

Section 6.2 of the *Bathurst Region Rural Strategy* identifies the need for the protection and enhancement of the Region's 'Rural Landscapes and Features', which contribute to the 'identity and character', including 'hilltops and ridges, natural landscapes and rural views and vistas' (s.6.2).

This includes the protection and enhancement of the Region's 'Areas of High Scenic Quality and Important Landscape Features' (Section 6.2.1). Scenic locations for the region are identified in this plan, however, there are none near the project site. The strategy suggests, however, that 'all roadways throughout the rural areas have a high scenic value', including 'all drives from Bathurst to all village and settlement locations and drives between villages and settlement locations'. (s.6.2.1) Section 6.2.2, 'Protection of Rural Landscapes and Features', identifies the key 'threats to scenic quality' to include 'inappropriately sited development located adjacent to roadways'. This plan includes several actions recommended to ensure that the 'general scenic quality of the region is protected'. This includes setbacks to 'reduce the visibility of new development and to enable opportunities to revegetate and therefore screen new development', and also to 'avoid locating new development on ridges and hilltops where it is highly visible'. (s.6.2.2)

The site is in RU1 Primary Production zoned land and the *Bathurst Regional Local Environmental Plan 2014* identifies one zone objective is to 'maintain the rural and scenic character of the land'.

Similarly, the *Bathurst Regional Development Control Plan 2014* (DCP) recognises the visual quality of the rural landscape, stating that development should include 'consideration be given to the location, design and materials of fences, driveways and property access roads, particularly near main roads and 'gateway approaches to the City', to minimise 'visual impact' and ensure they are 'compatible with the rural landscape'.

The DCP recognizes the importance of the region's 'rural vistas', and does not identify any specific views, lookouts or areas of valued landscape character within the vicinity of the site. In relation to landscaping, the DCP states it should aim to improve 'visual amenity and to ensure that developments do not dominate their surroundings'.

2.2.5.3 Site visibility

The potential visibility of the project is largely determined by landform and vegetation. The site and surrounding Bathurst plain is undulating, with several north to south aligned gentle ridges, which contain local views into smaller visual catchments. The landform rises to more elevated areas in the east, forming part of the Great Dividing Range.

The potential visibility of the development has been identified through an analysis based on the topography of the site. This analysis shows a worst-case scenario for visibility as it does not include off-site vegetation and built form which would provide some screening and filtering of views. This analysis shows the pattern of potential visibility and is a starting point for detailed analysis. This zone of theoretical visibility is shown on **Figure 7**.

Generally, this preliminary analysis shows:

- There would be close and mid-range views from the rural properties to the west of the site on the slopes facing the site and elevated areas within 500 metres of the site;
- Views to the site are contained to the west by elevated land about 3.5 kilometres west of the site, and to the east of Raglan, this landform obstructs view to the site from the dwellings within Raglan;
- To the north of the highway there is the potential for views of the site within the elevated areas to the west of Swamp Creek north west of the site, in the vicinity of Glanmire House, and from elevated areas south of Mersling Road about 1-2 kilometres north east of the site;