



City of  
**LAUNCESTON**

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# **Rural Design Guidelines**

prepared by

mesh

**Launceston Rural Design Guidelines**

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# Rural Design Guidelines

## Introduction

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**The City of Launceston has a range of low density/rural living areas that are highly valued by the communities that live within them. Residents value the sense of space and the benefits of living in a semi-rural environment.**

In these areas, it is expected that dwellings and other structures will 'sit lightly' in the landscape and that important site features such as slope, significant vegetation and bushfire risk will be taken into account during the design process in order to avoid the need to modify the landscape wherever possible.

Despite having the best intentions, it's not always easy knowing where to start in deciding where to build a home. These design guidelines have been prepared to assist home builders by making important decisions a little easier by highlighting the important matters that need to be considered before designing a home.

The guidelines are only intended to assist applicants during the process of choosing where to locate a home, any outbuildings and other infrastructure such as accessways.

During the process of designing a home however, it is important to check what planning or other approvals may be required. As such, applicants are encouraged to contact the City of Launceston Planning Department who can provide advice about other Council requirements and whether planning or other approvals are required.

The Launceston Rural Design Guidelines are an adaptation from the *Melton Design and Siting Guidelines For Rural Zone (1999)*.



# Rural Design Guidelines

A white line-art sketch of a rural landscape on a dark blue background. It shows a large barn or shed in the center, a fence in the foreground, and rolling hills with trees in the background.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

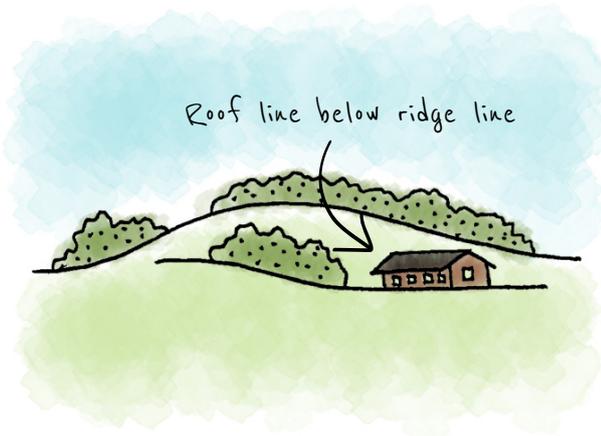
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<b>SECTION 1</b>	Where do I site my house and outbuildings?	<b>PAGE 1</b>
<b>SECTION 2</b>	How will I access my site?	<b>PAGE 3</b>
<b>SECTION 3</b>	What should my building look like?	<b>PAGE 3</b>
<b>SECTION 4</b>	How do I protect the local vegetation?	<b>PAGE 5</b>
<b>SECTION 5</b>	Assessment checklist	<b>PAGE 7</b>

# Where do I site my house and outbuildings?

## i. Choosing a building site is a very important decision

Houses and other structures should generally be located on lower slopes avoiding ridges and hill tops. They should not be evident on the skyline. To avoid this, locate on flat valley floor sites, cluster buildings or locate them adjacent to existing groups of trees. Always consider the view from adjacent roads when siting your house and avoid excessive intrusion into the landscape for example, clearing vegetation, major earthworks, driveways and the like.



## iii. Building on sloping sites

It is easier to disguise buildings on lower, gently sloping sites. Steeper sites often require split level houses to be built. This technique avoids excessive 'cut and fill' and results in a less bulky building.

A low horizontal spreading form will fit into the landscape more successfully than a large, taller single structure.

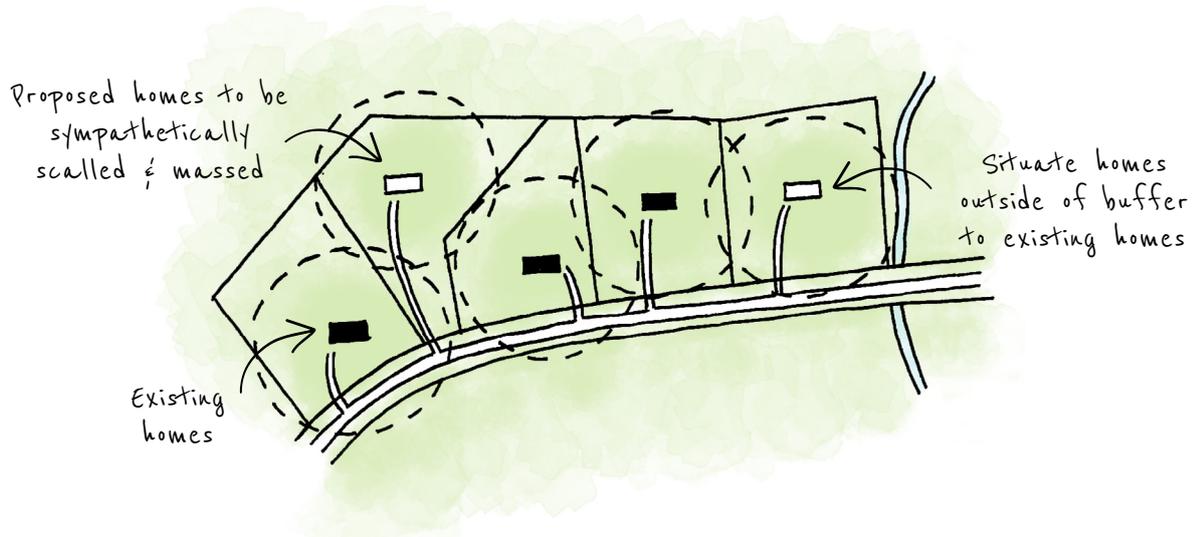


## ii. Building on the valley floor

It is difficult to disguise new buildings on a flat site, especially when the block has little vegetation. In these circumstances, it is best to cluster buildings close together, near existing trees and shrubs. The impact can be further reduced by intensively planting quick growing native trees around the building cluster, with appropriate offsets to ensure Bushfire safety. (See Council or CFA for more advice).

## iv. Separation between neighbouring homes

In addition to identifying the most suitable land for locating a home, it is important to consider the location of neighbouring houses and outbuildings. Ensuring your dwelling is located away property boundaries and outside of direct view lines to and from neighbouring homes, a sense of openness and views of the natural environment can be enjoyed by all.



## Where do I site my house and outbuildings?

### v. Building in heavily wooded areas

Structures in forested areas can be more easily concealed if attention is given to careful siting and design. To maintain the landscape character, retain all trees within an adequate setback.

By encouraging the regeneration of the site and by interplanting with similar species trees and shrubs, you will strengthen the area's character. The threat from bushfire in these areas is high.

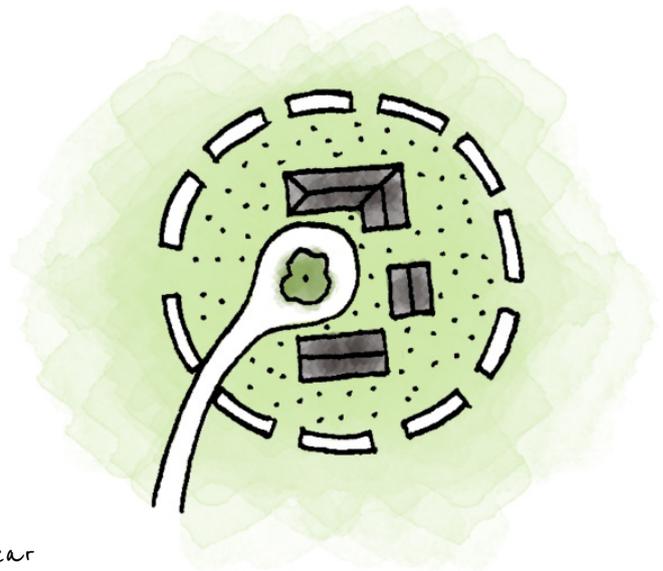
Care should be taken in the design stage to minimise this risk. (See Council or CFA for more advice).



### vi. Grouping of houses and outbuildings

Farm sheds are usually wider and taller than the main house and care should be taken to avoid sheds dominating the appearance of your site.

Development can be integrated by clustering buildings together, using similar roof forms and adopting similar materials, finishes and colours. Planting heavily with a single species of tree can also help unify the buildings.



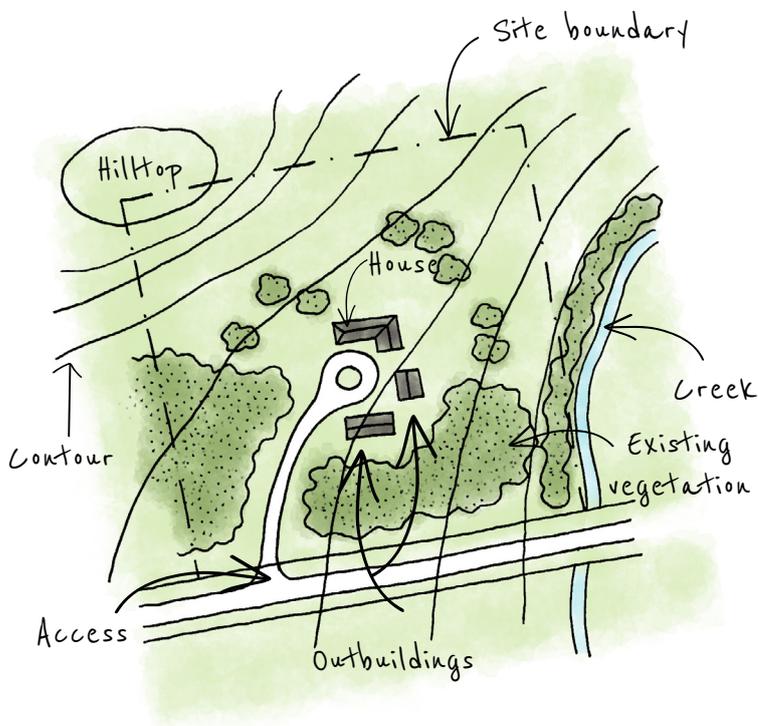
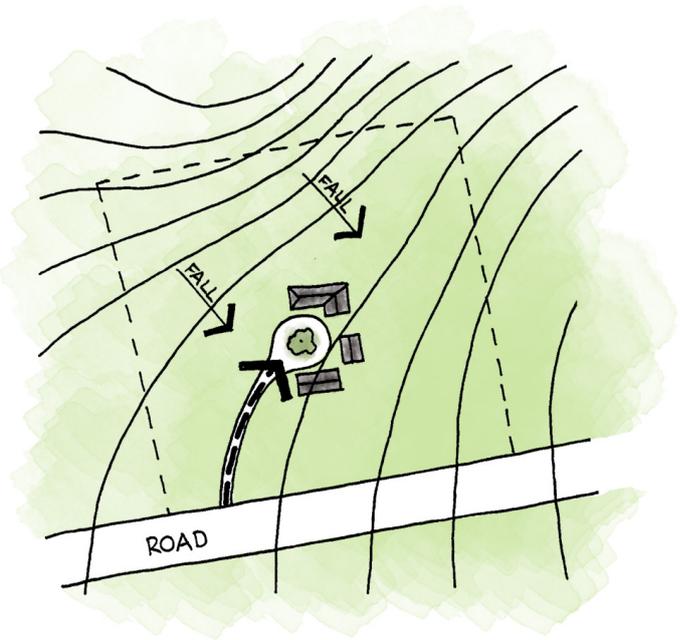
## How will I access my site?

### Poorly designed and constructed driveways can cause soil erosion and look unattractive.

Tracks and paths should follow the contours. Cut and fill areas should be minimised particularly in prominent areas such as hill tops, ridges and sites next to main roads.

Erosion can be minimised by dispersing water runoff through cut off drains and care should be taken to avoid long straight lengths of driveway.

For safety's sake, driveways should be no less than 2.4 m in width.



### A design approach for properties

You should prepare a site analysis plan before you select a house design. A site analysis plan will help you maximise the potential of your site. The plan will also assist you to choose the right house design for your land.

While you can prepare this plan yourself, you are welcome to reach out to Council officers for any assistance. A site analysis plan should show the site boundaries, existing vegetation, creeks, existing structures, soil types and conditions, prevailing winds and views.

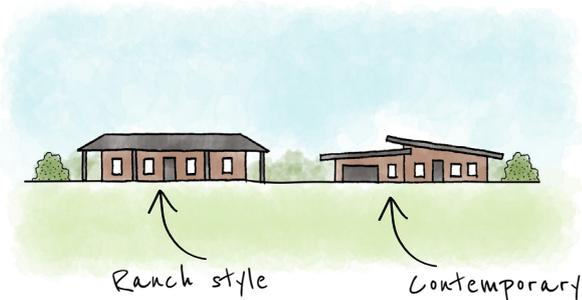
Council will require you to submit a site analysis plan with your application for planning approval.

# What should my building look like?

After identifying the most suitable location for your building, you will need to consider what the dwelling will look like. Both Council and the local community are keen to ensure that all development respects the local character of the surrounding area and is in harmony with the natural environment.

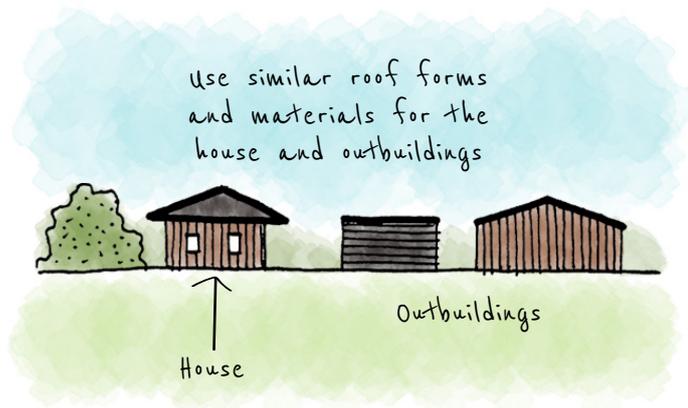
## i. House type and style

Council supports the diversification of housing typologies within rural areas, from ranch to contemporary, as long as they are sympathetic to the surrounding context. More important to the housing style, the scale and massing of a dwelling should be unimposing on view lines and views of the natural environment and meet local planning requirements. Further, Council will always encourage developments that demonstrate an excellence in design and style.



## ii. What colours and materials should be used?

You can help to blend buildings into the landscape by choosing colours and materials from a palette of earth tones-grey-green, green, beige, ochres and browns. Highly reflective or shiny materials should be avoided (that is, zinc aluminium roof). Generally materials which evoke a rural atmosphere are preferred over those which have an 'urban character', that is, timber surfaces, colourbond roofs, slate and masonry, gravel drives rather than aluminium cladding and fences, terracotta tiled roofs etc.



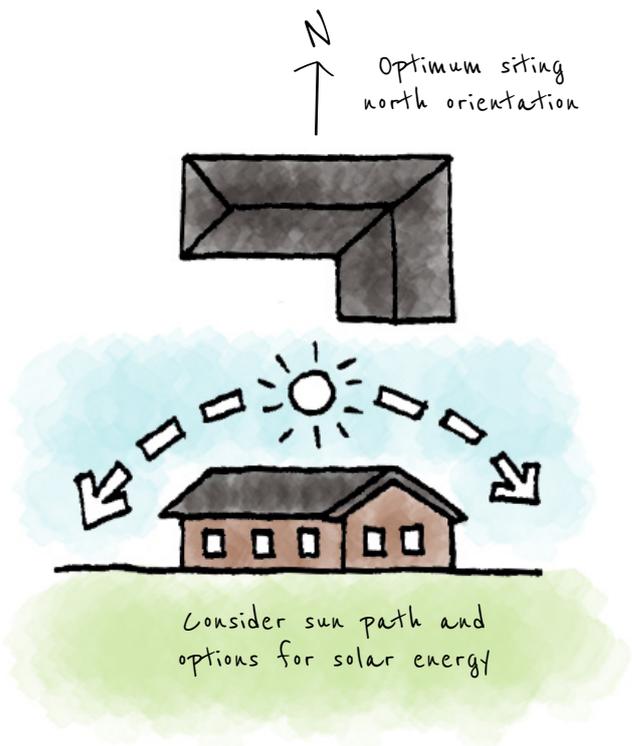
## iii. House orientation and energy conservation

While sustainable building construction, technologies and materials are strongly encouraged by Council, a more sustainable building that will reduce financial and environmental impacts in the long run can be achieved by successfully orienting a house. Good housing design generally orients living areas to the north to maximise solar access in the winter.

This allows the dwelling to be naturally warmer in winter and will reduce your heating and lighting costs. Excessive summer heat can be reduced by ensuring cross flow ventilation, shade planting and the installation of sun awnings. An easterly aspect will receive the sun early in the morning while westerly and southerly aspects will be in sun later or never in winter.

## iv. Roofs and roof form

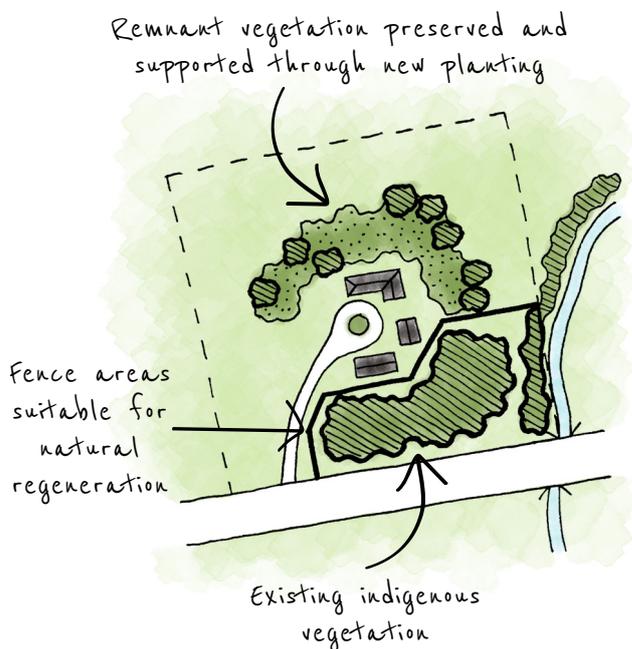
Roof forms should complement the landscape. Flat or low pitched roofs are preferable. High pitched roofs should be avoided on flat sites. Highly reflective roofing materials should also be avoided.



## How do I protect the local vegetation?

### i. Maintaining the indigenous vegetation

Remnant vegetation should be preserved by restricting stock or other vehicle access and fencing out areas suitable for natural regeneration and/or replanting.

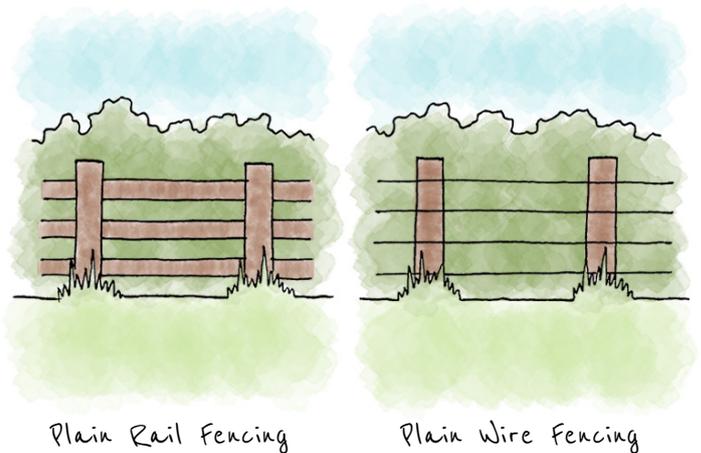


### ii. New planting and weed invasion

Throughout the conservation area the use of indigenous plant species-preferably propagated from local seed-is preferred for new plantings. For bushfire protection certain species of fire retardant non-indigenous vegetation may be preferable adjacent to houses and outbuildings. Many environmental weeds have been inadvertently introduced into bushland and farmland areas throughout Australia from rural gardens. Care should be taken in introducing plants into the area and they should be removed if they prove invasive.

### iii. Fencing my property and paddock fences

Conventional plain wire farm fences are preferred for boundary and internal paddock subdivisions. Painted timber rail fences and prominent masonry gateways are not encouraged in rural areas. Fencing within farm properties should be based on land classes and preferably applied consistently across a property.



### iv. How do I avoid erosion?

Soil typology and topography ranges throughout Launceston and in some instances can contribute to erosion problems. Care should be taken in the alignment of access tracks, batters and fill areas during and after construction so as to reduce erosion. Farming management practices such as stock control, rabbit eradication and road maintenance also need to be employed. Stream-side environments and steep slopes should always be avoided for development, and ideally be fenced off from grazing or access, then revegetated where practicable.

## How do I protect the local vegetation?

### v. Building near creeks

Buildings should be set back from creeks and natural vegetation should be re-established along the banks. Effluent disposal lines should be located 30 m from the creek or beyond the immediate seep areas of the creek.

### vi. Effluent disposal

Effluent run-off should not seep into drainage pipes or watercourses. Reducing the chances of effluent entering the water system around your house should be a priority.

Minimising water consumption and the careful design of on-site wastewater treatment will improve local water quality.

Design your system in accordance with the EPA Guidelines for Septic Tanks.

### vii. Ongoing management of the land

Good land management requires ongoing maintenance in order to prevent environmental degradation.

Practices include the development of a site management plan, good grazing management, environmental weed control and monitoring erosion spots.

### viii. Encouraging the wildlife back

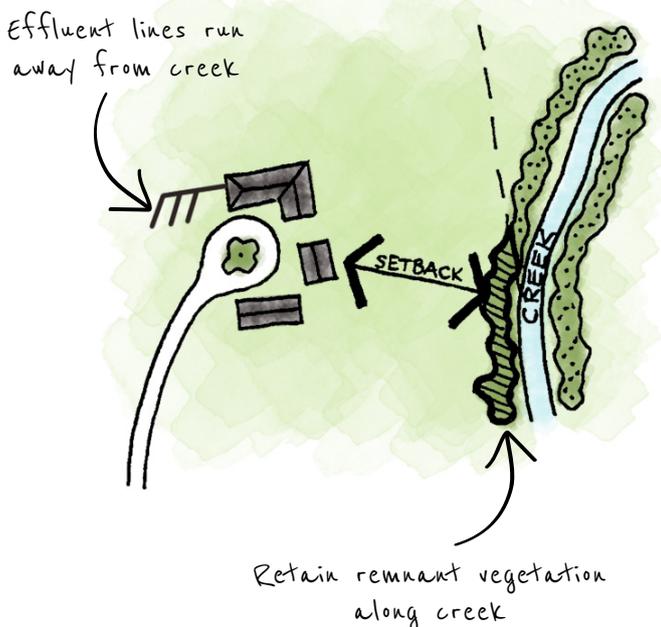
Careful siting and design of dwellings can also assist in protecting native habitat and will encourage native wildlife to return.

Do not interrupt major vegetation corridors, links to streams or known habitats with new buildings or other breaks (such as tree removal for fire breaks or access tracks).

### ix. Bushfire/wildfire

The location of dwellings on the south or east side of hills or preferably on flat land, can reduce bushfire hazard.

Cutting your house into the hill instead of using pole construction also increases protection against bushfire.



## Assessment Checklist

**Before you purchase land or make a development application to Council, check that you have satisfactorily answered the following questions.**

The information that will assist Council's review and approval will vary according to the size and impact of the proposed development, however it should include a site analysis plan that demonstrates the following points:

1. The Land	Yes	No	Partly
» Has the property been identified as a site of botanical or geological significance?			
» Does it have all weather access to a public road?			
» Is the lot subject to site specific planning controls, covenants or any agreements?			
» Have you examined a copy of title (attach a copy to your application).			

### 2. Site Analysis Plan

**Have you identified the whole lot, correctly numbered and given clear lot particulars? On this plan have you shown:**

- » Contours and areas of slope greater than 20%.
- » Existing vegetation soil conditions and land capacity.
- » Presence of any visible erosion.
- » Visibility of the site from adjacent public viewing points (that is, roads or parks).
- » Existing land uses and structure features.
- » Existing easements and other legal covenants.
- » Existing watercourses or wetlands.

### 3. Your application should contain the following information:

- » The location of sensitive landscape areas and native vegetation.
- » Areas for appropriate development that avoid steep slopes, ridge-lines and poor soils (you should identify a building envelope for the proposed development).
- » Servicing availability or area for waste treatment on site.

### 4. The submitted plans must allow Council to clearly understand your ideas

**Plans must be drawn to a suitable scale (e.g. 1:1000) and must show layout, elevations, sections and perspectives, where appropriate, of the proposed development. Have you included:**

- » All site works including schedule of finishes and materials.
- » Vehicular and pedestrian access and parking-including all new tracks, roads etc.
- » Landscaping design and species list including trees, buffer areas, habitat links and management of remnant bushland.
- » Service provisions and mechanisms and construction time.