

Keeping of Livestock

Information Sheet



City of
Greater Geraldton
a vibrant future



Version 1 – December 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City recognises that the keeping of livestock on smaller rural and rural residential zoned properties requires a higher level of management than broad acre farming due to the often higher density of animals and closer proximity of neighbouring landowners which results in a higher potential for both environmental and amenity impacts.

It is important to ensure that:

- a) The keeping of livestock is undertaken in a sustainable manner;
- b) The keeping of livestock does not have a significant negative impact on the natural environment;
- c) The keeping of livestock does not impact detrimentally on the amenity of adjoining landowners.

2.0 WHAT ARE STOCKING RATES

Stocking rates are the numbers of stock animals (e.g. sheep, cows, goats and horses) that can consistently be kept on a piece of pasture all year round with minor additional feed and without causing environmental degradation.

The base stocking rate is the number of Dry Sheep Equivalents (DSE) that would apply to a rural small holding with the lowest level of pasture management in an average year. The recommended base stocking rate should:

- provide enough feed to maintain animals in good condition;
- avoid soil erosion by providing enough pasture cover to protect the soil throughout the year (management such as stock rotation may be necessary); and
- be sustainable through average years.

3.0 BASE STOCKING RATE GUIDELINES

The standard measure for stocking rates is called Dry Sheep Equivalents (DSE) which can be considered as the number of 50kg adult dry sheep (wethers) that can be carried on each grazed hectare without causing degradation to the land.

The base stocking rate is the number of DSE that would apply to a property with the most basic level of pasture management in an average year based on the soil type and size of the property. It establishes a maximum stocking rate for properties where no irrigation is proposed and there is no approved land/pasture management plan. The base stocking rate should:

- Provide enough feed to maintain animals in good condition. Consideration must be given to the welfare of any grazed animal.

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- Avoid soil erosion by providing enough pasture cover (>50%) to protect the soil throughout the year. To achieve this in some areas, this may require resting paddocks (i.e. removing stock, from time to time to ensure minimal ground cover is achieved and maintained).

Assumptions for the base stocking rate are:

- Rain fed annual pastures and minimal supplementary feeding.
- A basic level of pasture management, such as resting paddocks from time to time, particularly over the summer months.
- Remnant vegetation, wetlands and water courses are fenced.
- Aimed at small lots (1 – 20 hectares) as they have fewer pasture management options, including resting pastures to maintain cover during the critical summer months.

4.0 BASE STOCKING RATE CALCULATIONS FOR SMALL LANDHOLDINGS

The base stocking rate calculation for non-irrigated, unimproved pasture paddocks with no land management plan in the City of Greater Geraldton are outlined in the table below noting that Figure A: Soil Types (see attached) illustrates the locations of the different stocking rate land units:

Stocking Rate Land Unit	Recommended Stocking Rate DSE/ha	Equivalent Sheep per hectare	Cows per hectare	Goats per hectare	Horses per hectare
Coastal Dunes	0	0	0	0	0
Limestone Hills*	2	2	0	0	0
Greenough Flats	6	6	0.5	4	0.5
Yellow Sandplain*	3	3	0	2	0
Moresby Range Footslopes	5	5	0.5	3	0.5
Granite Hills	5	5	0.5	3	0.5

*In an unimproved state this land unit is not suited to grazing in the hotter months (November – March)

** Dry Sheep Equivalent for number of animals per hectare is cumulative across species, such that a two-hectare property in Granite Hills that you can have one cow or one horse or three goats. It does not mean that the property could have one cow and one horse and three goats.

***Land area excludes developed areas (i.e. driveways, dwellings, outbuildings, stables/enclosures for stock etc)

5.0 INCREASING STOCKING CAPACITY

Clause 3.10.2.2 of Local Planning Scheme No. 1 states that “stocking rates shall not exceed Department of Agriculture and Food (now known as Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development) standards” (i.e. being the base stocking rate in accordance with clause 5.0 above).

Any increase in the base stocking rates will require issuance of Development Approval by the City of Greater Geraldton for a ‘Rural Pursuit/Hobby Farm’ land use, with determination (either approval or

refusal) to depend on land area, proposed pasture improvement, farm planning and nutrient management as well as meeting any other applicable statutory requirements.

The land use 'Rural Pursuit' can only be considered on land zoned 'Rural Residential' or 'Rural' under the City's Local Planning Scheme No. 1. A comprehensive Land and Stock Management Plan will be required to be prepared and be submitted with the Development Application.

Proposals to carry stock in excess of the base stocking rate should outline in the Land and Stock Management Plan how the increase in stocking rates can be sustained without causing land degradation to the land or any existing vegetation, nuisance to other nearby landowners, or harm to the animals. Different stock management systems are possible, depending on the level of pasture improvement, irrigation, type of animal, feeding regimes and management practices. Appendix 1 lists some of the information that must be provided in the land management plan submitted with any development application to keep stock in excess of the base stocking rate.

6.0 ADVERTISING

All development applications received for exceeding the base stocking rate on land zoned 'Rural Residential' is required to be advertised in accordance with the provisions of Local Planning Scheme No. 1.

Where in the opinion of the local government, the proposal to exceed the base stocking rate on land zoned 'Rural' has the potential to impact upon the amenity of surrounding landowners, the local government may elect to advertise the development application in accordance with the provisions of Local Planning Scheme No. 1.

Where in the opinion of the local government the proposed stocking rate has the potential to cause environmental impact or may risk harm coming to the animals, the proposal shall be referred to the Department of Agriculture and Food and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development for expert advice.

7.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, refer to the Town Planning section of the City's website where the following information is available:

- Local Planning Scheme No. 1
- Local Planning Policies
- Information Sheets
- Application for Development Approval
- Department of Agriculture and Food WA (now known as Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development) stocking rate guidelines for small landholdings.

Contact the City's Planning Team for further information.

Please note that the information contained within this information sheet is intended as a guide only. It is recommended that advice and assistance of the City's Planning Team be sought prior to lodgement of a development application.

The City of Greater Geraldton disclaims any liability for any damages sustained by a person acting on the basis of this information.

APPENDIX 1

The following information and details must be submitted with the Development Application to keep stock in excess of the base stocking rate:

1. Site plan of the property at a reasonable scale showing:
 - The position of all structures (existing and proposed) on the entire site, including dimensions of proposed structures, area of paddocks for stock and distances from proposed structures to the lot boundaries (note calculations exclude developed areas);
 - The location, dimensions and layout for all existing car parking areas, access ways, pasture areas, exercise yard areas/arenas and stables/shelters;
 - Extent of landscaped areas with the position and type of existing and proposed vegetation and the method of irrigation;
 - Paddocks, including dimensions, areas and whether they are to be irrigated;
 - Location of any existing or proposed effluent disposal systems;
 - Details relating to external finishes and colours (if structures such as stables/shelters are proposed);
 - Location and type of any existing or proposed fencing, including if electric fences are proposed;
 - Manure storage/composting area; and
 - Location of any watercourses, wetlands, dams and areas prone to waterlogging.
2. A comprehensive Land and Stock Management Plan prepared in accordance with the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (now known as the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development) Stocking Rate Guidelines for small landholdings (less than 20ha) must accompany the application, outlining:
 - Stabling practices and grazing times;
 - Pasture management techniques including type and condition of pasture, rotation of pasture and fencing of paddocks;
 - Waste management including collection, storage and disposal of manure, including
 - Dust, pest, odour and weed management and control methods;
 - Tree protection and ground management;
 - Feeding regime (i.e. supplementary feeding as a means of reducing grazing pressure);
 - The number, size and type/species of stock.
 - Fertiliser application rates, irrigation and soil type;
 - Water availability and proposed water usage;
 - Drainage management practices that prevent direct runoff to watercourses or dams; and
 - Where stables or other structures are proposed to be constructed for the housing of livestock, they must be located and managed so as not to detrimentally impact on the amenity of adjoining properties.

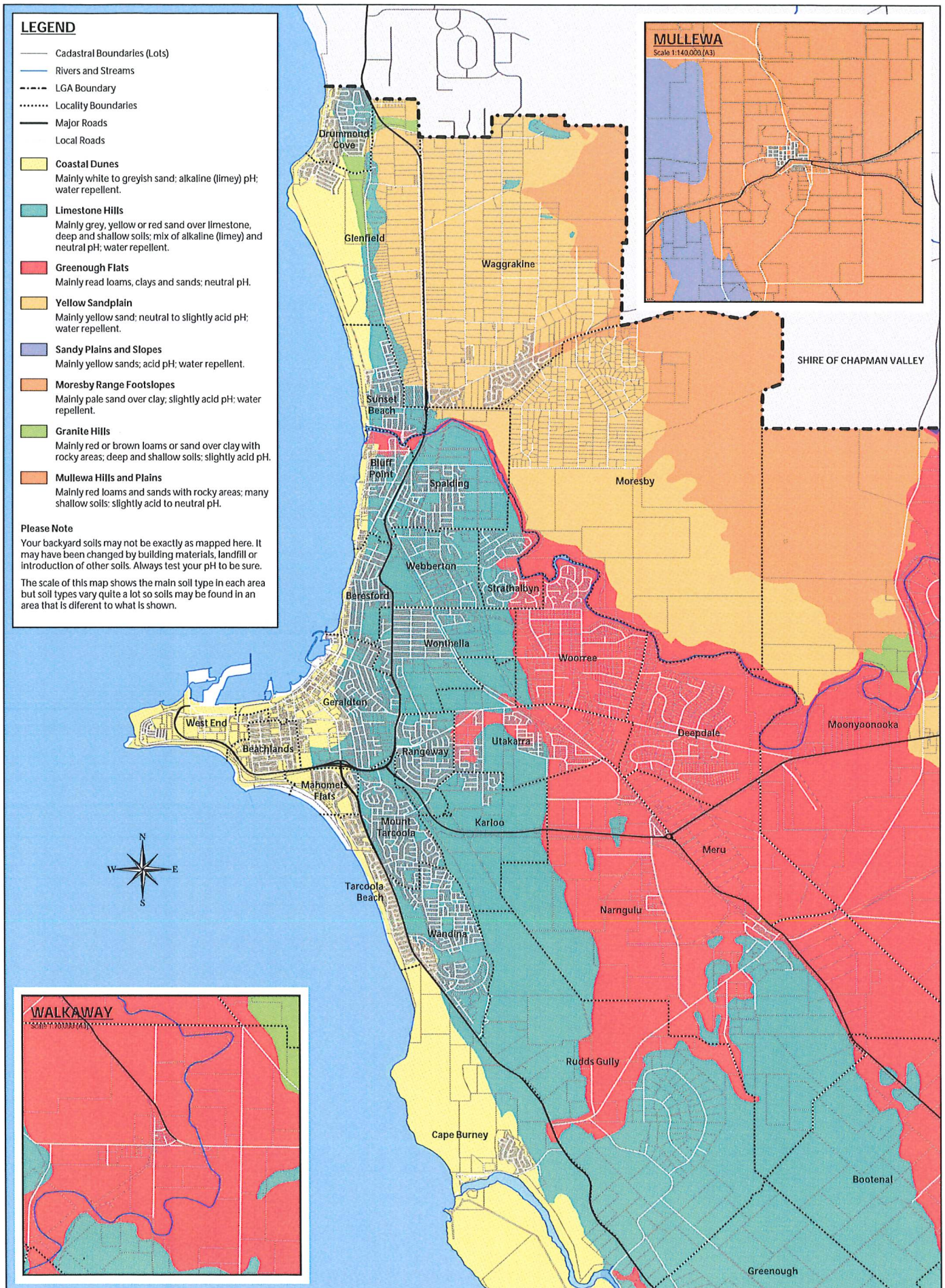


FIGURE A:
SOIL TYPES
of Geraldton, Mullewa & Walkaway
Scale 1:70,000 (A3)