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445 CARRS ROAD, ANAKIE

Town Planning Report

Client: Pavilion Biogas Pty Ltd

Ricardo ref. 31269

Issue: 3

21/11/2022

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Customer: Pavilion Biogas Pty Ltd

Customer reference:

Pavilion Farms Anaerobic Digester – Approvals proposal – rev01

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ricardo Energy, Environment and Planning (Ricardo) has prepared this planning report on behalf of Pavilion Biogas Pty Ltd (Pavilion Farms), owner of the land at 445 Carrs Road Anakie (the site), in support of a planning permit application to **use and develop land for the purpose of a waste-to-energy facility**.

In accordance with the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme a planning permit is required pursuant to:

- **Clause 35.07-1 Farming Zone** – A permit is required to use the land for a waste-to-energy facility.
- **Clause 35.07-4 Farming Zone** – A permit is required to construct a building or carry out works.
- **Clause 42.01-2 Environmental Significance Overlay** – A permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works.

This report describes the proposal and examines the context in which the land sits. It also analyses the relevant statutory and strategic planning controls within the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme that affect the site and discusses the town planning merits of the proposal.

This report is to be read in conjunction with the following:

- Appendix A A copy of certificate of title
- Appendix B Site and elevation plans
- Appendix C Landscape drawings
- Appendix D Traffic Engineering Assessment
- Appendix E Visual Impact Assessment
- Appendix F Noise impact assessment
- Appendix G Air quality and odour assessment
- Appendix H Flora and fauna assessment
- Appendix I Land and Environmental Management Plan

We submit that the proposal is consistent with the relevant environmental sustainability and waste reuse policies and requirements of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme, will deliver a much-needed waste to energy facility that will, once operational, utilise waste products from the existing farm and has capacity to take waste from surrounding farms, then provide ongoing energy not only for the existing farming use of the land, but also to be fed back into the electricity grid. The proposal should therefore be supported.

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2. SITE AND SURROUNDS

The address of the site is 445 Carrs Road, Anakie (the site), located at the intersection of Carrs Road and Old Boundary Road. It is approximately 20 kilometres north of Central Geelong, and 50 km south-west of Central Melbourne, in between Bacchus Marsh Road and Ballan Road (refer Figure 2-1).

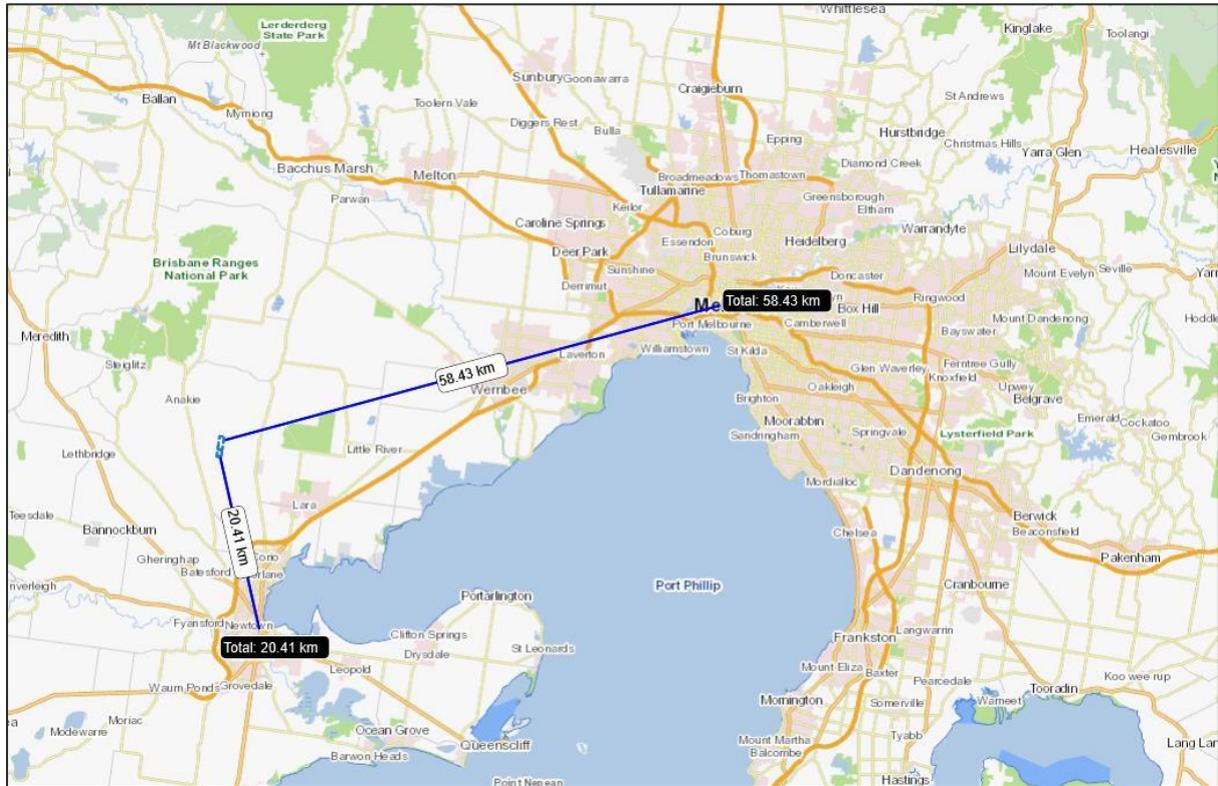


Figure 2-1 Regional context

Source: googlemaps.com 2022

The site is rectangular and includes approximately 123 hectares, with a road reserve running through the lower part of it. The eastern and western boundaries are approximately 2.3km long, and the northern and southern boundaries approximately 0.5km long (refer Figure 2-2).

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Figure 2-2 Aerial image of the Site

Source: Nearmap.com 2022



Figure 2-3 View of the sites main entrance from Carrs Road (looking south)

Source: Image captured March 2015, copyright 2022 Google

The site is currently and has been used for farming, both for grazing and broiler farming. It is currently used for broiler farming, with 12 broiler sheds, farm infrastructure and a series of associated outbuildings on the site. There are two residences located at the northern end of the site, close to Carrs Road.

Access to the site is provided from the northern boundary, Carrs Road. There is a main entrance at the central part of the boundary which is used to access the farming part of the property, and an additional entrance at the western side of the boundary to access an existing dwelling and outbuilding.

The site is flat, as is much of the surrounding landscape, and reflects largely grazed, farming land.

In terms of the surrounding area, the site is located within a predominantly farming area, with multiple broiler farms on the neighbouring properties.



Figure 2-4 Surrounding Land Use

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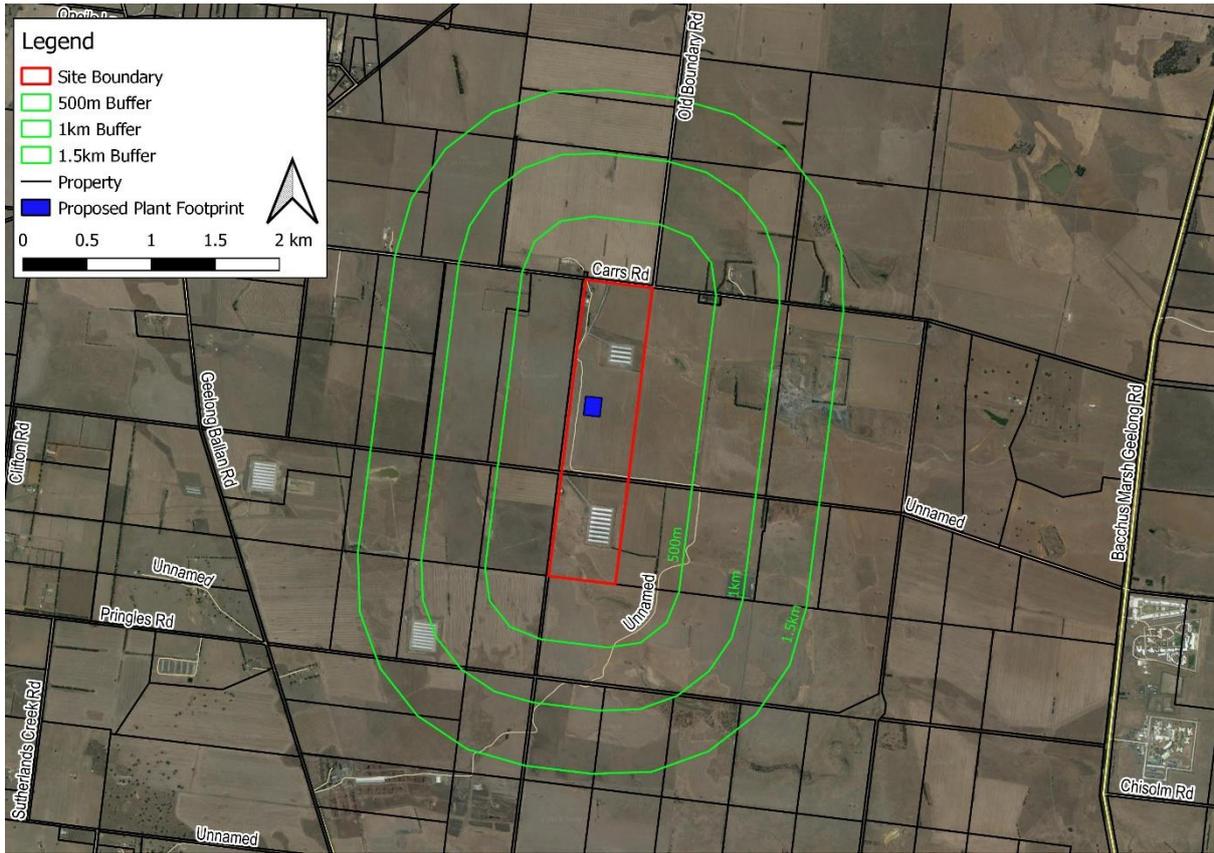


Figure 2-5 Facility siting and buffers

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3. PERMIT HISTORY

3.1 CERTIFICATE OF TITLE

A copy of the certificate of title is included in Appendix A. The site is formally identified as Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 703711W. No covenants or section 173 agreements are on the title.

3.2 PRE-APPLICATION MEETING

A pre-application meeting was held on the 10th of February 2022 with a number of participants from the Renewables and Native Vegetation departments of DELWP, the Department of Transport, and Energy Safe Victoria.

It was noted that the site had been assessed by the Native Vegetation Department in 2012 when the broiler farm application was undertaken, and that there had been no issues in relation to native vegetation at the time.

4. PROPOSAL

Pavilion Biogas proposes to develop a state-of-the-art waste-to-energy facility at the site, generating electricity used to power the Facility itself and the adjacent chicken farms with the remainder being exported to the grid. The facility will produce a by-product which will be bagged and sold as fertiliser, thereby constituting an ancillary manufacturing element.

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4.1 LAND USE TERMS

The proposal includes the following land use terms:

Waste to energy facility: *“Land used for the combustion, treatment or bio-reaction of waste to produce energy for use off site. It includes the activities to collect, temporarily store, process, or transfer waste materials for energy production.”*

Industry (manufacturing): *“Land used for (any of the following operations):*

- a) *Any process of manufacture;*
- b) *Dismantling or breaking up of any article;*
- c) *Treating waste materials;*
- d) *Winning clay, gravel, rock, sand, soil, stone, or other materials (other than Mineral, stone, or soil extraction);*
- e) *Laundering, repairing, servicing or washing any article, machinery, or vehicle, other than on-site work on a building, works, or land; or*
- f) *Any process of testing or analysis.*

If on the same land as any of these operations, it also includes:

- a) *Storing goods used in the operation or resulting from it;*
- b) *Providing amenities for people engaged in the operation;*
- c) *Selling by wholesale, goods resulting from the operation; and*
- d) *Accounting or administration in connection with the operation.*

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Clause 64.01 deems that if land is used for more than one use and one is not ancillary to the other, each use must comply with this scheme.

The test for characterising whether a use is ancillary was identified in *Lizzio v Ryde Municipal Council* where the High Court approved the statement of Glass JA in *Foodbarn Pty Ltd v Solicitor-General* that:

“Where a part of land is used for the purpose which is subordinate to the purpose for which another part is used, the whole of the land is regarded as being used for the dominant purpose. The subordinate purpose is merely incidental or ancillary to the dominant purpose.”

The purpose of the waste-to-energy facility is to generate electricity to export to the grid and use onsite. This process produces a by-product which will be bagged and sold as fertiliser. The further treatment of the by-product is considered ancillary to the dominant use of the land to generate electricity.

4.2 PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

It is proposed to construct an Anaerobic Digester (AD) on the site to produce energy from waste matter from the local broiler farms. The Anaerobic Digester (AD) shall produce over 8,000,000Nm³ of biogas (60-65% methane) per year which will be converted into approximately 21,000,000MWh of electricity via two 1.2MW combined heat and power (CHP) machines. The generated electricity will power the AD facility and adjacent six chicken farms with the remainder being exported to the grid. The captured waste heat will be used to dry the produced digestate and heat the digester tanks. The proposed AD will process the following approximate amounts of organics annually:

- 19,700 tonnes of chicken litter (K220 – industrial waste)
- 10,000 tonnes of a combination of the following organic waste:
 - Cheese whey (5.5%) (K200 – priority waste)
 - Paunch (K100 – reportable priority waste transport)
 - DAF biosolids (K100 – reportable priority waste transport)

To optimise plant efficiency, the biogas produced by the anaerobic digestion stage will be converted to electricity via two combined heat and power (CHP) machines. The generated electricity will be used to power the Facility itself and the adjacent chicken farms with the remainder being exported to the grid.

The heat from the CHP machines will be used to heat the digester tanks and also provide heat for the dryer operation. The AD will produce approximately 20,967,600kWh per annum of electricity through the combustion of biogas. This will power the parasitic load of the facility and the surrounding Pavilion Farms' operations with the remaining electricity being exported to the grid. The expected demand of the facility itself and the surrounding six Pavilion Farms chicken broiler farms is 3,166,371kWh and 4,000,000kWh per annum, respectively. Therefore, an estimated 13,801,229kWh will be exported to the grid each year.

A load calculation has been prepared which demonstrates the instantaneous loads rather than annual totals, demonstrating an estimated grid export of 1.075MW under normal operation conditions. This produces a conservative (high) estimate of energy used on the site so grid export could be up to 2.4MW, depending on the grid limitations and the pending agreement with the network operator.

Pavilion Biogas will use a circular farming approach to treat the by-product from the AD To product a high-grade fertiliser that will be organic and low in contaminants.

The facility will operate as a 24-hour facility and will take in waste products from existing operations on the site and neighbouring properties, recover energy and produce a waste product which can be later used as fertiliser.

As AD utilises wholly automated systems, it is expected to employ seven skilled supervisory staff, four during the day and two at night. As the facility runs 24/7, it's imperative that a caretaker lives on site to be able to respond to any alarms or issues that arise.

The package of site and elevation drawings are included in Appendix B.

4.3 SITING AND BUILT FORM

The site layout is shown in Figure 4-1. The project will include the following built form elements:

- A sealed access road surrounding the plant
- 2 x 9m high x 28m diameter circular primary digester tanks
- 2 x 8m high x 15m diameter secondary digester tanks
- 4 x poultry manure bays
- Car parking
- 4 x 2.9m high x 12.6m diameter water storage tanks for firefighting purposes
- 7.5m wide landscape mound buffer
- Dried solid fertiliser product yard
- Batteries and infrastructure storage associated with the plan
- Caretaker's house

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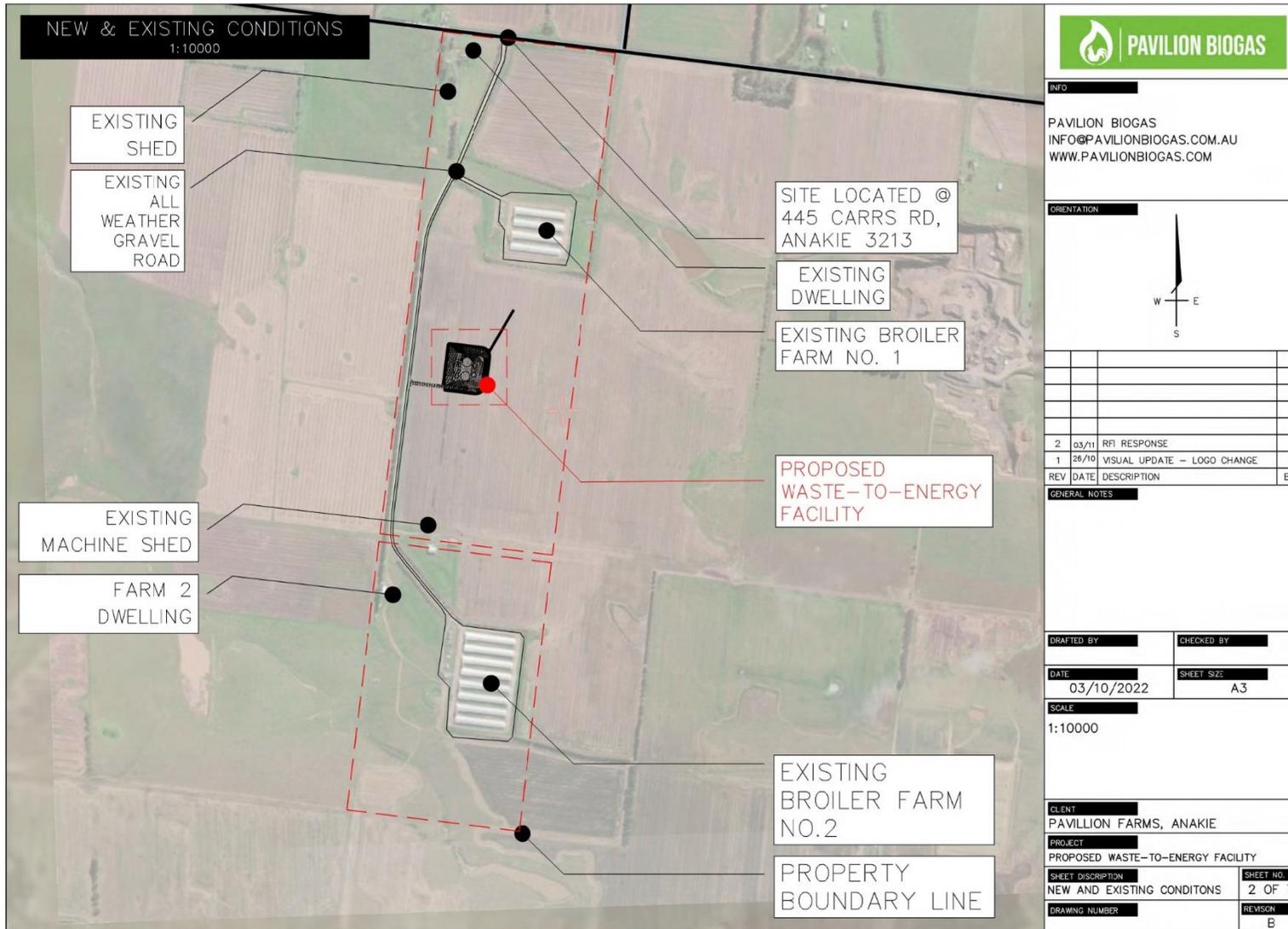
The AD plant will be primarily outdoors and consist of primary and secondary digesters, pre-hydrolysis tanks, CHP machines, flaring system, box feeder, control room and other digestate treatment equipment. The proposed AD layout is shown in Figure 4-2, and elevation plan in Figure 4-3.

The AD plant is located between the northern and southern broiler farms and is setback 900 metres from Carrs Road. A mounded landscape buffer of approximately 7.5 metres width will circle the AD plant.

An ancillary shed will be constructed to store the dried solid fertiliser that is a product of the process, and multiple containers to protect sensitive equipment.

In terms of vehicle access to the site, the AD will be located to allow easy access in and out of the site using an existing access road that services two of the Pavilion Farms owned broiler farms. The AD will be located between the two existing farms, approximately 300m from the nearest.

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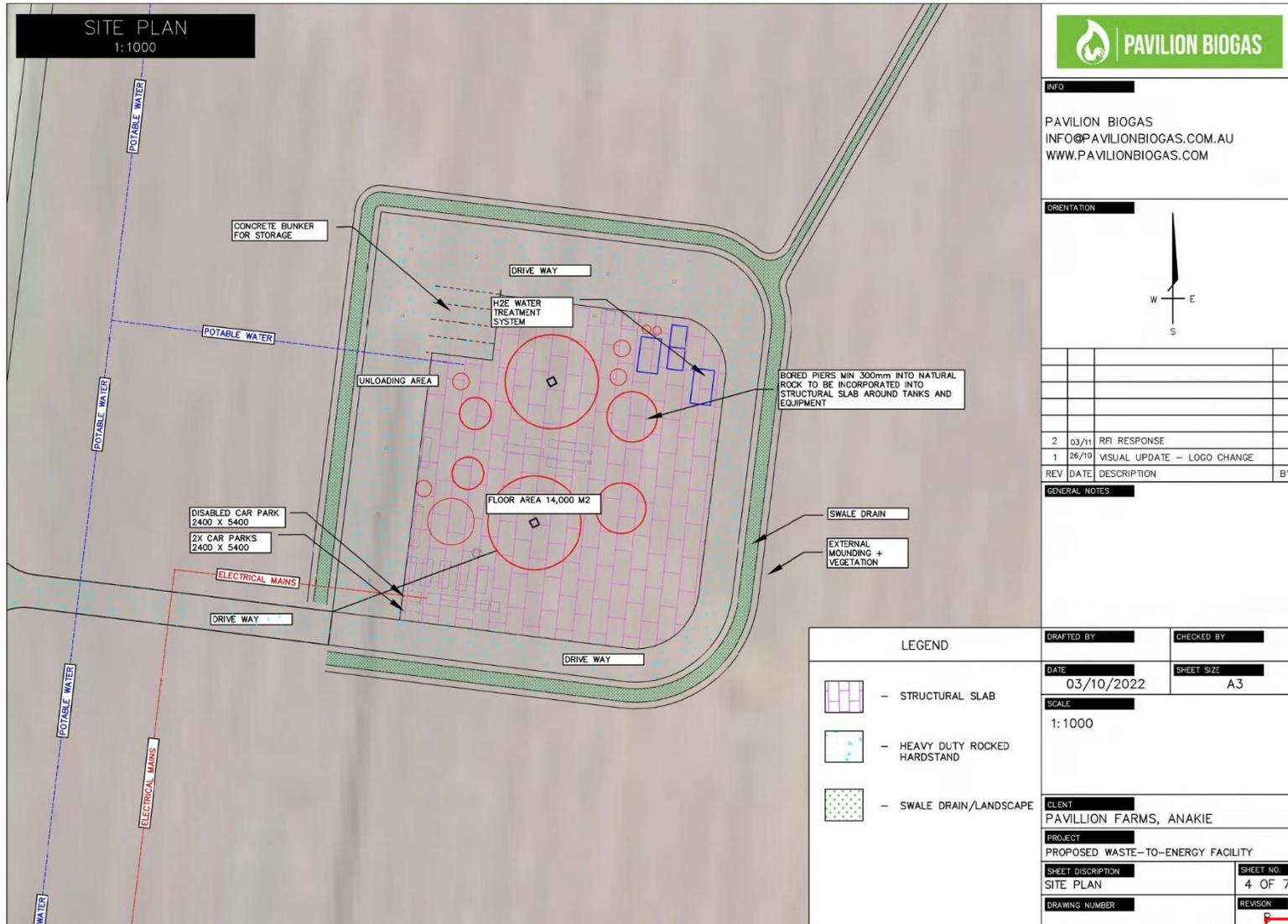
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Figure 4-1 Site layout

Source: Pavilion Biogas Pty Ltd

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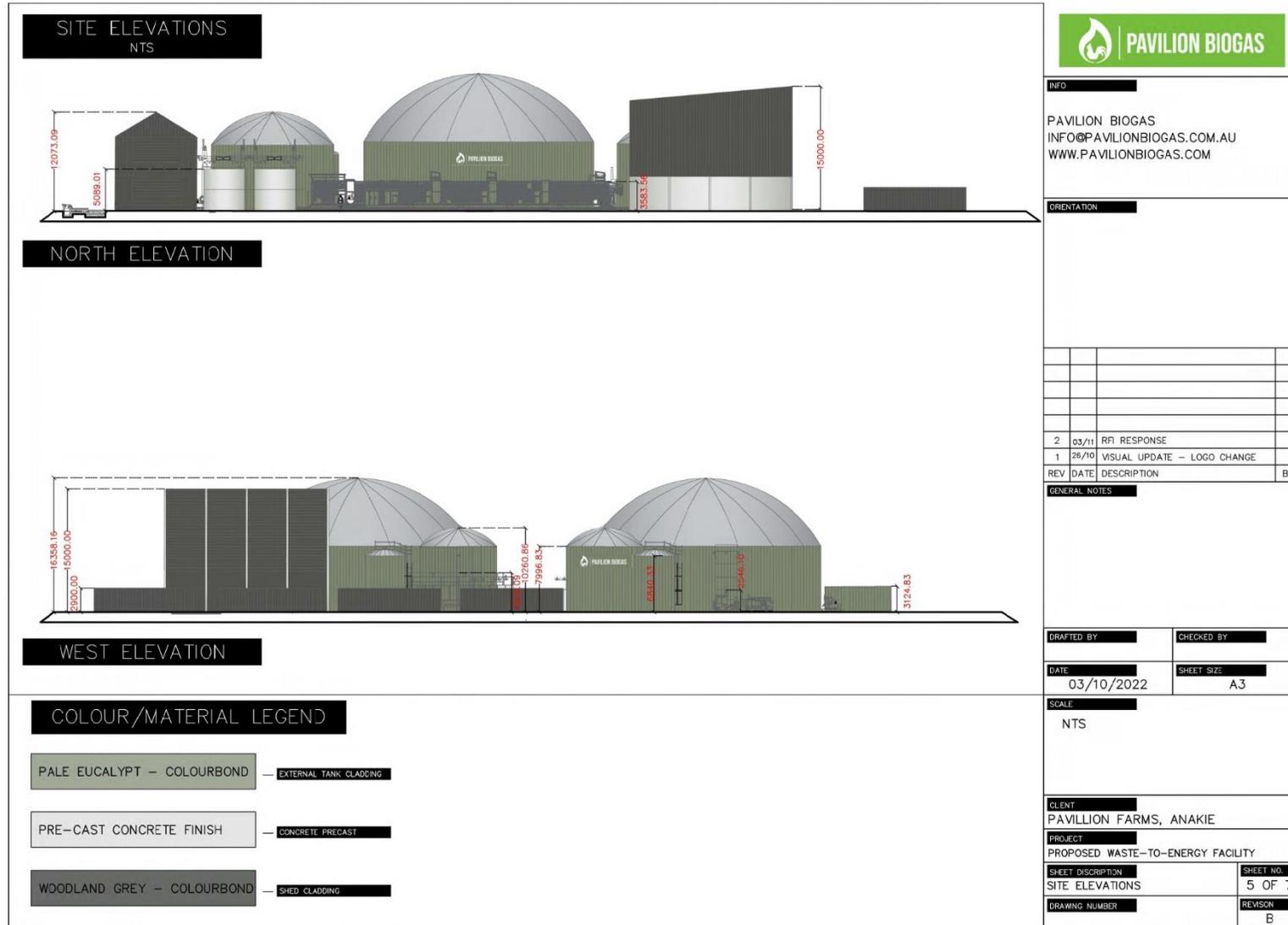
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Figure 4-2 Proposed Anaerobic Digester Plant layout

Source: Pavilion Farms

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Figure 4-3 Proposed Anaerobic Digester Plant elevation

Source: Pavilion Biogas Pty Ltd

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5. PLANNING CONTROLS

The subject site is contained within the Farming Zone (FZ) and is also subject to the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO).

1.1 RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Clause 72.01 of the Scheme, the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for matters under Divisions 1, 1A, 2 and 3 of Part 4 of the Act, and for matters required by the scheme to be approved to the satisfaction of the responsible authority in relation to applications for the use and development of land for an energy generation facility with an installed capacity of 1 megawatt or greater.

Therefore, the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for this application.

1.2 FARMING ZONE

The subject land is zoned Farming Zone (FZ), as is much of the surrounding area (see Figure 5-1).

Key purposes of the Farming Zone include:

- To provide for the use of land for agriculture, encourage the retention of productive agricultural land
- To ensure that non-agricultural uses do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture; and
- To encourage the retention of employment and population to support rural communities.

Pursuant to Clause 35.07-1, a planning permit is required to use land for a waste-to-energy facility.

Pursuant to Clause 35.07-4, a planning permit is required to construct a building or carry out works associated with a Section 2 use.

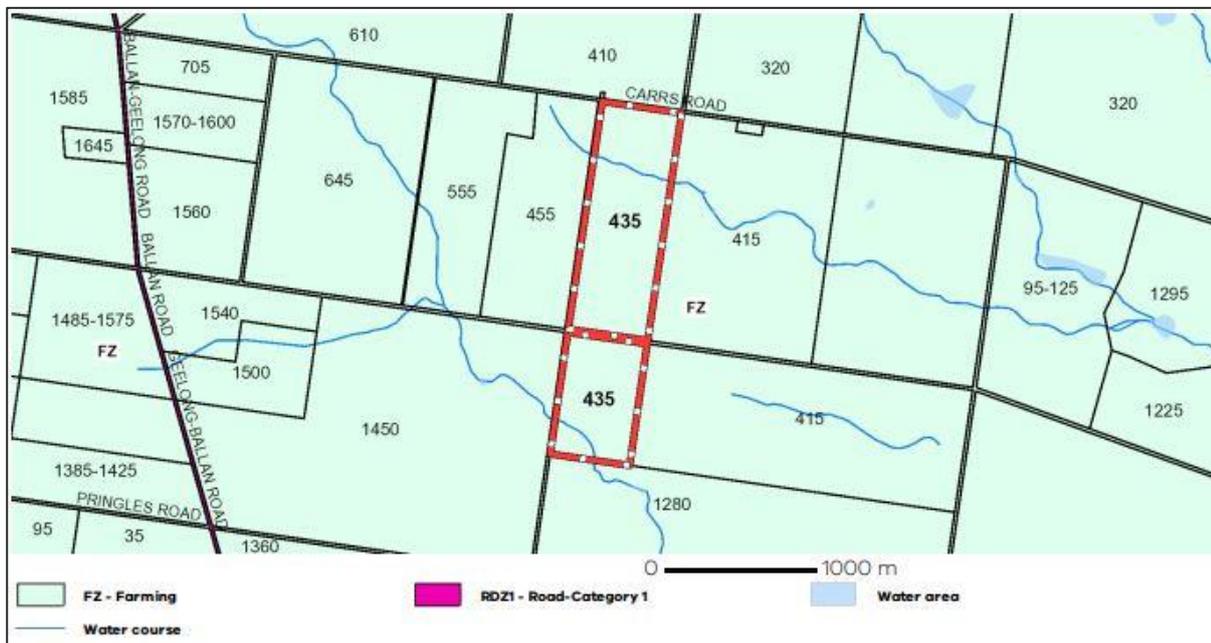


Figure 5-1 Zoning context

Source: VicPlan, State Government of Victoria

A number of decision guidelines are included at Clause 35.07-6 of the Farming Zone. They are as follows:

General issues

- The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- Any Regional Catchment Strategy and associated plan applying to the

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- The capability of the land to accommodate the proposed use or development, including the disposal of effluent.
- How the use or development relates to sustainable land management.
- Whether the site is suitable for the use or development and whether the proposal is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses.
- How the use and development makes use of existing infrastructure and services

Agricultural issues and the impacts from non-agricultural uses

- Whether the use or development will support and enhance agricultural production.
- Whether the use or development will adversely affect soil quality or permanently remove land from agricultural production.
- The potential for the use or development to limit the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.
- The agricultural qualities of the land, such as soil quality, access to water and access to rural infrastructure.
- Any integrated land management plan prepared for the site.

Environmental issues

- The impact of the proposal on the natural physical features and resources of the area, in particular on soil and water quality.
- The impact of the use or development on the flora and fauna on the site and its surrounds.
- The need to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area, including the retention of vegetation and faunal habitat and the need to revegetate land including riparian buffers along waterways, gullies, ridgelines, property boundaries and saline discharge and recharge area.

Design and siting issues

- The need to locate buildings in one area to avoid any adverse impacts on surrounding agricultural uses and to minimise the loss of productive agricultural land.
- The impact of the siting, design, height, bulk, colours and materials to be used, on the natural environment, major roads, vistas and water features and the measures to be undertaken to minimise any adverse impacts.
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area or features of architectural, historic or scientific significance or of natural scenic beauty or importance.
- The location and design of existing and proposed infrastructure including roads, gas, water, drainage, telecommunications and sewerage facilities.
- Whether the use and development will require traffic management measures.

1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OVERLAY

The subject site is affected by the Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 4 (ESO4), which affects much of the surrounding area. It applies to grasslands within the Werribee Plains Hinterland and seeks to prevent a decline in the extent and quality of native vegetation and fauna habitat of the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion, whilst enhancing landscape values and avoiding fragmented land or incompatible land uses.

Key purposes of the Environmental Significance Overlay include:

- To identify areas where the development of land may be affected by environmental constraints.
- To ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.

Pursuant to Clause 42.01-2, a planning permit is required to construct a building or carry out works; and to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation, including dead vegetation.

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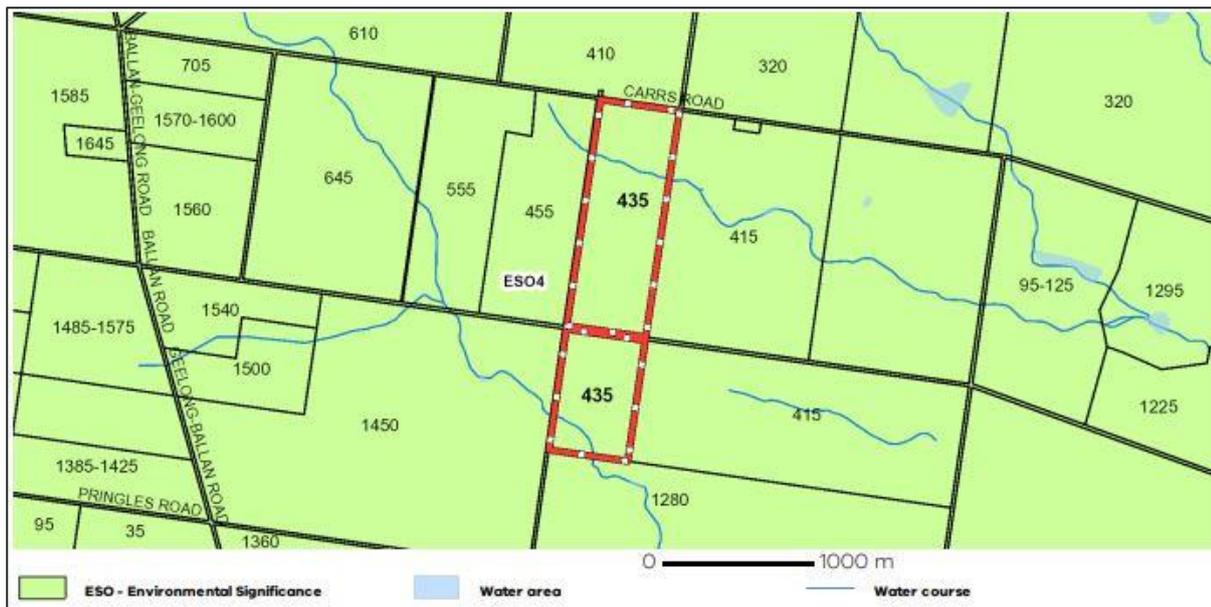


Figure 5-2 Overlay context

An application must be accompanied by:

- A description of any proposed disturbance of surface soil or rocks associated with the proposal.
- The total extent of vegetation on the property and the extent of native vegetation proposed to be removed, lopped or destroyed.
- A description of the steps that have been taken to avoid and minimise the removal of native vegetation including the practicality of alternative options which do not require removal of the native vegetation.

An application must also be accompanied by, as appropriate:

- A flora and fauna assessment of the land prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced person to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. The assessment must include:
 - A flora and fauna survey.
 - A habitat hectare assessment.
 - Identification of the vegetation and habitat significance of the property.
 - A description of the effect of the proposed development in relation to other areas of native vegetation or native fauna habitat, including any proposed conservation reserves, streams and waterways.
- A land and environmental management plan prepared by a suitably qualified person identifying, as appropriate:
 - Any proposals for revegetation, including proposed species, and ground stabilisation.
 - How any vegetation removal will be offset (an offset plan), in accordance with Victoria's Native Vegetation Management: A Framework For Action (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002).
 - Weed management, including species to be targeted and proposed management techniques.
 - Pest animal management, including species to be targeted and proposed management techniques.

If in the opinion of the responsible authority a flora and fauna assessment of the land or a land and environmental management plan is not relevant to the assessment of an application, the responsible authority may waive or reduce the requirement.

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1.4 DESIGNATED BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

The subject site has been identified as a designated bushfire prone area, as determined by the Minister for Planning.

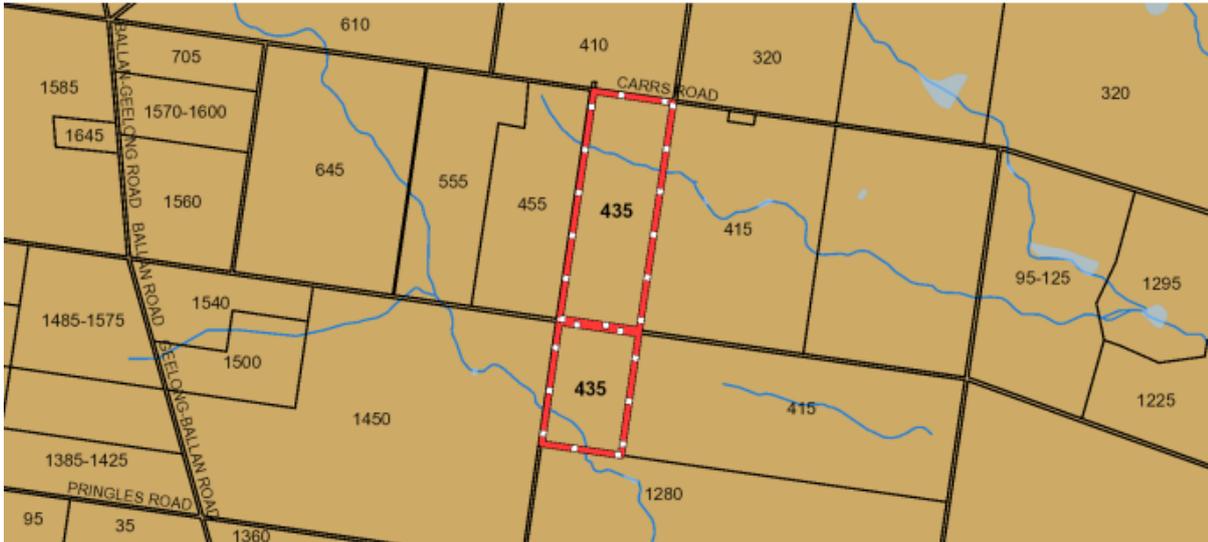


Figure 5-6 – Designated Bushfire Prone Areas

The *Building Regulations 2018* through application of the Building Code of Australia, apply bushfire protection standards for building works in designated bushfire prone areas.

1.5 PARTICULAR PROVISIONS

1.5.1 Clause 52.06 Car Parking

This clause applies to a new use and sets out the car parking requirements.

As the proposed use is not identified in Table 1, car parking spaces must be provided to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

1.5.2 Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation

This clause seek to ensure that there is no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. Pursuant to Clause 52.17 a permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead native vegetation, unless it is specifically stated that a permit is not required.

1.5.3 Clause 53.10 Uses with Adverse Amenity Potential

This clause identifies the types of uses and activities with adverse amenity potential. The purpose of this clause is 'to identify those types of uses and activities, which if not appropriately designed and located, may cause offence or unacceptable risk to the neighbourhood'.

Table to Clause 53.10-1 lists the types of uses or activities and sets out a threshold distance for particular uses and activities. Combustion, treatment or bio-reaction of waste to produce energy is listed in the table although no threshold distance is specified, and as such the application must be referred to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) under Section 55 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The EPA is also a determining referral authority for the permit application pursuant to Clause 66.02-7 of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme, as a Development Licence in accordance with Pat 4.4 of the *Environment Protection Act 2017* is required.

1.5.4 Clause 71.02-3 Integrated Decision Making

This clause acknowledges that planning aims to meet the needs and expectations of society by addressing aspects of economic, environmental, and social wellbeing affected by land use and development. It states that

“planning and responsible authorities should endeavour to integrate the range of planning policies relevant to the issues to be determined and balance conflicting objectives in favour of net community benefit and sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations. However, in bushfire affected areas, planning and responsible authorities must prioritise the protection of human life over all other policy considerations.”

1.6 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) seeks to achieve the objectives of Planning in Victoria as set out in Section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, by providing fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land, to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe place to live and visit, and to facilitate development in accordance with the relevant objectives whilst balancing the present and future interests of all Victorians.

The key planning policies relevant to this application are as follows:

Clause 12.01-2S Native Vegetation Management- Objective is *“To ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.”*

Strategies to achieve this include ensuring decisions that involve, or will lead to, the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation, apply the three-step process in accordance with the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP, 2017).

Clause 12.03-1S River corridors, waterways, lakes and wetlands- The objective is to protect and enhance river corridors, waterways, lakes and wetlands.

Clause 13.07-1S Land use compatibility - The objective is to protect community, amenity, human health and safety while facilitating appropriate commercial, industrial, infrastructure or other uses with potential adverse off-site impacts.

Clause 14.01-1S Protection of agricultural land - The objective is to protect the state’s agricultural base by preserving productive farmland.

Clause 14.01-2S Sustainable agricultural land use - The objective is to encourage sustainable agricultural land use, with a strategy to support the development of innovative and sustainable approaches to agricultural and associated rural land use practices.

Clause 14.01-L-01 Discretionary uses in rural areas- This policy applies to the consideration of use and development applications within the Farming and Rural Conservation Zone. The policy seeks to carefully manage non-agricultural uses in rural areas to ensure that the ongoing use of land for agriculture is supported, and the character preserved.

For a discretionary non-agricultural use, it is policy that:

- The intensity of the use will complement and support the local rural context.
- The use will not result in an unreasonable loss of productive agricultural land.
- Existing agricultural activity on adjoining land will not be compromised.
- The scale of the development will complement and respect the rural landscape character.
- Buildings and structures are designed and sited to not be visually dominant and can blend into the surrounding landscape and natural environment. Visual impacts should be mitigated or minimised through sensitive design, landscaping, materials and colours.
- The site has access to an appropriately constructed or sealed road that is capable of accommodating anticipated traffic levels or has convenient access to a major road.
- The site has access to all necessary servicing infrastructure. Where infrastructure is required or needs upgrading the applicant will meet all costs.
- The environmental condition of the land could be enhanced by fencing off remnant vegetation and revegetating waterways and other strategic areas to develop wildlife corridors.

Clause 14.01-L-02 Dwellings and subdivisions in farming areas- This policy applies to the Farming and Rural Conservation Zones. The policy seeks to ensure that the development of dwellings and subdivisions

existing dwellings are consistent with the use of land for sustainable rural uses. The responsible authority will support the construction of a dwelling where:

- The dwelling will not result in the property being removed from agricultural production and the primary use of the land will continue to be agriculture.
- Existing agricultural activity on adjoining land will not be compromised.
- The proportion of the property used for the dwelling and ancillary infrastructure is minimised and located on the area of lowest agricultural quality.

Clause 15.01-6S Design for rural areas- The objective is to ensure development respects valued areas of rural character.

Clause 17.01-1S Diversified economy- The objective is to strengthen and diversify the economy, with a strategy to support rural economies to grow and diversify.

Clause 19.01-1S Energy supply- The objective is to facilitate appropriate development of energy supply infrastructure.

Clause 19.03-5S Waste and resource recovery - The objective is to reduce waste and maximise resource recovery so as to reduce reliance on landfills and minimise environmental, community amenity and public health impacts.

2 ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVALS

The proposal triggers the need for a Development Licence, as the Facility will be for a prescribed development activity. The Development Licence application is occurring concurrently to this planning application process.

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3 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The Greater Geelong Planning Scheme (the Planning Scheme) requires the responsible authority to integrate a range of policies relevant to the issues to be determined. A balance is required between conflicting objectives in favour of net community benefit and sustainable development.

The proposal enjoys strategic support under the Planning Scheme, with state and local policies supporting the need for waste reuse and recovery, and development that does not impact the natural environment and existing agricultural operations.

Overall, the proposal is considered a suitable response and outcome for the site and will greatly support the existing agricultural operations on the land.

The following section undertakes an assessment of the proposal against the relevant clauses of the Planning Scheme.

3.1 FARMING ZONE

The proposal will support agricultural operations by providing energy for use on site and an option to treat waste which would otherwise be diverted to landfill. This will ensure that the on-site and surrounding farming operations can operate sustainably and viably economically.

The proposal does not subdivide or further fragment agricultural land, and therefore does not diminish its potential for a range of agricultural uses in the future. The infrastructure to service the waste-to-energy facility could be relocated so that the land can be re-used for agricultural pursuits. Further, the AD plant has a proposed floor area of approximately 1.69 hectares, which is around 1 per cent of the total property area.

The development licence application addresses potential amenity issues such as noise, air quality/odour and visual impact to ensure that there are no amenity impacts to the surrounding area. These assessments are further detailed later in this section.

The proposal will generate additional employment to initially deliver and construct the AD plant but also in the long term to operate the machinery. In addition, the complementary nature of the proposal to the surrounding broiler farms will increase the viability for these farms to remain in this location for the foreseeable future.

The generous size of the property and surrounding land use makes it ideal for a waste-to-energy facility as there are limited nearby sensitive receptors. The AD plant itself is located central to the property and set back 900 metres from Carrs Road behind the existing northern broiler farm to minimise the visual impact on the road network.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OVERLAY – SCHEDULE 4

The ESO4 applies to grasslands within the Werribee Plains Hinterland, which form part of the Victorian Volcanic Plain Bioregion.

Pursuant to the application requirements of the ESO4, a flora and fauna assessment was undertaken to assess the total extent of vegetation on the property and the extent of native vegetation proposed to be removed, lopped or destroyed.

The Flora and Fauna Assessment (FFA) identified that there was no native vegetation on the site, and therefore the proposal does not contribute to the decline in the extent and quality of native vegetation and native fauna habitat of the Victorian Volcanic Plain.

A Land and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) has been prepared as per the ESO4 application requirements to identify how the environmental and landscape values of the area can be enhanced, and to ensure that the proposal is compatible with the long-term conservation, maintenance and enhancement of the grasslands.

3.3 FLORA AND FAUNA ASSESSMENT

A FFA was undertaken by Mark Trengove Ecological Services to assess the ecological value that might be present within the site (refer to Appendix H).

The assessment identified that the site is within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority area. Vegetation onsite includes heavily cropped land, dominated by Barley Grass (*Hordeum glaucum*) and common agricultural and ruderal weeds. There was no native vegetation identified on the site.

The assessment included a literature and database review and a field survey. It deems that the site is heavily degraded cropped land, dominated by invasive weed species with no native vegetation identified. Some native Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*) persists on the eastern side of the site boundary but is in competition with several Pine trees (*Pinus sp*) and Boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*). Taking into consideration the landscape in which this parcel of land sites, surrounded by similarly degraded farming land, it is unlikely this area provides any floral habitat value to local fauna.

No national, state or regional conservation significant species were recorded within the site.

The assessment concludes that the proposed development area is comprised of exotic, degraded vegetation that, if removed, will not impact upon the environmental values of the native vegetation and fauna habitat of the Victorian volcanic plain. As such, there are no implications for the current proposal under the ESO4.

3.4 LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

A LEMP has been prepared in accordance with the ESO4 application requirements (see Appendix I). It outlines how the proposal can be facilitated whilst protecting, enhancing and supporting the overall environment.

The LEMP incorporates the outcomes from the flora and fauna assessment, and the landscape drawings to holistically plan for the care and protection of the landscape.

The Site has been well documented as heavily cropped farming land, which is consistent with the neighbouring areas. The part of the Site for the AD facility is identified as Land Class 1 which means it has little risk of degradation and is able to support a wide range of uses.

The areas for new revegetation are the focus point around land management for the land owner as there is no native vegetation on the property, and the existing non-native vegetation is not located near the proposed development area. The revegetation will include 3 rows, each 2-3 metres apart, of tree and shrub tube stock, planted 2 metres apart, resulting in 866 mostly local indigenous plants.

Planting will comprise mostly local indigenous species derived from EVC 803 Plains Woodland with trees and shrubs planted in an alternative pattern to ensure a under and upper storey structure, to screen sheds and provide effective windbreaks with habitat value.

The LEMP includes a planting management plan, a vegetation maintenance plan, and weed and pest management plan to ensure that all requirements of the ESO4 are met.

3.5 TRANSPORT

Traffic Group prepared a Traffic Engineering Assessment for the proposed development with particular attention to traffic impacts and access (refer Figure 3-1).

There are three formal car parking spaces proposed to the southwest of the AD plan, as shown in Figure 3-1, to accommodate the seven full-time equivalent staff required to operate the facility. The assessment recommends that future allowance for provision for up to four additional spaces be identified on plans in the event that there are seven staff on-site at one time. An area of overflow parking may also be necessary to accommodate staff parking at shift change-over, though it is noted that the site is very large and there are ample opportunities to provide car parking on-site as required. As such, there will be no off-site parking impacts.

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Figure 3-1 Location of proposed car parking

Source: Extracted from Traffic Engineering Assessment, Traffic Group (2022)

The proposed AD plant will be accessed from the existing internal access driveway which provides access to both broiler farms on the site. This access road already accommodates vehicles up to B-doubles and is sufficiently wide to allow vehicles to pass at low speeds.

The proposed access to the AD plant will include a crossover to this internal access road suitable to accommodate the turning movements of semi-trailers, and a wide boundary road capable of accommodating semi's will be constructed around the boundary of the AD plant. Adequate provision is made for circulation, manoeuvring and access for semi-trailers at the loading facility as demonstrated by the swept path in Figure 3-2.



Figure 3-2 Semi-trailer Swept Path at On-Site Loading Area

Source: Extract from Traffic Engineering Assessment, Traffix Group (2022)

The assessment concludes that once operational, the proposal will reduce heavy vehicle traffic on the site access point and the surrounding road network compared to existing operations due to efficiencies gained from the re-use of the broiler farm waste to create a biofuel that can also be used on-site, eliminating the need to source LPG externally to heat the broiler farms.

The development will increase the light vehicle traffic accessing the site. During shift change-over, up to 14 vehicle movements could be generated in an hour, corresponding to an average of one vehicle either entering or exiting the site every 4.3 minutes during the site peak hour.

The assessment concludes that the proposed traffic is expected to be predominantly generated to/from the east and is negligible in the context of existing traffic volumes on Bacchus Marsh-Geelong Road. Notably, not more than seven vehicles will turn into Carrs Road from Bacchus Marsh-Geelong Road in any single hour and this level of traffic can easily be accommodated without any adverse impacts.

Traffic Group identified that there will be an increase in heavy vehicle traffic on the road network at this stage, and accordingly an assessment of the truck access route(s) has been undertaken. It was recommended that Bacchus Marsh-Geelong Road be the preferred truck access route for construction traffic having regard to the recent intersection upgrade at Carrs Road and signs of existing damage at the Carrs Road/Geelong-Ballan Road intersection. It was also recommended that the existing crossover be sealed up to the road carriageway noting that there is evidence of damage in the existing 2 metres gap between the bitumen carriageway and concrete crossover.

3.6 STORMWATER

The stormwater system will be separate to the wastewater system which treats all wastewater generated by the process. No rainwater will be harvested for reuse and there will be no differentiation between streams of stormwater depending on quality.

All stormwater captured on the site will be collected by a swale drain surrounding the AD plant. The swale drain runs around the entire perimeter of the AD plant and is connected to an existing drainage system for the broiler farm to the north of the AD. This drainage system transfer stormwater to a settling pond approximately 650m north-east of the AD. The floor of the AD plant is graded such that all stormwater from the site will be collected by the swale drain.

3.7 WASTEWATER

The proposed design reuses all wastewater generated by the plant and does not require any discharge of liquid effluent.

There are multiple systems in place to maximise the amount of water recovered from the AD process. The waste digestate generated by the AD is firstly separated into solid digestate and filtrate by a Screw Press and Microfilter. Approximately 72% of the separated filtrate is then re-circulated to the start of the process to blend with the dry feedstock in the wet feeding process.

The remainder is then processed to separate solids into a concentrated slurry and greywater. Approximately 70% of the water is recovered as grey water by the Water Treatment Plant and presses.

As all the separated filtrate is dried into fertiliser and the polished water is reused by the system, the system produces no wastewater that requires disposal.

3.8 VISUAL IMPACT

Davidson Design Studio Pty Ltd Personnel (Davidson Design Studio) undertook a visual impact assessment to provide an objective review of the proposal and the potential visual impacts on the surrounding environment (refer Appendix E).

Visual impact was determined by considering both visual sensitivity and visual effect. Initially a desktop analysis was undertaken to determine zones of visual influence, followed by a site visit to photograph and assess these locations for their sensitivity of view and magnitude of change.

Of the fifteen receptors analysed in the assessment, eight were classified as low sensitivity of view. This was largely due to the receptors distance from the site or the cleared agricultural landscape devoid of vegetation common of the area. Six receptors were classified as moderate sensitivity of view, characterised by pleasing distant views, planted natural vegetation and inoffensive rural infrastructure. One receptor was classified as high sensitivity of view, from the You Yangs across the Werribee Plain.

By applying the sensitivity of view to the magnitude of change the following visual impacts were determined of the fifteen receptors:

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- Four have a very low visual impact
- Six have a low visual impact
- Two have a low/moderate visual impact
- Three have a moderate visual impact
- Zero have a high visual impact

The assessment concluded that the subject site is well suited to the proposal due to the land’s topography, pre-emptive windbreak and buffer planting, existing agricultural use, sufficient drainage, and size to accommodate an energy generation facility.

The assessment concludes that moderate visual impacts concentrated on Carrs Road and at the intersection of Whytcrosses Road and Darlington Drive will be mitigated by concentrating buffer planting to the perimeter of the AD. This vegetation, once established, will mitigate the visual impact of the proposed works and is a general improvement on the otherwise spare plain typical of the region.

The siting, design and scale of the proposed works respects and complements the rural landscape character. Visual impacts on the natural environment have been mitigated and minimised through sensitive design, muted colours and appropriate materials. Extensive perimeter buffer planting, which seeks to mitigate detrimental views from the selected receptors, has been incorporated into the proposed works. The buffer planting will be composed of locally indigenous plant species to provide ground level, mid and upper storey vegetative cover.

The compact footprint of the proposed works preserves the productive agricultural capacity of the land whilst enhancing the environmental condition of the landscape through plantings that provide improved benefit to local ecologies.

The assessment concludes that based on the appraisal and findings of the visual impact assessment it is considered that the proposed anaerobic digester would have a low effect on the existing landscape characters and values as well as the local context.

3.9 NOISE

Watson Moss Growcott Acoustics (WMC) undertook a noise emission assessment for the proposed facility (refer Appendix F). Noise limits were determined in accordance with the Noise Protocol under the Environment Protection Act, and noise emissions from the proposed facility was modelled in conjunction with emissions from the existing broiler farms on the site.

The assessment concluded that resultant noise levels at noise sensitive areas from the proposed facility operations, in conjunction with operation of the ventilation fans at the existing broiler sheds on the site, will be below the relevant noise limits by a sufficient margin to allow for noise contributions from other sources in the area while remaining below the overall noise limits at all noise sensitive areas during all time periods.

One noise control strategy was recommended: that all mobile equipment operating at the site be fitted with broadband reverse alarms, which vary their noise output according to the ambient noise level. These reversing alarms should be selected for the lowest noise level consistent with safe operation.

3.10 AIR QUALITY AND ODOUR

The Odour Unit prepared an air quality and odour impact assessment (AQOA) for the proposed facility to identify and characterise all potential air and odour emissions risks, estimate key pollutant sources and emission rates, identify risk controls and mitigation measures and inform design options (included in Appendix G).

The AQOA identified that all Air Pollution Assessment Criteria are satisfied using the modelling prediction except for short-term NO₂ at and beyond the boundary of the proposed AD. It is noted that the exceedance is largely contained within the property boundary. One or more of the following measures will ensure that human health and the environment are protected both at on-site and off-site locations of the proposed AD:

- Optimal operation and maintenance of the combined heat and power engines and validated performance emissions limits, resulting in a revised conversion performance; and
- If required, additional measures such as a stack extension, pre-conditioning of the biogas fuel and/or enhanced operating conditions can be adopted to manage NO₂ emission release levels.

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For the other key pollutants, the Odour Unit could not identify any representative sources of background air pollution monitoring data for the region surrounding Anakie. It is assumed that the key pollutants of concern have negligible background levels within a farming land use environment.

In the case of odour, the contour presents the baseline predicted ground level concentrations based on the following design assumptions and configurations:

- Open poultry/feedstock receival area (concrete clamps). The poultry litter will be sourced from the existing broiler farms stockpile areas in the vicinity and moved to the Proposed Fertiliser Facility as feedstock for processing. Therefore, it is presumed that the change to the existing local poultry background odour and air quality impact (particulate matter) will be negligible;
- The dryer exhaust air emission will be treated via a biofilter or equivalent odour control system with a treatment airflow capacity of 6,200 m³/hr. Biofiltration is an established technology and proven air emissions control technology for the treatment of process air emissions in the agricultural and organic resource recovery sector;
- The liquid feedstocks/slurry vessels will be covered and fully enclosed (i.e., closed loop operational circuit). As such, there air quality impacts are anticipated to be negligible emissions;
- The dried and separate storage of product components such as the press filter cake and product from the dryer to be kept under cover in a building. As such, there will be negligible odour and particulate matter emissions on the basis the product is in a dry state and good housekeeping and management practices are followed as part of material transport and handling activities; and
- The input feedstock and digested material particle size reduction process is enclosed (i.e., closed loop operational circuit), with any displaced gas emissions captured and returned to digester.

Based on the AQOA findings, the Odour Unit recommends the following for the proposed AD:

1. For the proposed dryer biofilter system, a process monitoring system, consisting of the logging of key operational parameters (airflow, pressure, relative humidity, and temperature);
2. Development of an air quality/odour management plan. As a minimum, the details should include:
 - a. Identification and characterisation of the key steps involved in the Proposed Fertiliser Facility activities and the associated air quality/odour emission risks;
 - b. A qualitative assessment on the risk rating for each key step;
 - c. An identification of the key odour management and monitoring procedures that will be adopted as part of the site activities (including proactive and reactive strategies);
 - d. The reporting requirements with respect to odour as part of the normal site activities;
 - e. The training and awareness programs surrounding the activities and its potential odour emissions risk and associated mitigation;
 - f. An outline of a commitment to operational excellence and continuous improvement in odour management; and
 - g. A trigger and response action plan to abnormal/atypical events that are beyond the normal operational settings.

3.11 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The proposal is strategically supported by state and local policy. The Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan 2018 (Sustainability Victoria) sets out a 30-year roadmap to improve Victoria's waste and recycling infrastructure. The plan aims to create an integrated waste and recycling system that maximises the opportunities to reprocess and use recycled materials, reduce the need for raw materials, and send less waste to landfill. The proposal supports this by redirecting waste from the local poultry farms from landfill to the waste-to-energy facility, which will reprocess the material to create energy.

Supporting technical reports conclude that the proposal is suitable in the proposed location and offsite amenity impacts will be appropriately mitigated.

The proposal complements and supports the ongoing use of the land for agriculture and preserves the farmed landscape and will not result in an unreasonable loss of productive agricultural land. The AD plant supports the viability of the farming operations by providing an energy source and waste management option.

The caretaker's residence will not result in the property being removed from agricultural production, and the primary use of the land will continue to be agriculture supported by the waste-to-energy facility. Further, the residence will not have an impact on agricultural activity on adjoining land, as it will be located closer to the proposed AD than to neighbouring properties.

The flora and fauna assessment and visual impact assessment will enhance the environmental condition of the land.

The land management plan aims to preserve and enhance the productive capacity of the land through addressing issues such as pest plants and animals, and erosion.

The technical assessments which support this application demonstrate that the waste-to-energy facility will not compromise existing agricultural activity on adjoining land. In contrast, the facility will offer their neighbours an option to process waste, rather than transferring it to landfill.

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4 CONCLUSION

The waste-to-energy facility will have significant benefits for the agricultural operations on the site and neighbouring properties. In economic terms, it will allow energy to be produced on site thereby reducing the costs of operation and will reduce the costs associated with disposing of waste material. These economic savings are crucial to ensure the long term viability of farming in this area.

Further, the facility supports state policy around waste and resource recovery, by diverting a waste product which would otherwise have gone to landfill and reusing it for energy production.

The facility provides a number of benefits including production of renewable energy from waste, a high-grade organic fertiliser, upskilling of Australian businesses and labour force, job creation and substantial lowering of greenhouse gas emissions.

The location is suitable for the facility as it is a large property surrounded by farming uses suitable to accommodate buffers to sensitive receptors, is in line with the agricultural neighbourhood character, and is surrounded by broiler farms which produce the waste product required.

Visually, the scale of the development will complement and respect the rural landscape character. A vegetated buffer mound around the AD will enhance the vegetation on the site and mitigate the visual impact of the facility. This will also enhance the environmental condition of the land which has been heavily grazed.

The proposal is consistent with the objectives and decision guidelines of the planning policy framework, the relevant zone and overlay provisions of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme and is supported by the required documentation to demonstrate that the proposal is acceptable in its location.

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Appendix A A copy of certificate of title

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Appendix B Site and elevation plans

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Appendix C Landscape drawings

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Appendix D Traffic Engineering Assessment

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Appendix E Visual Impact Assessment

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Appendix F Noise impact assessment

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Appendix G Air quality and odour assessment

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Appendix H Flora and fauna assessment

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Appendix I Land and Environmental Management Plan

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