

Dear Sir or Madam:

**Re: the Macedon Ranges Draft Localised Planning Statement (DLPS) and Town Settlement Boundaries-In Particular Riddells Creek.**

There is considerable pressure being exerted on the community (and presumably DELWP) by the 'no-growth' lobby groups in the Macedon Ranges, I would ask that in considering the final town boundaries in the Macedon Ranges DLPS, DELWP look past the very simplistic anti growth position and give genuine consideration to best practice environmentally sustainable development. The simplistic 'no-growth' response can lead to quite environmentally perverse outcomes.

I am a long term (█ years) resident of Riddells Creek. I am also an █ and am a passionate advocate for environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection. I have spent my adult life working as best I can to achieve optimum environmental outcomes in a range of government and non-government science, planning and policy roles. I have also studied █ at a post-graduate level.

In the case of the Riddells Creek C100 Amendment, a number of areas around the township were considered for new residential development. After several years of investigation, consultation and drafting plans (culminating in the Riddells Creek Structure Plan and a the Planning Panel Report on the C100 Amendment), Macedon Ranges Council submitted an amendment for the approval of the State Planning Minister, which included rezoning two areas in Riddells Creek for residential growth. One area was north of Amess Road and the other area south of the train line. This was probably more land than was required for re-development according to growth forecasts. At the same time, the Macedon Ranges Environment Advisory Committee had been investigating environmental protection matters in the Macedon Ranges and considerable opposition to continued population growth was detected. In response to this anti-growth pressure, the Planning Minister decided to drop the area south of the railway line from the rezoning proposal but to rezone the area to the north. Was this a win for environmental sustainability? I would suggest that it was in-fact a big loss.

This was a perverse planning outcome because the area to the south represents a far more environmentally sustainable area for residential development. The area to the north of Amess Road is 1500 metres from the centre of town and the Railway Station at its closest point, at the furthest point it is 3km.

Increasing car use has major environmental and social costs: it contributes to carbon emissions, creates ongoing demand for road upgrades (often resulting in incremental loss of remnant vegetation and habitat), exacerbates economic inequities, makes conditions less safe and attractive for cycling and pedestrians and has major detrimental effects on people's health. Research shows that people will willingly walk up to 500 metres to catch a train or do their shopping, any further than that they will likely get in their car and drive. This means that the new development north of Amess Road will be a driving neighborhood, residents will either drive to a railway station or drive all the way to work, shopping, kids activities etc. The area south of the railway station holds about 30 Ha of land, which is less than 500 metres from the railway station while at its furthest point it is 1500 metres- this is where we should be building a new residential neighborhood in Riddells Creek. The area south of the railway line is on very degraded cropping and grazing land holding very low biodiversity values. Because it holds very little remnant vegetation there would be minimal biodiversity loss due to residential development in that area and little discernible change to the neighborhood character of the existing town. There would be some more people using the shops and school but not necessarily more cars. People would be very likely to walk or ride their bikes into the town and when they chose to drive, most car trips would take them south onto the Sunbury- Riddell Road or east onto Sutherlands Road. Most trips will be toward the larger centres of Gisborne, Sunbury or Melbourne CBD.

The area to the south of the railway line would be slightly more expensive to service initially in terms of development infrastructure than the area now rezoned to the north (this was established by research submitted to the Planning Panel and acknowledged in the Panel Report.) However, development cost should not be conflated with environmental sustainability. These higher infrastructure costs would be paid for by developers and possibly reflected in slightly higher final prices for lots. The environmental and social benefits of developing the land close to the train station and town centre would flow long term to the current and future Riddells Creek community and the Macedon Ranges environment.

The Riddells Creek train station car park is already full at peak times and there is traffic congestion in the mornings and afternoons, especially as traffic leaving the train station car park meets peak shopping time in Station Road around the Supermarket, Medical Centre and Pharmacy. This parking and traffic congestion will worsen as residents of the development north of Amess Road begin to drive into town to access services and use the VLine train to commute. Development of the area south of the railway line offers the opportunity

for more train station car parking- with car access via Sunbury road or Sutherlands Road- not involving a drive through the congested centre of town. Even better, it offers the opportunity for homes located where people can walk or cycle to the town and the station, leaving their cars behind.

Higher density development, close to fast train transport into the Melbourne CBD, within walking distance of services such as medical centres, pharmacy, primary school, neighborhood house and senior citizens hall is exactly what we should be building if we genuinely care about people's well being and our environment. This area to the south is also further from the high biodiversity value forest areas on the southern slopes of the ranges. Riddells Creek runs through the site but it has been heavily grazed (for probably over a century) and is currently quite degraded. If the area was redeveloped this section of the creek would likely become a public park and conservation reserve, allowing public access and ecological restoration to a much healthier state.

The area south of the railway line in Riddells Creek should remain within the town boundary and be considered for future residential growth. When viewed from a land use perspective it represents a fantastic sustainable development opportunity for the Macedon Ranges (please see the figure below).

There are ill-conceived developments occurring in the Macedon Ranges, new residential neighborhoods and Rural Living subdivisions are being carved out miles away from public transport hubs and basic services (for example new residential development south of Romsey township and in Gisborne South). These will result in many more people being forced to drive ever more cars around the shire to achieve the business of their daily lives. Many new developments are impacting on native vegetation and habitat for native fauna either directly (trees or vegetation have to be removed to build houses and install services) or indirectly (for example trees and vegetation are incrementally whittled away as people 'clean up' road sides and bush areas to reduce fire risk to new homes that were built inappropriately those pre-existing risks, or trees are removed so that roads can be widened and barriers installed to allow for faster, safer car travel). This does not mean that all new development is equally bad.

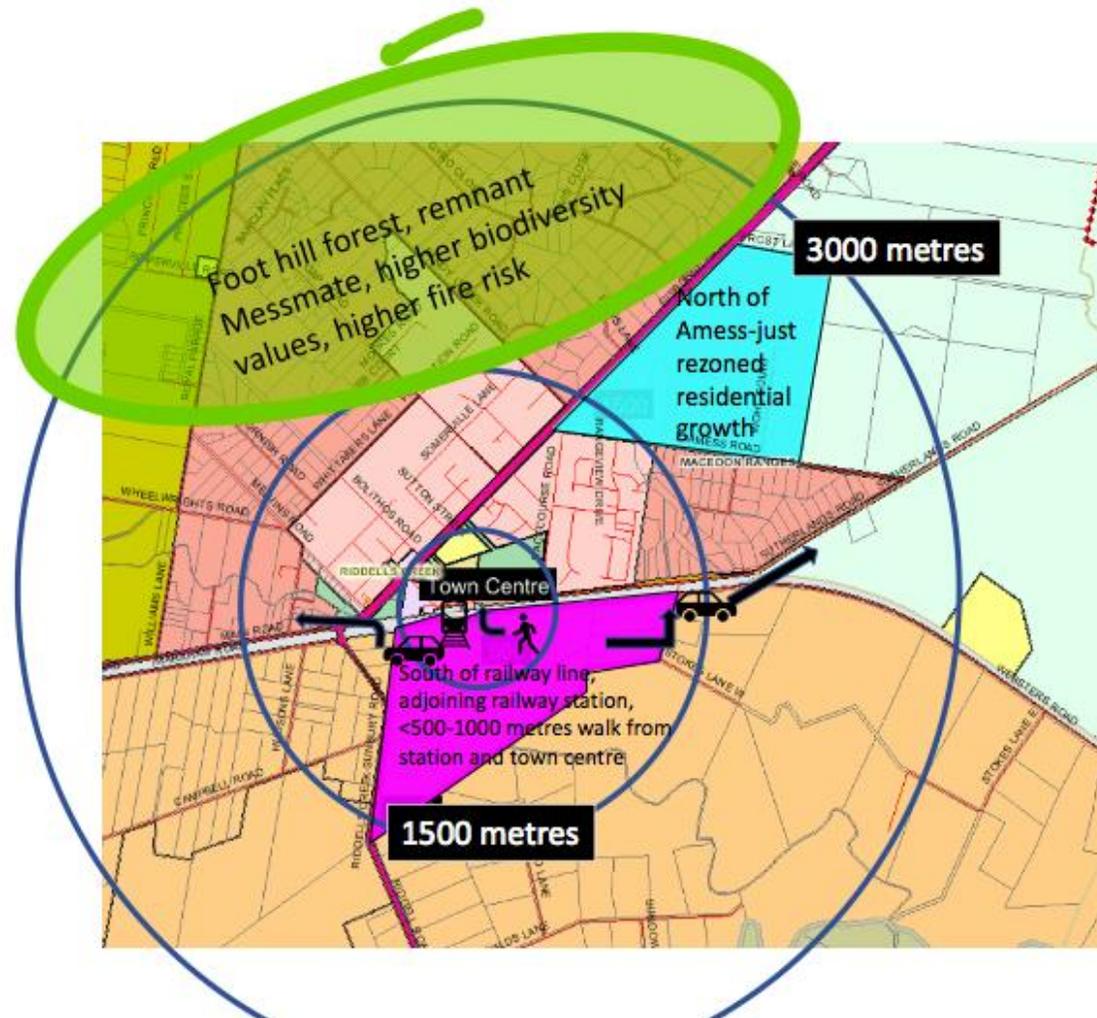
Climate change and biodiversity loss are arguably the two most significant environmental issues of our time. We need to provide more places for people to live in Victoria and we can do that while also providing to solutions to these two very big issues of our time. Environmental sustainability can't just mean no growth, it has be mean the best possible type of growth. Compact, public transport orientated,

walkable, neighborhoods can provide great places for people to live while leaving maximum areas for biodiversity thrive and having minimum impact of carbon emissions.

Please consider the complexity of planning for sustainable development and strive for very smart, very considered, very careful growth planning rather than simply 'no more growth'.

Thanks for taking the time to consider my submission.

[REDACTED]



Riddells Creek: consideration of areas for inclusion in town boundary. If environmentally sustainable development is a priority for the Macedon Ranges then inclusion of the area south of the railway line within the Town Boundary is an obvious choice.