Interface and Buffer Management

Current Situation:

The Development Plan refers to the use of buffers and separation distances along property boundaries to manage the interface between sensitive adjoining land uses such as between primary production and residential areas.

The State Government (Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure) recommends a 40 metre buffer area should be used between urban and rural uses, but lesser buffer distances could be used if a reduction can be justified.

There is no defined standard that guides buffers between different rural uses.

Issue:

Specific buffer requirements currently only exist in the form of guidelines and there are competing demands between activities in the rural area, including an increasing desire to balance the traditional primary production priorities that have historically defined rural areas with the needs and aspirations of businesses, residents, and tourists. Different primary production activities adjacent to each other also have the potential to adversely impact upon each other’s operations.

Questions that have been asked:

Buffer Distances:

- Should a 40 metre separation buffer policy be adopted between all rural uses?
- If the 40 metre buffer is to be applied, what form should it take (e.g. vegetated buffer or non-vegetated buffer)?
- What are the criteria for applicants to adopt a lesser separation distance if required? Should a greater buffer apply in specific situations?
- Should other approaches be considered which would apply to new development applications or in situations where no development approval is required?
- Is the existing 200 metre open space or rural buffer area required at the interface of the Barossa and Gawler Council boundary still relevant?

How can competing land uses be addressed?

- Within primary production areas, where should the emphasis be placed when considering new developments, for example, should Development Plan policy:
  - Be weighted to promote productive commercial agricultural land uses over existing residential and other sensitive land uses; or
  - Should a proposed new land use (that requires a development application) have to show that it will minimise impacts? If the impact cannot be minimised, should the development application be refused?
How should the interface between towns and rural areas be managed to limit potential conflicts between these two areas?

Possible Policy options:

**Interface between rural activities**

1. Remove references in the Development Plan on the issue of the interface between rural activities and rely on other legislation and guidelines (e.g. the Environment Protection Act) to deal with interface issues.

   **Implications:** Planning policy would not regulate potential conflict between rural activities.

   **Feedback from the Stakeholder Working Group:** This option received mixed views amongst the Group.

2. Deal with interface between rural activities in the Development Plan through implementation of a minimum buffer distance (refer details below).

   **Implications:** A new rural land use would be required to provide a minimum 40 metre buffer to any adjacent existing rural land use of a different type (e.g. cropping is different to horticulture).

   **Feedback from the Stakeholder Working Group:** This option received mixed views amongst the Group.

**Interface between rural activities and residential and rural living areas**

3. Deal with interface between rural activities in the Development Plan through a minimum buffer distance, or a specified form of buffer such as landscaped mounding.

   **Implications:** Planning policy will require residential and rural living areas and rural activities to be separated.

**Interface between rural activities and dwellings in rural areas**

4. Remove references in the Development Plan on the issue of the interface between rural activities and dwellings in rural areas and rely on other legislation and guidelines (e.g. the Environment Protection Act) to deal with interface issues.

   **Implications:** Planning policy will not regulate or require new dwellings adjacent to rural areas to be protected by buffers.

   **Feedback from the Stakeholder Working Group:** This option received mixed views amongst the Group.

5. Deal with interface between rural activities and dwellings in the Development Plan through a minimum buffer distance, and a specified form of buffer (e.g. landscaped mound).

   **Implications:** The buffer distance and form of buffers may have an impact on the amount of productive land in rural areas.

   **Feedback from the Stakeholder Working Group:** This option received mixed views amongst the Group.