

Macedon Ranges Localised Planning Statement Consultation Draft

Response submission by [REDACTED]

I have no confidence that this draft statement protects the Macedon Ranges' towns and communities, nor the conservation of its natural environment or its water catchment for urban and local supply.

The State Government recently announced legislation to 'protect' Macedon Ranges into the future. Part of this protection is the introduction of a 'Localised Planning Statement' (LPS). Nearly all of this draft document talks about protection but then comes the detail. It seems you only want to extend the settlement boundaries and protect the land that lies outside the 'new' settlement boundaries.

I have looked through this plan and I can't tell how much growth is anticipated for my town of Gisborne because you don't disclose that. I can get a feel for what it might be by looking at the 'new settlement boundary' for Woodend which opens up around 500ha of land, thereby doubling the size of the township. I expect your lack of disclosure for Gisborne would suggest even greater growth is planned.

Last week, a Vicroads representative who was explaining the need for traffic lights in New Gisborne, told a public meeting there would be 10,000 new homes built in New Gisborne in the next 10 years. In that scenario the number of additional new HOUSES in New Gisborne alone is greater than the total number of PEOPLE who currently live in Gisborne and New Gisborne combined (9,822 Census 2016). They are not talking about adding 10 or 15 or even 50% to the population (which would be a significant increase that the town infrastructure would be unable to absorb and support); they are talking about adding 27,000 residents to a population currently less than 10,000. That New Gisborne growth alone (excluding any other new developments in Gisborne) would make the town bigger than Melton, bigger than Shepparton. Nobody who lives here aspires to live in that. Furthermore, if people really want to live here, there are 472 existing properties on realestate.com.au listed for sale right now in our postcodes 3437 and 3438. Let's get people in them before we build more.

The Infrastructure Victoria strategy wants to run a mega growth corridor straight through the middle of our Shire. We are supposed to be the lungs of Melbourne. Our Shire is an open water catchment area for urban and local supply. Our location is of state, metropolitan and local importance for food production, nature conservation and leisure activities. Irrespective of whether it's Labor or Liberal, someone in power has an obsession for growth and has masterminded a deceptive plan on a scale that is inconceivable to most Victorians. I am not opposed to growth but this is a plan for a mega city and no one asked me if that was okay.

To fix this we need the finest minds in the state to work on our plan; people who are highly qualified strategic thinkers capable of balancing social, environmental and economic imperatives. Not developers and bankers. We need a plan that is deeply considered and open to wide, thorough and transparent consultation, not this 'after the fact' back-end, lip service consultation we are being offered now. We want planning protections something more akin to the Yarra Valley than Wyndham.

For Victoria as a whole, your "bold new vision for the future of our State" comes with a "warning that if we didn't act now, we would lose our title as the world's most liveable city". The plan involves

skyscrapers from Sunshine and Essendon in the west to Bundoora and Clayton in the east. Apparently, Melbourne will have a population of 9.5million by 2046. The interviewee from Infrastructure Victoria stated “this is not a question of whether we have growth, it is a question of whether we have dumb growth or smart growth”.

I suppose you aware that already Melbourne is bigger than Chicago and Houston, in fact it would be the third largest city in the US after New York and Los Angeles. That growth explosion plan is a thinly veiled Ponzi scheme promising immeasurable wealth for the benefit of nobody except a small bunch of developers, bankers and politicians.

As far as the Macedon Ranges region is concerned, we need to grow, but let's manage it. Start with a strategic plan to protect the whole shire, not just pockets, and work through it in a considered way. There is no case for this massively turbocharged growth which will destroy rural town character, landscapes, rural and farming land, heritage and the environment.

Our current local member Mary-Anne Thomas when she was the Labor candidate for Macedon, said the new plan would include a specific commitment to legislate to protect the Macedon Ranges using SPP8 as the basis for legislative protection. “This commitment is in direct response to the concerns expressed by so many in our community including those who have campaigned so hard against the constant threat of inappropriate development.” (Midland Express) Nov 24th 2014

I want the State government to replace this Localised Planning Statement with a Statement that gives us the protection we need to keep our unique character and environment, without expanding our town boundaries.

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██████████ Resident