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Planning Report

Use and Development of an Education Centre,
(Primary School, Secondary School and
Kindergarten), Display of a Business Identification
Sign, Reduction in Car Parking and Reduction of
Bicycle Facilities

3-5 Caldwell Court, Johnsonville

Our reference – 20474

18 November 2024

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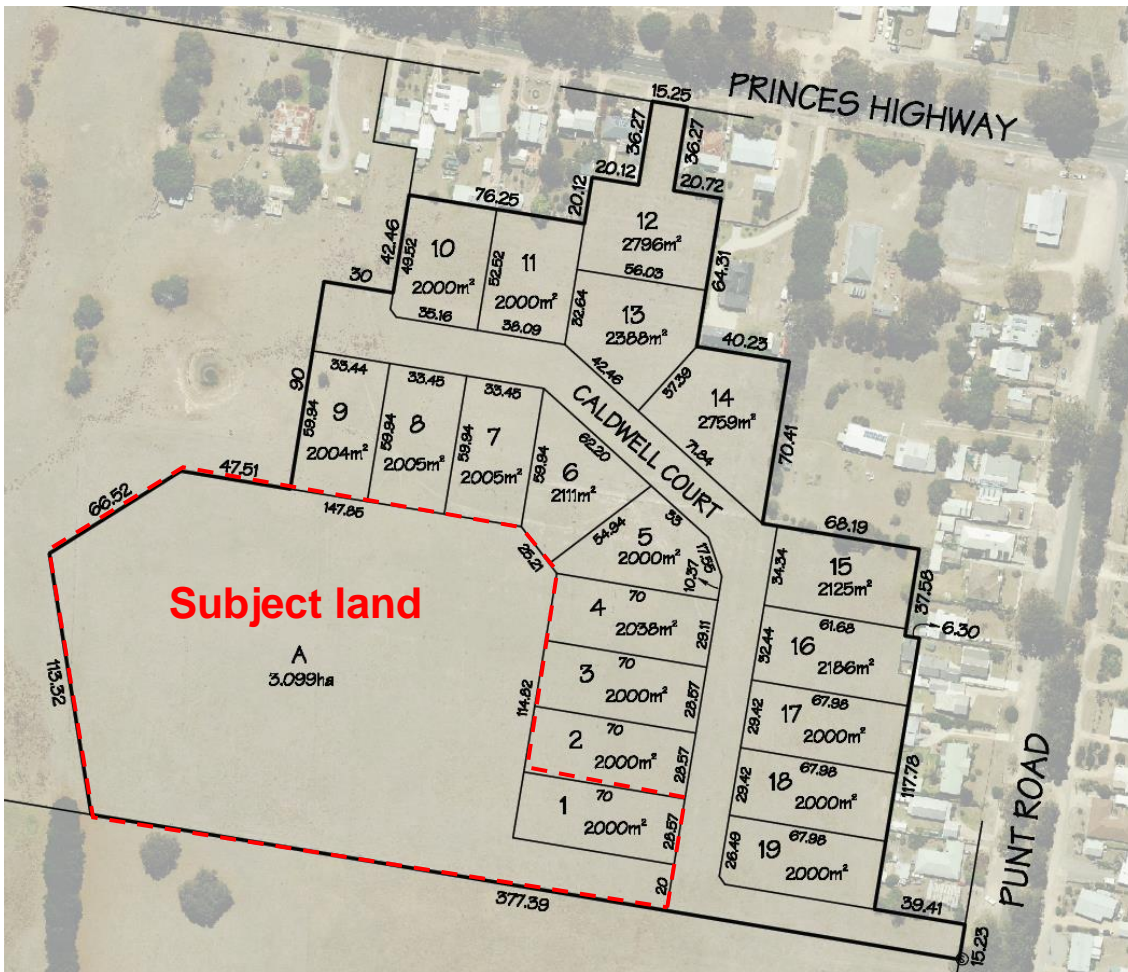
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Estimated cost of development: \$35 million

Fee class	Description	Amount (\$)
Reg. 9 Class 1	Use of an Education Centre (50%)	726.70
Reg. 9 Class 15	Development between \$15m-\$50m	28,291.70
Reg. 9 Class 22	Reduction in car parking requirement (50%)	726.70
Reg. 9 Class 22	Reduction in bicycle facilities (50%)	726.70
	Total fee payable	30,471.80

1. Subject Land & Surrounding Context

Formally known as Lot A and Lot 1 on PS903390 or otherwise known as 3 and 5 Caldwell Court, Johnsonville the subject land, is an irregular land parcel of 3.299 hectares and is zoned Low Density Residential Zone. The land parcel was created by a recent subdivision (approved on 28 April 2022) which developed Caldwell Court and residential lots that take access from the Court.



Extract from endorsed Proposed Subdivision Plan

The subdivision that created the subject land has been constructed and titles have issued. Residential allotments are currently being developed with contemporary single storey dwellings.

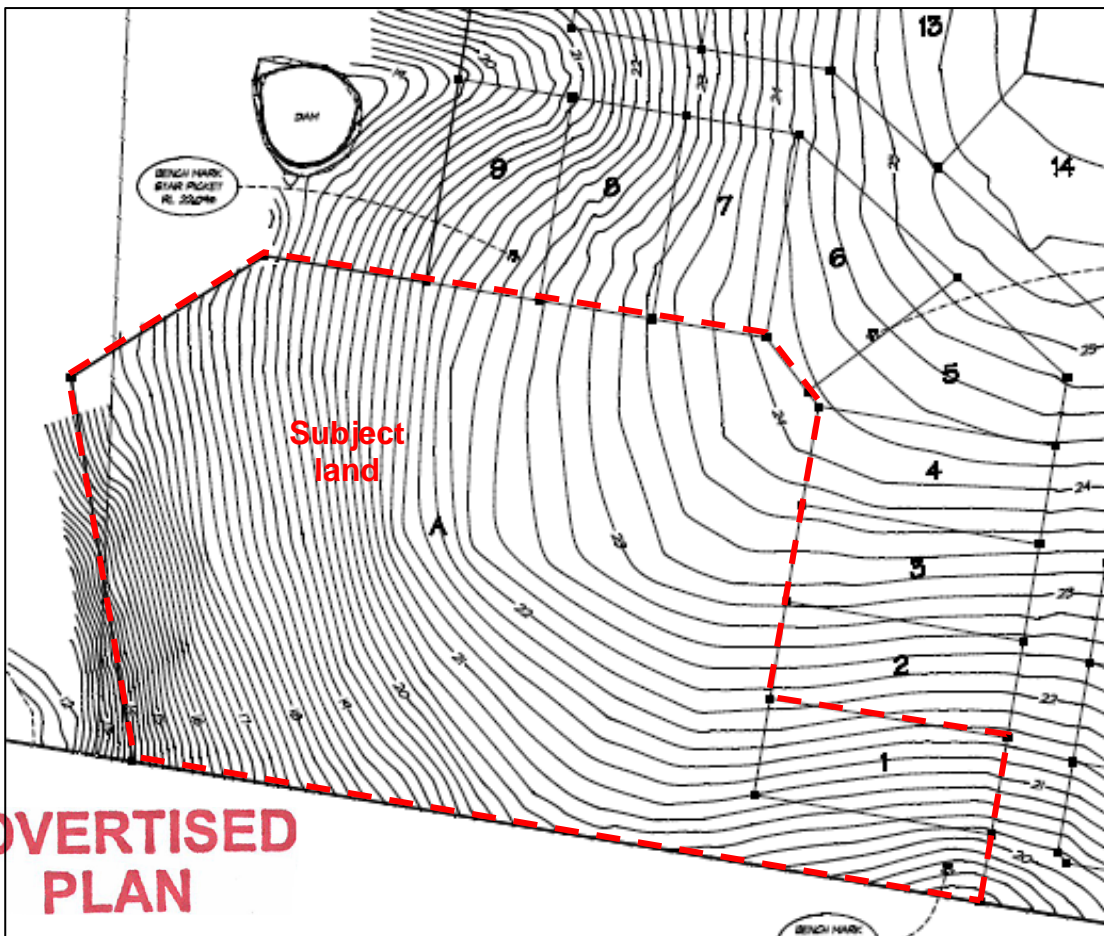
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Image of Caldwell Court looking north of recently developing dwellings within the estate

The subject land is currently vacant and the landform gently falls from the north-east corner of the property to the south-western part of the land. Current overland drainage flows towards Lagoon Creek within the western neighbouring property.



Subject property landform contours



Looking west from the subject land showing the slight fall of the land towards Lagoon Creek

Access to the subject land is obtained from Caldwell Court which leads to Punt Road. Caldwell Court is a constructed urban road with kerb and channel drainage extending east from Punt Road for the initial east/west section, transitioning to grassed verges with swale drains at the frontage of the subject land.



Frontage to Caldwell Court looking south, showing transition from kerb and channel to swale drainage

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Frontage to Caldwell Court looking west, showing transition from kerb and channel to swale drainage

The subject land was until recently grazed and contains introduced pasture grasses. The property boundaries are being progressively fenced to the north and east with a mixture of fencing styles adjoining the recently created lots, with post and wire fencing to the west and south allowing for a rural aspect from the subject land.



Looking east showing introduced pasture grasses and southern post and wire fencing

To the east and north of the property are residential properties recently developed or currently being developed with single storey detached dwellings.

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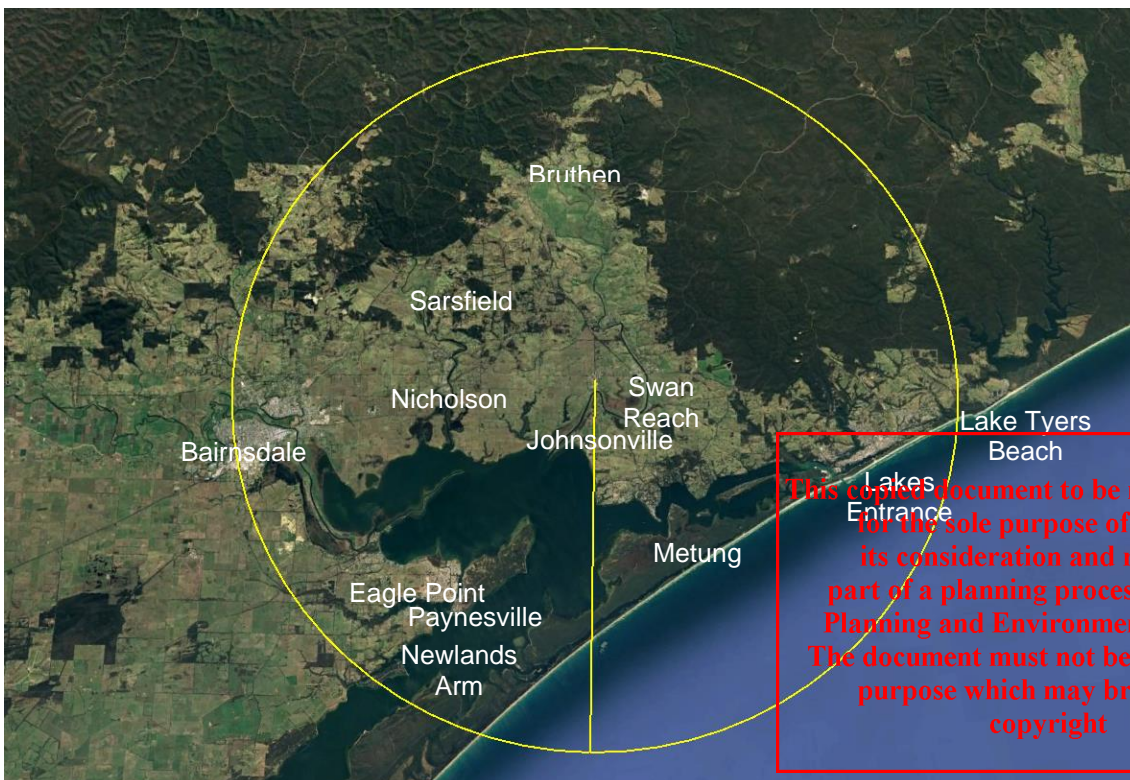
Looking north and east from the subject land with recently constructed dwellings in the background

South and west of the subject land are two larger land parcels that are currently grazed by livestock.

Johnsonville is a smaller township located primarily between the Princes Highway and Tambo River. The town is supported with a general store, petrol station, nursery, marine repairs and a number of tourist accommodation businesses.

Johnsonville is located within close proximity to the larger growth townships of the Shire. Bairnsdale is approximately 18 km to the west of Johnsonville and is the regional centre of East Gippsland, Paynesville to the south-west is approximately 30 km by road to Johnsonville, and Lakes Entrance to the east is approximately 17 km to Johnsonville.

The settlements of Metung, Swan Reach, Nicholson, Eagle Point Bruthen, Sarsfield, Newlands Arm and Lake Tyers Beach are also in close proximity to Johnsonville.



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Towns within a 20 kilometre radius of Johnsonville (Source: Google Earth)

East Gippsland is dominated by agricultural properties, rural lifestyle living, coastal and river residential townships and the urban community of the regional centre of Bairnsdale.

East Gippsland continues to grow and it is projected from 2021 to 2041 to increase in population by 15,400 people to a total of 63,800 people as advised in the East Gippsland Housing & Settlement Strategy (*SGS Economics and Planning*).

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2. Application & Proposal

It is proposed to use and develop an education centre, including an Early Learning Centre, Primary School and Secondary School.

The proposed school to be developed will be a new campus of the Wild Cherry Steiner School that will ultimately provide for educational opportunities and experiences from early childhood years through to year 12 senior schooling.



Currently the Wild Cherry Steiner School is located at 28 McKean Street, Bairnsdale, and is part of a larger land parcel developed with heritage buildings that are in disrepair. The school currently provides playgroup, kindergarten and prep to grade 6 educational opportunities.

Unfortunately, the current school site has significant structural limitations that prevent ongoing use or redevelopment which includes:

- Structural and physical damage.
- Water ingress issues.
- Vermin infestation.
- Low energy efficiency.
- High running costs.
- Inadequate insulation.
- Hazardous materials throughout the school building (asbestos).

Other limitations that have resulted in the school outgrowing the current site include:

- Steiner school philosophy is hampered by the current site.
- Physical school size preventing growth opportunities and provides for limited comfort for school educators and administrative staff.
- Being a leased site does not provide land tenure confidence.
- Purchasing the property is not financially viable.
- Heritage protection of the building limits the ability to undertake alterations and additions that would respect the heritage character of the building and meet the Steiner philosophies.
- Reduced carparking opportunities and unsafe drop-off areas.
- The inability to provide infrastructure to support persons with disabilities.

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Proposed New School Site

The new site is considered a significant opportunity to develop a purpose built school based on the Steiner educational philosophy, based on interactions with the natural environment, making human values the central element of the curriculum.

The proposed school site offers a rural context where buildings have an opportunity to interact with the natural environment and students can absorb the unique location located close to the Tambo River.

Sustainability is a key theme with the development of a Steiner School and the subject land provides for the opportunity achieve energy efficiency gains through a, reduced carbon footprint, water sensitive urban design, outdoor shading, native landscaping, and reduced waste creation.

Students learn through various means and speeds. The proposal will allow for the development of various buildings, communal areas and landscaped areas allowing students to respond to different learning styles and approaches, encouraging creativity.

It is important for the school community to have a positive and creative connection with the local community. The proposed school hall will provide an area to facilitate visiting artists where the community can attend, accommodates for seasonal festivals open to community participation, provides an internal space for community sports events, scouts, guides, yoga classes, public meetings, public speakers, community dances and festivals.

Community art projects, local gardening groups and Landcare projects will be facilitated within the school grounds and the library will be made available to the local community outside of school hours for book clubs, study groups, literary events, author readings and book launches.

Design Principles and Site Planning

Siting of buildings on the subject land and the design of buildings is important to convey the Steiner educational philosophy.

Site flow and space planning is based around a central nature corridor (or Rambla) and is proposed to run through the school and provides a natural connection from the classrooms and provides for outdoor learning opportunities.

Student progression is reinforced through spatial sequencing of classrooms, allowing students to move through their education years academically, socially and topographically.

Horizons accommodate students' depth of views which expands with age and development, with for shorter views at the early learning stage and expanded views at secondary learning stages.

Civic zoning provides peace of mind promoting, wellness, encouraging motivation for education growth and allowing for a positive school community and student experience.

Good building design provides a sense of warmth, calmness and inviting environment. Buildings are required to be well-lit through natural means, with maximum passive heating/cooling throughout school hours. Site topography utilising natural varying sized curved structures constructed from materials found within the environment (i.e mud brick and timber) provide a connection with the undulating form of the surrounding area.

This is achieved through appropriate orientation, scale, shape, balance, openness/enclosure and connectivity. Curved roof forms emulate a wave effect to rhythmically flow through the school while still ensuring human scale and balance.

The proposed building design has been developed to celebrate the natural environment and changing seasons, with the colour palate evolving with student development through educational stages.

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Proposed Wild Cherry Master Plan

Wild Cherry Steiner School engaged *Mark Simnett Building Design* to prepare a master plan presented as the proposed site plan. Floor plans for proposed buildings 1a and 1b, elevations and staging plans have also been prepared, being the proposed first stage of development.

The proposed master plan for the subject land has incorporated the design principles based on the Steiner school philosophy.

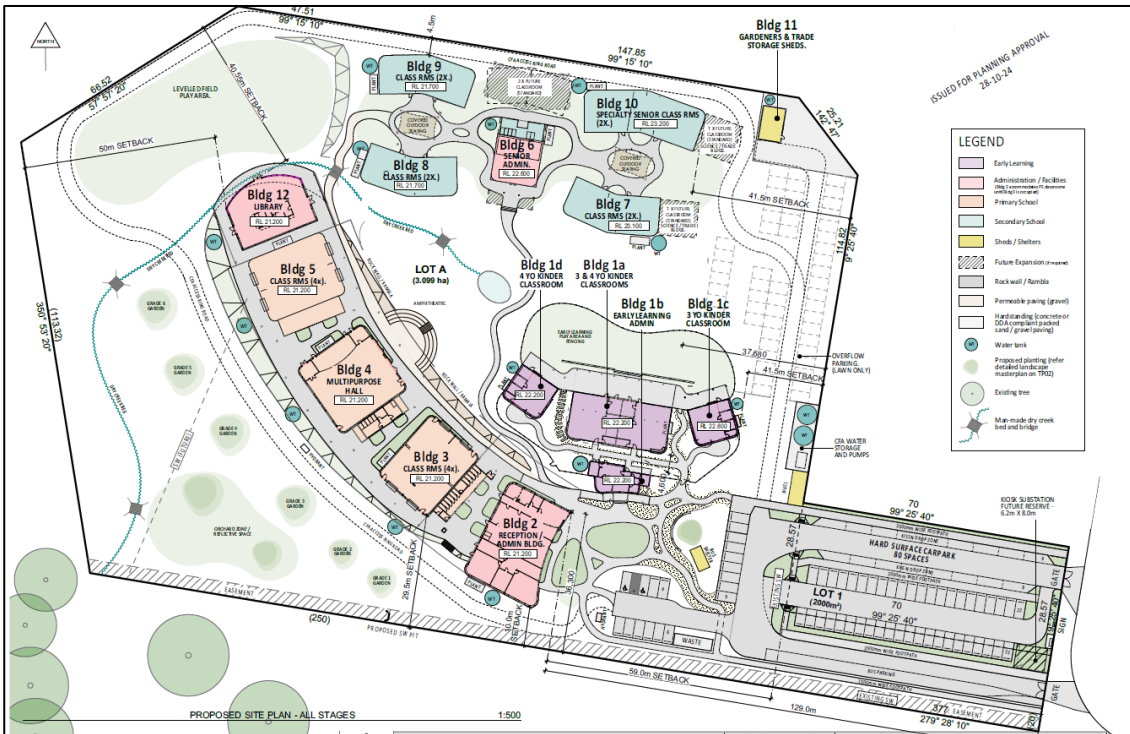
A central rambla will be developed centrally within the subject land with school buildings developed to the north and south enjoying views of the natural rambla and the rural views to the west and south of the property.

To the south-east of the subject land will be the first buildings developed on the land, being the early learning classrooms and administration room, providing a welcoming element of the school. The main reception and administration building is proposed within this precinct allowing for ease of identification, easy access to students and passive surveillance of the car parking and bus shelter area.

Primary school buildings will be located to the south and west of the school in a "crescent" formation following the topography of the land, with the multipurpose hall centrally sited within this part of the school allowing a focal point and interactive school community facility.

To the north of the subject land are the proposed secondary classrooms and administration building, to be constructed on the more elevated part of the land, allowing views of the rural landscape to the west and south.

The building siting has been deliberately laid out to allow for a flow through of year levels as students' progress through their educational experience. Proposed building design will utilise curved corners and roofs, have good northern exposure to ensure energy gains and natural light, and will utilise building materials found within the natural environment.



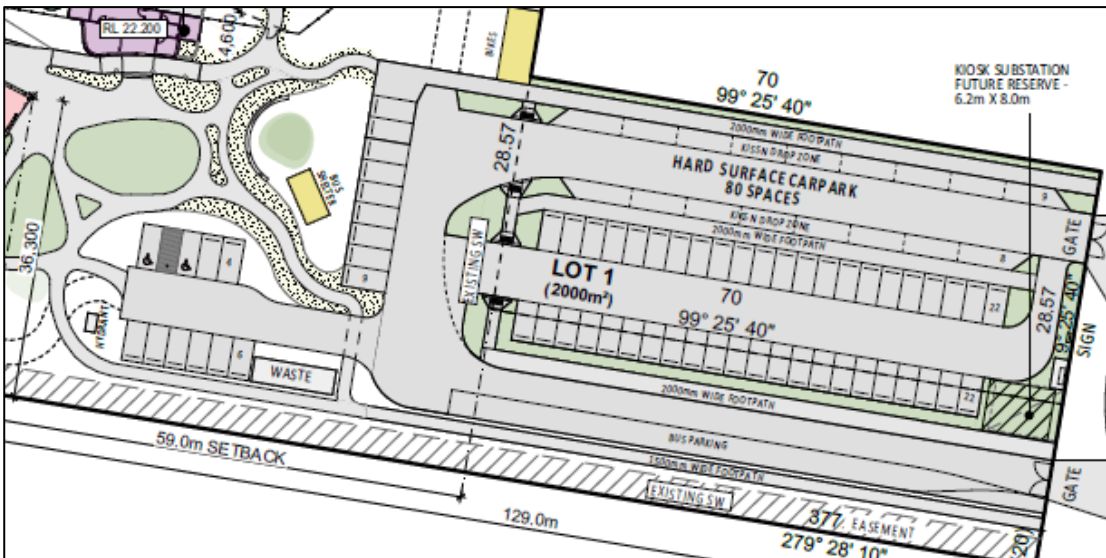
Proposed masterplan of the subject land (Source: Mark Simnett Building Design)

Proposed access and egress to the subject land will take place from Caldwell Court leading to a formalised car parking area. The proposed internal vehicle access has been designed to allow for bus turning movements to be accommodated and provides for a one way flow of traffic.

The proposed car park will be developed within stages as car parking demand increases. The car park design provides for a dedicated access driveway and an egress driveway that will be developed as part of the first stage. The overall number of car parking spaces to be provided for the school will be 80 car spaces with a proposed bus bay located to the south of the internal access road, and “kiss and go” drop-off and pick-up along the internal egress road.

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Extract of the master plan showing the proposed school car park
 (Source: Mark Simnett Building Design)

Leading from the car park is a waste collection area, bus shelter and bicycle storage area. Overflow carparking is proposed to the east of the property to accommodate vehicles during festivities and special events.

Bicycle parking will be provided in a dedicated bike shed to the immediate west of the car park. The area of the bicycle shed is proposed at 4 metres in width and 9 metres long equating to an area of 36 square metres

A space for a bicycle is understood to have minimum dimensions of 1.7 metres in length and 0.7 metres in width at the handlebars. On that basis the proposed bicycle shed can accommodate 26 bicycles.

Business identification signage is proposed in the form of a 1.08m² sign facing Caldwell Court.

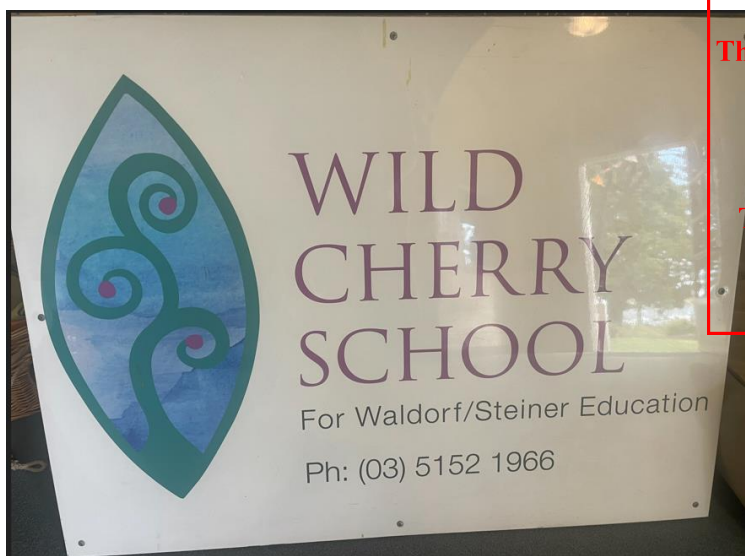


Image of the proposed sign to be relocated to the new campus

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Once fully constructed, the new campus is proposed to accommodate the following staff and student numbers.

Component	Teaching staff	Other staff	Students
ELC	10	1	110
Primary School	11	19	161
Secondary School	10	12	138
Total	31	32	409

Development Staging

Given the scale of the proposal, it is proposed to develop the new campus in seven stages:

Stage	Buildings	Building name	Classes added	Predicted completion
1	1a & 1b	2 x ELC Classrooms ELC Administration	2 x 3/4 Kinder	2026
2	2 & 3a	Main administration Amenities	Prep-Year 6	2028
3	3	Secondary Classroom	Year 7	2030
4	4 & 1c	Multipurpose Hall ELC Classroom	3/4 Kinder Years 8 & 9	2032
5	5 & 1d	2 x Secondary Classrooms 2 x ELC Classrooms	Years 10 & 11 3/4 Kinder	2034
6	6, 9 & 10	Admin 2 x Secondary Classrooms	Year 12	2036
7	7, 8 & 12	2 x Secondary Classrooms	N/A	2038

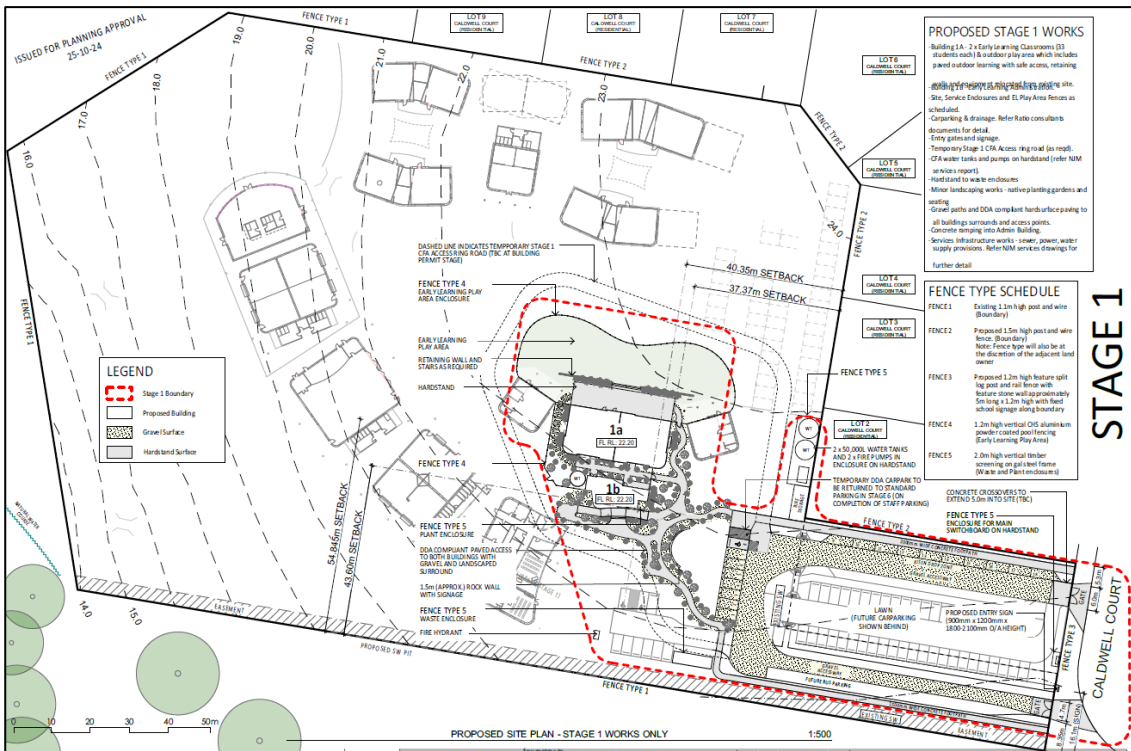
Whilst the Master Plan provides an overview of the proposed development, it is acknowledged that a condition of the planning permit will require detailed plans to be submitted on a stage by stage basis. Given the significant investment required and extended construction timeframes it is sought that an extended permit expiry period be allowed to complete the new school development.

Proposed Stage 1

Stage 1 plans prepared by Mark Simnett Building Design propose the development of building 1a, being the early learning classroom, and 1b, the early learning administration building within the first stage of construction.

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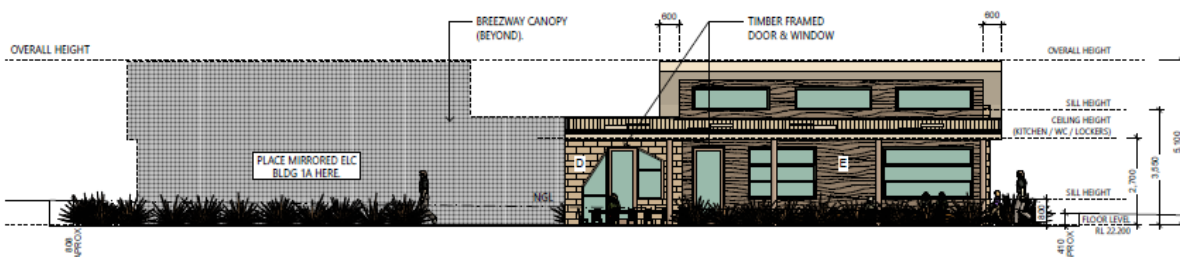
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Proposed stage 1 site plan (Source: Mark Simnett Building Design)

The early learning classroom building will consist of two kindergarten classrooms, two kitchens, two amenity rooms, two store rooms and two mudrooms.

Proposed building 1a is setback 38 metres to the eastern boundary and 55 metres from the southern boundary. The maximum building height will be 5.1 metres and will be constructed from Paperbark Colorbond Orb, Timbercrete Blockwork, Timber Weatherboard and Weathertex.



Proposed northern elevation of building 1A, 3 and 4 year old kindergarten rooms (Source: Mark Simnett Building Design)

Setback 42 metres from the southern property boundary, the early learning administration building will comprise of a ramped access, meeting room, kitchen, amenities rooms, office and storage room. The maximum building height will be 6.1 metres and will be constructed from Paperbark Colorbond Orb, Timbercrete Blockwork, Timber Weatherboard and Weathertex.

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*Proposed northern elevation of building 1B, early learning administration
(Source: Mark Simnett Building Design)*

The carpark for stage 1 will consist of 18 gravel car parking spaces with the access and egress driveways to be sealed.

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Sustainability

A key feature of Steiner schools is sustainability, and immersing students in a sustainable ethos as part of their school experience.

The proposed rambla provides for a nature corridor and it will double as a water sensitive urban design feature. Stormwater from hard surfacing will be directed into the rambla providing for pre-development detention, and with the use of native vegetation plantings, water quality will be treated to a high level with the removal of nutrients and capture of any solid waste material.

Ethically sourced natural building materials will be used throughout the buildings including timber, eco-bricks and double glazed windows. Timber detailing internally will provide thermal efficiency and also aids a connection to natural and tactile surfaces.

Committed to reducing the carbon footprint of the school, the design brief was to ensure sustainable building design. In response buildings have been designed to take advantage of solar access reducing heating requirements, mud brick/rammed earth walls provide for thermal mass, double glazing will be utilised to prevent heating loss in winter and heat absorption in summer, louvre windows will provide both natural light and ventilation assisting with cooling, skylights/roof windows will reduce the need for artificial lighting and insulation and air tight construction will provide for energy gains.

Reliance on traditional electricity will be minimised with the installation of solar panels, with energy stored in mass battery storage units. With smart technology, energy use can be actively managed to reduce energy consumption.

Rainwater will be harvested with each building installed with rainwater tanks and plumbed into sanitary facilities, and external taps will provide for garden irrigation.

Native vegetation, as part of the landscaping will be reintroduced on the subject land. The landscape master plan shows the use of drought tolerant plants, a range of trees and shrubs providing for native fauna, incorporating shade trees.

Food waste will be composted to provide for renourishment of garden areas and the orchard.

Infrastructure

As part of the master planning of the site, services provision and the likelihood of any upgrade has been reviewed. A services plan confirms reticulated sewerage, water, electricity and communications are connected to the land and can progressively be upgraded when each stage of development is undertaken.

The reticulated electricity provision to the proposed school will require an eventual upgrade with a substation which to be positioned to the east of the car park. The existing electricity provision is sufficient for stage 1 works. Given costs associated with service provision, the upgrades will occur as required.

Water and sewerage capacity will also need to be progressively upgraded after stage 1.

A geotechnical risk assessment report has been undertaken by an appropriately qualified engineer from Chris O'Brien & Company which advises that erosion risk associated with the land is low noting that a construction management plan and stormwater management plan needs to be prepared to reduce adverse construction impacts such as sediment runoff.

The soil report from a qualified engineer from Chris O'Brien & Company advises that the soil structure is capable of supporting development with certain footing requirements which can be readily accommodated.

Swept paths have been reviewed to ensure vehicle movements for a bus, waste vehicle and personal vehicles can effectively utilise the proposed car park. The car park can be utilised by all three vehicle types. However, the egress crossover to Caldwell Court will require augmentation prior to the use commencing.

Swept paths have been undertaken for a bus at the intersection of Caldwell Court and Punt Road. Some modifications to the intersection will be required to provide for safe turning movements before the commencement of the primary school use.

Stage 1 will not require any intersection works as a bus will not be required for the proposed early learning centre.

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Image of the intersection of Caldwell Court and Punt Road that does not require upgrading until the primary school use commences

All technical reports advise that the proposed school location is suitable for the proposal to be undertaken without risk to life and property and can be connected to services.

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3. Application Triggers

The subject land is zoned Low Density Residential Zone and is partly contained within the Salinity Management Overlay.

Planning approval is required pursuant to the following Clauses of the East Gippsland Planning Scheme:

Planning Scheme Clause No.	Description of what is Proposed
Clause 32.03-1 Low Density Residential Zone	Use of the land for the purposes of an education centre (primary school, secondary school and kindergarten)
Clause 32.03-4 Low Density Residential Zone	Buildings and works associated with a Section 2 use
Clause 44.02-2 Salinity Management Overlay	Buildings and works
Clause 52.05 Signs	Display a business identification sign
Clause 52.06 Car Parking	Reduction of car parking
Clause 52.34 Bicycle Facilities	Reduction of bicycle facilities

Pursuant to Clause 44.02-7 an application under the Salinity Management Overlay is exempt from notice requirements of section 52(1)(a), (b) and (d) and the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and review rights of section 82(1) of the Act.

In accordance with Clause 52.34-2 an application for a reduction of bicycle facilities is exempt from notice requirements of section 52(1)(a), (b) and (d) and the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and review rights of section 82(1) of the Act.

Clause 66.02-11 requires the application to be referred to Head, Transport Victoria as a determining referral authority. Clause 66.03 requires the application to be referred to Secretary to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action as a determining referral authority.

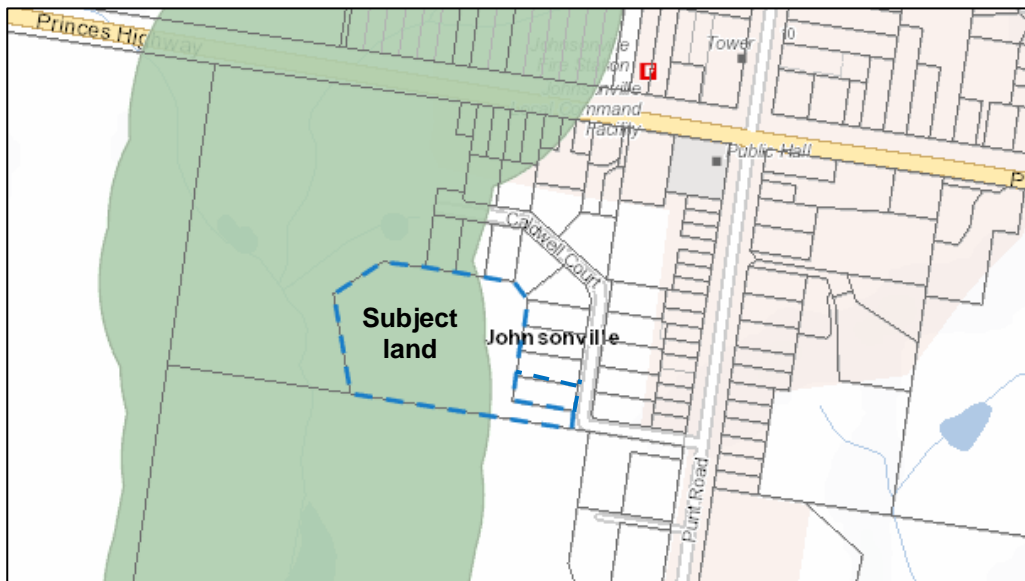
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4. Cultural Heritage

Pursuant to Regulation 7 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*, a CHMP is required for an activity if:

- (a) *all or part of the activity area for the activity is in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity; and*
- (b) *all or part of the activity is a high impact activity*



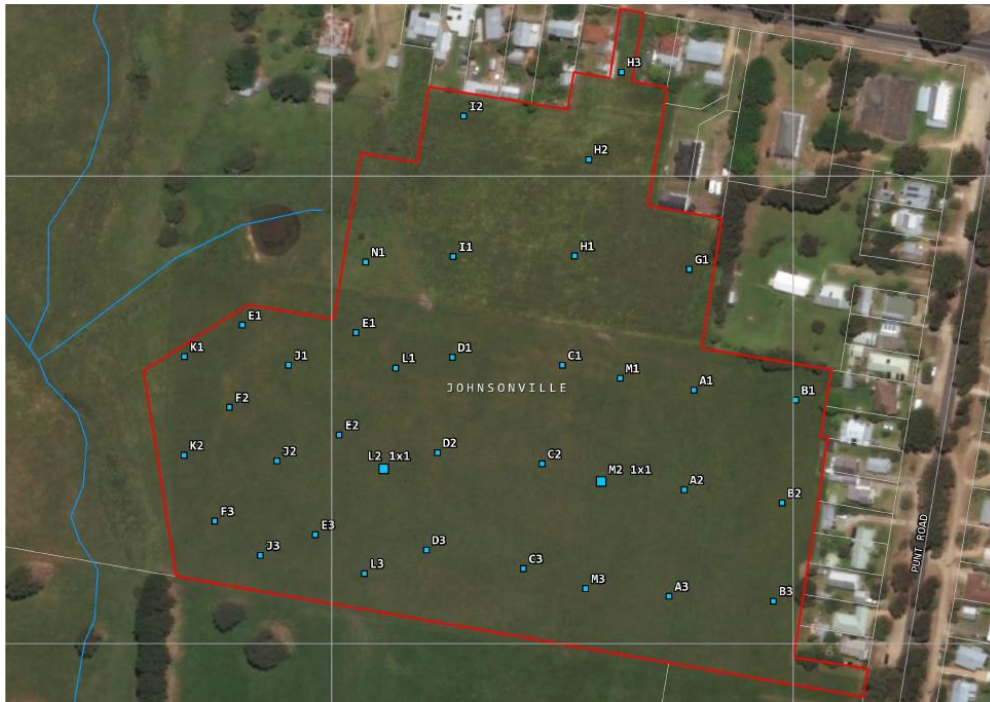
Extract from Cultural Heritage Sensitivity mapping, with sensitive areas shown in green
(Source: VicPlan)

The subject land is within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and the proposed uses and works are considered a high impact activity requiring a CHMP. The preceding subdivision that created the subject land was informed by CHMP:17760 prepared by Unearthed Heritage and approved by the Registered Aboriginal Party, the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation ('GLaWAC') on 21 September 2021.

No Aboriginal cultural heritage material was identified on site as a result of field investigations associated with either the Standard or Complex assessment phases. As a consequence, no harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage is proposed.

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Extract from Figure 7-3 of CHMP 17760 showing the location of test pits and shovel test pits excavated as part of field investigations (Source: Unearthed Heritage)

The CHMP, at Part 1, proposes compliance requirements that represent proactive measures to appropriately manage Aboriginal cultural heritage should it be found during the development of the subject land.

The approved CHMP incorporates at Section 1.2 contingencies in the event that Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered during the works program associated with the proposal, or during subsequent development.

The proposed development is able to comply with all obligations included within CHMP 17760.

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5. Planning Policy

5.1 Planning Policy Framework

The objective of Clause 11.01-1S Settlement is to facilitate the sustainable growth and development of Victoria and deliver choice and opportunity for all Victorians through a network of settlements.

Development of the Wild Cherry Steiner School meets a number of strategies that support the objective:

- The proposal will assist to develop sustainable communities within East Gippsland through the provision of an expanded educational offering.
- The proposed school will be located within the existing residential zoned land and settlement boundary of Johnsonville.
- It will provide for the development of facilities across a regional network.
- Balances strategic objectives to achieve improved land use and development at a regional catchment level.
- The development will result in net zero greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficient design, solar harvesting and storage.
- Provides urban growth within an existing settlement.
- Future urban expansion of Johnsonville will not be compromised by the proposed school as the proposed use is relatively benign and can successfully coexist with residential development.

Consistent with Clause 11.01-1L-01 the proposal achieves infill of the existing town of Johnsonville, provides the consolidation of an existing township, that will be connected to reticulated sewerage and other appropriate urban infrastructure.

Clause 11.01-1L-03 Rural settlements – Twin River Towns applies to all land in Nicholson, Johnsonville and Swan Reach. The proposed school will not detract from the landscape values of the area, preserves the separation of the Twin River Towns and provides development of an undeveloped Low Density Residential Zone property.

The proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on native vegetation as the land does not contain native vegetation, consisting of exotic pasture grasses. It is proposed as part of the development to reintroduce native vegetation on the property as encouraged by Clause 12.01-2S Native vegetation management.

As sought within Clause 12.03-1 River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs the proposed school development will not detrimentally impact the neighbouring western waterway being Lagoon Creek. It is proposed to capture stormwater runoff from the proposed buildings for re-use in sanitary systems and water quality will be maintained using the rambla to reduce nutrient loads and waste solids arising from stormwater runoff on the property.

Clauses 12.05-1S and 12.05-1L Environmentally sensitive areas, the aesthetic values of the area will be maintained through the development's low footprint, human scale building form, spacing of buildings and use of natural materials in building construction.

In designing the proposed school, Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire planning has been seriously considered. Land to the north and east of the subject land are of low threat while land to the west and south consist of "grassland" classification vegetation. In response to the potential threat of a grassland fire event the buildings have been setback from the western and southern boundaries to provide for defensible space and will be constructed to an appropriate BAL level. A more detailed response is provided in Section 6.8 of this report.

Positively responding to Clauses 13.04-3S and 13.04-3L Salinity, the proposed site has undergone soil testing and found no evidence of salinity on the land. Steiner school philosophy seeks for students to interact with nature, as such the school site will be significantly landscaped assisting to reduce risk of groundwater salinity problems from arising.

Strategies within Clauses 15.01-1S and 15.01-1L-01 Urban Design are advanced by the proposed school development. Building siting and design will respect the character of the area and natural features. School buildings will work with the topography of the land providing for only minor cut and fill to allow for levelled building sites, a spaced building footprint will maintain the spacious feel of the low density residential area, respectful setbacks from property boundaries are provided and buildings will have a low height and scale.

Community and cultural life are important to the school community and an environment of local community integration will be encouraged through making buildings available to local community groups. The safety of the public realm has been considered and will be achieved with upgrades to Caldwell Street intersections with the proposed carpark to allow for larger vehicles (buses) to navigate the intersections safely.

The proposed car parking area allows for the public to easily use and navigate the area and integrated walking paths through the school will provide a sense of security.

In accordance with Clause 15.01-4L Health and wellbeing a social impact comment is provided at Section 6.7 of this report.

To strengthen and diversify the economy is the objective of Clause 17.01-1S Diversified economy. The development of the new Wild Cherry Steiner School campus will maintain current staffing and provide additional employment within the educational sector of the local economy. Also, the proposed school represents significant investment that will benefit the construction sector and local suppliers.

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Clause 18.02-2S Cycling is supported by the proposed school by providing end of trip facilities within the school in the form of bicycle storage.

Access upgrades from the internal access/egress to Caldwell Court and Caldwell Court/Punt Road intersection will be undertaken to facilitate the safe movement of larger vehicles servicing the school and protecting the role of nearby roads as sought by Clauses 18.02-4S and 18.02-4L-01 Roads.

To assist the integration of education and early childhood facilities with local and regional communities is the objective of Clause 19.02-2S Education facilities. Strategies supporting this objective are achieved by the proposed school development:

- Demographic trends and future demand requirements for educational services within East Gippsland, particularly within commuting distance to Johnsonville, predicts the need to provide for 346 additional persons within early education, 707 additional persons within primary education and 517 additional persons within Secondary education by the year 2041, which the school will assist to accommodate (Source: id.com - informed decisions).
- The primary and secondary school elements of the Wild Cherry School can be accessed by a bus service utilising the Conveyance Allowance program delivered by the State Government
- Safe vehicular drop-off zones are provided to the north and south of the internal access/egress road and allows students to utilise footpath connections from drop-off areas to the school grounds.
- Built form of the proposed school buildings represents small building footprints, human scale buildings and spacing of hard development on the subject land.
- Although not located within an education precinct the subject land is centrally located within the highest population area of the Shire and provides for a wide student catchment from growing towns and settlements within the area.
- The proposed multipurpose hall and library will be available for use outside of school hours by local community groups, providing a positive opportunity to integrate with the wider community.
- The proposed school will provide integrated learning from early years through to secondary education as is supported by State planning policy.

5.2 Municipal Planning Strategy

Clause 02.01 Context – Settlement advises that the Shire population is expected to reach 50,500 persons by 2027 and 56,000 persons by 2037. The proposed school site and surrounding towns are located within the Lakes & Coastal sub-region which has the highest population density within the Shire.

The proposed campus will provide an expanded opportunity to service the educational needs of a growing population within the most populated part of the Shire.

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Current demographic predictions advise that the forecasted growth rate for the region would see an extra 1,692 persons requiring education by 2041, with the greater increase arising in Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Paynesville, Twin Rivers region (Nicholson, Swan Reach and Johnsonville) and Orbost. With the exception of Orbost, all these locations are within commuting distance of the proposed location.

When analysis raw data and forecast growth to the year 2041, the proposed school is well positioned to respond to the future educational demands for East Gippsland.

Educational Cohort	Percentage Change	Raw Numbers
Early Education	24%	346 persons
Primary School	19.4%	707 persons
Secondary School	16.8%	517 persons

(Source: www.forecast.id.com.au/east-gippsland/population)

Clause 02.03-1 Settlement and housing – growth area towns advise that Bairnsdale, Paynesville and Lakes Entrance are the major towns of the Shire where growth is promoted.

The proposed school is centrally located between these three towns providing for a large catchment of people requiring educational services.

Council’s strategic directions for rural towns, which includes Johnsonville, at Clause 02.03-1 Settlement and housing will be implemented through the proposal:

- The school will assist to consolidate development within existing town boundaries, through infill development of a large and serviced vacant allotment.
- The property is connected to reticulated sewerage, no detrimental impacts to native vegetation will take place and the site does not adjoin public land.
- The separation between Nicholson, Johnsonville and Swan Reach will continue to be preserved.

Clause 02.03-2 Environmental and landscape values strategic directions are achieved by the proposed development. Stormwater from building roofs will be harvested for reuse in sanitary facilities and the rambla with associated planting will remove nutrients from stormwater ensuring water entering into the adjoining wetland on the western property is of an appropriate quality.

The proposed development will have no impact on roadside vegetation and the landscape and scenic values of the Tambo River will be maintained given the scale, height and separated buildings proposed onsite.

In accordance with Clause 02.03-3 Environmental risks and amenity the proposed building siting has been carefully laid out to provide a buffer from a potential grassfire event and allow for defensible space. The land is elevated and well setback from the Tambo River, reducing the potential impacts from climate-induced sea level rise.

Consistent with encouraging a range of education options within the region which is a strategic direction contained within Clause 02.03-7 Transport and infrastructure. The proposed Wild Cherry Steiner School will provide an expanded and different educational experience within East Gippsland, as opposed to more traditional educational offerings that are currently available.

5.3 Victorian Government Early Childhood Reform Plan¹

The proposed school will provide for early learning which will be developed as part of Stage 1 of the school development.

Consistent with the Early Childhood Reform Plan the Steiner school philosophy sees the importance of childhood education providing an important base for learning throughout a student's scholastic progression and experience.

The provision of early childhood education based on a natural environment experience and learning through play fits well with the State Government's Early Childhood Reform Plan, which emphasises learning through play based methods.

Although not being a government school the collocation of early learning with primary schooling will promote a more seamless transition into primary education and assists to build a positive and supportive school community.

5.4 Twin Rivers District Community Plan 2019²

One of the main themes of the Twin Rivers District Community Plan is Resilient & Connected Communities. It highlights a lack of ability for the community to connect outside of school activities for primary aged children.

The proposed school values the importance of inviting the local community to become an extension of the school community with the ability to provide for the shared use of facilities, inclusion within seasonal events and providing spaces, buildings and areas that can be utilised by local community groups and clubs.

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¹ <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/level4framework.pdf>

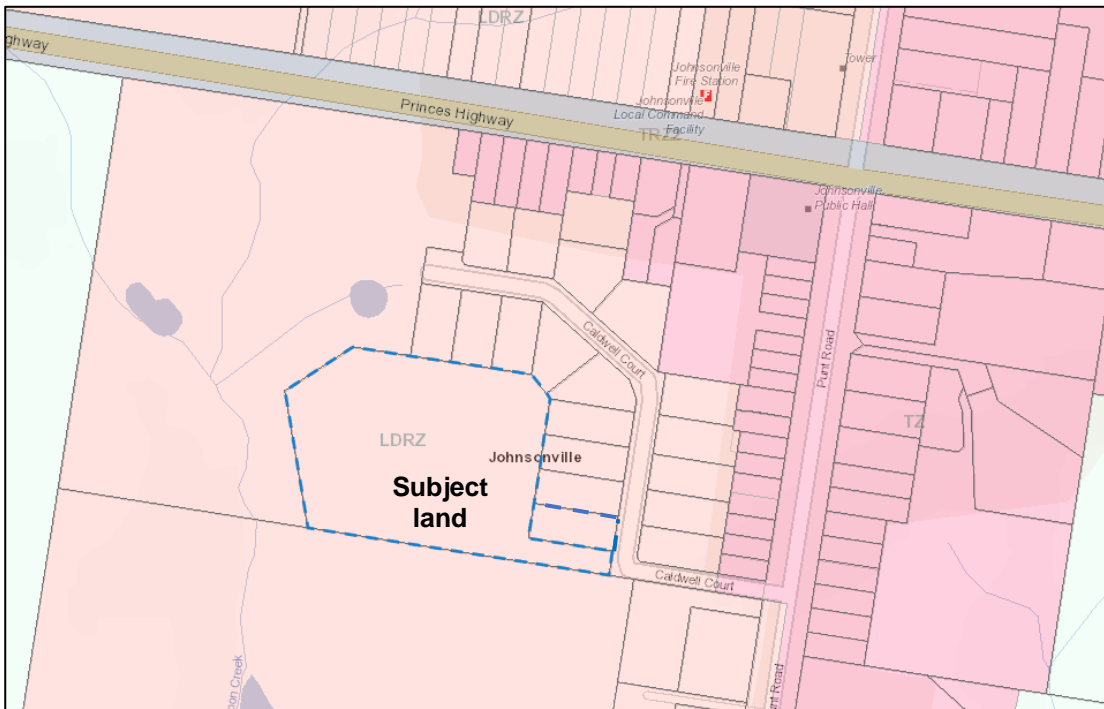
² <https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community-plans/twin-rivers-district>

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6. Planning Elements

6.1 Low Density Residential Zone

The subject land is included in the Low Density Residential Zone. A Planning Permit is required for the use and develop of an education centre.



Planning scheme zone mapping (Source: VicPlan)

The proposed school is consistent with the purposes of the zone and decision guidelines as the use and development is provided with strong and positive planning policy support contained within the Planning Policy Framework and Municipal Planning Strategy.

The subject land is connected to reticulated sewerage which will service the proposed school buildings and avoids the need to treat and retain wastewater on the land.

A school is a fairly benign use given operational hours are limited, noise to sensitive receptors can be managed through internal use of amplified music and no overlooking or unreasonable overshadowing will take place.

The proposed built form is considered to be respectful of the low residential context of the area. Proposed buildings have been spaced on site as opposed to a mass of built form, low building footprints will be achieved, building height is single storey and the development respects the topography of the site.

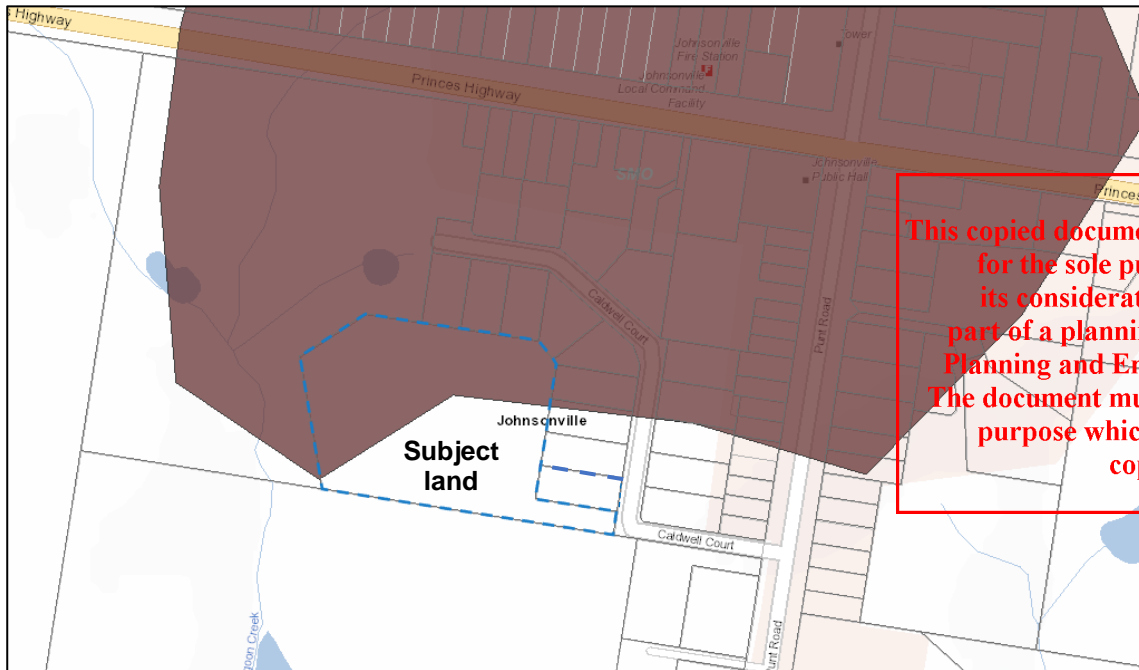
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6.2 Salinity Management Overlay

The subject land is partly contained within the Salinity Management Overlay



Planning scheme overlay mapping (Source: VicPlan)

The proposed development is respectful of the overlay purposes providing significant revegetation of the subject land which is devoid of vegetation with the exception of introduced grasses, stormwater will be harvested from building roofs and reused in sanitary facilities and stormwater will be carefully managed to avoid salinity recharge and a high watertable.

It is considered that the proposed school development positively addresses the decision guidelines of the Overlay through the following:

- Strong planning policy support is provided within the Planning Policy Framework and Municipal Planning Strategy.
- Saline discharges to the environment and impacts to the environmental quality of water, will be managed with the capture and re-use of stormwater from the roofs of buildings, minimising water table impacts.
- A strong theme within the Steiner school philosophy is student's connection with nature. A significant landscaping and planting regime will be undertaken, assisting to reduce the water table.
- A soil report has been prepared by *Chris O'Brien & Company* for the proposed development which found no active salinity occurring on the property.
- Removal of stock from the property will assist to reduce soil disturbance on the subject land.
- Proposed earthworks have been minimised to ensure natural overland drainage paths are not adversely impacted.

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6.3 Signs

It is proposed to display a business identification sign fronting Caldwell Court. The proposed sign will be relocated from the existing Bairnsdale campus to the new proposed location in Johnsonville.

The proposed business identification sign will have a width of 1.2 metres and length of 0.9 metres equating to an overall area of 1.08 square metres. The proposed sign will be displayed on a support structure 1.8 metres high.

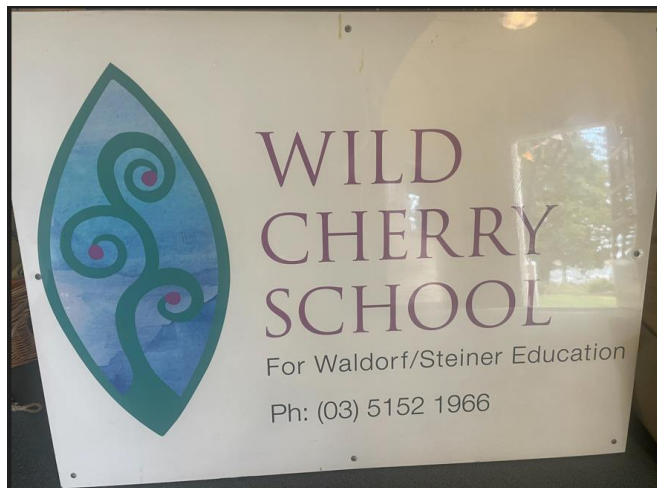


Image of the proposed sign to be relocated to the new campus

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The signage category within a low density residential zone is Category 3 – High amenity areas and a business identification sign is a Section 2 permit required sign.

The proposed business identification sign responds well to the decision guidelines through the following:

- The character of the area is evolving with residential development taking place within the precinct. The western and southern adjoining properties have a rural landscape however, the sign location will have limited impact on the rural landscape given the location fronting an urban area within the town.
- The proposed singular sign identifying the proposed school will avoid visual clutter and disorder of signs.
- There will be no significant impact to views and vistas of the area, given the low height and modest sign size.
- Being a school site, the subject land needs to be identified, however the sign will be a secondary element to the buildings on the land.
- Landscaping around the sign location will soften the appearance of the sign within the streetscape.
- The sign will not be illuminated reducing potential concerns with respect to glare.
- No sightlines will be disrupted with the proposed sign location.

6.4 Car Parking

Before a new use commences the number of car spaces provided on a site must be provided in accordance with the rates specified in Table 1 to 52.06-5, or a Planning Permit be obtained for a reduction in car parking requirement.

Table 1 to Clause 52.06-5 provides separate parking ratios for Primary School and Secondary School, based on the number of employees. The Table describes an employee as someone *“that is part of the maximum number of employees on the site at any time”*.

Employee rates included within the following have been estimated by Wild Cherry Steiner School, and include administrative and education support staff in addition to teachers. Conservatively, it is estimated all staff will be on site at any time, which in reality is unlikely given a number of staff roles are expected to be part time.

For the Early Learning Centre component, we have adopted the ratio provided in Table 1 for Child Care Centre, given the definition at Clause 73.03 includes Kindergarten.

The following table summarises the car parking requirement associated with the proposed Education Centre.

	Table to Clause 52.06-5	Requirement	Rounded requirement
Primary School	1 space to each employee	30 employees x 1 space = 30 spaces	30 car spaces
Secondary School	1.2 spaces to each employee	22 employees x 1.2 spaces = 26.4 spaces	26 car spaces
Kindergarten	0.22 to each child	110 children x 0.22 spaces = 24.2 spaces	24 car spaces
Total required			80 car spaces
Car spaces provided			80 car spaces
Shortfall			N/A

Whilst the project at completion will not require a reduction in car parking requirement, the proposal seeks to stage the delivery of car parking, and therefore we consider it appropriate to seek a reduction in car parking requirement.

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Pursuant to Clause 52.06-7, the proposal is supported by the following *Car Parking Demand Assessment*.

- A Traffic Assessment Report has been undertaken by Ratio which confirms that the car parking provision on the land will be sufficient to provide for the likely car parking generation associated with the proposed school.
- The school will actively encourage students to attend school via a private bus service. Provision of a dedicated bus parking bay to the south of the internal access road has been provided for. The use of a private bus service will significantly reduce the need to provide for parental/student parking. The private bus service may be financed and collected by the school through the Conveyance Allowance provided by the Department of Education
- Provision to the north and south of the internal egress road is dedicated to a “kiss and go” drop-off and pick-up car parking spaces, reducing the need for parental parking onsite for long periods.
- Temporary overflow car parking provision is proposed, to the east of the subject land. These overflow car parking spaces will be utilised at times for parking during school fetes and special events and such events are likely to occur infrequently.
- Specialist staff will not be permanent full-time educational providers reducing the car parking generation that requires accommodation on the land.
- Parking demand during the school’s operating hours sees a higher demand in the morning and afternoon periods during student drop off and pick up times. It is therefore considered inappropriate to develop large areas of the subject land to be set aside for car parking and detrimentally affecting the amenity of the school grounds.
- Due to the significant investment involved with the school construction, the development is required to be staged. As such there will be limited car parking generated in the short to medium term, with provision to expand with the progressive development of the campus.

In accordance with Clause 52.06-8 plans have been submitted that shows access/egress lanes, car parking location, bus parking location, student drop-off and pick-up and the relevant design standards of Clause 52.06-9 will be met.

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6.5 Bicycle Facilities

Clause 52.34-1 Provision of bicycle facilities stipulates that a new use must not commence until the required bicycle facilities have been provided on the land, with Clause 52.34-2 providing the ability for a permit to be granted to waive any requirements.

The following table summarises the required bicycle facilities associated with the proposed uses in accordance with Table 1 to Clause 52.34-5.

	Employee Spaces	Student Spaces
Primary School	@ 1 per 20 employees 30 employees = 1.5 spaces	@ 1 to each 5 pupils over Year 4 46 pupils = 9.2 spaces
Secondary School	@ 1 per 20 employees 22 employees = 1.1 spaces	@ 1 to each 5 pupils 138 pupils = 27.6 spaces
Child Care Centre	None specified	None specified
Spaces required	2.6 spaces	36.8 spaces
Total required	39.4 spaces	
Spaces provided	26 spaces	
Shortfall	13.4 spaces	

The subject application requires a reduction in parking requirement in the amount of 13 spaces (rounded to nearest whole number).

In accordance with Table 2 and 3, no shower or change room facilities are required.

Decision Guidelines

It is considered that the proposal positively responds to the decision guidelines:

- The purposes of the clause are met with the provision onsite for the secure, accessible and convenient bicycle parking spaces.
- Opportunity for cyclist commuting is limited due to the distances involved from other towns and lack of provision for cyclists along the Princes Highway. As such there would be a lesser demand for bicycle facilities at the school.
- The design of bicycle spaces will meet the requirements of Clause 52.34-6.

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6.6 Stormwater

The application must meet the objectives of Clauses 53.18-5 and 53.18-6 and should meet the standards of these clauses.

The objectives and standards of Clause 53.18-5 are considered to be met through the incorporation of water sensitive urban design features. Each building will undertake water harvesting for re-use in the building for the flushing of toilets and use within the buildings gardens, a proposed dry creek bed will run through the subject land and will be planted allowing for nutrient stripping, filtration of sediment and water detention and the creek will provide for natural cooling, an enjoyable space and will improve local habitat.

A STORM Rating Report has been prepared for the overall project and stage 1 that clearly demonstrates that the development is capable of providing water quality treatment prior to being released consistent with BPEM principles.

It is acknowledged that with such a large building project a likely condition of the permit will require a construction management plan to be prepared and submitted for endorsement. Site management objectives and standards can be achieved through the use of sediment fencing around disturbed areas of the property, hay bales can be fixed to avoid sediment run-off resulting from overland water flows, temporary stormwater detention can be provided onsite to maintain pre-development flows off site, litter and construction wastes can be placed within a skip bin and emptied as required by a waste contractor.

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6.7 Social Impact Comment

In accordance with the *East Gippsland Shire Council Social Impact Assessment Guidelines*, a Planning Application for the development of an education centre requires a social impact comment.

The following table provides a response to the key requirements for a social impact comment, as required by Attachment 4 of the Guidelines.

Discussion Point	Response	Comment
Will the proposal be likely to give rise to a significant increase in the population demographics of the local area?	No	The proposed school is unlikely to lead to an increase or decrease in population.
Will the proposal benefit or disadvantage any particular population cohort or group in the community?	Yes	Benefit will be provided to the younger population of East Gippsland, providing a choice in education facilities within the municipality.
Will the proposal be likely to give rise to increased employment opportunities?	Yes	An expanded school offering will provide additional employment opportunities within the education sector.
Will the proposal have a significant impact on the existing housing stock in the local area, particularly affordable housing?	No	The proposal will have no impact on housing.
Will the proposal have an impact on current social, recreational or community infrastructure in the local area?	Yes	The school proposes to provide the local population with access to the multi-purpose hall and library providing additional facilities for recreation and community activities.
Will the proposal create increased or decreased risk for occupants or pedestrians within the development of surrounds?	No	The proposed school has been designed to cater for larger vehicles such as buses. Safe pedestrian movement throughout the campus have been carefully considered, with footpaths designed to avoid points of vehicular conflict.

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A review of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for Gippsland East³ advises:

- That the resident population continues to increase and is close to 50,000 persons.
- The statistical areas of Paynesville, Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance surrounding the proposed school site sees the greatest populations within the Shire and school aged children.
- The resident population of persons in 2022 of student ages were 9,939 persons which equates to approximately 20.2% of the Gippsland East population.
- Since 2017 to 2021 East Gippsland has seen a significant increase in 4 and 5 year old children enrolled in a preschool or preschool program from 566 children to 660 children.
- Persons aged over 15 years and are no longer attending primary or secondary schools has seen increasing schooling participation and increasing year 12 or equivalent completion from 2011 at 32.8 % to 39.3% in 2021.

The statistical review of relevant categories contained within the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals that East Gippsland, in particular the areas within the south-west of the East Gippsland Local Government Area, will see an increasing need to provide for early learning, primary and secondary schools educational facilities/opportunities.

The proposed development of a school that will provide for all three educational streams and importantly developing early learning provision at the start of the project will support the increased participation in preschool within the local community and overall will provide for a positive social outcome within the south-western region of East Gippsland.

7. Conclusion

The proposed use and development of an education centre, display of a business identification sign, reduction in car parking and reduction of bicycle facilities at 3-5 Caldwell Court, Johnsonville is considered to accord with all relevant provisions of the East Gippsland Planning Scheme. The proposal is consistent with the Planning Policy Framework and Municipal Planning Strategy, has been designed to complement the adjoining properties and provides for educational opportunities to the East Gippsland region.

For these reasons we respectfully request that the Department of Transport and Planning consider the merits of the application favourably and resolve to issue a Planning Permit.

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³ <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA22110>

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8. List of Attachments

Application Form

Development Plan Set (*Mark Simnett Building Design*)

Existing Conditions Plan

Bushfire Assessment

Services Plan – Stage 1 (*Mark Simnett Building Design*)

Building Services Masterplan (*NJM Design*)

Soil Classification Report (*Chris O'Brien & Company Pty Ltd*)

Geotechnical Risk Assessment (*Chris O'Brien & Company Pty Ltd*)

Traffic Impact Assessment (*Ratio*)

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (*Unearthed Heritage*)

STORM Rating Reports x 2

Copy of Titles x 2

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