

18 February 2018

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, LAND, WATER AND PLANNING

Objection to Woodend Local Planning Statement (LPS) – December 2017

As a [REDACTED] resident I wish to register my objection to the Localised Planning Statement (LPS) Consultation Draft released in December 2017 by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and inviting community feedback.

Legislation was introduced to parliament in June 2017, the Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill 2017. This legislation will allow the Macedon Ranges to be declared a distinctive area with strengthened planning controls and state level planning protection from inappropriate development. Properly implemented this legislation would protect our landscapes, environment and heritage and help stop poor planning decisions in the Shire.

The LPSs for each locality were to be developed by our Shire's planning staff, State planning staff and in consultation with each of the communities for which the LPSs were to be developed. As part of the development process the LPS working groups were to ensure that the LPSs included the 12 recommendations from the report of the Macedon Ranges Protection Advisory Committee, July 2017 (appointed by the current Planning Minister in November 2015) which the Minister had accepted in total for the Macedon Ranges. The LPS for Woodend was to have been developed based on the earlier work done by the Macedon Ranges Protection Advisory Committee and the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme Amendment C098: Woodend Town Structure Plan (referred to as the C98) and gazetted by the Minister for Planning in June 2017. The C98 had been developed following independent study and extensive community consultation with approval and adoption by a planning authority panel. Amendment C98 confirmed the current township boundaries for Woodend until at least 2036.

Potential growth post 2036 was provided for by the incorporation of ONE of three identified potential sites each of which would require in-depth investigation for suitability for future integration into the township boundary. The expectation for the incorporation of any new site was to be gradual over an extended period of time and only when other suitable land within the town boundary had been utilised. Nowhere in either the study or the C98 was there any mention that these potential sites should be incorporated prior to an established need.

There has been no community consultation or involvement in the period between June 2017 and the production of the Woodend LPS released in December 2017. The new document totally disregards all the recommendations of the independent study, the protections built into the C98, the recommendations of the Protection Advisory Committee and, significantly, community expectations in regard to Woodend's future growth. The proposed Woodend LPS would see new town boundaries that would include, with no further discussion or consultation, significant areas of land on the northwest, northeast and east of Woodend for urban development. This would more than double the size of the township without demonstrating an established need, without proper investigation and without input or recourse by the local community.

This LPS fails to provide any protection for Woodend, containing many vague statements and lacking clarity. It is inconsistent with the intent of the legislation. It is inconsistent with the 12 recommendations of the Protection Advisory Committee accepted in full by the Minister. It is inconsistent with the protections within amendment C98 to maintain the character of the small heritage town of Woodend. The expanded settlement boundary disregards and totally disrespects

the local community and its considerable input over an extended period of time in expressing its view and vision for the future growth of the community.

In summary, I strongly believe that the Localised Planning Statement should be scrapped and a proper Statement of Planning policy be written. It is a retrograde step from the currently accepted Statement of Planning Policy No 8, the envisaged outcomes of which should be incorporated into the LPS. The existing Woodend settlement boundary should be declared as a "protected settlement boundary" under the new legislation to ensure protection of surrounding natural areas, water catchment and farmland as well as the heritage townscape and its approaches.

I look forward to your response.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]