

Wednesday, 14 February 2018

As a resident of and in the Macedon Ranges Shire for the past [REDACTED] years, I am increasingly concerned about the rate of change in the nature and amenity of my living environment.

Having recently become aware of yet another proposed change to the zoning of land for residential development (the 2017 Legislation and Draft Localised Planning Statement), I am moved to protest in the strongest terms, basing my objection on the following:

1. I do not believe (for one second!) that the proposal “protects” the Macedon Ranges Shire from the rampant development that is evident on other fringes of Melbourne, protection which was recommended by the Macedon Ranges Protection Advisory Committee (MRPAC) that was widely communicated and apparently endorsed by the Victorian Government, in that
 - a. It departs significantly from the previously endorsed Statement of Planning Policy No.8 – Macedon Ranges and Surrounds 1975.
 - b. It does not protect (in my case, [REDACTED]) the character of our township that is already burdened by current (over) development through increasing traffic and car parking amenity. This is illustrated by the “morning and evening rush hour” when schools close for the day; full car parks at our shopping centre(s) and an overflowing Vic Rail car park.
 - c. It does not address the issues of infrastructure such as water supply, sewage treatment, rubbish collection, schools and transport within the Shire which would result from further accelerated residential development (we are considering traffic lights – in Gisborne!!).
2. I look upon the proposed changes (expansion) of Town Boundaries (Settlement Boundaries?) with horror when I see similar developments taking place in “Growth Corridors” to the West and South-East of Melbourne. Big houses on small lots; roofs eave to eave; few or no trees, displaced wildlife, rubbish pollution, kids milling around in shopping centres, the list goes on.... This is a long, long way from the amenity of the area I moved into in 19[REDACTED]. Already we are seeing what I consider to be inappropriate residential development around Gisborne railway station. The greed of developers seems to have no bounds; they come, cut up the land, make their profit and then bugg off. “They” don’t but “we” have to live with the consequences for the rest of our time in the district. I don’t see why developers should reap profits at my expense, population pressures notwithstanding.
3. There are many technical issues relating to the 2017 Legislation and Draft Localised Planning Statement too numerous for me to mention here, save they are detailed in the submission of the Macedon Ranges Residents’ Association (MRRA) which is exhaustive in its criticism of the Statement, and with which I concur entirely.

Enough is enough!

Change in our lives is inevitable, but the rate of change to my living conditions proposed by this 2017 Legislation and Draft Localised Planning Statement is way beyond what I can stomach. I strongly recommend that whosoever is in charge of the process (something not entirely clear to me) re-examine their motives with a view to more closely, if not entirely, following the intent of Statement of Planning Policy No.8 – Macedon Ranges and Surrounds 1975. I understand that in our “democracy” there are few means or avenues available to influence the decision-making of our elected representatives, but if these protests are not effective, then the ballot box remains our only alternative.

If I wanted to live in residential developments like I see along the Western Highway, or Cranbourne or Werribee, I would move there; **but I don’t!** I want to live my days out in the Macedon Ranges, where I walk the forest trails, have the occasional koala visit, enjoy the company of a mob of kangaroos, be able to get to the cemetery to visit my wife without standing in a traffic jam, and be able to park and walk to the shops without the hassle of finding a car parking slot in a full car park. This is what we pay our municipal rates for – not to be ripped off by some well-connected developer making a quick buck at our expense!

I implore those responsible, to fundamentally reconsider the Planning proposal.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]