

Dear Planning Department,

I am a long-term property owner in Portarlington and an inner Melbourne resident. The way we go about normal life of late during these strange times, has been forever impacted due to the pandemic. Australian norms which were taken for granted pre-pandemic are now more important than ever. The pandemic is reinforcing Australian values now and into the future.

I have reviewed the "Draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy" June 2021, and the strategic plan "misses the mark" when placing a pandemic and post pandemic view. It is quite obvious that the strategic plan makes no attempt to address the changing community views and values post pandemic. The Australian values that encompass more than ever the need for connectedness, family and safety. At best the strategic plan was a snap shot when life was not impacted by the pandemic.

I urge the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning re-asses broad stroke strategic policies which may have been more suitable pre-pandemic, still objectionable nonetheless. However, given Australians immediate desire now and into the future to live freely and enjoy somewhat a pre-pandemic life style, this strategic plan makes no attempt in addressing this.

Attitudes to work have altered, the office is now a thing of the past, it may have been foreseeable in the next generation of digital natives (millennials etc), but unimaginable on this scale. The pandemic has generated a mass office exodus and empowered their staff to work from anywhere they want, meaning people are no longer tethered to their office location. The option of purchasing property and moving away from central city areas where the virus may impact and effect the community in terms of more lockdowns, has seen sales in the real estate market sore regarding rural peninsula areas. These phenomena have no airplay in a document that is planning out a strategic policy. It fails.

Considering Australians values are now stronger than ever, and the massive change in attitudes to office life, the Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy needs a re-think. It may seem like a lot of work, but you are taking away the rights of people to live and work in a beautiful part of Victoria with nonsensical restrictive policy statements that have a blatant disregard for Australia's pandemic situation. I implore the planning department and ministers re-think farming zones which are adjacent to high density living. Their multiple planning options such as low-density residential zone which meets the new Australian reality.

Before launching into disagreement, you must appreciate the pandemic's impact to all Australian's including Victorians who want to able to enjoy their "Port Phillip Bay", area. Victorian's now want to explore living outside of the urban areas and your strategic objectives are out of sync with the best interest of the community's views and needs.

Kind regards,

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