

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5th March 2018
Victoria State Government
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

RE : SUBMISSION - DRAFT MACEDON RANGES LOCALISED PLANNING STATEMENT

[REDACTED] is located on [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] in the village of Mt Macedon. [REDACTED] aims to create a quintessential country escape with a focus on personal service and attention to detail.

[REDACTED] has been welcoming guests to Mt Macedon for over [REDACTED] years. The business was purchased by [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. A hospitality and tourism professional with [REDACTED] years domestic and international experience, [REDACTED] recognised the potential of both the property and region and has restored and upgraded the property, establishing [REDACTED] as a high quality tourism product with high repeat visitation and strong referral business.

[REDACTED] was named [REDACTED].

Business owner, [REDACTED], is [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] and a member of the regional [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] endorses the intent of the Macedon Ranges Localised Planning Statement however has concern that the suggested population growth will overwhelm much of the outlined protection strategies.

Tourism and Recreation, as noted in the Planning Statement within the wide definition of the “Visitor Economy”, is the third largest contributor to the Shire economy after the Government and Health sectors, and the largest contributor in the private sector economy. **We believe that the importance of the Visitor Economy to the Macedon Ranges Shire’s long-term economic sustainability needs to be recognised and clearly stated and protected in the LPS.**

1. Potential Population Growth

Population growth and its impact are not easily understood from the document. Population growth in the Shire is driven principally by the State’s net migration increase and the provision of affordable residential property in reasonable proximity to central Melbourne. This is augmented by the attractive lifestyle that a peri-urban rural shire has to offer.

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council Settlement Strategy 2011 (Page 3) provides Council’s recommended population growth by settlement. Gisborne and Kyneton are set to grow to 14,700 and 8,600 by 2036 (up from 8,900 and 5,700 respectively in 2006). Romsey is set to grow

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from 4,100 to 6,000 residents and Riddells Creek from from 3,500 to 6,1000.

The LPS advises that the State sponsored Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan and Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050 identify the largest settlements, Gisborne and Kyneton as becoming “Regional Centres” supporting populations of 10,000+ residents and Romsey growing to a Large District Town of 6,000 – 10,000 residents.

We believe that the attributes that attract residents and visitors to the Shire will be lost by the end of the Planning Period (2050), possibly as early as 2036, if population growth and development follows the trend of recent years. It notes that while the State Government is proposing an LPS to protect the Macedon Ranges, it is at the same time dictating growth levels that will threaten the character of the Macedon Ranges, most notably the towns of Gisborne, Riddells Creek, Romsey and the Shire’s showcase town of Kyneton.

We recommend that a review of the population growth forecasts that inform the Shire’s settlement strategy, and the State Government’s LPS, be undertaken to ensure that the proposed growth will not threaten the very attributes that the LPS aims to protect. Initially growth should be focused on the infill areas within the existing settlement boundaries and those identified to 2036. The 2036 boundary must be considered as fixed with no further growth beyond these boundaries permitted. Further growth will then only be possible through medium scale development and creative and efficient use of land within the fixed settlement boundaries.

We also recommend that an appendix be added to the finalised document that includes the aforementioned population estimates, generated under the assumptions of both existing and proposed urban density levels, and detail the implications for the provision of services to the Shire from both State and Shire level resources.

2. Protecting the Shire’s Character

The LPS highlights the need to protect the Shire’s unique natural beauty, its 19th century built heritage and rural landscapes. History has demonstrated to residents that many land developers are only interested in cash-flow and wealth creation and not in the long-term interests of the Shire in the decades that follow their activity. Examples of this are evident in the Brooking Road area of Gisborne and the rapidly expanding urban sprawl of Sunbury, both the result of land-only sub-divisions. In contrast, house and land developments such as the Baringo development at New Gisborne require the developer to masterplan the whole development and show built-form plans with considerations to all elements of the development including streetscaping, green space, access, supporting retail and aesthetic. Unless Council has strong and detailed Localised Planning Schemes, down to streetscape and retail precinct level, the local town character will continue to diminish.

We recommend that:

- 1. No further land-only sub-divisions be permitted within the Shire.**
 - 2. Future development be based on the house and land package development model, with a limited proportion of land-only blocks controlled via covenant, to ensure that the built-form is in keeping with the rest of the development.**
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3. That the Shire’s Planning Department receives sufficient additional funding, if required, to ensure that appropriate planning guidelines and planning tools are in place to manage development based on this model.

4. Kyneton, with its historic Piper Street and residential built-form heritage, requires special protection to maintain this unique town’s appeal for both residents and visitors. Kyneton’s population growth provisions must be reviewed to ensure the proposed population growth will not detract from the unique nature of the town.

5. Retail development be required to reflect the “village style” aesthetic as opposed to bland big-box retail developments.

6. Village street-scaping and infrastructure improvements reflect the “village style” aesthetic.

3. **Land Size**

There is a long-standing practice in rural areas to reduce minimum land sizes over time. At some point land becomes uneconomic for traditional and even innovative agricultural activity. How is it proposed to “encourage the use of rural-zoned land for agricultural purposes?” (page 22)

We recommend that in current Farm Zones, economic viability be included as a consideration when determining minimum subdivision size.

4. **Ability to provide Farm Gate / Cellar Door Sales**

The opportunity to provide farm gate / cellar door sales not only provides a valuable source of income for small landholders/farmers but is a sought after visitor experience.

We recommend that farm gates and cellar door sales be supported throughout the Shire.

For any further details please don’t hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

Owner / Operator

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]