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Minister for Planning, Richard Wynne     [richard.wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:richard.wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au)

MP Mary-Anne Thomas     [mary-anne.thomas@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:mary-anne.thomas@parliament.vic.gov.au)

**Re: Macedon Ranges Shire. Local Planning Statement.**

Dear Minister and member,

Please accept this submission in the hope that it will help us reach a better understanding of the needs of the Shire, especially Woodend.

### **Town boundary**

The existing policy is based on investigations that have shown the targeted growth of Woodend (6000) can be contained within the existing town boundary until 2036.

The target population is now described as 6000+ in the proposed LPS. That is a fundamental change to the basis for planning because there is no cap. This can mean 6500, which might not strain infrastructure too much, equally it can (cynically but realistically) be interpreted as meaning “we can’t micromanage growth, what we can do is acknowledge that suitable land has already been purchased in anticipation of making a killing, so we may as well bend the boundaries to suit them”.

Or, to put it another way, the proposed redrawing of the town boundary to anticipate an area increase of perhaps 45%, is in breach of the negotiated and adopted terms that followed extensive consultation with the community, and could be interpreted as a cynical and opportunistic move that favours the noisy interests of monied and exploitative individuals, often not residents, over the community as a whole.

This shift in focus is a failure to apply sound long-term planning principles, and is just not good enough. There are parts of Victoria (Yarra Ranges etc.) that have enjoyed proper protection for decades and that has been lacking here. After all, the Macedon Ranges was included with those other areas as being of great significance all those years ago.

This demonstrates what is wrong with governance today. Decisions at this level should flow from a direct involvement of the community in the process, and be **respected** for what that is.

### **Analysis/Objectives/Strategies**

The way the LPS is set out is good as far as it goes, but it equips neither the applicant nor the planner who must assess with actual tools for use. It isn’t enough to say a locality must be “managed” because this is a given, and meaningless because there is no prescription. If this bad document goes forward it would create a process whereby what is permissible develops over time through precedents that vary from locality to locality based on individual planner’s interpretations, or worse, receptiveness to influence.

That would be a recipe for chaos in communities and a complete lack of planning. This is a LOCAL planning statement. As such it should respond to broad legislative requirements at a local level. It should be both an analysis of the key factors at each locality, and an outline of the appropriate *management techniques* that should be applied. A big undertaking, but unless that detailed understanding is laid out for proposer and for assessor, no real progress will be made.

**European Agriculture and the investigation areas.**

The reference to acknowledging patterns of land use since settlement is interesting. In as much as that has led to dry stone walling, lines of now over-mature pines, and field patterns etc. our open vistas and treasured view lines in the shire have been largely shaped by these influences. One of the areas of greatest beauty in this sense is the land owned by Villawood. I object to that area being investigated because it does echo the land use patterns adopted since settlement and its' landscape value is enormous, just as it is. As the developer continues to put pressure on, it should be made clear that this land is not being considered as appropriate as development land until other growth areas have been utilised.

There is a powerful logic investigating the Shirley Park/ex Carnegie land that is bounded by the freeway. Provided densities were kept moderate and catered for a mix of family types with infrastructure provided in a timely manner (both within the CBD and adjacent to growth areas) things should work well. The way the town would be screened from the freeway would need special care.

**Conclusion.**

Can I respectfully suggest that no one is being well served with the process thus far, nor with this LPS (as it stands) as an outcome. Please re-consider in consultation (again) with the community. Come up with detailed guidelines that are based on a locality by locality basis. Provide densities and timelines for growth. Don't scare the horses.

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