

6 Castella Design Framework

Castella is a rural locality which contains a low density residential estate located on the northern slopes of the Great Dividing Range west of the Melba Highway. Castella is relatively isolated and being located within a forest setting is in a fire risk area. The existing Murrindindi Planning Scheme controls identify significant further subdivision potential in Castella. The preferred scenario recommends that this subdivision potential be removed given the isolation of the location from services and fire risk considerations.

Figure 6.1 and the associated recommendations provide a design framework which support removal of growth potential in Castella.

6.1 Create clear settlement boundaries

As with each of the townships, the physical containment of Castella is required to ensure that the unique character of the locality is preserved. The containment of Castella to the current development boundaries is proposed.

This estate is currently zoned Low Density Residential Zone and is relatively isolated, being located approximately 9 kilometres from the closest recognised settlement (Kinglake). The estate is located within a tall forest and hence fire risk is considerable. There is currently significant potential to further subdivide land in the estate to create over 200 additional lots (subject to land capability assessment). It is considered appropriate to remove any further subdivision potential by increasing the minimum lot size.

A settlement boundary is identified in Figure 6.1.

6.2 Transitions between urban and rural land uses

In conjunction with a settlement boundary, physical containment can be supported through the provision of buffers. They provide a transition between urban and rural land uses in Castella. Within the region there are landscape buffers which are comprised of road side vegetation, farming and agricultural land and ecological buffers which have a primary role in providing habitat for native flora and fauna. There are existing buffers that need to be protected and enhanced. This can be achieved by:

- implementing a settlement boundary
- enhancement of roadside vegetation through additional planting with due regard to fire risk and re-vegetation programmes
- enhancement and rehabilitation of riparian vegetation within waterways.

6.3 A unifying wayfinding strategy

The ability of visitors and residents to move freely, confidently and safely through the study area can be improved. To connect residents and visitors within the region, townships should be re-cast as gateways to the natural assets of the area. This can be achieved through improved signage and branding of the region.

Castella is a small locality however, a unifying brand and signage strategy would enhance the presence of the locality and provide an element that unifies it with the surrounding townships. An indicative location for entry signage is identified in Figure 6.1.

Attractions within the region need to be accessible to visitors and residents. Information and identification signage should be located appropriately to inform and direct visitors. Figure 6.1 identifies potential locations for this signage.

6.4 Better-connected streets, paths and trails

The size and isolated nature of Castella has resulted in no need for additional pedestrian and cycle infrastructure within the residential streets.

A community park is proposed at the junction of the Melba Highway and the Healesville-Kinglake Road. A shared path is proposed to connect Castella and the park.

6.5 New residential development complements the character of the region

The unifying physical attribute of the area is the rural and bushland setting. New residential homes must enhance and protect this value. Recent residential buildings are not in keeping with the character and are undermining the value of the rural and bushland setting.

Built form (its colour, look and style) contributes to character and identity of a location and place. The architectural style and expression throughout the region is can be inconsistent and overall has no unifying elements. Many of the new buildings and structures compete with the natural surroundings due to the size and scale, inappropriate siting and poor choice of finishes and colours. To maintain and safeguard the character of Castella, buildings should:

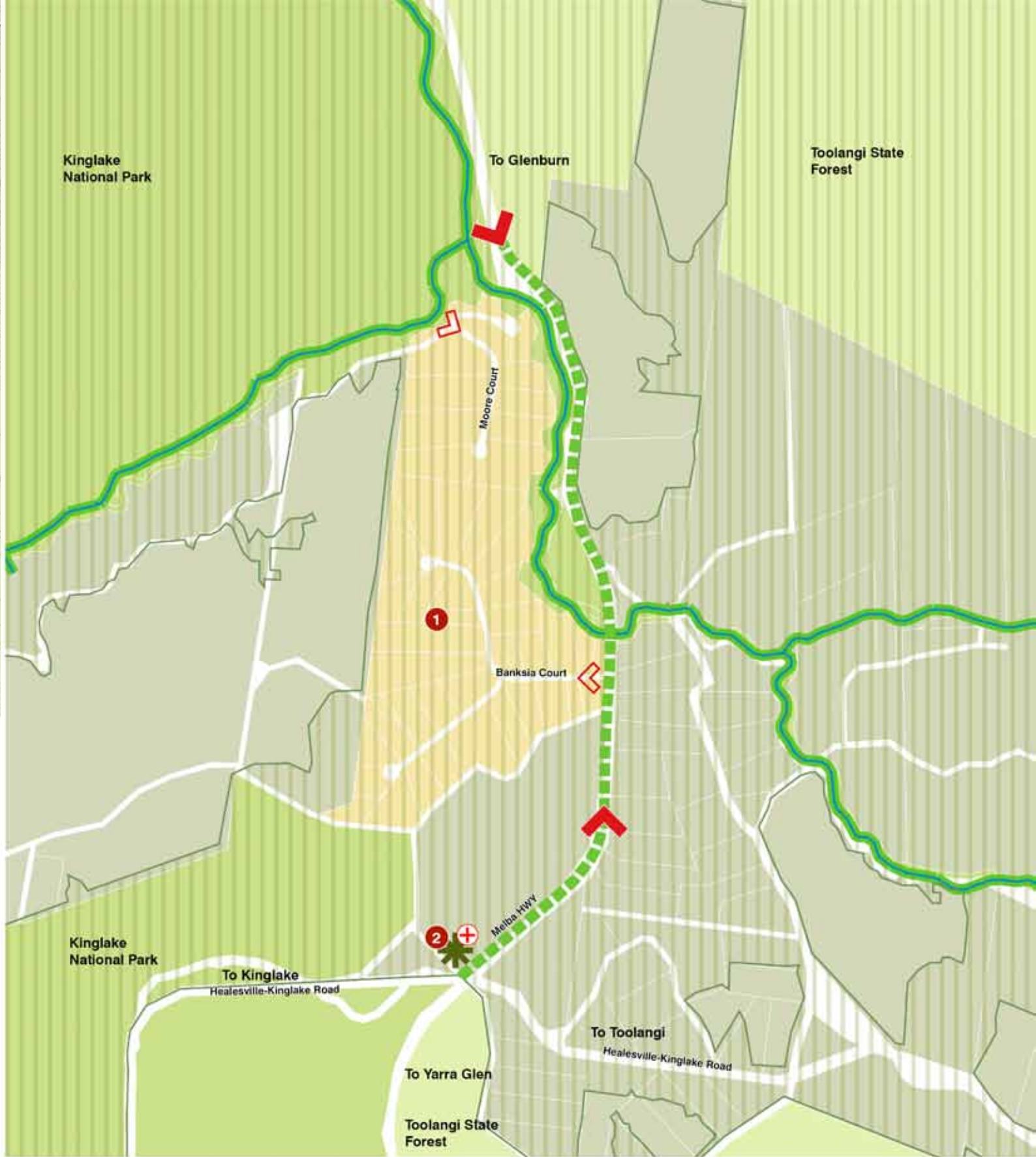
- use site sensitive and responsive design styles and palates
- adopt subdued and restrained architectural styles
- adopt muted hues, tones and textures which blend into the bushland setting
- incorporate vegetation (of suitable fire retardant species) with significant canopy cover into private gardens.

6.6 Streetscape improvements in Castella

The character of Castella is one of its valued attributes. The streetscape is a contributing element to this character and should be preserved. No improvements are needed within Castella.

6.7 Future commercial and retail development

No commercial or retail development is proposed within the locality of Castella. An opportunity for convenience, petrol station or similar like could be considered at the junction of the Melba Highway and the Healesville-Kinglake Road.



Land Use

- Retain Farming or Cleared Land
- Removal of Subdivision Potential
- Proposed Park (funding secured)

Movement

- Existing Settlement Entries
- Proposed Locality Signage
- Proposed Information Signage

Landscape/ Public Realm

- Kinglake National Park
- State Forest
- Significant Vegetation Cover
- High Points
- Proposed Waterway Rehabilitation
- Roadside Vegetation Enhancement

Figure 6.1 Castella Design Framework

