

## **Response of [REDACTED] to the Macedon Ranges Localised Planning Statement**

My name is [REDACTED]. I have lived in [REDACTED], Woodend for [REDACTED] years. I am writing to express my deepest concern about the Macedon Ranges Localised Planning Statement ("the Statement"). This statement is contrary to the Woodend Town Structure Plan which was formulated after much public consultation and which was approved by the Minister for Planning and adopted by the Macedon Ranges Shire Council as policy.

The Statement is also contrary to the promise by the Planning Minister to protect the character of the Macedon Ranges.

I am one of the residents of Woodend who feels that all the work we put into the Woodend Structure Plan in 2014 is under threat. How can we feel that some influence and that our opinions are respected when policies such as the Woodend Town Structure Plan ("the Structure Plan") can be overturned?

I will outline my concerns with regard to the following aspects:

- Visual Impact and Changed Character of Woodend
- Environmental Concerns
- Traffic
- Choice to Live in a Small or Larger Town
- Dangerous Precedent
- Tourism
- Building on Excellent Agricultural Land

### **Visual Impact and Changed Character of Woodend**

Woodend has a unique setting which defines its character. The town is ringed by rural land or forest on all sides. To allow such development as in the proposed investigation zone would change and destroy this defining character. This view is supported by the statement in the Structure Plan at p96-97.

"This grazing land interfaces with the Avenue of Honour, provides the open rural outlook that is an integral part of the northern gateway experience."

### **Environmental Concerns**

With reference to the north-west of Woodend investigation area, the Structure Plan (p88) states that a development in that area:

"presents considerable developmental constraints in the form of cultural, landscape and environmental sensitivities and a number of overlay controls as well as an extensive section of riparian corridor with flooding issues for the south east ... This area should not be considered an option for development at this stage."

At p98 the Structure Plan also states:

"The area west of Gregory Street has significant flooding, environmental and landscape constraints."

## **Traffic**

One of the proposed exits to a Villawood development would be along Gregory Street onto Tylden Road, which is already congested with trucks travelling to and from the Tylden Quarry. (A proposed quarry extension would mean up to 175 truck movements per day along Tylden Road.)

## **Choice to Live in a Small or Larger Town**

To allow a residential development such as Villawood would result in Woodend becoming another town like Gisborne, Kyneton and Sunbury, depriving people of the choice of living in a smaller town such as Woodend, Malmsbury, Macedon and Riddells Creek.

If the area under consideration for development in Woodend is overlaid over future Kyneton boundaries, the actual area for Woodend appears larger than that of Kyneton.

## **Dangerous Precedent**

If development is allowed to happen on land designated as farming zone and rural conservation zone (currently 40 HA minimum lot size) in Woodend, subdivision of these zones sets a precedent for the whole shire - **where does development stop?**

## **Tourism**

People travel to Woodend from the city and elsewhere to experience something different - rural views, much less traffic and a distinct "village" feel. A Sunbury-like development would greatly reduce a pleasurable experience and breathing space for visitors to the town. Tourism is a vital industry for the shire. It accounts for 16.6 % of jobs and earns 292 million dollars per annum (see Macedon Ranges Business Kit at p10).

Woodend is the closest town to one of Victoria's major tourist attractions, Hanging Rock. A coffee or lunch in Woodend is part of the experience in a small town setting. It could not be such an experience if a significant increase in population and increased traffic are the inevitable consequences of a development such as Villawood.

Why kill the goose that lays the golden egg?

## **Building on Excellent Agricultural Land**

With food security and global warming becoming major concerns it is foolhardy to build houses on prime agricultural land in an area blessed with reliable rain fall and in close proximity to a major population centre.

We need to adopt a planning scheme that protects unique areas from constantly pushing out the boundaries causing the special character of towns and villages to be lost for ever. We cannot afford to lose the breathing spaces so necessary for our health and wellbeing.

[REDACTED]

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