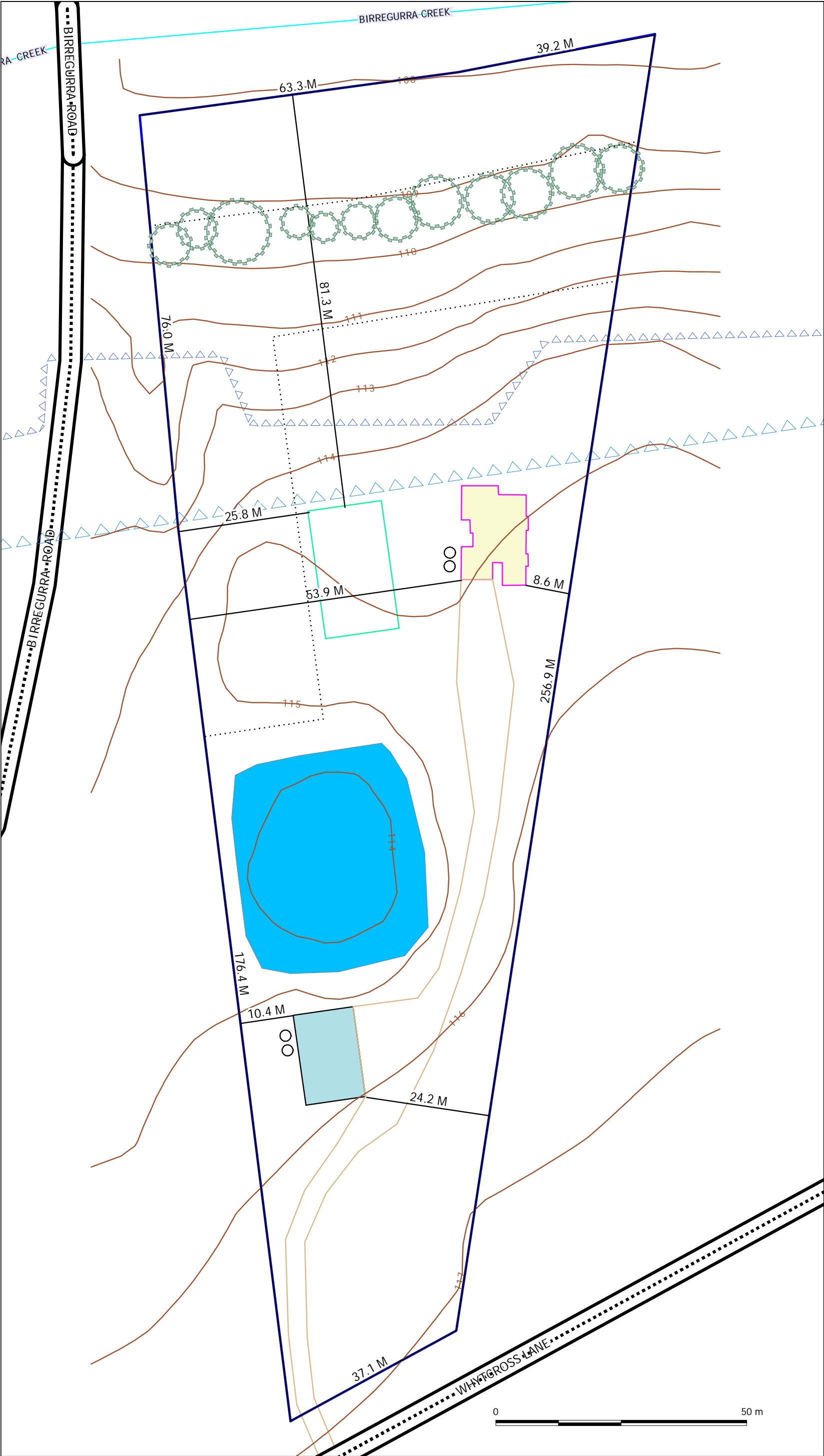
The applicant submits that the property is very well served for water, with an existing dam of 2.5 megalitres for farm use. Should a dwelling be permitted, this water source would be removed from the larger farm holding.

As noted previously, the proposal is to build a dwelling on a small 1.6ha lot and to sell off the rest of the existing agricultural holding (including an existing dwelling) with which the subject lot is associated. The limited agricultural activity proposed on the 1.6ha lot, in part within land subject to inundation, is not considered to justify the proposed dwelling. In addition, the nature and scale of the proposed agricultural activity is not considered to justify the proposed dwelling.

The application is recommended for refusal as it is not considered that it complies with relevant planning policies, being more akin to a rural residential land use than a genuine agricultural/horticulture enterprise. It is also noted that, if the dwelling is permitted, the land could be sold at any time with no obligation to continue or carry out the agricultural use. Due to the land size and associated dwelling, it would more likely appeal to the lifestyle market rather than a genuine farming enterprise. Granting a permit for the proposed dwelling would result in the fragmentation of productive land and could lead to pressure for further dwellings within the surrounding area.

## 9. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

No officer declared an interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.



Legend	
	Boundary
	1% AEP
	LSIO Extent
	Properties
	Roads
	RTK Contours 1M
	Watercourses
	Post & Wire Fencing
	Vegetation
	Farm Dams
<b>Proposed</b>	
	Dwelling
	Effluent Field
	Access
	Water Tanks
	Farm Shed

25 Whytcross Lane  
Birregurra  
  
Site and  
Separations Survey

Print: 16/02/2025  
Scale: 1:700



**Australian Home Designs 250KR****3 Bed + Study + 2 Bath + 2 Cars****Width 13.37 m x 19.6 m****Dimensions:****Living 178.6 sqM****Garage 39.6 sqM****Alfresco 22.2 sqM****Portico 250****Features:****3 Bedrooms + Study****2 Bathrooms****Media Room****Alfresco**

**Australian Design Services**  
**A Design World Of Difference**

**PRELIMINARY SET OF PLANS**

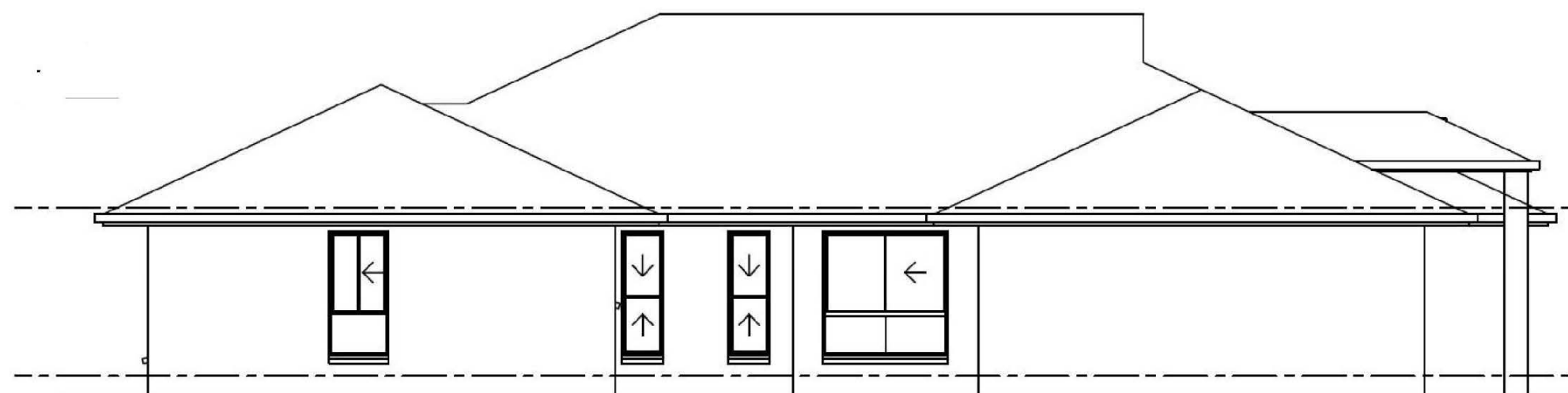


# Australian Home Design: 250KR

## 3 Bed + Study + 2 Bath + 2 Car



Northern Aspect



Western Aspect

### PRELIMINARY SET OF PLANS

[www.australianfloorplans.com](http://www.australianfloorplans.com)

Agenda Planning Committee Meeting - 8 July 2025

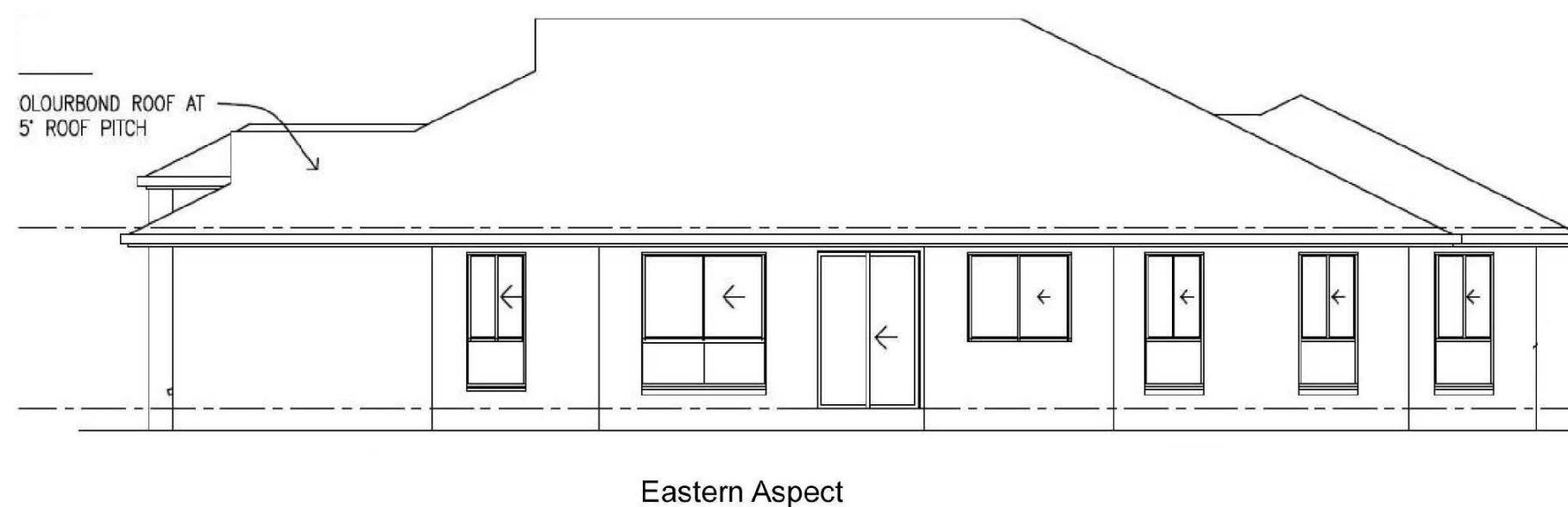


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# Australian Home Design: 250KR

## 3 Bed + Study + 2 Bath + 2 Car



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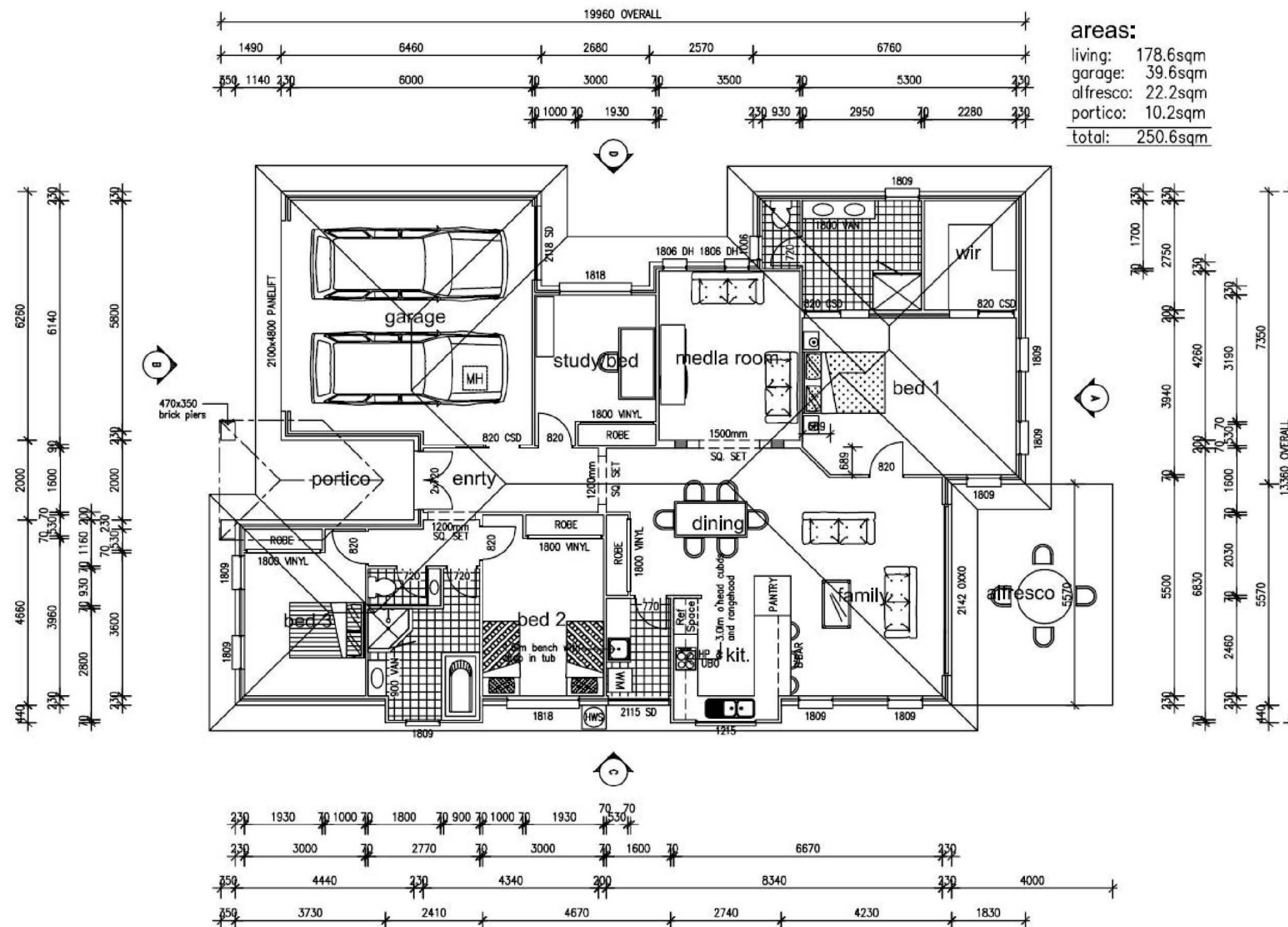
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## 3 Bed + Study + 2 Bath + 2 Car



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## Australian Home Designs 250KR



Width 13.37 X 19.6 M

### Features:

3 Bedrooms + Study  
2 Bathrooms  
Media Room  
Alfresco

### Dimensions:

Living 178.6 sqM  
Garage 39.6 sqM  
Alfresco 22.2 sqM  
Portico 10.6 sqM  
Total 250.6 sqM

## Bed + Study + 2 Bath + 2 Car



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 ABN: 71 462 965 882

7<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Planning Department**

**Colac Otway Shire Council**

**Via email: [inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au](mailto:inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au)**

## Planning Report

### 25 Whytcross Lane, Birregurra

Use and development of the land for a dwelling supporting a farm.

### Proposal Overview:

The proponents seek a planning permit for buildings and work to construct and use a single-storey, three-bedroom dwelling on a 1.6-hectare lot at 25 Whytcross Lane, Birregurra. The proposal parcel is already titled and part of their larger 47.8-hectare farming property, with the main body being made available for sale if the planning permit is approved.

The subject land is located in the Farming Zone, which triggers this requirement for a planning permit.

The proponents will relocate their existing high-value horticultural activities and business to this site, ensuring sound agricultural use of the property.

#### Property Details:

Proponents:	[REDACTED]
Address:	25 Whytcross Lane, Birregurra 3241
Property Descriptions:	Lot 1 TP17242
Property Size:	1.6 Hectares
Local Authority :	Colac Otway Shire Council
Zones / Overlays:	Farming Zone Schedule to The Farming Zone Designated Bushfire Prone Area
Current Use:	Vacant





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## Shire Planning Scheme:

Map 1: Zoning and location Note: The title boundary is drawn incorrectly on planning maps.

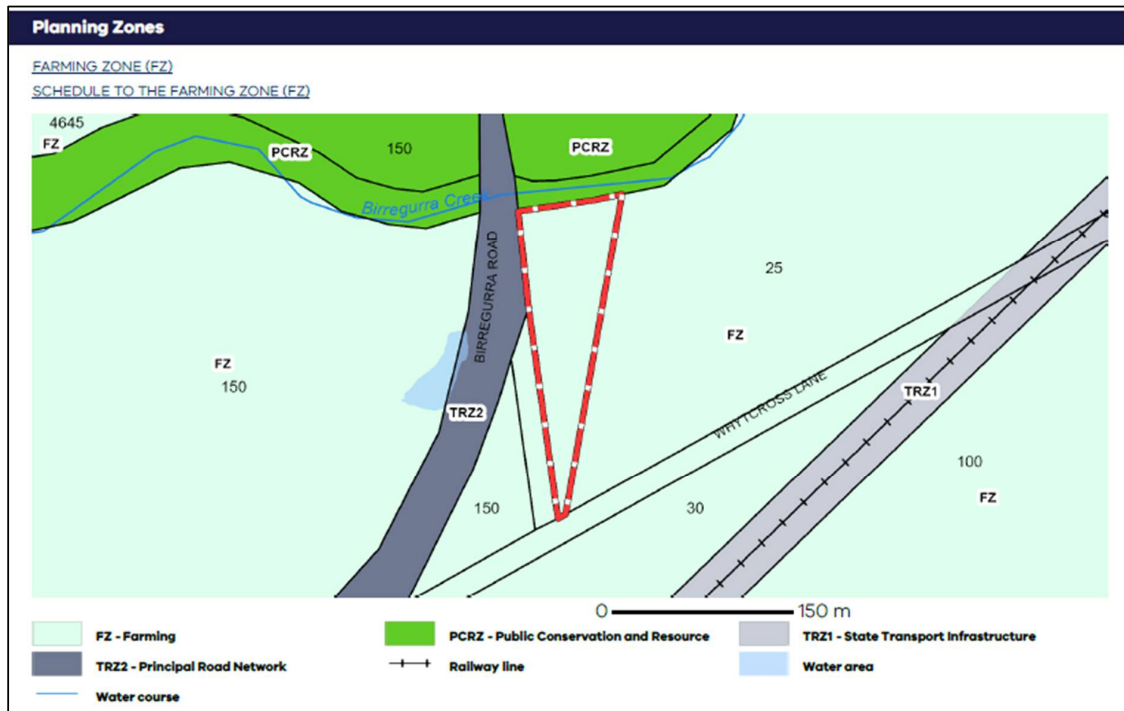


Image 1: Property Image looking from Whytcross Lane, proposed house site marked.





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## Site Assessment:

### Site Description:

The property is regular in shape and measures 1.6 hectares in size. The property would be described as a gentle slope having less than 3 metres fall across the entire site. It is fronted by Whytcross Lane on the southern boundary, the disused Birregurra Road reserve on the western boundary, Birregurra Creek at the north and the proponent's farm on the east.

The property has been fully cleared and pastured, having been used for pastoral production. There is no existing agricultural infrastructure on the property and that investment will be required. All buildings and infrastructure will need to be constructed.

### The siting and use of existing buildings on the site:

There are no buildings on the site.

### Services Connections:

There are electricity and telephone services located nearby and are available. There are no sewer, gas, or mains water connections available.

Domestic effluent will require a wastewater treatment system, and there is plenty of area to install that system within the EPA Guidelines.

Domestic and farm water will be available from tanks attached to the proposed house and shed and from the existing farm dam. The property is entitled to a water bore for domestic and stock purposes, should that be required.

### Easements:

The property has no easements.

### House Design and Siting:

The property is nearby to the old Birregurra township and there are a number of properties to the north of the creek that are similar sized and developed with dwellings, other properties nearby are used for grazing. The nearest existing dwelling is 500 metres to the north, and the proponent's farm dwelling is over 600 metres to the east.

### Cut and Fill Requirements:

There are no major cut-and-fill requirements for the dwelling beyond standard house site and construction preparation. Any site-cutting work will be less than 1 metre.





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#### Street features and access points:

The property fronts Whytcross Lane on the southern edge and the disused Birregurra Road reserve on the western edge; access is from that reserve. That access is adequately constructed with gravel topping and an installed crossover. Whytcross Lane is a well-formed, unsealed road maintained by the council. There are well-formed drainage lines along each of these roads.

The property will access from an existing gateway off the adjoining public roadway reserve which has no signage limiting or prohibiting "Right of Passage" (Roads Management Act 2004).

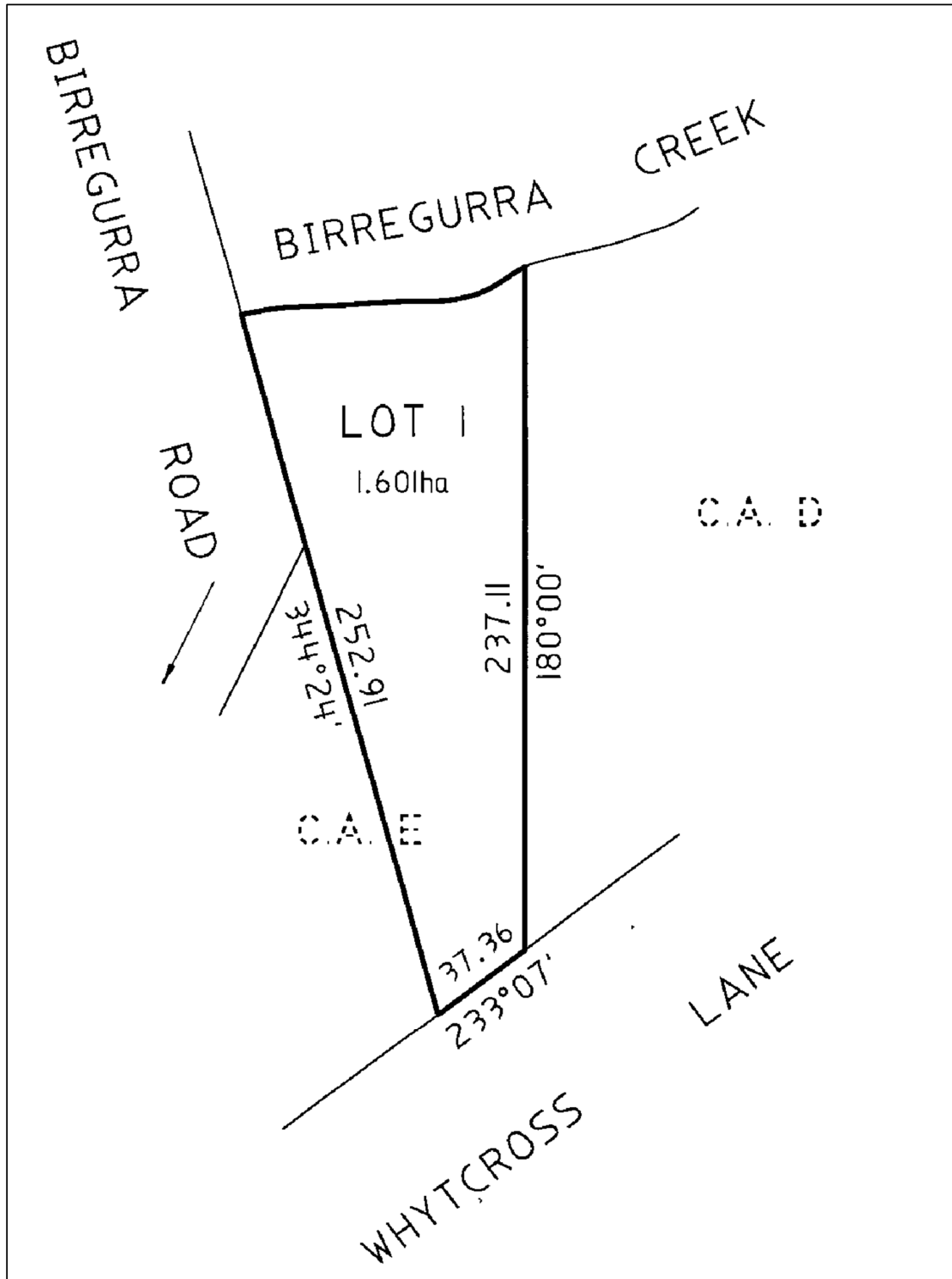
**Image 2: Existing access point from Whytcross Lane.**





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Map 2: Property Dimensions







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Map 3: Current Production Area



The flower and garlic growing will be relocated from the main farm body and re-established at a significantly higher production intensity at the proposal site. The grazing farm with the established dwelling can then be sold intact to another farmer.



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## Design Response:

### Farming Zone:

The property is 1.6 hectares located in the Farming Zone, requiring 40 hectares for entitled dwelling, and that lack of size triggers the planning permit process. The property has been either vacant or used as an outpaddock, and this application brings it to a higher production level.

- The presented application demonstrates that this is a viable agricultural enterprise, best suited to the farming zone and requires a dwelling to facilitate the management and operation of that agriculture and:
- The use proposed is consistent with the objectives for the use of agricultural landscapes for horticulture and is consistent with the use of many of the properties in the area.
- The farm management plan proposes significant investment in the agricultural capability of the land.
- The proposed dwelling will not result in further fragmentation of productive agricultural land; the title is one of 3 existing and adjoining fragment small titles created for road construction and realignment.
- The proposal does not remove any area of the land from agricultural production; existing agricultural activities are to be relocated to the site, freeing farmland elsewhere.
- The dwelling will not impact the agricultural activities of adjacent or nearby land, nor will it affect the expansion of any adjoining or nearby agricultural uses.
- The proposal is best considered as an alternative to an excision of the existing dwelling, which protects the larger farm body for continued agricultural use.

### Land Subject to Inundation:

Attached is flood information from the Corangamite CMA illustrating the 1% AEP which shows the dwelling is located 2.78 Metres above that mark and the shed site is greater than 3 metres above that mark. The effluent system is also located out of the 1% AEP.

The proposed flower gardens will be susceptible to any 1 in 100 flood and that planting may be lost although peak water heights generally only last a few hours and depending on plant stage may be recoverable. The flowers are either bulbs or seasonal plantings so will be a single seasonal crop lost.

The proposed access will not be impacted by that flooding.





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## Summary:

This proposal is seen as an excellent alternative to the proponents requesting an excision of their existing dwelling and attendant 600-metre long driveway from their 47.8-hectare farm. They will be able to relocate, increase their existing horticultural activities, and remain in the area where they have lived for the last 25 years. Their beef cattle farm can then be sold for purpose without the disruption of long narrow excision.

The proposed farming activities themselves are high value, and being soil-based production, they need to be in the farm zone, but it doesn't need large tracts of land. The fact they will make two-thirds of the revenue from the smaller lot as they would from the grazing activity demonstrates the efficiency of the proposal.

Smaller farms like this one need to be more intensive in operation to achieve a viable income, and that creates a greater risk of critical agricultural issues that can be damaging to productivity, viability and financial return; they actually require a higher level of monitoring than larger, less stressed farming types.

A dwelling is the heart of a productive farm. It's where management occurs, monitoring occurs, issues are resolved, and pride is stored. Being there is important; vulnerable animals can be constantly monitored, and corrective actions are taken when issues arise. All productive farms need a farmhouse.

The chosen dwelling design is a standard low-key residential design suited to the surroundings, and the farming proposal is seen as a very good fit with the amenity of the neighbouring area and will improve the overall agricultural, environmental, ecological, social and economic value of the area.

The proposal is a great fit for the values that the council expect from the farming zone, bigger or smaller than the mandated 40 hectares with a well-planned growth strategy, and councils should be supporting and encouraging these high-value, efficient farms to create community resilience and farming diversity.

### Attached:

Planning Application  
Farm Management Plan  
Buildings and Site Design Plans  
Surveyors Maps  
Copy of Title Certificates  
Site / Separation Map  
Corangamite CMA Flood Advice

---

# Farm Management Plan

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Floriculture, Fruit  
and Garlic  
Production with a  
Dwelling

---

25 Whytcross Lane,  
Birregurra

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Report Prepared by  
Dean Suckling  
Enprove Pty Ltd

---

Report Revision Date:  
16<sup>th</sup> February 2025

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## Contents

<b>PLAN OBJECTIVE:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PROPERTY DETAILS:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FARM OVERVIEW:</b>	<b>4</b>
Requirement for a dwelling supporting a farm:	5
<b>SITE LOCATION AND PROPERTY MAP:</b>	<b>7</b>
Map 1: Property Location and Context	7
Map 2: Farm Map	8
Map 3: Proposed Property Layout	9
Map 4: Property Dimensions	10
<b>FARMING FACTORS:</b>	<b>11</b>
Site Topography:	11
Climate:	11
Water Supply:	11
Weed and Pest Management:	11
Fire Management:	11
Soil Quality and Fertility:	12
Regenerative / Carbon Farming:	14
Flower Rows:	14
Garlic Crop layout:	14
<b>Infrastructure and Business Management:</b>	<b>15</b>
Infrastructure Investment:	15
Marketing / Sales:	15
Staffing:	15
Allowance for possible future expansion:	15
Opportunity Cost / Diversification:	15
<b>FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS:</b>	<b>16</b>
Indicative Agricultural Revenues:	16
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:</b>	<b>17</b>
Natural Resource Management:	17
Erosion and Compaction:	17
Groundwater:	17
Drainage:	17
Biosecurity Requirements:	17
Adverse impacts on adjacent land:	17
Adverse impacts from adjacent land:	17
<b>SITE IMAGES:</b>	<b>18</b>

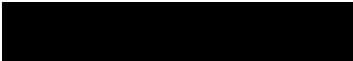

## Plan Objective:

This Farm Management Plan is drawn to provide an assessment of current agricultural activities and identify future improvements that will benefit the agricultural production values of the property and identify the benefits of the proposed dwelling at 25 Whytcross Road, Birregurra.

This plan is for the provision of a high-value horticultural enterprise, including cut flowers, garlic and fruit for sale.

The farm plan has been drawn after consultation with the owners about how they want to run their farm business and what they plan to achieve. The farm layout and agricultural activities are as described by the proponents, and Enprove has assessed the site to provide agronomic and environmental management advice, which is included in the report. Land and conditions can change seasonally, and management variation can and should be expected. This report relies on external data and information that is assumed to be accurate.

## Property Details:

Proponents:	
Property Address:	
Property Description:	Lot 1 TP17242
Area:	1.6 Hectares
Local Authority:	Colac Otway Shire
Zoning / Overlay(s):	Farming Zone Schedule to the Farming Zone Land Subject to inundation Land Subject to Inundation _Schedule 1 Designated Bushfire Prone Area
Current Use:	Vacant
Proposed Use:	Horticulture



## Farm Overview:

This Farming Zone proposal calls for the relocation and expansion of the proponent's existing horticultural activities to this excised site, which will allow them to sell their adjoining beef farm with dwelling to new owners who can continue that farming.

██████████ have been producing garlic and flowers at their property for many years and this restructure of their farm and farming activity allows them to expand that business. Horticulture is high-value farming and often returns greater revenues than many larger-scale agricultural enterprises. Cut flowers and garlic production suit smaller properties as larger producers shy away from the higher labour inputs and greater risks inherent in a low chemical environment. Cut flowers particularly are the highest returning of all agricultures but also the most labour intensive.

The proponents are passionate about farming their small acreage, protecting their local environment, and contributing to their community. Their product is already sold through local stores, and the flowers by their daughter, who is a florist. They have planted hundreds of trees in the direct area already improving the biodiversity and ecological values of the area.

The agricultural and land management highlights include:

- Establishing and growing 6,000 flowering plants, producing 16-20,000 flower stems for sale each year.
- The planting of 40 fruit trees to produce 4 tonnes of fruit for sale.
- The establishment of 3600 purple and Aussie White garlic plants each year for sale at the farm gate and markets.
- A new farm shed to allow propagation, produce drying packing and equipment storage.
- Planned value-adding of produce to increase sale price.
- The development of a small roadside stall selling produce to passersby.
- A sustainable financial model for production from a small rural property.

The property has been used for grazing production and has low soil fertility, creeping soil acidity issues, and no agricultural infrastructure. The pastoral production is currently estimated to be 3 tonnes of dry matter per hectare per annum, producing \$4,000 in produced. After the initial development period, the enterprise will generate and indicated \$86,000 in farm revenues each year, and there is scope to increase that return over time.

The enterprise is designed to fit with and enhance, the growing reputation of the Birregurra area as an area of high-quality produce and horticulture. It is seen as a great example of sustainable and productive use of a small rural lot contained within the Farming Zone, which is well fitted to the character of the greater area.

Siting a dwelling on the property means that the property can be improved confidently, knowing that those improvements can be most effectively utilised to increase productive value. A resident also means that animals and plants can be monitored for best production and welfare.

### Requirement for a dwelling supporting a farm:

The nexus between a dwelling and the land can be complicated to describe. At the simplest level, it puts a set of eyes, ears and maybe a nose on the property most of the time. This means that the property, and indeed the local area, can be monitored for issues. Problems arise constantly on farms and timely response is important. A single event can reduce or wreck an entire season's production or kill a high-value, expensive horse.

Good farming is also about personal motivation; there is no boss, and there is no help. For the first few seasons, before a viable production, the proponents may actually be paying to work on their farm. The co-investment into a dwelling and farming is important to manage the extensive development cost and time and instil the pride and routines that create motivation to keep going forward.

Farming is a major commitment and responsibility. The farmer is the sole custodian of that land and is responsible for everything that happens on that land: the welfare of animals and people, the protection of that agricultural land, the maintenance of the ecology and biodiversity, the prevention and eradication of pests and weeds and the quality of the produce to be supplied to others. That commitment should be encouraged in our society, and currently, it feels seriously undervalued, poorly understood and restricted.

A farmer's work time can be divided into three categories: the daily and mundane ongoing work, the higher intensity growing and harvest season, and the response to critical issues. Weather can also pinch a lot of time, and waiting for the right window to complete tasks can use up productive time (go in the house and do the bookwork, maybe). Managing time, being on time, keeping up maintenance and, when required, quick responses separate the good from the bad.

The justifications for a dwelling on this small lot farm are the same as justifications for most farming properties. The management times and tasks can be similar due to the greater manual operation:

- There are no rental houses in the area.
- Allows the proponent to put their beef farm for sale without the major disruption of a dwelling site cut out through that property.
- Monitor Crops: (typical daily routine) check water, check for pests, check for fungus and brown rot, check supports, check produce quality.
- Monitor flowers, fruit and garlic for harvest: Both need to be monitored daily for readiness and harvested.
- Monitor and react to weather: Heat, frost, hail and wind can play havoc and responding quickly with a management decision can save a crop or minimise losses.
- Weeding: Herbicides cannot be used, so hand weeding is the main weed control technique.
- Pest Animal Control: Probably the biggest issue for horticulture. Crows, lorikeets, blackbirds, finches, bats, wallabies, rabbits and other animals will damage garlic crops and flowers for no apparent reason. In this farming region, scare guns and shotguns are not well received, so constant movement of vehicles and people is a good control method, from dawn to dusk and into the nighttime, to scare away flying pests.
- Manage storage and drying: Drying plants need to be constantly monitored to ensure dryness and even drying and rodent exclusion
- Do the work: Horticulture needs constant attention, weed control, watering, foliar fertilising, thinning and trimming to ensure even access to sunlight. A hectare of horticulture generally requires 3-400 hours per year to maintain, and this property will require 800 hours each year purely for plant maintenance. Most of the work cannot be mechanised so it will require manual input.
- Monitor the roadside stall for sufficient supply and potential theft.

- Justifies the investment in infrastructure and services to improve agricultural production into the future. This includes power supply, water harvesting and distribution, improved soil quality, safe access, handling, buildings and shedding.
- Provides a dedicated agricultural reason to guide and plan for ongoing improvement in the agricultural production and use and improved land management and environmental performance.
- Saves farmer wasted time (out the door, do the work).
- Saves fuel and greenhouse gases in travel and saves travel cost; the tax department rates a kilometre as a cost of 75 cents, money better invested in the farm: e.g. 20 kms a day = \$5475 a year, 2 trips a day \$10,950 wasted.
- Allows farmers to insure their property, equipment, stock and crops (insurance companies will either not insure or the premium will be unviable for untenanted farms).
- Creates motivation and drive to improve the farm beyond minimal or basic maintenance. Human behaviour, tasks seen get attended to, and tasks out of site get forgotten.
- Creates peace of mind; farmers worry about crops and animals. Many will sleep in sheds, caravans or cars on the site during critical farming periods.
- Allows nighttime monitoring of the property. Farm monitoring is as much about hearing issues as seeing issues.
- Allows the proponents to keep a farm dog to chase away pests like foxes and rabbits.
- Improves farm viability by allowing critical issues to be addressed in a timely fashion and creating more farm time to complete more tasks.
- Encourages greater time and financial investment into the property; there is no cost sharing with another property.
- Reduces farm theft from both the farm and neighbouring community and provides security of equipment and stock.
- Improves environmental performance; a larger number of trees and plants are established when a dwelling is present, and establishing trees takes time, work and maintenance, in addition to farming work.

A dwelling on a farm is a lot more than a place where people reside; it is the centre of an agricultural business. It is the administrative centre, office, meeting room, first aid shed, pharmacy, security and bio-security checkpoint, tea room, and monitoring post for a 24-hour a-day, 365-day-a-year business.

There is no future farming plan for Victoria, and that direction is needed. Agriculture must provide 30% more farming produce and services in the next 15 years to keep up with population and demand, and given that most of Australia's farming produce is destined for export, the productive agricultural development of all farming lots must be a current and future focus. In reality, many major farms are already used to and past their maximum, and smaller farms offer growth potential with new farming types, methods and people. In most farming zone proposals, it will be a farm with a house or no development at all.

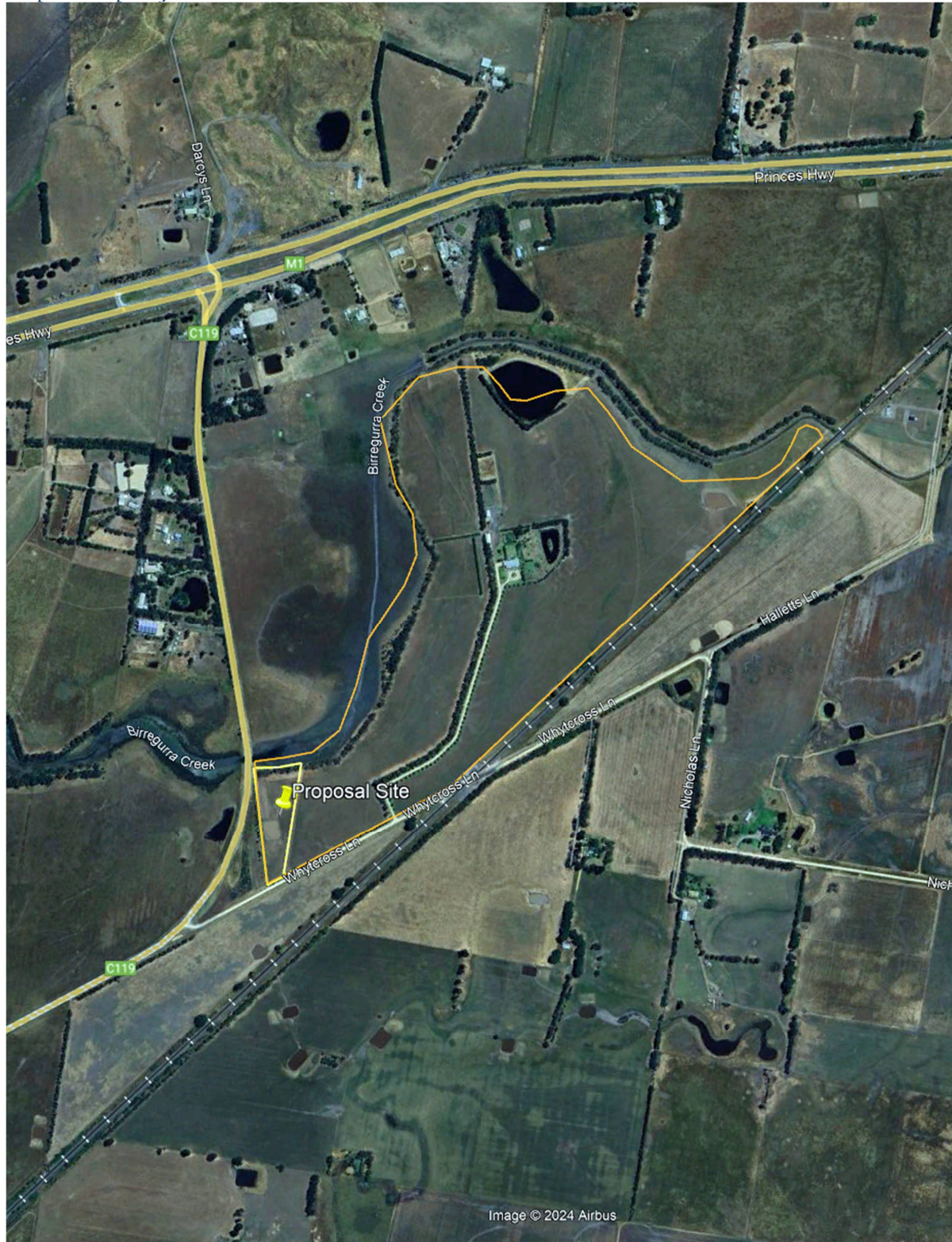
It is also worth noting that the majority of productive farms in the state are less than 40 hectares and generally have a greater intensity and greater return per land unit and water use than larger farms (20% of farms control 80% of farmland). That is because most agricultural activities don't actually need large land areas to be viable (horticulture, poultry, vines, market gardens, equine, some feed lotting, floriculture, contracting, processing, aquaculture, fruit production, accommodation, etc).

As is the case here, women are 50% more likely than men to be the drivers to develop and farm the smaller farming properties; dwellings on small farms are a key mechanism to create greater female representation in agriculture, which will continue to boost agricultural progress and development.



## Site Location and Property Map:

Map 1: Property Location and Context



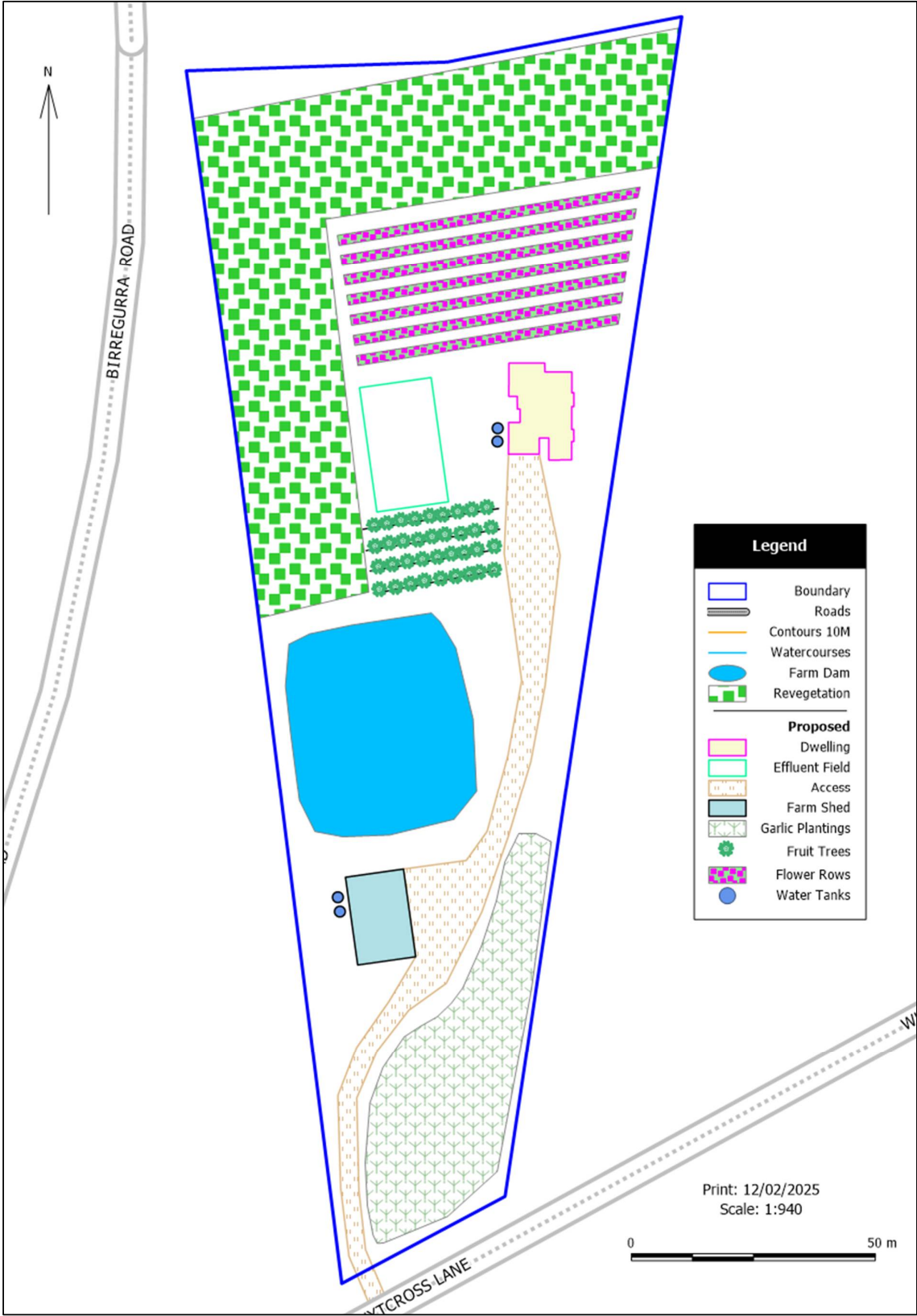
The orange line denotes the proponent's entire farm; yellow denotes the already titled excision site.



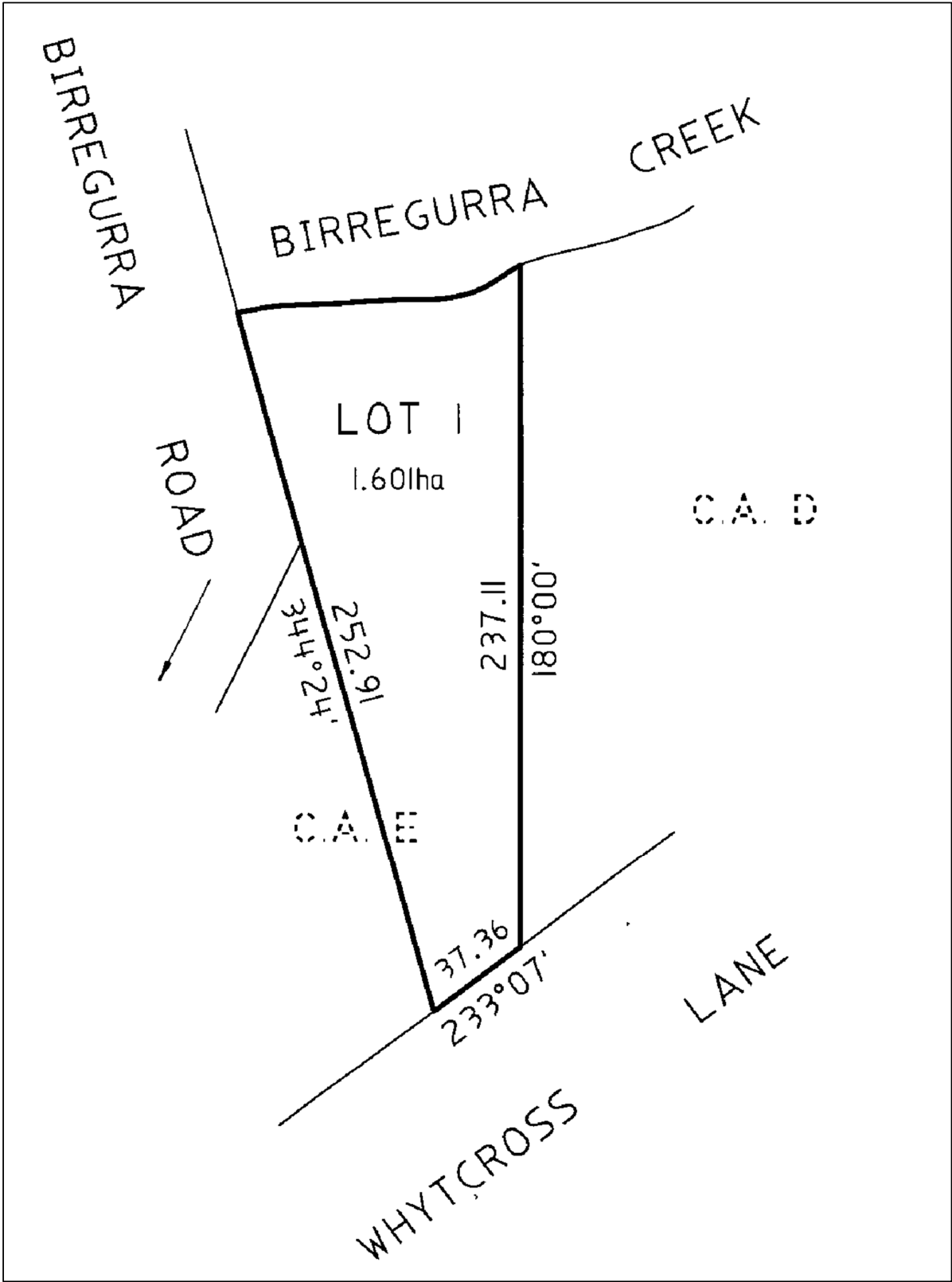
Map 2: Farm Map



Map 3: Proposed Property Layout



Map 4: Property Dimensions





## Farming Factors:

### Site Topography:

The property is defined as a gentle slope generally falling from the north to the south to the steeper banks of Birregurra Creek. There are no major topographical features on the site.

### Climate:

#### Birregurra climate statistics:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ann
<b>Mean Max (°C)</b>	26.0	25.1	23.0	19.1	15.1	12.3	11.7	12.7	14.7	17.2	20.5	23.4	18.4
<b>Mean Min (°C)</b>	12.8	12.9	11.9	10.0	7.9	6.2	5.4	5.6	6.6	7.7	9.6	10.8	9.0
<b>Mean Rain (mm)</b>	34.0	33.6	38.1	48.8	62.5	64.8	71.7	77.7	70.2	66.8	54.9	41.6	666.9
<b>Mean Rain Days</b>	4.0	3.1	4.8	6.2	8.6	10.0	11.2	12.3	10.4	9.2	6.1	6.2	92.1

Data: BOM 090085 Mount Gellibrand, Rainfall BOM 90008 Birregurra

The climate is the typical Mediterranean type of warm, dry summers and cool, wet winters. The climate is good for the chosen agricultural activity, although there is potential for wet periods, which need to be managed.

### Water Supply:

The property is very well served for water with an existing dam of 2.5 megalitres of water for farm use.

Four new water tanks will be installed: 2 X 30,000-litre tanks attached to the house and 2 X 30,000-litre tanks attached to the shed. Rainfall will be collected from the roofs of the house and shed, and this will be about 450,000 litres of water in an average rainfall year.

### Weed and Pest Management:

The property doesn't have any major environmental weed or pest issues. Blackberries are establishing along the Birregurra Creek waterway reserve, and these weeds will be controlled as part of the farm management routines demonstrating good land stewardship. Flowering plants are particularly sensitive to manufactured herbicides, so the proponents plan to avoid chemical use; most weeds will be controlled by hand and manual methods.

The current pasture has significant agricultural weed establishment, particularly flatweed and fog grass, but this shouldn't present an issue for the proposed farming, and the farming activities will manage these out.

### Fire Management:

The land is in a designated bushfire area but is not seen to be of greater risk than any normal, cleared farmland. The land use is not seen to contribute to fire risk, and the irrigated areas could be expected to act as firebreaks. The usual fire precautions will apply no petrol-powered vehicles in long grass, limited mechanical activity on high-risk fire days, reduced fire load before summer, and adequate fire fighting water in tanks/dams at all times. Firewater supply will be available from the dam and tanks if required.



**Soil Quality and Fertility:**

The property land class is typical of the region, productive well-structured sandy clay loams over clay classed as duplex soil. The soils may be prone to waterlogging during wet periods and drying and cracking during dry periods but generally retain productivity.

A soil test was collected to determine soil fertility and quality and identify any changes to improve the current productivity level.

**Soil Test Observations (soil test next page):**

- Low pH  $\text{CaCl}_2$  (4.6), indicating soil acidity issues.
- Slightly phosphorus levels (Olsen P 16.2 mg/Kg)
- Fair potassium levels (176 mg/Kg)
- Low sulphur levels (4.3 mg/Kg)
- Low Organic Carbon (2.4 %)
- Low nitrogen levels (at the time of testing, nitrogen is seasonably variable)
- Trace elements: Zinc and boron are below optimum levels for horticulture; iron is naturally elevated and can reduce the availability of phosphorus.
- Cation levels (indicating soil structure) are of poor balance with low exchangeable calcium levels. The total cation exchange capacity is very high, meaning nutrient lock-up may be an issue (nutrients lock to soil and are not freely available to plants).
- Elevated aluminium levels. Aluminium reduces plants' rooting and persistence and encourages weeds.
- Low salinity (electrical conductivity) with elevated sodicity (exchangeable sodium) indicates some salt impact to be addressed.

**Recommendations:**

The soil fertility is generally good (indicating pasture use in the past), and only minor corrections are required. Flowers will generally require a higher fertility level than garlic, different treatments will be required, and the rows will be individually fertilised.

Calcium levels are also slightly low, causing the acidity issue and should be corrected. Poor calcium can also create soil structure issues; correcting this will offer resistance to pugging and compaction. Acidity in soils releases aluminium toxic to most plants and encourages weeds. Applying agricultural lime will correct this issue at a rate of 250 grams per square metre and potentially the same again in 2-3 years.

Trace elements are very important for flowers and garlic; zinc and boron are particularly low and will need to be corrected by solid fertiliser, although foliar spray applications would also be useful.

Nitrogen levels are also very important for garlic and flowers, nitrogen being essential for leaf development, and strategic applications of nitrogen will be required to ensure optimum plant development.

Significant grass-root matting means that soil cultivation will need to occur before attempting any plant establishment. Even after initial cultivation (by discing, ploughing or ripping), the soil will still be blocky and root-bound and unsuitable for planting and may need several working passes. It will also require time for that root matter to break down and form a suitable working tilth (this could be several months). It can be worked green, but a complete knockdown with a herbicide is preferable to manage undesirable grasses and weeds.

As always, ongoing soil testing should be conducted to ensure adequate fertility and reduce potential excess and risk to the environment. Plant tissue testing can be conducted on establishing crops to determine nutritional deficiencies in the developing stages.

## Lab Soil Tests Results:

<b>Customer:</b>	<b>Drewry</b>	<b>Sample Date:</b>	03/01/24
<b>Sample Name:</b>	<b>Front Paddock</b>	<b>Lab. No.:</b>	1APS24009
<b>Test Depth (cm):</b>	0-10	<b>Soil Colour:</b>	Grey Brown
<b>Gravel %:</b>	5-10	<b>Assessed Texture:</b>	Sandy Clay Loam
	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Level Found</b>	<b>Good Range</b>
Phosphorus Olsen	mg/Kg	16.2	25+
Phosphorus Colwell	mg/Kg	40	50 - 80
Potassium Colwell	mg/Kg	176	180+
Sulphur	mg/Kg	4.3	10 - 20
Organic Carbon	%	2.4	3 - 6
Ammonium Nitrogen	mg/Kg	4	
Nitrate Nitrogen	mg/Kg	10	
Conductivity	dS/m	0.07	< 2.0
pH Level (H <sub>2</sub> O)	pH	5.6	5.6 - 6.4
pH Level (CaCl <sub>2</sub> )	pH	4.6	5.0 - 6.0
Aluminium (CaCl <sub>2</sub> )	mg/Kg	1.8	< 2.0
DTPA Copper	mg/Kg	0.71	> 1.5
DTPA Iron	mg/Kg	421	100 - 400
DTPA Manganese	mg/Kg	16	> 10
DTPA Zinc	mg/Kg	1.3	> 5
Boron (Hot CaCl <sub>2</sub> )	mg/Kg	0.6	> 1.5
<b>Cations</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Level Found</b>	<b>Good Range</b>
Cation Exchange Capacity	meq/100g	4.85	5 - 20
Exchangeable Calcium	meq/100g	2.42	
	BSP %	49.92	70 - 85
Exchangeable Magnesium	meq/100g	1.38	
	BSP %	28.47	10 - 20
Exchangeable Potassium	meq/100g	0.34	
	BSP %	7.01	3 - 8
Exchangeable Sodium	meq/100g	0.34	
	BSP %	7.01	< 5
Exchangeable Aluminium	meq/100g	0.37	
	BSP %	7.59	< 2.0
<b>MIR Particle Sizing</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Level Found</b>	
Sand	%	62.67	
Silt	%	17.29	
Clay	%	20.05	
<b>Classification</b>	Sandy Clay Loam		

Laboratory Analysis CSBP Labs (Wesfarmers), Bibra Lake, WA

### Regenerative / Carbon Farming:

Boosting the soil carbon would also be beneficial. A naturalistic approach will be adopted to managing soil quality and general farm health; manufactured chemicals will be avoided as best practical. The property will adopt techniques to increase soil carbon and ultimately be positioned to take advantage of any future soil carbon credits. The reuse of wastewater effluents from the dwelling and composts from the poultry will help provide nutrients for farming and increase carbon percentage. Although initially unavoidable due to the heavy pasture cover, a “no-till” practice for soil management will be used in the future.

### Flower Rows:

The flower rows will mostly be used for annual crops. There will be 15 soil-based rows formed along an east-west aspect, giving about 800 linear growing metres. The location has been selected to use the boundary shelterbelt to protect the flowering plants from the winds. Flowers will be grown in cultivated rows of about 400mm in width and spacing of 900 mm apart for serviceability. Overhead irrigation will be available for the flower beds. This design will give the potential to grow over 2,000 plants at a time at two plants wide (some plants can be more densely planted), yielding 8-10 flower stems per plant (16-20,000 stems per year). Cultivated row width can be increased to accommodate more plants if required and could accommodate an additional 2,000 plants.

Most of the plants in these rows are seasonal, and potentially, 2-3 crops can be grown each year, although winter crops might be best avoided if the area proves too wet. Irrigation requirements will be 4-6 litres per linear metre or 4-6,000 litres per watering 2-3 times per week. For a dry summer, 250,000 litres would be the minimum requirement.

### Garlic Crop layout:

A mix of Aussie White and Purple garlic plants will be grown; these are well-acclimatised and readily saleable. Using a single-width planting with a row spacing of one metre apart, 500 linear metres of crop row will be available. A 15 cm garlic plant spacing gives a production capacity for 3,300 garlic plants. Double planting increases this yield to 6,600 plants. These are considered optimal placements for light, nutrient access, bulb growth, and maintenance.

These soils may be prone to waterlogging, and nice high-raised beds will be important. The soil has a high sand content (~63 %) which will drain well when cultivated into beds.

Trace element management can be critical for horticultural success; zinc is particularly critical for garlic. Ongoing foliar applications of a trace element mix are distinctly beneficial. Plant tissue testing is the best way to determine any ongoing production deficiencies once crops are established.

Although called seed garlic, garlic does not grow from a seed; it grows from the cloves. Year one should be used to produce seed garlic for reasons of both soil condition trials and to reduce the costs of purchasing seed garlic. Typically, one garlic head can produce ten cloves for ten new plantings. Allowing for 15 per cent failure, 3,600 cloves would be required for maximum production. This is the equivalent of 360 garlic heads required to plant 500 metres of a single-row planting. Double-row planting would require 72 heads. As a rule, 15% of produced garlic is retained for future plantings.

There are no chemical sprays suitable for use on garlic crops, so garlic needs constant weeding, particularly during the transition to spring from winter when weeds flourish.

The garlic is dried in the shed in racks before the sale and needs to be turned regularly to prevent moulds.

## Infrastructure and Business Management:

### Infrastructure Investment:

There is no suitable infrastructure on the property for the proposed enterprise. There are no buildings suitable for the enterprise, and the shedding, access, and dwelling will need to be constructed. The water network will also need to be constructed.

An irrigation watering system will need to be constructed to deliver water to the trees and flowers. A watering system gravity-fed from a tank is the ideal design, as this ensures a constant water supply to trees in the event of any system failures.

An all-weather driveway will be constructed of extracted material to the house site to allow access in all weather conditions. Formed tracks will be constructed for the flowers, garlic and orchard, allowing suitable access.

### Marketing / Sales:

The proponents are already producing flowers and garlic, and those products are sold at farmers' markets, and the local store and flowers are supplied to a daughter who is a florist. The increase in flower production is expected to be taken by floristry. A small roadside stall will also be constructed to sell to passersby at the front of the site.

### Staffing:

The enterprise is to be run, managed, and constructed by the proponents with assistance and input from the family.

### Allowance for possible future expansion:

The proposed agriculture is a significant expansion of the farming activities that the proponents have been doing on their adjoining farm. They are looking to make a good income from these activities but are not seeking to become major operators, and the proposed activities will take several years to evolve fully.

### Opportunity Cost / Diversification:

The development of this property allows the proponents to sell their cattle grazing farm and relocate and increase their horticulture activities. Horticulture is one of the higher-returning agricultural activities, and the presented farming has a very good return per area used; there are few forms of agriculture with better returns per land unit from soil-based farming.

Agriculture is dynamic. Markets change and evolve, climate change impacts agricultural suitability, and farm circumstances alter. As with any business, the farming method and type should be constantly evaluated and, if required, adjusted to meet new circumstances.



## Financial Projections:

The proposal calls for an agricultural investment of \$35,000 and an investment in the dwelling and shed building of \$500,000.

After the initial development period, the property could expect revenue of over \$86,000 per year. The nature of horticultural crops is the longer the establishment, the greater the returns; these values are likely to be conservative.

This indicative budget demonstrates the expected returns from the agricultural activities, and assuming the products are sold at the farm gate rate, the proponents already have established direct contacts, and the revenues can be expected to be higher.

### Indicative Agricultural Revenues:

Income /Cost Item	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Garlic Sales (\$25 per Kg double row planting)	\$0	\$6,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
Flowers (-\$4 per stem)	\$0	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$60,000
Fruit (\$3.50 kg X 100 kg per tree)				\$6,000	\$10,000	\$14,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$26,000</b>	<b>\$42,000</b>	<b>\$58,000</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>	<b>\$86,000</b>
Plant / Garlic Costs	-\$15,000	-\$1,500	-\$1,500	-\$1,500	-\$1,500	-\$1,500
Packaging Costs (10%)	\$0	-\$2,600	-\$4,200	-\$5,200	-\$6,200	-\$7,200
Apportioned Rates, Insurances Utilities \$	-\$2,000	-\$2,000	-\$2,000	-\$2,000	-\$2,000	-\$2,000
Infrastructure Investment / Maintenance \$	-\$20,000	-\$2,500	-\$2,500	-\$2,500	-\$2,500	-\$2,500
Variable Costs (8%)	\$0	-\$2,080	-\$3,360	-\$4,640	-\$5,760	-\$6,880
<b>Net Revenue \$</b>	<b>-\$37,000</b>	<b>\$15,320</b>	<b>\$28,440</b>	<b>\$42,160</b>	<b>\$54,040</b>	<b>\$65,920</b>

#### Notes:

Farming revenues and costs only

This table shows agricultural costs and revenues only. Landholding costs and building and equipment costs are not included. Revenues and costs are indicative and based on Industry averages.

## Environmental Factors:

### Natural Resource Management:

The landscape is typical of highly modified pastoral farming, having been completely cleared for agricultural production. The site adjoins the ephemeral Birregurra Creek, and the proponents have revegetated that waterway frontage. A new native tree shelterbelt will be planted along the south boundary for wind protection and as an ecology habitat.

### Erosion and Compaction:

The property itself is not seen as prone to water erosion, and there is no evidence of erosion occurring. The steeper bank adjoining the waterway has been planted with a row of trees to provide structure to that bank.

The soils have a high clay content, which means they could be prone to compaction during wetter periods. Heavy vehicle traffic should be confined to constructed tracks, particularly during wetter seasons.

### Groundwater:

Groundwater is at a depth of 5 metres and is generally at low risk from exposure to any form of nutrients infiltrating from the surface. The high level of plant coverage and minimal fertiliser use will assist in keeping soil nutrient levels lower to minimise any further risk. The water quality here is unsuitable for horticultural use, with a salinity of 3500-7000 parts per million.

### Drainage:

The property has no constructed drainage, relying on overland flow to the river or dam and soil infiltration for water clearance. There are no identified run-on or run-off flows.

### Biosecurity Requirements:

There are no specific biosecurity requirements for this horticulture, but good biosecurity practices will always be applied. Only clean, certified plants from a certified supplier will be used for planting, and excess plant material should not be sent to other growers. Vehicles entering and leaving the property for work purposes should have clean wheel arches. Any shared farm equipment must always be cleaned before entering or leaving the site.

### Adverse impacts on adjacent land:

The adjoining properties are all grazing farms in all directions. There is not seen to be any major change to the amenity of these properties from the activities. The use of sprayed chemicals would be rare and should only be used on appropriate weather days (low wind and not within 24 hours of forecast rainfall).

### Adverse impacts from adjacent land:

None of the adjacent properties appears to have any use which would impact this land use.

## Site Images:

Image 1: Looking north over the property from Whytcross Lane (house site shown)



Image 2: Looking north over the farm.





Image 3: Looking south over the property from Birregurra Creek



Image 4: Proposed house site





Image 5: Looking westward over the site, the proponents manage the grass and weeds on the road reserve.



Image 6: Existing farm dam





Image 7: Planted flower seedlings activity to be relocated.



Image 8: Garlic plantings to be relocated and expanded





Images 9,10,11, and 12: Current farm produce images: flower growing beds, flowers to be sold, garlic cloves for planting and drying garlic plants.





Image 13: Birregurra Creek frontage has been vegetated to manage any erosion issues, and the house site is well above flood levels.



Image 14: Existing house site and driveway; a new dwelling is preferred to prevent disruptive excision.

