



5 March 2018

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
PO Box 500
East Melbourne VIC 8002

lodged online via: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/macedon-ranges-localised-planning-statement>

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission on Draft Macedon Ranges Localised Planning Statement

I have given considerable thought to the draft Localised Planning Statement for the Shire which I live and work in, having regard to the following documents:

- *Statement of Planning Policy No. 8 (Macedon Ranges & Surrounds) Town & Country Planning Act 1961*
- *Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme*
- *Macedon Ranges Protection Advisory Committee Final Report* dated 27 July 2016 including the Committee's Preferred Localised Planning Statement; and
- *Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill 2017*

I have previously made a submission to the Macedon Ranges Protection Advisory Committee.

I make the following brief submissions:

Role of Settlement Boundary

I do not see a need for settlement boundaries around specified towns' urban areas and areas flagged for urban expansion under adopted Structure Plans. The Planning Scheme at the State and Local level already provides clear guidance on appropriate settlement planning. I do not see any land (cattle and sheep paddocks) adjacent the urban edge of our towns that are of State significance to warrant the application of a settlement boundary, except for those areas containing biodiversity values and high quality agriculture soils. There is land within Woodend's proposed settlement boundary that contains high value agriculture soils adjacent the Five Mile Creek and if the State and Council want to respect the broad policy on protecting agriculture land this land should

not be rezoned for urban expansion. In my view the Woodend Structure plan did not give adequate weight to this value.

Although the Advisory Committee final report indicated that the settlement boundary would also encompass the Shire's Rural Living areas (to reflect the Shire's Settlement Strategy), if the Department of Planning decides to keep the proposed settlement boundaries then it seems fine to use policy rather than a boundary to direct growth to the Rural Living Zone. Keeping the Rural Living Zone outside of the settlement boundary allows the Statement to set out clear policy about when the settlement boundary can be reviewed to accommodate strategically planned and justified urban expansion.

It is appropriate to allow for the review of Romsey and Gisborne townships before considering any settlement boundary given their role as strategic growth towns and for which their Outline Development Plans (Structure Plans) were prepared a few years ago.

Silence on discretionary decision making in the Farming and Rural Conservation Zones

The draft statement does not provide any additional tools to assist the discretionary decision making for applications in these zones. In my view the current Planning Scheme provisions and policy are sufficient, but I am concerned that the policy statement which seeks to direct settlement to the rural living zone may be misconstrued and unfairly restrict the validity of dwellings in these zones where they contribute to agriculture or the enhancement of biodiversity values, as the Scheme currently provides for.

Lack of detailed content

I think the draft statement has less guidance than the Advisory Committee's preferred Localised Planning Statement and feel more directive content would enhance its function as a statutory planning tool. So long as directions do not prohibit development but rather provide guidance on what forms of appropriate development are to be supported and encouraged. I am concerned that certain interest groups within the Shire (who have no doubt made submissions) are anti-development in that they don't want to see any change and wish to compromise the long term sustainable development of our towns and rural areas for the benefit of its many purposes and roles including settlement, agriculture, conservation, tourism and recreation. I think as indicated in Statement of Planning Policy No. 8

4.12 Formulation of suggested standards for the siting and appearance of buildings and other developments, particularly in recreation and tourist areas and areas of special landscape value, and provision for consultation thereon.

.....that a set of performance based design guidelines are needed for areas affected by the Significant Landscape Overlay, such as allowing for appropriate development which sits under the tree canopy and blends with the landscape and has regard for vistas and view corridors. The Design and Development Overlay is the most appropriate tool

and could be applied to sites such as the environs of Hanging Rock, the Macedon Ranges and associated foothills.

Status as proposed Incorporated Document

The document is not robust like a design guideline tool for heritage precincts that provides very specific guidance for decision making. It is a bit soft and visionary in nature. I think this is fine as perhaps it is enough just to confirm that the Shire is of value for its natural features of state significance if this assists in kerbing the urban expansion of Metropolitan Melbourne into our Shire, which could happen when the next "Plan Melbourne" type document is devised. Metropolitan intrusion of suburbia is the key threat which the document is silent on. Something should be added to the Statement which makes it clear that the Shire should not accommodate metropolitan expansion.

Please keep me informed of the Department's consideration of this and other submissions.

Should you have any queries please contact me.

Sincerely

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