

Draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement & Planning Policy

Submission by:-

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Having my say...

I was introduced to the Bellarine Peninsula close to 23 years ago, relocating here in 2009. During this time, I have seen great change and warmly welcome the Victorian Government's legislation declaring the Bellarine Peninsula a distinctive area and landscape. I do fear that great damage may have already been done and I hope that by having this opportunity to have my say, the future of Bellarine will be ensured for future generations.

As is noted in the DPP document, the settlements of the Bellarine Peninsula are highly desirable places to live, work and visit. The rate and amount of population growth in the declared area over the last decade have been strong. Drysdale, Clifton Springs, Curlewis, Leopold and Ocean Grove are all noted as large towns, providing a diversity of housing. It is the term 'diversity' that worries me the most.

As we continue to experience the effects of COVID restrictions the fleeing of many from Metropolitan Melbourne to Regional Victoria is felt greatly. Prior to COVID the new developments in Curlewis, Leopold and Ocean Grove were noticeable on the roads, rail and even the limited ferry services. Where once there were distinctive seasons that produced this influx of people, the traffic congestion and crowded supermarkets seemed not to lull.

I relocated here from Werribee. When I moved to Werribee in 1991, it was very much a country suburb. My daughter learned Italian at school. We could walk down the street and know many by name. Local councillors were neighbours and friends. We were active members of our community within our daughter's school and amateur theatre. We loved where we lived by the banks of the Werribee River. Then things began to change.

Eventually the change in Werribee became too great. It was not the future we wished for our daughter, nor the retirement that we dreamed of for us. As I write this, I note that over the last 5 years several long term residents, also of Werribee have relocated here – amongst them the former Mayor. I digress...

After reading the DPP, my greatest concern is infill developments. The DPP states that town and landscape characters are to be balanced. I cannot find anything within the DPP that shows how that will be adhered to. I am witnessing large allotments of an acre or more being sold with STCA in bold letters upon billboards. The vast majority are going through. Some of these developments have been done with respect to the landscape and settlement character – some have not.

Families that have been born and raised here and newer residents have expressed our concern about such developments. The Drysdale Curlewis Clifton Springs Association has also been very vocal.

In order for the DPP to meet its objectives and preserve the Bellarine for future generations, infill developments need to be more closely scrutinised with stringent rules and regulations being drafted and enforced.

As mentioned, I loved Werribee. I love Clifton Springs. I do not wish to see the beautiful Bellarine become just another suburb. I understand why people want to move here. Being surrounded by water and wine – not bad at all. Nonetheless, it is our responsibility to ensure that this is preserved for future generations and this can only be done with all parties working in harmony.

I am not certain if the DPP, once complete, goes into greater detail in regards to infill development. I can only ask that those that can influence these decisions ensure that this aspect of growth is provided due diligence, thoughtful consideration and high regard to the future of all communities where this is of great concern.

I know of many who have chosen not to provide a submission in relation to the DPP. They feel that developers get what they want. That money talks louder than concerned residents or native flora and fauna. Now is the time for ministers of State and Federal Governments and local councilors to work together to preserve what makes the Bellarine great.

Warmest of regards,

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