

# Rural Lands Issues Paper:

## RURAL LIVING



CGRC Rural Lands Strategy

**RURAL LIVING**

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*This report was prepared by  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional*

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# 1. Executive Summary

Rural living is an important issue within the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council area.

Rural living is a land use that is not without issues. It is recognised that these issues are associated generally with closer rural settlement such as the loss of productive agricultural land, the impacts of rural land fragmentation and land use conflicts. The protection of productive agricultural lands remains a key issue.

There are a number of recent local trends that need to be fully considered before making any strategic changes to further facilitate rural living opportunities across the Council area. This includes examining social and economic conditions that are being experienced by the local and regional community including an ageing population.

With the predominant land use across the LGA being rural the future options for development on these lands are a major consideration in developing a new rural lands strategy. The existing legislative and strategic planning framework for rural lands across NSW plays an important role in determining these future options.

## 2. Introduction

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council is the merged local government area of former Cootamundra and Gundagai Shires. The two towns of Cootamundra and Gundagai are the main population centres with a number of villages and rural communities also serving as residential options. All of these residential areas have strong existing and historical connections to the surrounding rural lands and the architecture and wealth of the towns in particular are directly attributable to the agricultural industry.

The total land area is 398,141.7 hectares, home to 11,141 people (ABS 2016). Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is the largest employment industry, employing 15.3% of employed persons. Manufacturing (which includes agricultural value add industries) is a close second, employing 10.6% of employed persons (Census Time Series Profile, 2011).

In 2011 the combined value of agricultural commodities produced from the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council Local Government Area was \$103 million, however this figure does not capture other agricultural outputs such as agritourism, local markets, events and so on.

Figure 1: CGRC LGA



## Rural Lands Strategy Background

The merger of Gundagai Shire Council and Cootamundra Shire Council as Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council has stimulated the need for new planning instruments and policies; in particular a Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan which cover the regional council area. A strategy to deal specifically with the rural lands of CGRC is proposed which aims to analyse agricultural trends and opportunities for the area. This strategy will help to update mapping for the new Local Environmental Plan while also providing rationale and reasoning for zoning and minimum lot sizes in rural areas.

Rural land is often neglected from a planning perspective due to more pressing planning needs in larger centres, however agricultural land often has a disproportionate impact on residential and economic activity when compared to development in a town, with intensive feedlots, quarries, landfills, etc. Furthermore, agricultural activities themselves such as piggeries, vineyards, feedlots and so on have a long-term impact on the use and viability of the site and surrounding lands. Through the strategic planning process, controls and principles of development can be placed on agricultural land to ensure the viability of the land into perpetuity as well as providing opportunities for emerging and new agricultural enterprises to establish in the area.

The two former shires have varied terrain and soil quality which makes formulating one course of action or plan for rural land difficult. However, this should be viewed as an opportunity which will make Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council more attractive and marketable to residents, visitors and prospective residents as a wide variation of agricultural pursuits can be explored in this single local government area.

It is Council's intention that the Rural Lands Strategy serves not only as a land use planning document, but as a plan for economic success and growth through the shared identity of agriculture. This leverages off what Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council does best (agriculture), connections to logistic hubs and routes as well as capitalising on changing recreation and tourism trends.

## Purpose of the Issues Papers

The Issues Papers are integral to the success of the Rural Lands Strategy as they are background documents based on research and science; analysing trends elsewhere and juxtaposing this with the situation within Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council.

There are ten Issues Papers which will be produced with the community having shaped not only the overarching theme of each paper, but also having identified a number of existing constraints and opportunities to be investigated. Based on the findings of the Issues Papers and workshops during the “listening” phase, a directions paper will be produced which will list key directions for the Rural Lands Strategy.



## 3. Rural Living

### 3.1 What is Rural Living?

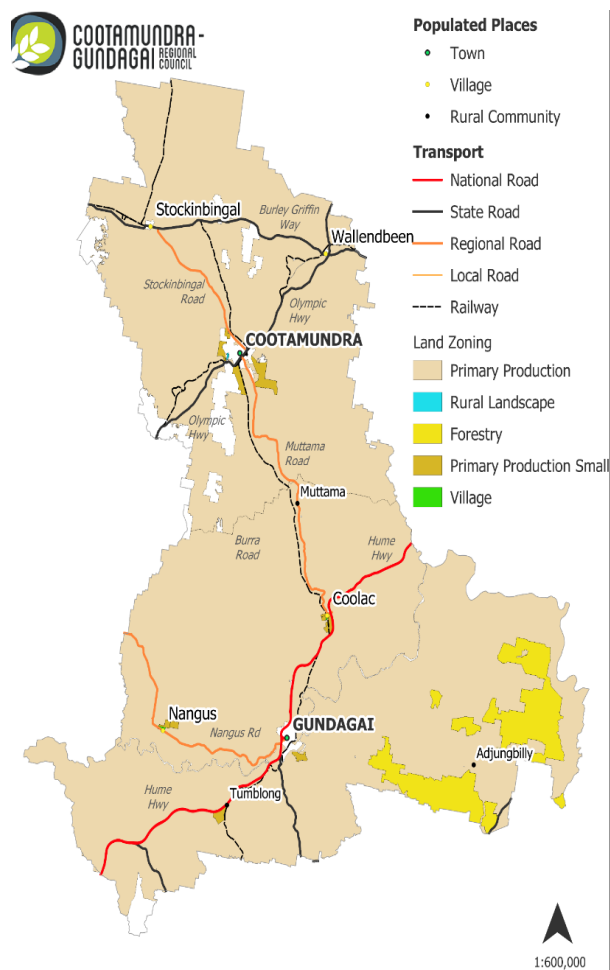
While some define rural living as simply living in an area not considered to be ‘urban’ this definition is crude and does not encompass the many aspects specifically related to rural living (*Sinclair, 2002*). The term is arguably difficult to define as rural living varies in each locality given several factors including but not limited to geography, vegetation, land use and other factors. For some, having spent more time in the city – rural living invokes a poetic idea of a homestead on a small acreage with neighbours close enough for safety but far enough away for privacy. Add a few sheep, cows and a horse to the land and you’ve got rural living. However, this is not necessarily an accurate description as rural living includes everything from rural villages to large-scale agricultural practises.

Rural living is arguably a combination of several sub-categories like rural residential living – with practically no agricultural use, “bush blocks”; hobby farms – small-scale agriculture with small-scale income, hobby interests like horses for private recreation; and large-scale farming – extensive or intensive. There are many potential definitions for the term rural living.

For the purposes of this Issues Paper the term rural living is:

*“land identified as rural and zoned within the relevant Local Environmental Plan, which encompasses open land, farmland and rural villages but is not restricted to any one landform or land use, and to which a primary dwelling is situated on and resided out of”*

Figure 2: CGRC LGA Rural Land Zone





## 3.2 Rural Living Issues

### Rural Land, Land Fragmentation and Conflict

Only 10% of Australia's land "...is arable land suitable for soil based agriculture and livestock production" and most of this land is located along the coastal fringe of the continent (Sinclair 1999, p1).

This restricts the total land mass of primary agricultural land inland and emphasises the need to preserve larger scale agricultural land and prevent further fragmentation.

Land use conflicts may arise due to possible incompatibility when there is no separation between agricultural and non-rural land (Sinclair 1999).

Agricultural practices can impact adjoining properties, particularly small lots and residential zones. Such conflicts arise from farming and agricultural operations producing noise, odour, light, chemical, dust and other disturbances to amenity as well as damage from stock (Sinclair 1999).

While there is potential for non-rural land to be negatively impacted by the operations of primary agriculture there is also the potential for the opposite to occur. Small rural land holdings with the primary use being more residential in nature than agriculturally productive have the potential to negatively impact larger adjoining land used for agricultural production. This can occur through spread of weeds, pests and other invasive species from one parcel of land to another.

Land use conflicts are more likely to occur in areas where there has been abundant land fragmentation resulting in more lots barely meeting the minimum land use size to support development (ie dwellings) with consent.

Land fragmentation is a major issue within Australia. Figure 3 summarises the land fragmentation cycle which has and continues to occur across Australia despite State planning policies and strategic planning principles to mitigate this. Other aspects that are also significantly impacted by land fragmentation and thereby oppose the principles of ecologically sustainable development include:

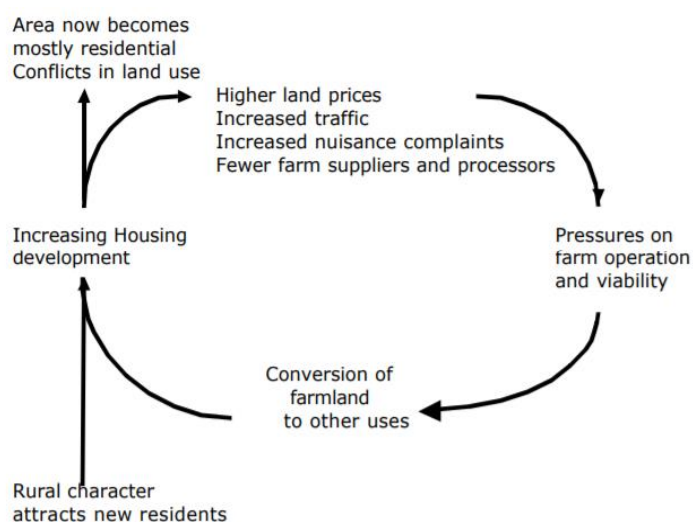
- Large-scale agricultural practices;
- Biodiversity impact; and
- Permissibility and suitability of development.

Fragmentation of rural land can have a significant impact on the economy as rural land is where most of Australia's food and fibre is generated (*Sinclair 2002*).

Land fragmentation may also have a significant impact on the environment as the biodiversity values are impacted by development both directly and indirectly (*Sinclair 2002*).

It is important to consider that the effects and impacts of land fragmentation are serious and can be irreversible which is why strategic future planning and mitigation is so important when it comes to rural living and potentially conflicting land uses.

Figure 3: Land Fragmentation Cycle



Source: Daniels & Bower, 1997, p6

## Lifestyle Factors and Social Trends

There are general perceptions about rural living and the benefits of a country lifestyle. Studies into these perceptions, like that of *Davis and Bartley (2008)*, have identified the benefits and constraints of rural living as summarised below:

### Pros

- Clean, fresh air;
- Peace and quiet, amenity;
- Lower housing costs;
- Lower crime rates and community violence;
- Greater community engagement – volunteering and inclusion.

### Cons

- Everything costs more
- Poor accessibility to organised activities;
- Difficulty visiting healthcare professionals;
- Lack of employment diversity.

As a general trend this summary may have some accuracy though individual rural communities may not be encumbered by the same benefits or constraints as others. It is important to consider that multiple factors impact on the benefits and constraints of individual rural communities and rural living.

One major factor not mentioned in the above summary is the demographic of communities and how this may impact rural living.

Within the total population of Australians living outside a major urban centre 13% are aged 65 years and over (*Davis & Bartlett, 2008; Winterton & Warburton, 2014*). This figure identifies that there is a significant population of older people within rural areas- a trend that has implications for broader social trends within Australia and impacts on rural communities and their suitability, accessibility and support services.

Perhaps one of the most notable and concerning trends for rural communities within Australia is the demographic ageing of such communities. Ageing rural communities is identified as being the result of two dominant trends:

- Young people (15 – 24 years) moving out – for education and employment; and
- Older people (semi-retirees and retirees) moving in – due to housing affordability and lifestyle opportunity.

### 3.3 Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

#### Population Trends

The following is a summary of the local trends that influence rural living within the LGA.

Table 1 and Table 2 reveal that the median age of residents within the towns, villages and communities within the LGA ranges between 33 – 50 years. The median age for the CGRC Local Government Area is 47, in contrast with the National and NSW median age of 38. (*ABS, 2016j*).

*Table 1: Population and Median Age of Villages within the CGRC Area*

Village	Population	Median Age
Adjungbilly	81	36
Coolac	216	38
Muttama	131	33
Nangus	205	40
Stockinginbal	374	50
Tumblong	196	40
Wallendbeen	260	52

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016c-1

Table 2: Age Profile of Cootamundra and Gundagai

Age	Cootamundra	Gundagai
0 – 4	4.9%	5.0%
5 – 9	6.3%	5.1%
10 – 14	5.9%	7.3%
15 – 19	5.0%	6.5%
20 – 24	4.3%	4.1%
25 – 29	4.0%	4.1%
30 – 34	4.7%	4.2%
35 – 39	4.7%	6.3%
40 – 44	5.5%	5.4%
45 – 49	5.4%	5.6%
50 – 54	6.3%	6.4%
55 – 59	7.4%	6.3%
60 – 64	7.5%	6.7%
65 – 69	7.7%	7.7%
70 – 74	6.6%	6.2%
75 – 79	6.3%	4.9%
80 – 84	3.5%	3.6%
85+	4.1%	4.6%
<b>Median</b>	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>46.0%</b>

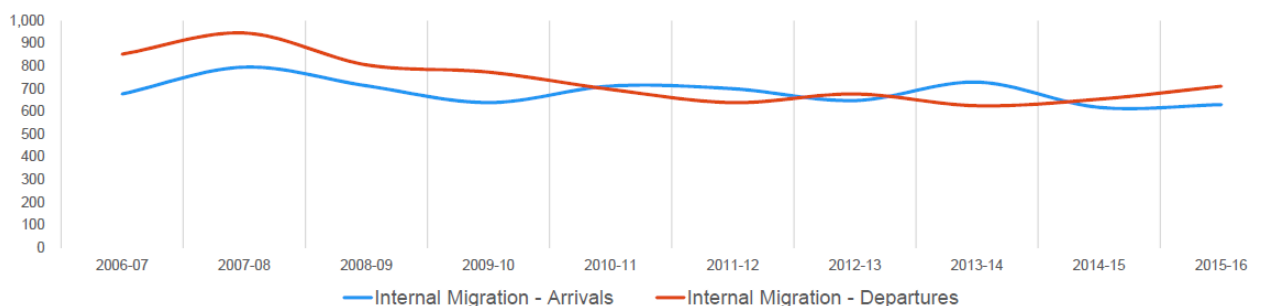
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016a-b

## Past and Present

Within the Cootamundra-Gundagai LGA there has been an almost steady migration of people both into and out of the region. Figure 4 reveals the regional internal migration between 2006 and 2016.

Figure 4: Regional Internal Migration 2006 - 2016

### Regional Internal Migration Estimates 2006-16 Gundagai (A)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016c-i

## Location Migration Trends (in/out)

A migration profile for the Cootamundra-Gundagai LGA (2011 – 2016) revealed the following trends:

- 36.4% of all moves were from down the street, the next suburb over or from out of town;
- 1,461 people moved home within the LGA;
- 114 people moved from overseas;
- 2,435 people moved to the LGA; and
- 2,572 people moved from the LGA.

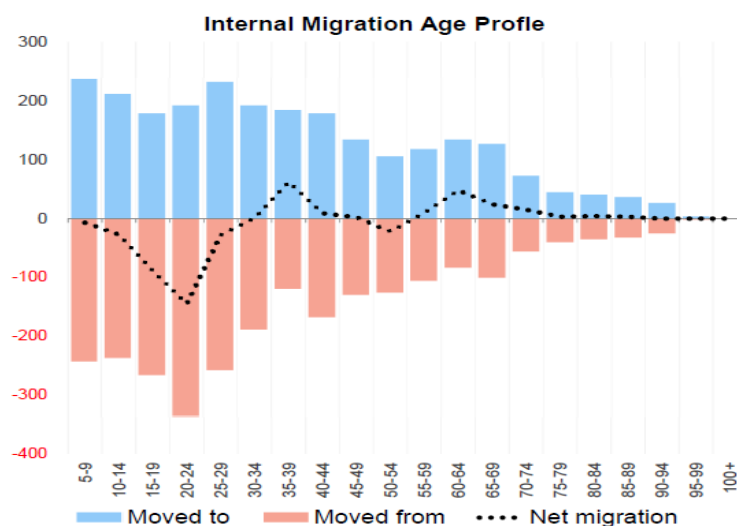
Table 3: Migration into and out of the LGA

Migration into the LGA from:		Migration out of the LGA to:	
Queensland	112	Wagga Wagga	194
Australian Capital Territory	107	Australian Capital Territory	147
Hilltops	104	Queensland	136
Snowy Valleys	95	Victoria	85
Wagga Wagga	85	Snowy Valleys	69
Junee	67	Hilltops	66
Victoria	48	Wollongong	47
Wollondilly	34	Temora	42
Wollongong	34	Shoalhaven	40
Shoalhaven	32	Junee	39

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016c-i

Of these trends, the movement of people into and out of the LGA is important to note and the age profile of such migration is detailed in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Migration Age Profile



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016c-i

## Age/Demographics

Of the 2,435 people moving into the LGA the more prominent age brackets are 5 – 9 and 25 – 29 years. It can be assumed that these ages are linked as parents within the 25 – 34 age bracket moved into the region. It is also important to note that there is a higher number of people aged 55 – 69 moving into the LGA than from it.

As evident in Figure 5 there is a significantly higher number of people aged 15 – 24 moving out of the LGA. It can be assumed that this figure coincides with a larger social trend of people moving out of the LGA to pursue educational opportunities (Year 11, 12 and University) and job opportunities. This trend is supported by Table 3 which identifies that almost 200 people moving out of the LGA moved to Wagga Wagga with almost 150 moving to the ACT.

The trend of young people moving out and older people moving in to rural communities has been long occurring (*Davis & Bartlett, 2008*). This is consistent with responses from several local real estate agents.

## 4. Opportunities for Rural Living

### Land Use

Over 96% of the Cootamundra-Gundagai LGA is zoned rural with the top three land uses occupying the largest areas being cropping (141,447ha), improved pastures (111,312ha) and native pastures (87,999ha) (see Figure 7) (*Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, 2018*).

Figure 6 identifies the five different rural zones across the LGA. These are listed below by relevant Local Environmental Plan applying to the LGA. The consolidated objectives within each zone are also listed below.

Figure 6 identifies the consolidated land zoning across the LGA. Figure 8 identifies the location of prime agricultural land within the LGA. Figure 7 identifies agricultural land uses within the LGA.

There is an opportunity to overlay Figure 6 and Figure 7 with Figure 8 to identify key areas zoned rural that are best suited to remain as large holdings to support large-scale farming and agricultural practices.

Identifying such areas would also assist in meeting the principles and objectives of the *State Environment Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008* by identifying areas of high importance to assist in protecting natural resources and preventing further fragmentation of rural land.

Identification of prime agricultural land simultaneously identifies land which should not be developed for residential purposes. Land identified as prime agricultural land is largely consistent with land used for cropping as indicated in Figure 8.

Figure 6: Rural Land

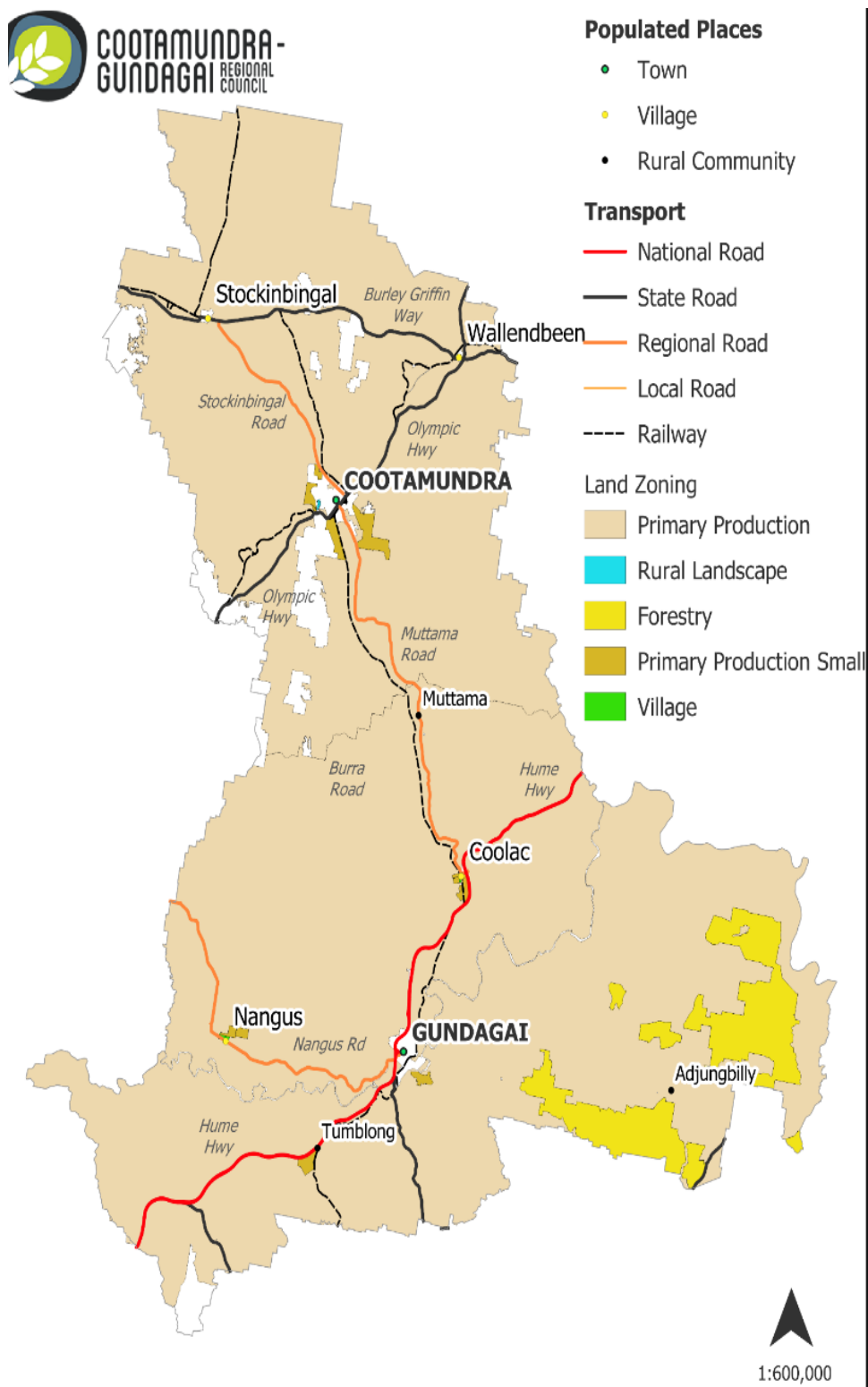




Figure 7: Prime Agricultural Land

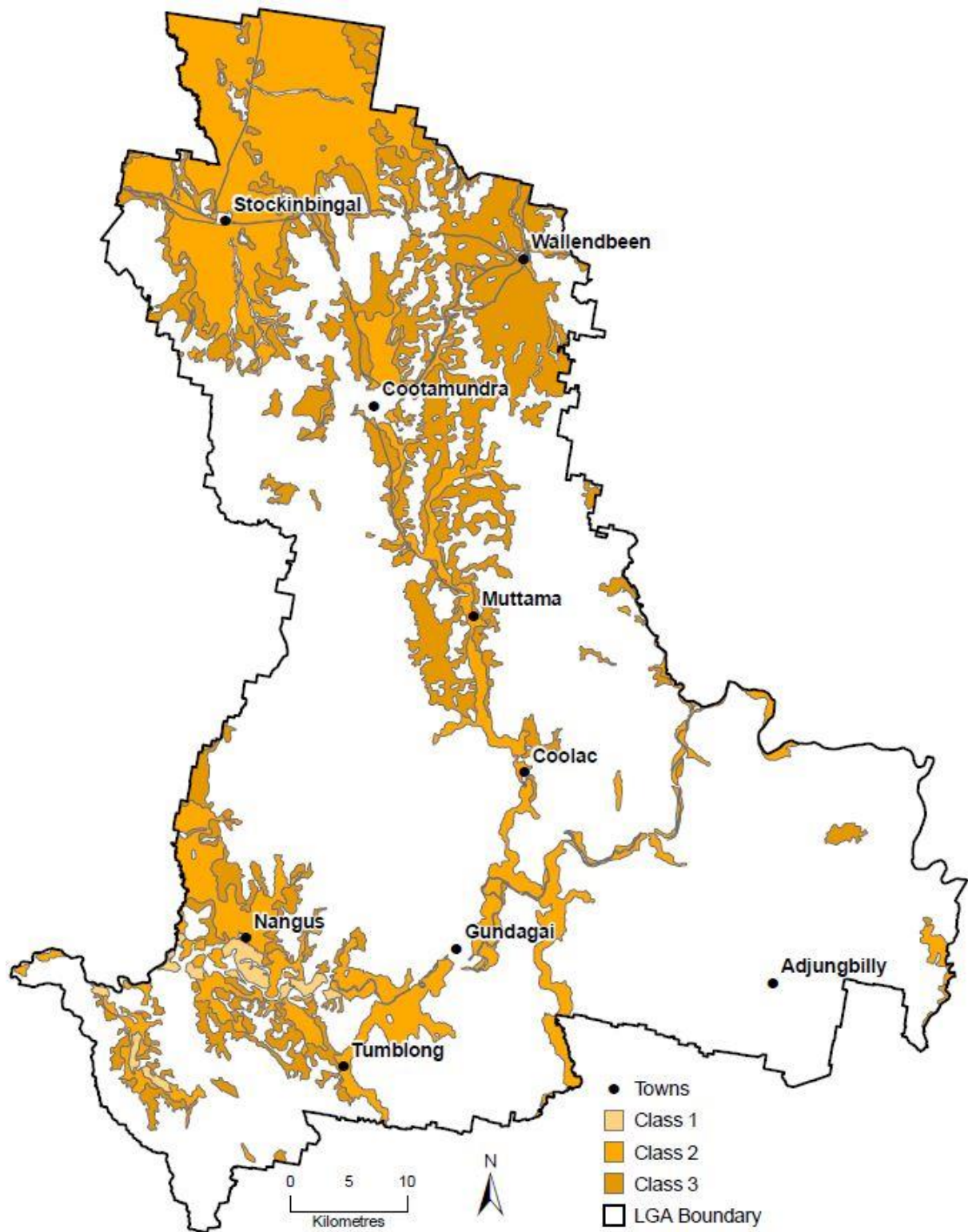
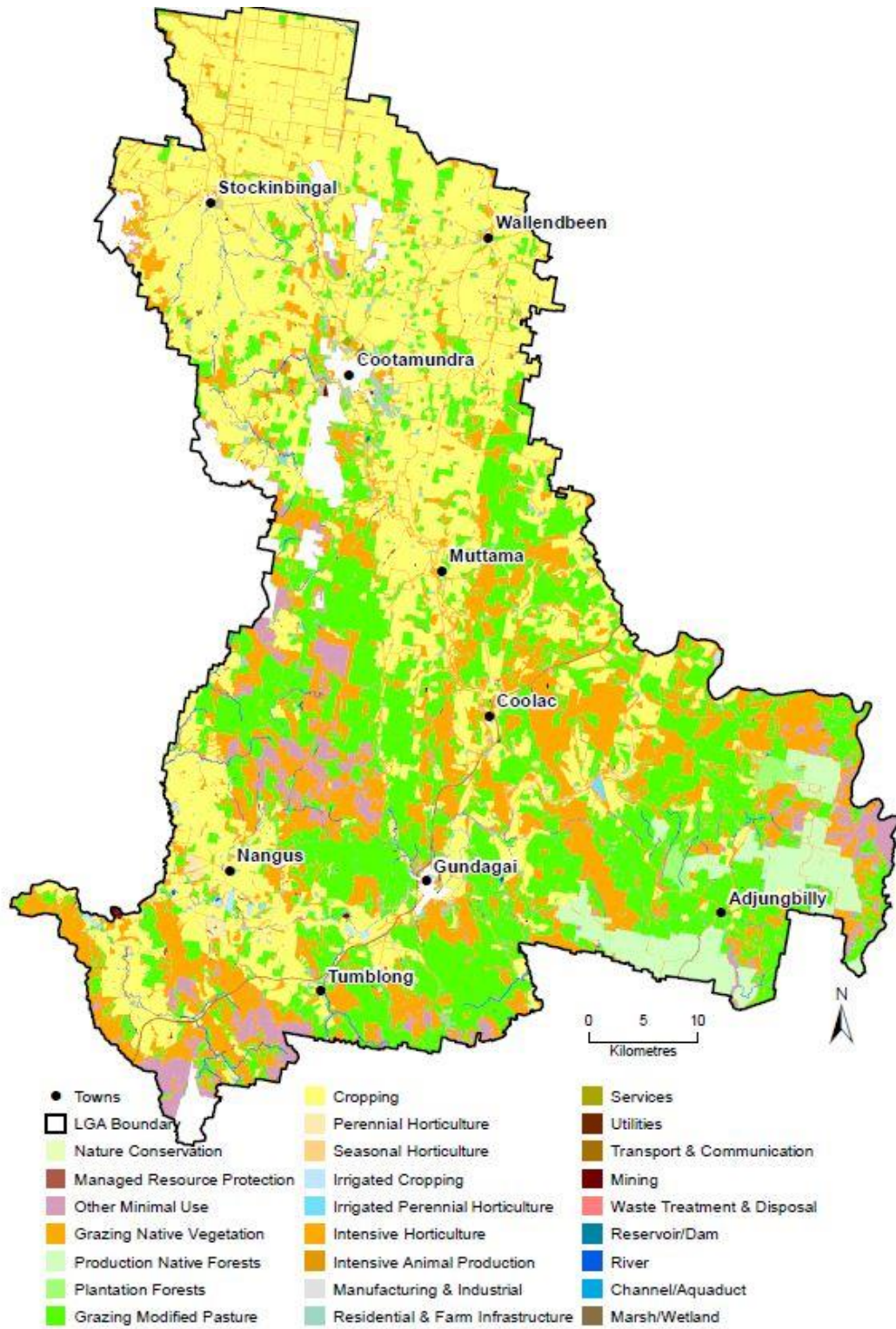


Figure 8: Land Use (Agricultural)



Source: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/acump/land-use/alum-classification>

Current rural zones in the LGA are listed below:

<b>Cootamundra</b>		<b>Gundagai</b>	
<b>RU1</b>	Primary Production	<b>RU1</b>	Primary Production
<b>RU2</b>	Rural Landscape	<b>RU3</b>	Forestry
<b>RU4</b>	Primary Production Small Lot	<b>RU4</b>	Primary Production Small Lot
<b>RU5</b>	Village	<b>RU5</b>	Village
(Cootamundra Local Environmental Plan 2013)		(Gundagai Local Environmental Plan 2011)	

Consolidated objectives of the existing rural zones are listed below:

- **RU1 Primary Production**
  - To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base;
  - To encourage diversity in primary industry enterprises and systems appropriate for the area;
  - To minimise the fragmentation and alienation of resource lands;
  - To minimise conflict between land uses within this zone and land uses within adjoining zones;
  - To protect and conserve deposits of extractive materials and allow their extraction by limited development where appropriate;
  - To protect and conserve native and other vegetation in order to preserve scenic amenity and to minimise land degradation.
  
- **RU2 Rural Landscape**
  - To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base;
  - To maintain the rural landscape character of the land;
  - To provide for a range of compatible land uses, including extensive agriculture;
  - To ensure that environmentally sensitive land, remnant vegetation and natural wildlife habitat are appropriately protected from development likely to detrimentally affect the preservation of those areas.
  
- **RU3 Forestry**
  - To enable development for forestry purposes;
  - To ensure other development that is compatible with forestry land uses.

- RU4 Primary Production Small Lot
  - To enable sustainable primary industry and other compatible land uses;
  - To encourage and promote diversity and employment opportunities in relation to primary industry enterprises, particularly those that require smaller lots or that are more intensive in nature;
  - To minimise conflict between land uses within this zone and land uses within adjoining zones.
  
- RU5 Village
  - To provide for a range of land uses, services and facilities that are associated with a rural village.

## Economic Trends

Following discussions with several local real estate agents it became clear that there are several trends in the migration of people to and from the LGA.

One of the main trends identified by the real estate agents and supported by larger social trends is the movement of older people into the LGA and young people out of the LGA (*Davis & Bartlett, 2008*).

As identified the movement out of the LGA by younger people is often linked with education and career opportunities. However, the movement of older people into the LGA is believed to be link to economic factors such as affordable housing and land prices as well as employment opportunities.

Through the discussions with local real estate agents it became clear that there is a high occurrence of retirees and semi-retirees moving into the LGA, many of these having trades and skills to which they are looking to make use of for casual employment on an as-needs basis.

It was identified that the migration of the demographic into the region is due to the affordable real estate and rural living opportunities as migration occurred from Sydney or Canberra (tree-change) or the South Coast (sea-change).

Summarised in Table 4 as of July 2018 the average housing cost in Cootamundra was \$210 and the average cost in Gundagai was \$248 (*Realestate.com.au 2018a; Realestate.com.au 2018b*).

Table 4: *Housing Costs and Trends*

Average Housing Cost		Top 3 People Moving to Area		
Cootamundra	\$210	21.5% older couples & families	15.6% established couples and families	13.4% elderly singles
Gundagai	\$248	25.3% older couples & families	16.9% established couples & families	13.5% elderly couples

The median value of rural land in NSW in 2017 was \$3,946 per hectare (*Rural Bank 2017 p7*). In 2017 within the Cootamundra-Gundagai LGA the media value per hectare was \$4,786 (*Rural Bank 2017 p11*). A study by the Rural Bank (2017) summarises the performance by land size in NSW from 2013 – 2017 (Table 5).

Table 5: Performance by land size in NSW

	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	% of Trans	Median \$/ha	% of Trans	Median \$/ha	% of Trans	Median \$/ha	% of Trans	Median \$/ha	% of Trans	Median \$/ha
30 - 99	37%	5,240	41%	5,876	43%	6,410	44%	7,104	43%	7,467
100 - 299	31%	2,530	30%	2,719	28%	2,818	27%	3,007	27%	3,388
300 – 499	12%	1,889	10%	1,963	11%	2,026	10%	2,188	10%	2,297
500+	20%	1,259	19%	991	18%	1,249	19%	1,349	19%	1,672
Overall	3,594	2,789	3,8433	2,989	3,825	3,294	3,924	3,628	3,740	3,946

Trans = Transactions

## 5. Constraints

### General

While there are many opportunities for rural living there are also several constraints which impact on the migration of people into and out of the LGA.

Some of these constraints include:

- The erosion of services- particularly in villages as commercial premises close;
- Lack of accessibility to services- people need to travel out of the LGA for specialist services;
- Limitation of employment opportunities;
- Socio-economic disadvantage; and
- Disadvantages exacerbated by natural disaster and land limitations (drought, flood etc).

*(Davis & Bartlett, 2008)*

### Ageing Population

Research into healthy ageing in rural communities has revealed several factors that are believed to impact heavily on individuals in the population bracket of 65+ years. Some of the factors that these studies have identified include access, physical environment, medical support and community engagement.

Accessibility to services such as transport or medical facilities have been identified as factors which contribute to the decision to undertake rural living, particularly by people aged 65 years and over.

Through consultation with numerous real estate agents within the Cootamundra-Gundagai LGA it was identified that people moving into the LGA aged 65+ years, chose the region based on its central location between Melbourne and Sydney and the specialised medical services that can be found in these cities. The increasing medical needs of ageing populations are serviced adequately within the LGA with several doctors at both Cootamundra and Gundagai- each with a hospital. While the hospital might not offer specialist services they are easily obtainable within a 1hr – 2hr drive to either Wagga or Canberra.

The health-related travel requirements do not appear to deter people migrating into the LGA. This is believed to be due to the availability of transport services such as buses and trains. The central location of the LGA and proximity to major cities is very appealing to not only elderly people moving into the LGA but also to young families who seek the solitude of rural living, the attention given by schools with lower class numbers and the proximity to commute for work.



## Land Use Zoning

Land use zoning within the LGA can act as a constraint for rural living.

Land zoned for primary agriculture (RU1) is not appropriate for small lots (RU4), especially when such lots have no significant agricultural use.

However, discussions with real estate agents revealed a concern that the land that is zoned RU1 is not always prime agricultural land and might be better suited to RU4 primary production small lots given the geography and land suitability. It was discussed that 'poor production' agricultural land would be more manageable as smaller lots (2ha – 5ha).

## Minimum Lot Size – Building Entitlement

One of the main constraints for rural living within the LGA is past land fragmentation.

Such fragmentation has resulted in parcels of land being subdivided over time which are now below the required minimum lots size for the zone (see Figure 9, Figure 10 and Figure 11).

While small lots do not necessarily present an issue for agricultural production if all lots are clustered, it presents an issue when those parcels are sold individually with the intention to erect a dwelling on them.

The common misconception that land can be sold with a building entitlement is a constraint for rural living.

No rural land is “entitled” to be development, though development may be permissible with consent. A summary of permissible land uses within each zone is listed below. This demonstrates the range of land uses permitted with rural zones to support rural living.

While dwellings and ancillary buildings may be permissible with consent within certain land zones such development must comply with several factors.

One of the first things to consider when proposing to erect a building is if the area of that lot meets the minimum lot size for that land use zone. This is often made difficult for rural zoned land as the minimum lot size for rural zones is larger than that of residential zones (see Figure 9).

However, even if the minimum lot size is met there are other factors to consider before a building or dwelling can be approved and constructed. Such factors include but are not limited to bushfire prone areas, flooding and water vulnerability, existing vegetation and biodiversity and other natural factors. Existing structures, neighbourhood context and locality must also be considered when assessing a potential development. A proposed development must not have a significant impact on existing features.

Figure 9: Minimum Lot Size

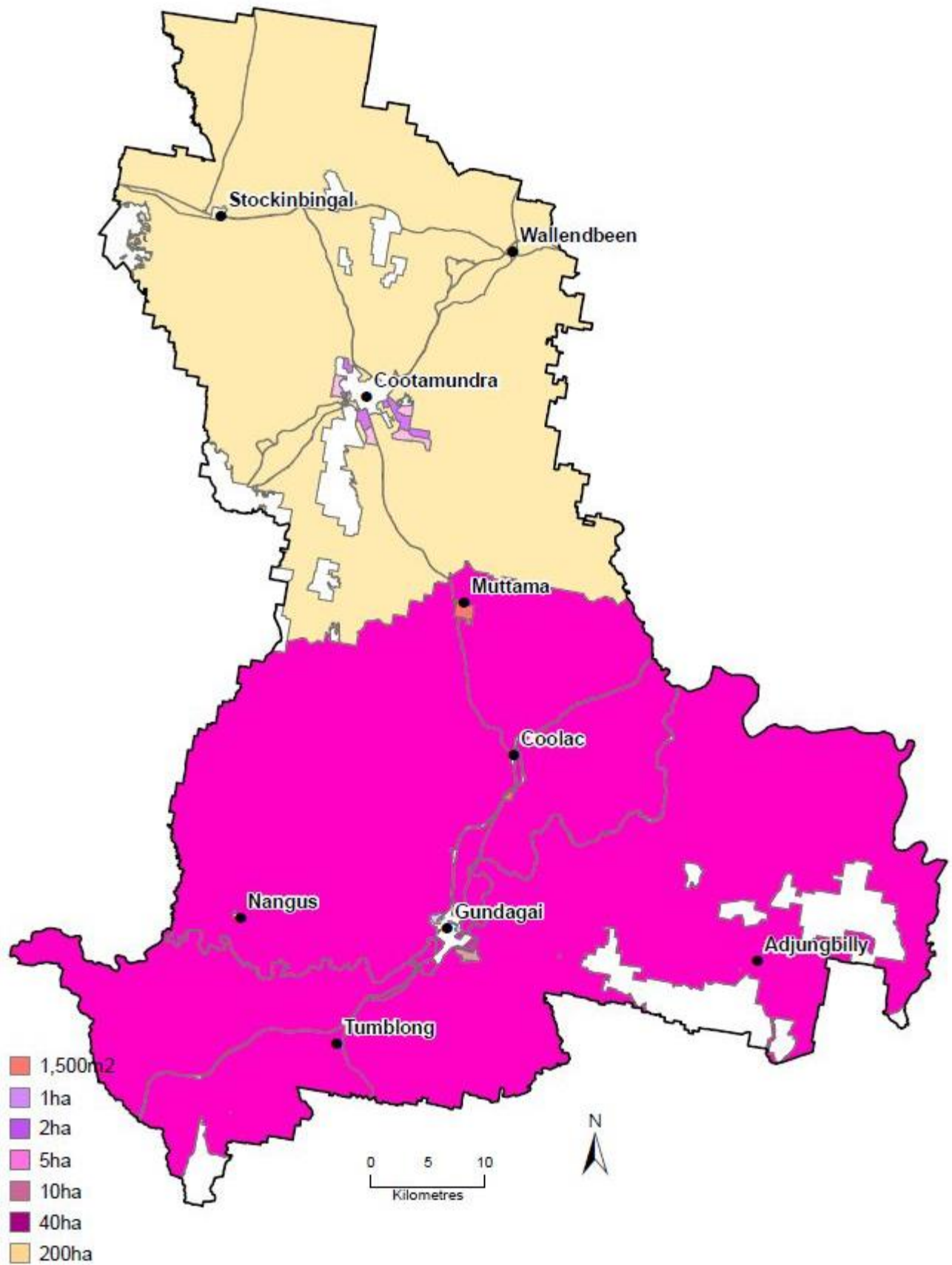




Figure 10: Landholdings

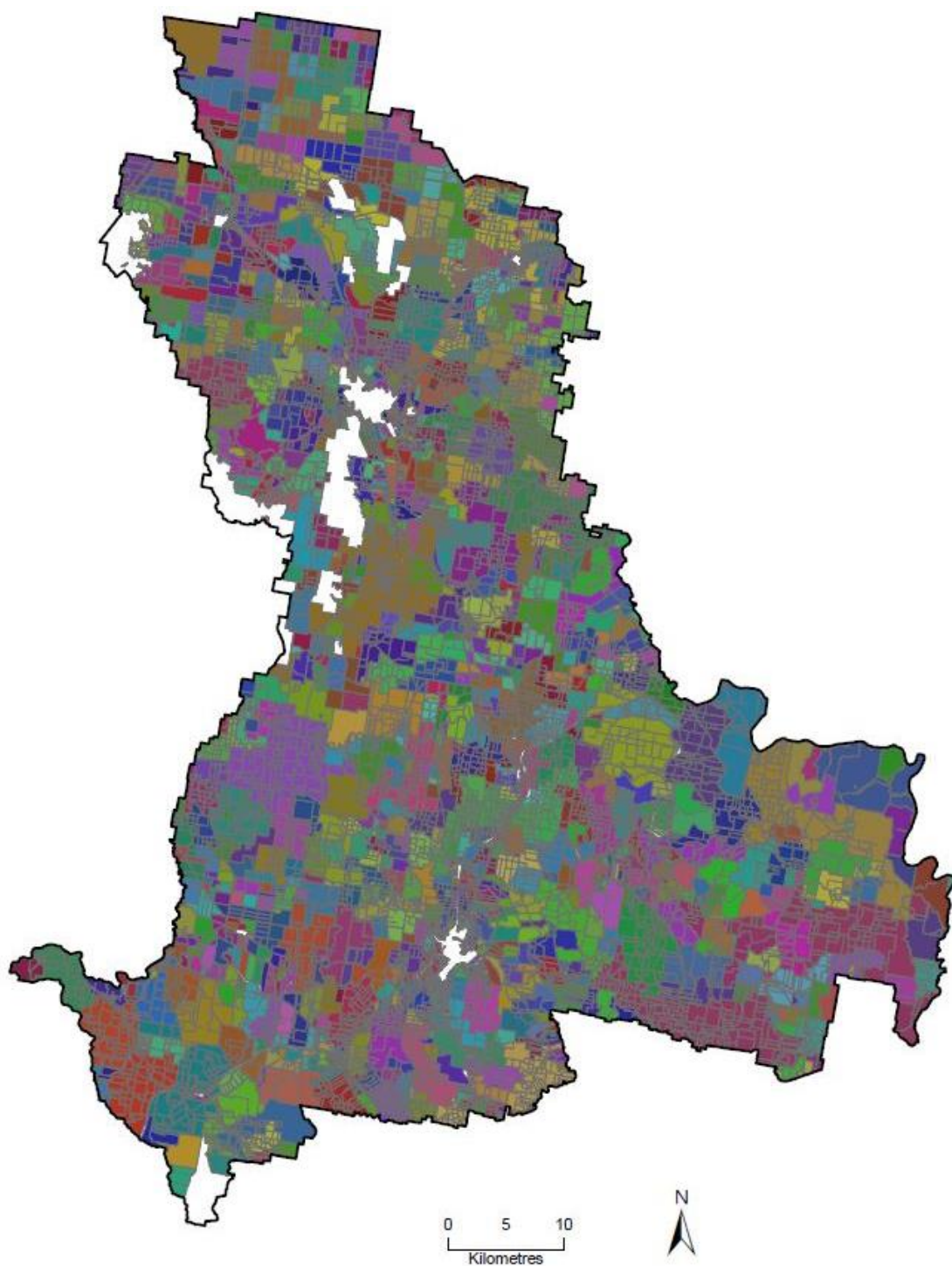
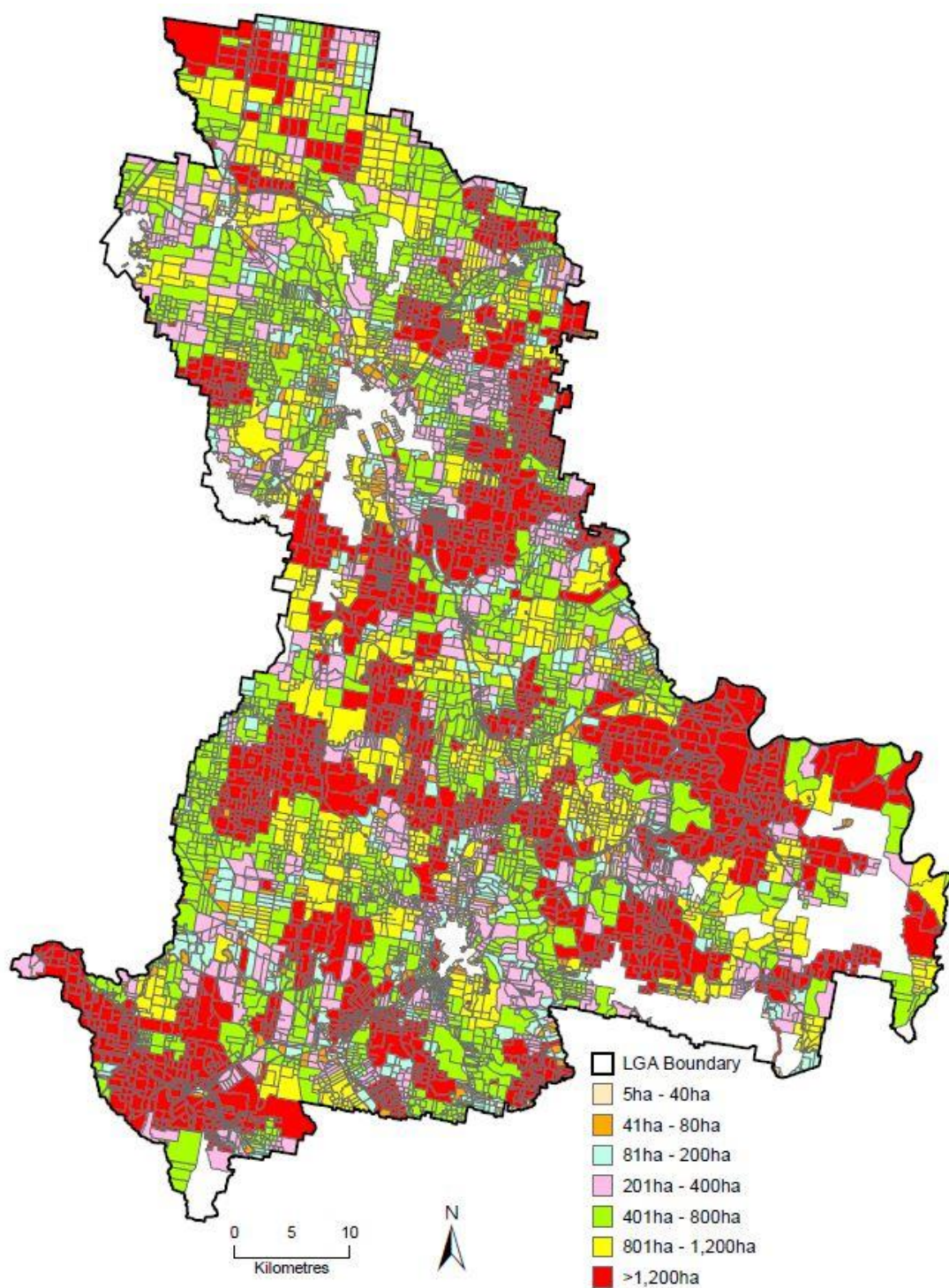


Figure 11: Lots by Size



The following is a summary of permissible uses across existing rural zones.

<b>Permitted without consent</b>	<b>RU1</b>	<b>RU2</b>	<b>RU3</b>	<b>RU4</b>	<b>RU5</b>
Home occupation	X	X		X	X
Environmental Protection Works	X				
Extensive Agriculture	X	X		X	
Roads			X		
<b>Permitted with Consent</b>					
Airstrips	X				
Amusement centres					X
Animal boarding or training establishments	X				
Aquaculture	X				
Backpackers' accommodation	X				
Bed and breakfast accommodation	X	X		X	
Business identification signs	X	X		X	
Camping grounds					X
Car parks					X
Caravan parks					X
Cellar door premises	X			X	
Centre-based child care facilities					X
Commercial premises					X
Community facilities					X
Dual occupancies (attached)	X	X		X	
Dwelling houses	X	X		X	X
Entertainment facilities					X
Environmental facilities	X	X			X
Environmental protection works		X		X	X
Extractive industries	X				
Farm buildings	X	X		X	
Farm stay accommodation	X	X		X	
Forestry	X				
Helipads	X				
Highway service centres					X
Home-based child care	X	X		X	X
Home businesses	X	X		X	X
Home industries	X	X		X	X
Information and education facilities					X
Intensive livestock agriculture	X				
Intensive plant agriculture	X			X	
Neighbourhood shops					X
Open cut mining	X				
Places of worship					X
Plant nurseries				X	

<b>Permitted with Consent</b>					
Public administration buildings.					X
Recreation facilities (indoor)					X
Recreation facilities (major)					X
Recreation facilities (outdoor)	X				X
Registered clubs					X
Residential accommodation					X
Respite day care centres					X
Roads	X			X	X
Roadside stalls	X			X	
Rural industries	X				
Rural workers' dwellings	X	X			
Schools					X
Secondary dwellings	X	X			
Self-storage units					X
Service stations					X
Signage					X
Tourist and visitor accommodation					X
Truck depots	X				
Veterinary hospitals	X				X
Water storage facilities	X				
<b>Prohibited</b>	<b>RU1</b>	<b>RU2</b>	<b>RU3</b>	<b>RU4</b>	<b>RU5</b>
Any other development (not specified above)	X	X	X	X	X
Bulky goods premises					X
Cellar door premises					X
Funeral homes					X
Multi-dwelling housing					X
Rural workers' dwellings					X
Sawmill or log processing works	X				

## State Environmental Planning Policies

State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008 (more commonly referred to as the Rural Lands SEPP), is a policy that applies to all land within the state identified as rural in Local Environmental Plans.

The aims of the policy are:

- a) To facilitate the orderly and economic use and development of rural lands for rural and related purposes;
- b) To identify the Rural Planning Principles and the Rural Subdivision Principles so as to assist in the proper management, development and protection of rural lands for the purpose of promoting the social, economic and environmental welfare of the State;
- c) To implement measures designed to reduce land use conflicts;
- d) To identify State significant agricultural land for the purpose of ensuring the ongoing viability of agriculture on that land, having regard to social, economic and environmental considerations; and
- e) To amend provisions of other environmental planning instruments relating to concessional lots in rural subdivisions.

*(State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008 Part 1 Clause 2)*

*State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008* contains planning principles that must be applied to the use and development of rural land including the subdivision of land.

Part 2 Clause 7 of the *Rural SEPP* includes the following rural planning principles:

- a) The promotion and protection of opportunities for current and potential productive and sustainable economic activities in rural areas;
- b) Recognition of the importance of rural lands and agriculture and the changing nature of agriculture and of trends, demands and issues in agriculture in the area, region or State;
- c) Recognition of the significance of rural land uses to the State and rural communities, including the social and economic benefits of rural land use and development;
- d) In planning for rural lands, to balance the social, economic and environmental interests of the community;
- e) The identification and protection of natural resources, having regard to maintaining biodiversity, the protection of native vegetation, the importance of water resources and avoiding constrained land;

- f) The provision of opportunities for rural lifestyle, settlement and housing that contribute to the social and economic welfare of rural communities;
- g) The consideration of impacts on services and infrastructure and appropriate location when providing for rural housing;
- h) Ensuring consistency with any applicable regional strategy of the Department of Planning or any applicable local strategy endorsed by the Director-General.

*(State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008 Part 2 Clause 7)*

Further to the rural planning principles the Rural SEPP also details rural subdivision principles (Part 3 Clause 8).

These principles are significant given historic trends of subdividing larger holdings into smaller lots which then change ownership and leads to fragmentation and land use conflicts.

- a) The minimisation of rural land fragmentation;
- b) The minimisation of rural land use conflicts, particularly between residential land uses and other rural land uses;
- c) The consideration of the nature of existing agricultural holdings and the existing and planned future supply of rural residential land when considering lot sizes for rural lands;
- d) The consideration of the natural and physical constraints and opportunities of land;
- e) Ensuring that planning for dwelling opportunities takes account of those constraints.

*(State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008 Part 3 Clause 8)*

The Rural SEPP is identified in the Local Planning Directions issued by the Minister for Planning for the making of Local Environmental Plans.

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Consistency of local planning with Regional Plans is also identified in the Local Planning Directions issued by the Minister for Planning for the making of Local Environmental Plans.

In considering the future for rural living consideration of the various Goals and Directions associated with rural lands is required including but not limited to *Goal 1 – Direction 1: Protect the region’s diverse and productive agricultural land*



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