



MOVING TO A RURAL AREA

The City of Albany has prepared this fact sheet to provide assistance and advice to people who want a rural residential lifestyle or hobby farm in an area where land is being used, or able to be used for agricultural purposes.

Many new residents are attracted to living in rural areas of Albany, often expecting a pleasant and tranquil environment.

It is important to realise that country life is different from life in the city or suburbs. Many new residents have an idealised view of agriculture and are unaware of the differences in amenity between rural and urban areas or the responsibilities they may have in managing their properties.

People should not move to a rural area expecting the same level of amenity as enjoyed in a residential area. For example, roads are often not kerbed or there are no footpaths.

Many rural production activities have impacts that have not been seriously contemplated by the intending purchaser – noise, odour, dusty roads and spray drift are all factors which can impact on rural amenity.

This is an increasing problem as urban development spreads into rural areas, and pressure is applied to allow residential allotments and hobby farms in the adjoining rural hinterland.

Prospective purchasers of land in rural areas should find out in advance what type of rural industries are operating in the area and be aware that in the future nearby land may have the potential for a use which could generate disruption.

Even where a permit is required for some land uses, it should be noted that these uses are consistent with the purposes of agricultural zones in the Planning Scheme, and often can only be located in rural areas.

The following can potentially occur on agricultural properties;

- ✓ Extractive industries (sand/gravel)
- ✓ Grazing
- ✓ Poultry farms
- ✓ Piggeries
- ✓ Spraying
- ✓ Bird deterrent cannons
- ✓ Changes to landscapes as a result of timber plantations
- ✓ Heavy transport vehicles travelling along country roads (day and night)
- ✓ Machinery operating at night and early in the morning e.g. dairy farm and tractors cutting hay
- ✓ Telecommunications facilities and renewable energy infrastructure
- ✓ Visual impact of large rural buildings such as dairies, piggery shelters, silos, and broiler chicken sheds.



If properties adjoining rural land are purchased knowing that there are legitimate rural land uses which can occur, then future landowners will be in the best position to decide if living in the rural area is for them.



The best way to avoid a dispute is to have a real understanding of rural life before you purchase a site, and to take preventative action by simply talking to your neighbours about potential issues that may arise.

BEFORE BUYING A RURAL PROPERTY

Talk to a member of the City of Albany's Planning team about the town planning controls that cover the land and surrounding area.

Questions you might ask are:

- What is the land zoned for?
- What is allowed to occur on the site or surrounding land that does / does not need planning approval?
- What could be permitted on adjoining land in the future that may have some effect on the amenity of the property?
- Are there any controls which might restrict the type of use or development that you envisage on the land?
- Check that you understand the nature and content of any easements which are shown on the property title e.g. an easement on a title saying that your neighbour may gain access to his/her property across your land.
- The location of any future dwelling must take existing and future agricultural land uses and bushfire safety into consideration.

Consider talking to the adjoining landowners about how they have experienced the area, often they will be in the best position to give you a firsthand experience.

SEASONAL ACTIVITIES

Consider that agricultural activities can be seasonal and vary during different times of the day, week or month, and that one inspection of the site you intend to purchase may not be indicative of the activities which might occur on adjoining land.



BUSHFIRE RISK

Natural vegetation creates wonderful environmental amenity, but can also place you in danger if the area is vulnerable to bushfires. Parts of Albany are among the most fire prone in Western Australia.

Consider carefully if you are moving into a bush fire prone area, and the implications this can have. City officers can advise you of the degree of fire risk in an area and any town planning or building regulations you must comply with.

The Building Code of Australia also identifies standards for buildings constructed in designated bush fire prone areas. These are assessed at the time of a building permit being lodged.

It is also critical to maintain your property in a managed state, please review your yearly fire management notice for these details.

You should ensure you have done everything possible to minimise risk to life and property. This includes establishing a fire protection plan and the means of implementing it.

Contact the City to confirm what vegetation can be removed, and to establish the most environmentally friendly way of carrying out fire prevention works.



Volunteering with your local fire brigade can be an excellent way to give back to your local community.