

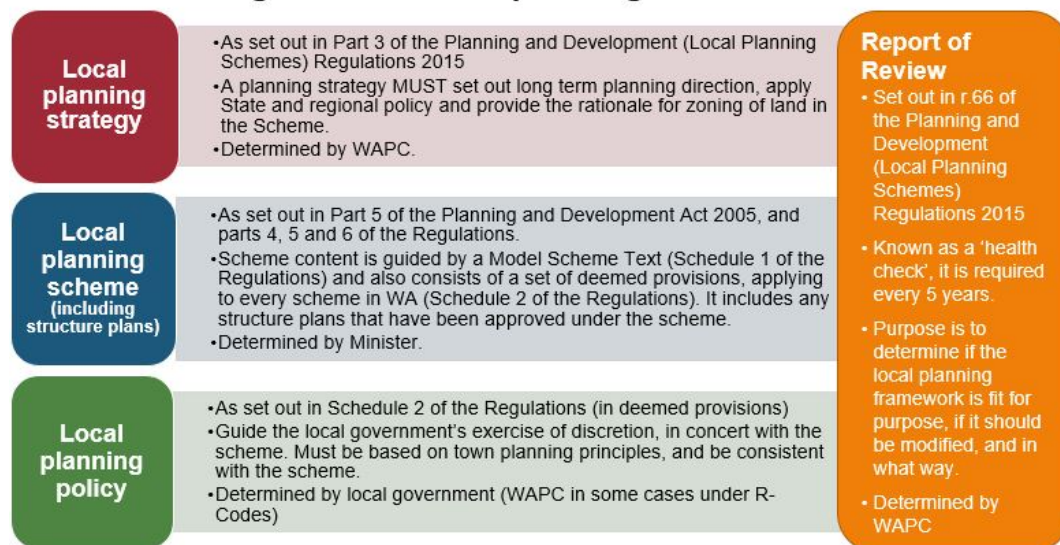
# Shire of Kulin – Report of Review

## PART 1 - BACKGROUND

### About the WA planning system

The key decision-makers in the Western Australian Planning system are the Minister for Planning, Western Australian Planning Commission (Commission) and local governments. Their roles and responsibilities are set out in legislation and regulation, principally the *Planning and Development Act 2005* and the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* (Regulations). As shown in **Figure 1**, the local planning framework consists of four key components - a local planning strategy, local planning scheme, structure plans and local planning policies.

**Figure 1 - the local planning framework**



### What is a Report of Review?

A Report of Review (RoR) is a health-check for the local planning framework, which is required to be prepared every 5 years to assess how the framework is operating, and if adjustments need to be made. A RoR is required to consider whether a local government's local planning strategy and local planning scheme, and any structure plans approved under the scheme are:

1. Satisfactory in their existing form; or
2. Should be amended; or
3. Should be revoked and/or have a new one prepared.

It is also recommended that local planning policies be considered as part of this review, but this is at the local government's discretion.

This RoR will examine the Shire of Kulin's local planning framework and make recommendations to the Commission.

### About the Shire of Kulin

The Shire of Kulin (Shire) is a local government area in the State's Wheatbelt planning region, that is situated about 300km east of Perth. The Shire covers an area of approximately 4,714km<sup>2</sup> (**Attachment 1 - Location plan**).

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the Shire's Estimated Resident Population (ERP) was 794 persons in 2023. The main population centre is the Kulin townsite (294 persons) and there smaller gazetted townsites such as: Dudinin, Holt Rock, Jitarning and Pingaring that

support much smaller residential populations. Outside of the townsites, the remaining population resides in the rural hinterland. The Shire's key economic activity is broadscale agriculture.

## **PART 2 - EXISTING LOCAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

The Shire's Local Planning Framework consists of:

**Local Planning Strategy** – the Shire does not currently have a local planning strategy.

**Local Planning Scheme** – the Shire Local Planning Scheme No. 2 (Scheme), which applies to the whole of the Shire, was gazetted in 1999. Since gazettal, the Scheme has been amended twice, including a Scheme consolidation to incorporate changes introduced to the planning system following the introduction of the Regulations in 2015 (refer to **Attachment 2** for an overview of these amendments).

**Structure Plans** – the Scheme provides that the Shire or the Commission may require the preparation of a structure plan prior to considering a subdivision in the Urban Development zone. A structure plan was endorsed for Lots 8 and 9838 (now 9001 and 51) Kulin Road West (now Rankin Street), Kulin on 18 July 2007, and is valid until 19 October 2025. This structure plan provides for urban expansion for the provision 94 residential and 22 rural living lots.

**Local planning policies** - the Shire has eleven active local planning policies that address:

1. Development of outbuildings in Residential areas
2. Development of moveable buildings (including relocated buildings)
3. Development of caretaker's dwellings in the Industrial zone
4. Home occupations
5. Installation of satellite dishes, microwave antennae and radio masts
6. Parking of commercial vehicles in Residential areas
7. Use of sea containers and other similar transportable structures
8. Extractive industries
9. Advertising signs
10. Exemption to requirement for development approval for non-habitable farm buildings and incidental farm structures
11. Workforce accommodation

## **PART 3 - PLANNING CONTEXT**

This section identifies some anticipated drivers of change that are currently or anticipated to have implications for future land use planning over the next 10-15 years.

### **3.1 Population**

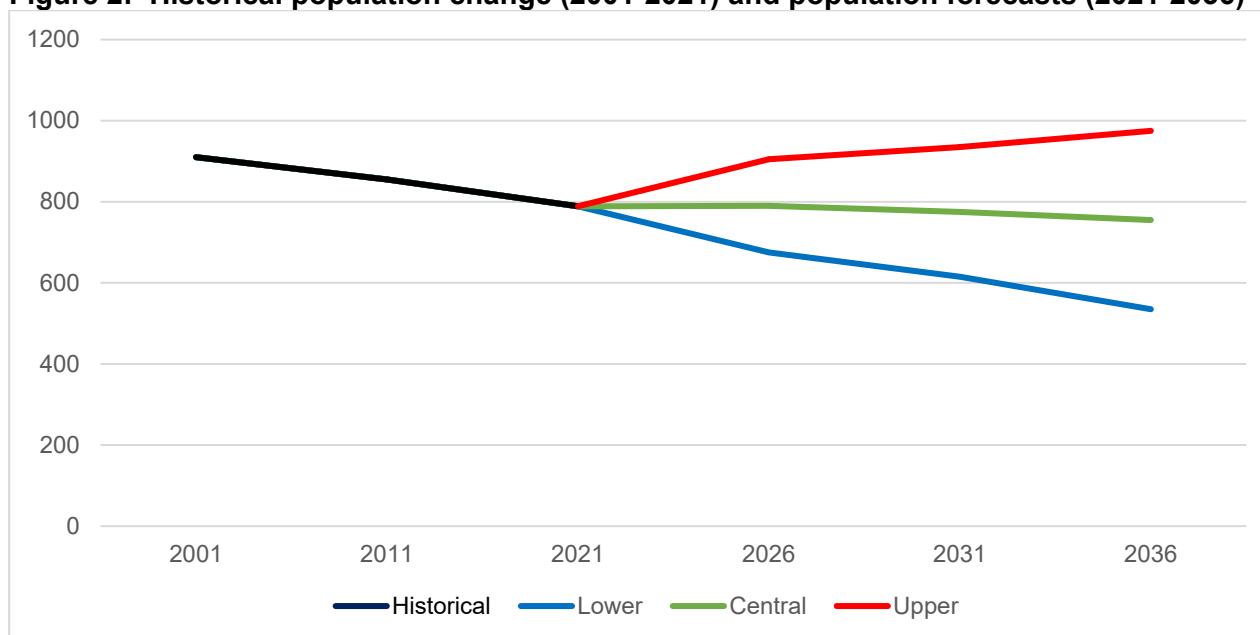
#### **Historical trends and forecasts**

Between 2001 and 2021, the Shire's Estimated Resident Population (ERP) decreased from 910 (2001) to 789 (2021). This decline can be attributed to various factors such as the aging population and changing economic activity/employment opportunities and is consistent with other inland local governments across the Wheatbelt region.

Population forecasts published in the Commission's *Western Australia Tomorrow Series 12* (WA Tomorrow) (WAPC, 2025), indicate that the number of people living in the Shire between 2021 and 2036 is expected to range between a slight decrease of 34 persons (Central Band) or an increase of approximately 186 persons (Upper Band) (refer to **Table 1** and **Figure 2**).

**Table 1: Historical ERP (2001-2021) and population forecasts (2021-2036)**

Historical population change (ERP)			WA Tomorrow Forecasts			
2001	2011	2021	Band	2026	2031	2036
910 (ERP)	855 (ERP)	789 (ERP)	Lower Band	675	615	535
835 (Census)	826 (Census)	769 (Census)	Central Band	790	775	755
			Upper Band	905	935	975
Source(s): ABS (2021), ABS (2024), WAPC (2025)						
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data for historic population was sourced from ABS Estimated Resident Population data (ABS, 2024) and the ABS's Quickstats database (<a href="#">2021 Australia, Census All persons QuickStats   Australian Bureau of Statistics</a>) (ABS, 2021)</li> <li>Population forecasts are based on the WAPC's WA Tomorrow Series 12 publication (WAPC, 2025). These forecasts are a series of possible population scenarios that are presented in 'bands'. Lower Band is the most conservative forecast while Upper Band is the most optimistic. These forecasts are based on historical fertility, mortality and migration trends.</li> </ul>						

**Figure 2: Historical population change (2001-2021) and population forecasts (2021-2036)**

Source: ABS (2024); WAPC (2025)

This forecast population change is expected to generate demand for between 0 additional dwellings (~ 0 p.a. for Central Band) and 74 additional dwellings (~ 5 p.a. for Upper Band) between 2021 and 2036 (refer to **Table 2**). An analysis of past population trends and future forecasts and land supply requirements is provided in **Part 4 - Land supply**.

**Table 2: Estimated population and dwelling requirements based on WA Tomorrow forecasts (2021-2036)**

Timeframe	Forecast population		Estimated additional dwellings	
	Central Band	Upper Band	Central Band	Upper Band
Base population and dwellings (2021)	769 (2021 ERP - Shire) 294 (2021 Census – Kulin townsite)		355 (2021 Census - Shire) 155 (2021 Census – Kulin townsite)	
Change (2021-2036)	- 34 (~0 p.a.)	+186 (~12 p.a.)	+0 (~0 p.a.)	+74 (~5 p.a.)
Source: ABS (2024), ABS (2021), WAPC (2025)				
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Base population and dwellings reflect historic ABS ERP (ABS, 2024) and Census data (ABS, 2021).</li> <li>The 2021 Census identified the Shire's household size as 2.5 persons per dwelling.</li> <li>The dwelling change calculations are based on the forecast population change for the Central and Upper bands for 2036-2021 divided by the average household size.</li> <li>Almost all the existing housing stock within the Shire is detached housing - none of the dwelling calculations in this contemplate medium (or higher) density housing typologies.</li> </ul>				

### Population retention

Retaining and growing the population requires the Shire to be proactive by advocating to retain its population by ensuring there is land available to meet demand, providing a range of housing types (including accommodation for the ageing), working with infrastructure providers to maintain and develop community services, providing opportunities for commerce.

### Population distribution

In 2021, the Shire's main population centre was the Kulin townsite (294 persons – or 38% of the Shire's population) with the remaining 62% of the population dispersed across the rural hinterland in the localities of: Kulin West (88 persons); Jitarning (63 persons); Pingaring (60 persons); Dudinin (59 persons); Jilakin (49 persons); Holt Rock (46 persons); and Walyurin (32 persons). It is anticipated that the Kulin townsite will continue to be the focus for population in the Shire.

### Ageing population

Census data for the Shire indicates proportion of population over 65 years of age has increased from 12.7% in 2001 to 27.8% in 2021. This is significantly above the State's average (17.2%). The ageing of the population has implications for decision making, including land use planning. It may be necessary as part of preparing a new local planning strategy to identify specific strategic directions and to define actions to ensure the Shire's townsites can cater for the specific accommodation needs of this age cohort. Additionally, the Shire along with other stakeholders, may also have a role to play in ensuring services are sufficient to respond to changing demand of this cohort. At the present time, most of the health and allied services accessed by the Shire's population are provided by the Kondinin Hospital (WA Country Health Service). The Shire and the neighbouring Shire of Kondinin provide a general practitioner under a shared services arrangement.

### Transient workforce populations

Currently there are no large transient workforce populations in the Shire. However, this may change in the short-term given that there are several proposed developments relating to renewable energy facilities.

## **Economy**

In 2021, the Shire's economic output was \$219.407m or 1.2% of the total economic output of the Wheatbelt region. At this time, 395 persons were employed within the Shire or 1.3% of the region's employment. The key sectors in terms of output/employment were 'Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing' (\$146.271m/246 jobs), 'Construction' (\$15.240m/21 jobs) and Public Administration and Safety (\$11.310/28 jobs)

### Agriculture/rural land uses

The agricultural sector is expected to remain as one of the Shire's primary economic activities. The key commodities produced by the Shire's agriculture sector are wheat, barley, canola and lupins. Cattle and sheep grazing is the other major agricultural activity.

Co-operative Bulk Handling (CBH) maintains a presence in the Shire with grain receival/storage/distribution facilities located at Kulin, Pingaring, Dudinin, Jitarning, Southeast Hyden and Holt Rock. Kulin and Pingaring are the only two sites which remain operational on an annual/seasonal basis. CBH links growers to the wider supply chain so their produce can be exported to interstate and overseas markets. CBH's grain receival/storage/distribution facility also provides opportunities for permanent and seasonal employment (particularly during the harvest period). CBH is currently implementing its Network Strategy, which seeks to upgrade facilities across its supply chain network.

Challenges to the agricultural sector include adoption of climate-resilient agriculture management practices, access to water resources, , provision and adaption of infrastructure, management of dryland salinity, reducing carbon emissions, protecting and enhancing biodiversity values and other land care practices, management of off-site impacts, farming businesses becoming larger, labour shortages and catering for workforce accommodation, government policy (e.g. banning the live sheep export trade) and the need to provide and maintain safe road (and rail) networks that are fit-for-purpose for freight traffic. The Shire's priority is to protect and support agricultural activity as well as encouraging other appropriate land uses that do not have local adverse impacts, or for which any impacts can be managed.

There may opportunities for tree farming in the Shire which can provide economic benefits to the farmer (owner), the local community, and various industries as well as environmental and social benefits. The opportunities include carbon sequestration and carbon farming in context to government schemes, arresting rising dryland salinity around valley floors, regenerating native vegetation to arrest soil erosion and provide habitat for endemic fauna, growing native sandalwood for pharmaceutical production and oil mallees for biofuel production.

To support the agricultural sector and protect rural land, preparing a new Strategy and updating the Scheme should seek to:

- discourage fragmentation of rural land through implementation of *State Planning Policy 2.5 – Rural planning* and *Development Control Policy 3.4 – Subdivision of Rural land*;
- incorporate contemporary model land uses;
- prescribe suitable land use permissibility in the zoning table;
- updating existing or introduce new development standards/requirements and local planning policies; and
- provide contemporary guidance on relevant issues (including consideration and assessment of rural intensive agriculture proposals, and provision of housing for workers and family members involved in farming operations and tree farms/plantations).

#### Mineral resources and basic raw materials

There currently are no active mining operations in the Shire, although one kaolin clay mine site (62km east of Kulin) is under care and maintenance and a gypsum mine, which now forms part of the Kondinin Salt Marsh Nature Reserve, has ceased operations. There are 'live' exploration licenses across the Shire relating to current investigations to determine the prospectivity of nickel, cobalt, copper, platinum group elements (PGEs), silver and gold deposits. The most significant of these are in the western portion of the Shire and are associated with the Calesi and Kulin Gold projects.

The Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS) have identified prospective mineral resource sites in the Shire and the prospects for discovering new mineral resource areas and future mining activity are good when noting the following:

- large sections of the western and central parts of the Shire are represented by a geologic formation known as 'greenstone belts'. These greenstone geologic formations often contain gold, silver, copper, zinc, lead and other mineral ores.
- the substantial areas of the salt lake chains are a source of gypsum and other minerals.
- mining companies have confirmed presence of 'critical minerals' within the Shire which includes magnesium (extracted from magnesite), graphite, rare earth elements (REE), platinum, palladium, nickel and high purity alumina (extracted from kaolin clays), as well as in surrounding Shires with similar geology (refer to Attachment 3 for definitions).

Extractive industries are important for the supply of basic raw materials (BRM) essential for the construction of housing, roads, other infrastructure and agricultural production. BRM extracted, or have potential for extraction, in the Shire include gravel and gypsum. Mapping

of BRM significant geological supply areas and extraction sites has not been undertaken for the Shire.

Future mining operations need to be demonstrated to be economically viable and capable of addressing Aboriginal cultural heritage, environmental and social concerns. There is a need for the local planning framework to support the mining and BRM extractive industry sectors. This includes the local planning scheme and associated local planning policy protecting the mineral/BRM resources areas from sterilisation and not significantly constraining such activity. Therefore, the planning direction would require restricting the siting of sensitive/incompatible land uses, such as dwellings. All mineral/BRM resource areas will need to be initially identified under the local planning strategy and reviewed from time to time.

#### Renewable energy

Renewable energy projects are an emerging driver for local economies across regional Western Australia, including the Wheatbelt region.

The Kulin West Wind Farm (Atmos Renewables and Nomad Energy) is a proposed wind farm in the Shire(s) of Kulin and Corrigin. If approved, the project will erect 78 wind turbines that are expected to generate 560 MW of electricity into Western Australia's power grid. The initial site selection investigations to investigate an appropriate site were completed in 2024 and the project has now entered the early stages of development. Comprehensive environmental studies and community consultation have commenced and will occur through 2025. A Final Investment Decision is expected in 2027. The construction phase is expected to last for two years concluding in 2029-30. The project is expected to realise a range of benefits to the region including job opportunities, support for local businesses and suppliers, and substantial direct investment in the region ([Kulin West Wind Farm Information Sheet](#)).

Renewable energy projects continue to present challenges for rural local governments, including the Shire. Future renewable energy related projects could include hydrogen production and BESS at energy hubs, associated upgrading of electricity transmission networks, the production of renewable diesel from agricultural waste products and the production of liquid biofuel from a range of plants including oil mallee. The key issues include determining the impacts of these projects on adjoining properties and, more generally, on local communities. The Shire's view is that changes are required to its local planning framework to provide more guidance when assessing these significant projects. A new local planning strategy is an appropriate starting place to identify issues/opportunities associated with renewable energy projects. Changes may also be required to the Scheme to better address planning considerations for these projects. This could include work to provide greater alignment with the State Planning Framework, such as the Commission's policy statement on renewable energy facilities, by inserting the 'renewable energy facility' land use; providing greater guidance for assessment of these proposals into Part 4. There may also be opportunities to develop additional local planning policies to guide decision making in respect to this issue.

#### Tourism

Tourism attractions within the Shire, including the Tin Horse Highway, historical heritage buildings and trails (including Macrocarpa Trail), and the Jilakin Rock Reserve. The Shire is also a participant in the Pathways to Wave Rock initiative which is a self-drive trail that offers a wide range of unique experiences across the region that links the Shire(s) of Corrigin, Bruce Rock, Narembeen, Lake Grace, Kulin, Kondinin and Quairading and settlements with Wave Rock. The Kulin townsite provides most of the Shire's tourism accommodation, including a 'pay as you like' caravan park, hotels/motel and bed and breakfast.

The Shire's Strategic Community Plan 2022-2032 acknowledges the importance of the tourism sector to the local economy and identifies the need for tourism planning that:



- coordinates and promotes visitor and tourist experiences;
- provides amenities for visitors at the caravan park while ensuring the Shire's settlements are 'friendly' for recreational vehicles; and
- implements key tourism-related projects such as construction of the Tin Horse Highway and the management of the Kulin Bush Races.

The South West Native Title Settlement process and the Aboriginal Heritage Survey Program may identify and unlock other sites, such as UCL or unmanaged Crown reserves, for future tourism purposes.

A new local planning strategy could investigate opportunities to facilitate tourism across the Shire, such as planning for and development of tourist attractions and accommodation, protection of key values (environmental, landscape and amenity); and addressing potential land use conflicts. It is also recommended that the Scheme be updated so that it reflects the strategic directions/actions identified in the Strategy that relate to tourism and achieving alignment with the State's Land Use Planning Framework, including alignment with current government reforms relating to short-stay accommodation.

#### Commercial/Retail

The Kulin townsite is the Shire's key centres for commerce (business and retail). Businesses within this town provide services to meet the needs of townsite population as well as people living in the Rural hinterland. The Shire acknowledges that the survival and future growth of Kulin depends on maintaining the current level of servicing but identifies that it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract people to run small businesses.

#### Industry

Key support industries within the Shire include bulk grain storage and handling, transport (freight services), engineering, agricultural supplies, agricultural machinery servicing, building and other household services, motor vehicle supplies/repairs and government services (road construction/maintenance). There are three distinct land areas zoned General Industry in the Kulin townsite that accommodate a range of businesses that mostly service the needs of the agriculture sector. These businesses are important to local employment and the local economy so the risk of land use conflict risk with sensitive land uses should be avoided.

### **Environment**

Land use planning plays a key role in ensuring that the impacts of subdivision and development on the environment and natural resources are appropriately managed. The State Land Use Planning Framework through State Planning Policy 2.0 – Environment and natural resources (SPP 2.0) and outlines environment and natural resource management needs to be integrated with the broader land use planning and decision making such that the natural environment is protected, conserved and enhanced. Other more specific State Planning Policies more specifically address issues such as management of water resources and bushfire risk. A brief outline of environmental issues within the Shire is provided below:

#### Landforms

Most of the Shire, including Kulin townsite, is situated within the Mallee bioregion and Western Mallee sub-region (*Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia*) which consists of gently undulating landscape and is traversed by significant salt lake chains within broad valley floors. A small section of the Shire is within the Avon Wheatbelt bioregion (*Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia*), which is comprised of gently undulating landforms with low relief and isolated granite outcrops. Kulin town is situated on undulating slopes (ranging in height from 304-320m) and is surrounded by several rock outcrops and hills to the west, north and east while a broad flat valley lies to the south (mostly below 300m AHD).

### Soils

There are a variety of soils, including clays and silts over kankar, sand, granite outcrops and gypsum dunes. More specifically, the soils within the Kulin townsite are mainly colluvial duplex soils in the upper slopes and alluvial sandy and loamy duplex soils in the lower slopes and valley floors.

### Biodiversity

Much of the remnant flora in the Western Mallee sub-region consists of eucalypt woodlands and mallee communities of the Eucalyptus species. Much of the remaining flora in the Avon bioregion consists of mixed eucalypt woodlands on granite-derived and alluvial soils, while the sandplains and lateritic uplands are species-rich scrub-heath vegetation. Important environmental assets include vegetation classified as Western Australia Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities, Commonwealth Threatened Ecological Communities, valley floor and saline land vegetation associated with salt lake wetlands, rare and priority flora and habitat trees for threatened/endangered/vulnerable fauna. Over time the altered environment has resulted in rising groundwater levels, salinity, and loss of biodiversity.

### Conservation areas

Across the Shire, there are approximately 260ha (or 5.78% of total area) identified for the purposes of nature conservation. The largest conservation and nature reserves include Kondinin Salt Marsh Nature Reserve, Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve, Lake Varley Nature Reserve and Lake Hurlstone Nature Reserve.

The land comprising the undeveloped gazetted townsites is either unallocated Crown land (UCL) or reserves vested in the Shire for the purposes of nature reserves, conservation, water or recreation. Where such Crown land sites are zoned Rural Townsite or Rural zoning, alternative classification on the scheme map may be required where it is necessary to protect land within these areas for conservation purposes.

### Bushfire

Large areas throughout the Shire are designated as 'bushfire prone areas', as published by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner. Land use planning in bushfire prone areas must have due regard to the Commission's State Planning Policy 3.7 - Bushfire and associated Guidelines. These areas include the fringes of Kulin townsite that are associated with large areas of remnant vegetation on Crown reserves and UCL. The other gazetted townsites are entirely declared bushfire prone area due to the dense vegetation coverage on adjacent Crown land, although the bushfire hazard classified vegetation affecting Pingaring is located on private land.

### Water Resources

#### *Surface water*

Surface water within the Shire, including Kulin townsite, is largely contained within the Swan-Avon River-Lockhart catchment while much smaller areas contained in the Main Avon (north-west) and Blackwood (south-west) catchments. There are no major waterways or water bodies that are close to the Kulin townsite or any of the other gazetted townsites. There are 27 dams in the Shire managed by Water Corporation, the Shire of Kulin, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. There are several large salt lakes in a wide chain formation east of Kulin one being approximately 10km away and another 115km away, near Holt Rock.

#### *Drainage/hydrology*

Most of the Shire of Kulin, including the salt lake chains, falls within the South-eastern Zone of Ancient Drainage hydrological zone. Some of western part falls within the South-western Zone of Ancient Drainage hydrological zone, which both consists of smooth to irregularly undulating plains of low relief, with a sluggish drainage system dominated by salt lake



systems within broad valley floors. The ancient valley drainage system (also known as palaeo-channels) will not function as a continuous entity and water will not flow to the Avon and Blackwood Rivers unless there is heavy and prolonged rainfall due to low valley floor gradients and low rainfall. The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation has not prepared floodplain mapping for the Shire. It appears there is a low risk of flooding at Kulin townsite due to the 10km distance from the salt lake chain and a height difference of approximately 30-40 metres. However, the broad flat valley and minor creek line to the south is classified as a valley hazard area.

#### *Groundwater*

Groundwater within the Swan-Avon-Lockhart River Catchment, which includes Kulin townsite, is generally within two metres of ground level in valley floors increasing to ten metres in upper slope areas. Groundwater salinity is very high in the valley floors and beneath the salt lakes and in deep aquifers in lower sub-catchment areas. Perched water tables and dams provide fresh to brackish water. Groundwater depth at Kulin has been gauged at 7.95m below ground level. No groundwater readings have been recorded at the other gazetted townsites.

#### Climate change

The issues associated with climate change impacting the Shire include more frequent extreme weather events resulting in drought, bushfires, water/soil erosion and flood risk from intensive rainfall events and shortage of potable water impacting biodiversity, agricultural production and general liveability. Consequently, the key challenges for the Shire include the management issues associated with agriculture, the remaining natural areas/biodiversity, water resources, salinity and responding to bushfire risk generally and within and around townsites.

A new Strategy could identify specific land use actions and strategic directions relating to protection, conservation and management of the Shire's environmental assets and management of bushfire risk. This could include reflecting the requirements of the current State Planning Framework relevant to local planning strategies and may consider whether new model zones, such as Environmental Conservation zones should be inserted into the Scheme. Consideration should also be given to whether additional provisions should be inserted into Part 3 and Part 4 to manage environmental considerations.

## **PART 4 - LAND SUPPLY**

This section evaluates land supply requirements in response to the key drivers identified in **Part 3**.

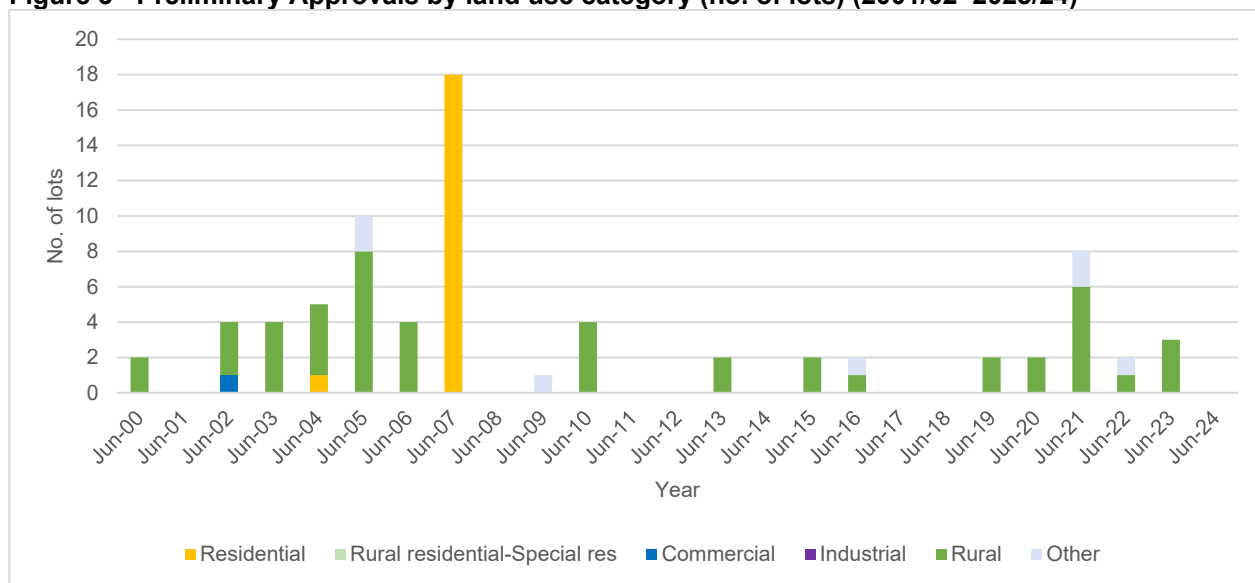
### **4.1 Subdivision activity**

When the Commission determines subdivision applications, these are typically given preliminary approval, subject to conditions. When conditions have been fulfilled, applicants may then proceed to final approval, where new lot titles are issued.

#### Preliminary Subdivision approvals

Since 2000/01, 75 lots (~ 3 lots p.a.) received Preliminary Approval across the Shire. Most of this preliminary approval activity (66%) occurred prior to 2011 but after this time approval activity has been far more subdued. Of the total lots given Preliminary Approval, 46 were for Rural purposes (63% ~ 2 lots p.a.) in the rural hinterland. Within the Kulin townsite, prior to 2011, 19 lots were given Preliminary Approval on land zoned Residential with one lot for Commercial purposes. No lots have received Final Approval in the townsite since 2011. At, 31 December 2024, there were no lots that have an outstanding Preliminary Approval.

**Figure 3 - Preliminary Approvals by land use category (no. of lots) (2001/02–2023/24)**

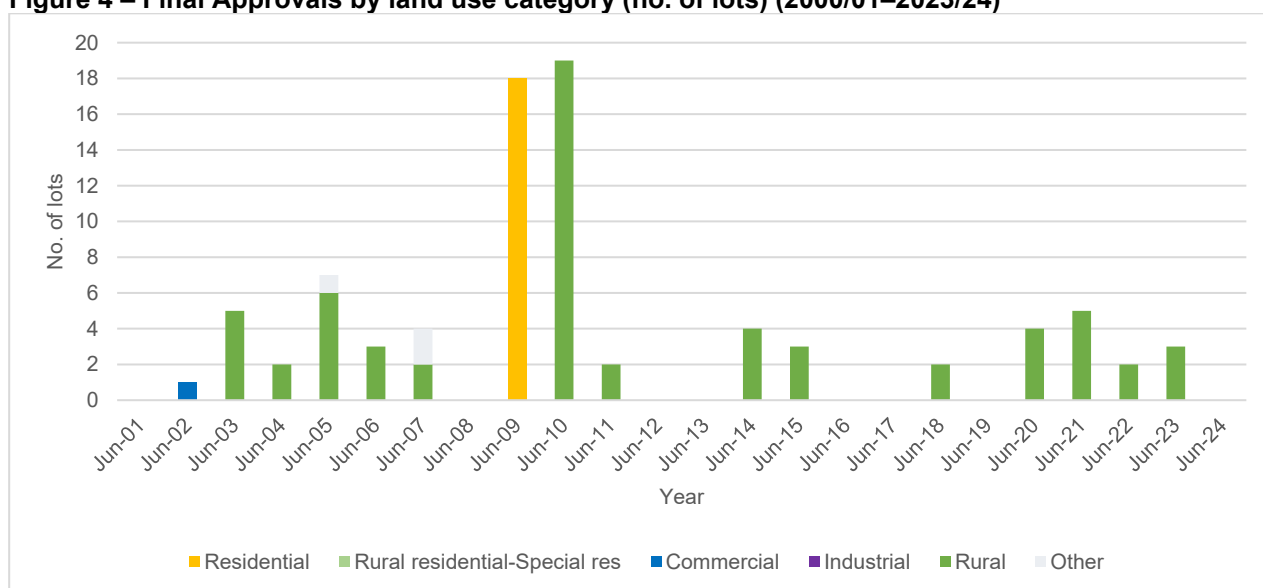


Source: DPLH (2025)

### Final Subdivision approvals

Since 2000/01, 84 lots (~ 4 lots p.a.) received Final Approval across the Shire. Most of this activity occurred prior to 2011 and activity after this time has been more subdued. Of the lots that received Final Approval, 62 were for Rural purposes in the Shire's Rural hinterland. Within the Kulin townsite, prior to 2011, 18 lots received Final Approval on land zoned Residential and for one lot was zoned for Commercial purposes. No lots have received Final Approval in the townsite since 2011.

**Figure 4 – Final Approvals by land use category (no. of lots) (2000/01–2023/24)**



Source: DPLH (2025)

## **4.2 Development activity**

Development applications are typically determined by the Shire, Regional Development Assessment Panel or Western Australian Planning Commission and are typically approved with conditions that must be complied with.

#### Building commencements

Since 2017/18, there have been 99 building commencements (12 p.a.) for - Residential dwellings (12/1.5 p.a.), Alterations (22/2.75 p.a.), Outbuildings (40/5 p.a.) Commercial/Industrial purposes (5/<1 p.a.) and Community Services (12/1.5 p.a.).

#### Regional Development Assessment Panel

No applications have been lodged with the relevant Joint Development Assessment Panels.

#### Western Australian Planning Commission

No applications have been lodged with the State Development Assessment Unit for consideration and final determination by the Western Australian Planning Commission.

### **4.3 Future demand and land supply requirements**

To evaluate future land supply, this analysis utilises data collated by the Valuer General's Office. This dataset provides a breakdown of land development status by classifying zoned land as 'developed', 'undeveloped' and 'unrated' (refer to **Attachment 3** for a description of these terms). **Table 5** provides an overview of land development status for the Shire.

#### Residential

Within the Kulin townsite there are 171 lots that are zoned Residential and most of these have a split residential density code of R10/30. Of these, 144 are 'developed' while 27 lots were 'Vacant'. The 2021 Census indicated that of the 125 private dwellings in the Kulin townsite 29 were 'unoccupied'.

Additionally, there is 45ha zoned Urban Development on the southern western boundary of the townsite in Proudview Estate which is owned by the Shire of Kulin 17 one hectare lots - five are 'Developed' while 12 are 'Vacant' - that are serviced with water and power but not sewer) and two large 'Unrated' land parcels, which are owned by the Shire of Kulin, north of Rankin Street.

The biggest constraint to developing additional lots residential and rural living purposes in the Shire is the high cost of providing all essential service infrastructure, particularly electricity. This can sometimes mean that the market value of new lots is significantly less than the cost to develop them. As such, there is no financial incentive for the private sector to develop and release land for these purposes and can result in the burden for land release falling upon the Shire. If the Shire assumes the responsibility for releasing land it will be necessary for it to receive external financial support from the Federal or State Government(s).

There may also be an opportunity for further subdivision of larger lots in accordance with the minimum lot size requirements. There are approximately 5-10 lots that are between 2,000m<sup>2</sup> and 1ha. There may also be opportunities for some re-subdivision of existing lots at the (higher) R30 density (minimum lot size = 330m<sup>2</sup>) given that the town has a reticulated sewer network.

#### *Adequacy of residential land supply*

Responding to anticipated population and economic change (as discussed in Part 3) over the next 15 years requires that there is a sufficient stock of Residential land. At the present time, opportunities to release additional land/dwellings consists of:

- approximately 27 lots zoned Residential in the Kulin townsite that are 'Vacant';
- approximately 29 'unoccupied' private dwellings in the Kulin;
- there is approximately 45ha of land zoned Urban Development in the Kulin town site but releasing this land will require various constraints to be addressed and resolved; and

- within Kulin, there may be opportunities to subdivide larger lots to yield additional Residential lots or re-subdivision at a higher R30 density given that the town has a reticulated sewer network.

This current situation is adequate to meet the requirements of the Central Band population growth forecast and assumes that economic drivers remain as they are presently. However, should population change occur in accordance with the Upper Band forecasts, as may occur if there is a significant new economic driver(s), it could be necessary for additional Residential land to be released. In this circumstance, there may be a requirement for land classified as 'unrated' to be released but this will require constraints to be addressed and resolved.

#### Rural Townsite

There is land zoned Rural Townsite in the localities of Jitarning and Dudinin. Of this land approximately 25 lots are 'Developed' with two lots classified as 'Vacant' and a further 182 lots that are 'Unrated'. However, releasing this land will require various constraints to be addressed and resolved. These constraints include cost of providing all necessary essential service infrastructure, resolution of Native Title, identification/management of bushfire risk, and the process for converting Crown land to Freehold land, which can be time consuming and costly.

#### Transient workforce accommodation

There are currently no transient workforce accommodation facilities in the Shire aside from commercial accommodation providers which are limited. Demand for this type of accommodation is expected to increase in the short-term future due to the proposed development of renewable energy facilities.

#### Aged Persons Accommodation

The Shire supports aged persons accommodation at two sites – Kulinda Village and Workman Estate that are run by the Kulin Retirement Homes Committee. These facilities are within walking distance of Kulin's town centre and health centre. There's no land immediately available to extend the Kulinda Village but there may be capacity to increase the number of units in Workman Estate but the land will need to be further subdivided.

#### Commercial

There are 47 lots that are zoned Commercial in the Kulin townsite. Of these, 22 are 'Developed', two lots are 'Vacant' and four are 'Unrated'. Given a significant proportion of the land zoned 'Commercial' in the Kulin townsite has not been developed there is sufficient supply of land of this land use into the medium term at least.

#### Industrial

There are 44 lots that are zoned Industrial in the Kulin townsite. Of these, 22 are 'Developed', six lots are 'Vacant' and 16 are 'Unrated'. The Shire reports that it is experiencing some new demand for industrial land from new businesses providing services such as civil works and traffic management given that land in the Shire is more affordable when compared to larger population centres to the west (i.e. Perth and Bunbury). Given that the existing supply of 'General Industry' zoned land in the Kulin townsite has not been developed to its full potential there is a sufficient supply of land of this land use into the medium term to accommodate new businesses. The provision of key essential services to some lots with potential for further subdivision will, however, likely be problematic due to the cost which is a disincentive to investment by the private.

#### Rural land

Outside of the townsites land is mostly zoned Rural or as local reserves for various purposes.

**Table 5 - Land development status (Kulin townsite)**

Townsite	Zone (Land use)	Developed		Vacant		Unrated	
		Lots	Ha	Lots	Ha	Lots	Ha
Kulin	Residential	144	16.81	27	2.16	9	1.66
	Urban Development	5	5.01	13	35.06	2	3.30
	Commercial	41	5.46	2	0.20	4	0.40
	Industrial	22	17.35	6	9.49	16	9.42
Dudinin	Rural Townsite	18	2.82	2	2.02	115	422.69
Jitarning	Rural Townsite	7	0.71	0	0.00	67	6.70
Source: VGO (2024), DLPH (2025)							
Notes:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to Attachment 3 for definitions of 'developed', 'undeveloped' and 'unrated'.</li> <li>The boundary of the Kulin townsite used for this analysis corresponds to the gazetted townsite boundary.</li> </ul>							

## **PART 5 - EVALUATION OF EXISTING LOCAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

This part evaluates the Shire's existing local planning framework given the planning context presented in **Part 3** and the assessment of land supply and demand in **Part 4**.

As required by the Regulations, this part of the report considers whether the Shire's Local Planning Strategy, Local Planning Scheme, Structure Plans and Local Planning Policies are satisfactory in their existing form; or should be amended; or should be revoked and new instruments prepared.

### **5.1 Local Planning Strategy**

At the present time, the Shire does not have a local planning strategy. This has implications for responsiveness of the local planning framework to current and emerging land use issues/opportunities that are influencing the Shire (as outlined in Part 3 of this Report of Review) such as:

- promoting different and new forms of housing;
- providing for workforce accommodation;
- expanding tourism opportunities (for both attractions and accommodation);
- regulating short-term rental accommodation;
- facilitating renewable energy proposals;
- managing use of rural land; and
- providing protections for the agricultural sector.

A local planning strategy also plays a key role in investigating how Local Planning Scheme No.2 could be updated (see Section 5.2 below).

Therefore, it is recommended that the Shire prepare its first (new) local planning strategy to:

- set out the long-term planning directions for the local government;
- apply any State or regional planning policy that is relevant to the strategy; and
- provide the rationale for any zoning or classification of the land under the local planning scheme;

The new local planning strategy will be prepared in accordance with the Commission's Local Planning Strategy Guidelines (published in 2023) ([Local Planning Strategy Guidelines](#)). These guidelines provide the guiding principles, procedural steps and recommended content for a Strategy. A Strategy is comprised of two parts – **Part 1** and **Part 2**:

- **Part 1** outlines the 15-year vision for how land use change and development will occur within the Shire; identifies relevant planning issues/opportunities and defines planning directions/actions under key themes that are generally identified in the State's Land

Use Planning Framework, such as: urban growth and settlement, economy, environment, and infrastructure.

- **Part 2** provides the background, context and justification for the planning issues/opportunities, planning directions, and actions identified in Part 1.

## 5.2 Local Planning Scheme No. 2

The local planning scheme and supporting local planning instruments (such as local planning policies) give effect to local strategic planning through statutory land use and development control.

The Shire of Kulin's Local Planning Scheme No. 2 was gazetted in July 1999 and has been amended twice to rezone land and address the (then) Deemed provisions set out in the Schedule 2 of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* (refer to **Attachment 2**).

While Local Planning Scheme No.2 has provided for flexible decision making, it has not been regularly updated to:

- address contemporary land use planning issues/opportunities as would be identified in a new (possibly joint) local planning strategy;
- apply the current State Land Use Planning Framework;
- reflect recent updates/changes to the Regulations;
- reflect changes to cadastral boundaries arising from subdivision development; and
- reflect changes to reserve classifications to reflect the current approved purpose of all reserved land in the Scheme area.

Therefore, to ensure the Scheme is contemporary and fit-for-purpose it is recommended that the Scheme be amended. This amendment will include changes identified during preparation of the new Strategy and, more generally, to achieve alignment with the Model Scheme Text and the Deemed Provision. Implementing the required changes to the Scheme is best achieved via an omnibus amendment process, in accordance with processes set out in the Regulations, where a suite of changes to the Scheme are actioned as part of one process.

In broad terms, amending Local Planning Scheme No.2 will require:

- a) actioning recommendations from the new Strategy that relate to the Scheme;
- b) aligning the document structure and clauses with the updated Model Scheme Text;
- c) incorporating contemporary use classes, land use terms and definitions;
- d) considering whether new zones (such as Rural Residential, Environmental Conservation and Rural Enterprise) should be incorporated;
- e) prescribing appropriate permissibilities in the zoning table;
- f) rationalising/updating existing clauses and adding new provisions relating to zone-specific and general development (e.g. re-purposed and second-hand dwellings, caretaker's dwelling, amenity of non-residential development, sea containers, use of street setback areas, vehicle access and road construction, Wastewater Disposal, drainage, water supply, extractive industries, regional facilities, and development of lots abutting distributor roads);
- g) identifying development that does not require development approval;
- h) rationalising/updating special control areas, schedules; and
- i) modifying the scheme maps to align with the updated scheme text and account for changes to cadastral boundaries and reserve classifications throughout the Scheme Area.

### **5.3 Structure Plans**

Local Planning Scheme No.2 provides that the Shire or the Commission may require the preparation of a structure plan prior to consideration of a subdivision or development proposal in the Rural Residential zone. A structure plan for residential and rural living purposes was endorsed for Lot 8 and Lot 9838 (now Lot 9001 and Lot 51) Kulin Road West (now Rankin Street), Kulin on 18 July 2007. This plan is valid until 19 October 2025. There are no other approved structure plans in the Shire.

### **5.4 Local planning policies**

It is recommended that these policies be reviewed as part of amending the Scheme to ensure they reflect contemporary guidance on the specific issues. The Shire could also investigate whether any additional local planning policies are required as part of preparing the new (joint) Strategy to address current land use issues such as hosted/unhosted short-term rental accommodation and renewable energy proposals.

### **5.5 Review of local planning framework**

It is understood that two of the Shires neighbouring local governments – the Shire of Kondinin and the Shire of Narembeen requested assistance to update their local planning frameworks in late 2024. Following preliminary discussions with the Shire(s) of Narembeen and Kondinin, the Department accepted a request to address the four local governments comprising the Roe Regional Organisation of Councils (RoeROC) (the Shire(s) of Corrigin, Kondinin, Kulin, and Narembeen) about reviewing their respective local planning frameworks in February 2025.

#### **5.5.1 Report of review**

At the RoeROC meeting, the Department broadly outlined that the first step in reviewing a local planning framework is to prepare a report of review (RoR). The RoeROC subsequently advised that its members are each committed to preparing an RoR to examine their respective local planning frameworks. This RoR fulfils this first requirement agreed and the document, including Council's recommendations, will now be forwarded to the Commission for its consideration.

#### **5.5.2 Local planning strategy**

The discussion during the RoeROC meeting also highlighted that none of the local planning frameworks of RoeROC members currently have a local planning strategy. In addressing the requirement for a strategy, the Department advised that there may be an opportunity for the RoeROC members to work collaboratively to jointly prepare a Strategy.

Some of the key reasons for preparing a joint Strategy include the opportunity to share costs (i.e. mapping); and production of a streamlined Strategy document that has a singular Part 1 and a singular Part 2 relevant to each participating local government instead of four separate documents as would be the case if each local government prepared its own Strategy.

Joint local planning strategies have been prepared for several locations across the Wheatbelt region, including Quairading/Cunderdin/Tammin in 2021 and, more recently, for the Shire(s) of Williams, West Arthur and Wagin during 2023-2024. Both strategy documents identified land use planning issues/opportunities and defined strategic directions/actions common to each participating local government while also investigating specific issues/opportunities and directions/actions affecting the individual LGAs.

Following this discussion, the RoeROC advised the Department that its members will give 'consideration to working collaboratively (pending Report of Review recommendations) to develop a joint Local Planning Strategy'. Shire officers consider a joint approach to be a pragmatic and more affordable option as the RoeROC local governments comprise a geographic cluster where population, economic, and environmental drivers are (likely to be) relatively homogenous.



The Department has advised that once each RoeROC member has considered its RoR and advised of their willingness (or otherwise) to collaborate in preparing a joint Strategy it will then work further with participants to prepare a detailed project and communications plan that will guide preparation of a joint Strategy through 2025 and 2026.

#### 5.5.3 Local planning scheme

The omnibus amendment is the preferred approach to updating the Scheme. The required amendment will commence after the local planning strategy has been finalised. Given that the Strategy will inform the amendment, it is anticipated that the earliest commencement for this phase of the review would be mid/late 2026 with finalisation by mid/late 2027. The amendment will be progressed by the Shire in consultation with the Department. This work will build on a scope of work to amend the Scheme that was previously presented to and endorsed by Council at its Ordinary Council Meeting in September 2024.

#### 5.5.4 Structure plans

The review of the existing structure plan can commence during preparation of the Strategy and is likely to be completed at the same time as the Scheme amendment.

#### 5.5.5 Local planning policies

The required review of the Shire's local planning policies is expected to be completed after the Scheme amendment as this process have some implications for the policy framework.

### **PART 6 – RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. pursuant to Regulation 66(1)(b) and (c) of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* approve the Report of Review and forward a copy of the Report to the Western Australian Planning Commission.
2. pursuant to Regulation 66(3) (a), (b) and (c) of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* recommend to the Western Australian Planning Commission that the Shire:
  - (a) prepare its first Local Planning Strategy to set out the long-term planning directions for the local government; apply any State or regional planning policy that is relevant to the strategy; and provide the rationale for any zoning or classification of the land under the local planning scheme;
  - (b) amend Local Planning Scheme No. 2 via an omnibus amendment to incorporate recommendations of the new Local Planning Strategy and align it with the Model Scheme Text and the Deemed Provisions; and
  - (c) as part of preparing the new Local Planning Strategy and amending Local Planning Scheme No. 2, assess any structure plans and determine whether these are satisfactory or should be amended or revoked.
3. as part of preparing the new Local Planning Strategy and amending Local Planning Scheme No. 2 assess its existing local planning policies to determine which policies are satisfactory or should be amended or should be revoked and whether any new local planning policies are required.

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Department of Planning, WA  
On behalf of:  
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Wheatbelt\WheatbeltGenericMap\  
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Base information supplied by:  
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LI 430-2009-6

**Legend**

- Planning region boundary
- Local government boundary
- Highway
- Wheatbelt region

**Map Labels:**

**Planning Regions:** MID WEST, PEEL, SOUTH WEST, GREAT SOUTHERN, GOLDFIELD-ESPERANCE, Maryville Estate.

**Local Government Areas (LGAs):** DANDARAGAN, MOORA, WONGAN BALLIDU, KOORDA, MUKINBUDIN, WESTONIA, YILGARN, GINGIN, VICTORIA PLAINS, CHITTERING, TOODYAY, NORTHAM, CUNDERDIN, YORK, QUAIRADING, BEVERLEY, BROOKTON, CORRIGIN, KORDIN, KULIN, LAKELAND, DUMBLEYUNG, WAGIN, WEST ARTHUR, WILLIAMS, NARROGIN, WICKEPIN, BROOME, KARDLA, KATKAT.

**Towns and Settlements:** Jurien Bay, Dandaragan, Moora, Wongan Hills, Koorda, Wellbungin, Mukinbudin, Westonia, Southern Cross, Merredin, Kellerberrin, Tammin, Northam, Cunderdin, York, Beverley, Quairading, Bruce Rock, Narembeen, Corrigin, Brookton, Pingelly, Wandering, Cuballing, Williams, Narrogin, Wagin, Dumbleyung, Lake Grace, Collie, Darkan, Bunbury, Busselton, Albany.

**Other Labels:** Indian Ocean, Southern Ocean.

**Inset Map:** Shows the location of the Wheatbelt region within Western Australia, bordered by PERTH, PEEL, SOUTH WEST, GREAT SOUTHERN, and GOLDFIELD-ESPERANCE.

## Figure 2 - Location plan (Shire of Kulin)

## Attachment 2 - Summary of amendments to Local Planning Scheme No. 2

No.	Gazettal Date	Details (summary)
1	22/01/08	Schedule 1 - modify by adding interpretation "tourist accommodation". Schedule 4 - modifying by adding Special Use Area "3. Portion of Reserve 26116 (Lot 224) Johnston Street, KULIN" together with permitted special uses and scheme map designation.
2	03/10/17	Scheme consolidation to incorporate the model provisions contained in Schedule 1 of the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 and the scheme provisions with the deemed provisions contained in Schedule 2 of the regulations.

## Attachment 3 – Definition of critical and strategic minerals

Critical minerals', as listed by the Australian Government under 'Critical Minerals List' in 2024 (which is reviewed every two years), are minerals of strategic national importance insofar as transitioning to a modern economy (e.g. advanced manufacturing, advanced computer technology and zero-carbon emissions) and national security reasons. Critical minerals are vulnerable to supply chain disruption, such as geopolitical turmoil. Some critical minerals can also be extracted as a by-product of mining/processing of gold, nickel, copper, lead, tin and zinc, which again may be present around the greenstone belts.

Strategic Materials', which are also listed by the Australian Government in 2024, are also minerals of strategic national importance but are not vulnerable to supply chain disruption, and includes aluminium (sourced from bauxite), copper, phosphorus, tin and zinc resources. There is an occurrence of copper 70km east of Kulin townsite, which lies within a greenstone area, and further discoveries of such minerals may be present within the greenstone belts.

## Attachment 3 - Explanation of Land Supply Data (Landgate Property Valuation Database)

The Landgate Property Valuation Database (PVD) gives each cadastral lot in the Residential, Industrial and Commercial zones one of three values (developed, undeveloped or unrated). These values are defined below.

<b>Developed</b>	Refers to lots that are zoned for development for the purposes of the specified primary land use category (Residential, Industrial and Commercial) for which premises valuation information is captured in Landgate's PVD.
<b>Undeveloped</b>	Refers to lots that are zoned for development for the purposes of the specified primary land use category (Residential, Industrial and Commercial) for that are recorded as vacant in Landgate's PVD.
<b>Unrated</b>	Refers to lots that are zoned for development for the purpose of the specified primary land use category (Residential, Industrial and Commercial) for which no vacant land or premises valuation information has been captured in Landgate's PVD. This may include State, or local government owned lots or premises exempt from rates, Crown allotments, common property within lots on survey, newly created lots on survey, land otherwise exempt from rates and some public roads which are zoned for the primary land use category (Residential, Industrial and Commercial) under the local planning scheme.