

Context.

Planning

Town Planning Consultants

Attention:

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

Via Email planning.implementation@delwp.vic.gov.au

20 August 2021

Dear DELWP,

Submission

– *Draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy*

1. This submission is made on behalf of [REDACTED] which has a number of interests with land that is covered by the *draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy (SPP)*. These interests include, but are not limited to:

- [REDACTED] (Refer Attachment 1)
- [REDACTED] (Refer Attachment 2)

Introduction

2. Firstly, we thank DELWP for the opportunity to provide a submission on the *Draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy* – (“The draft SPP”)
3. This submission is supportive of the strategic intent of the draft SPP which seeks to, among other things, protect the declared area’s outstanding landscapes and coastal landforms, unique natural environment, rich Wadawurrung living cultural heritage and historic heritage, and important infrastructure and natural resources.

4. We do however wish to make a submission regarding the draft SPPs important function of providing guidance for decision-making and planning for land within the declared area.
5. Specifically, we wish to highlight the role of golf and, in particular, the role that the [REDACTED] plays in the community and with regard to the landscape, including:
 - *Health and wellbeing benefits for the community.*
 - *Environmental resilience and biodiversity benefits, including flora, fauna, water quality and native vegetation. (For reference- [“An Assessment of Remnant Vegetation on the Barwon Heads Golf Course”, Billows, 2013](#))*
 - *Significant contribution to landscape quality and condition, including rehabilitation and land management.*
 - *Cultural heritage.*
 - *Visitor economy, agriculture and natural resources.*
 - *Social engagement and public health benefits.*
6. Of course, golfing on the Bellarine Peninsula is well established and has been a part of the significance of the landscape and the health and social values of the community for decades.
7. The Barwon Heads Golf Club was founded in 1907 as a recreational retreat for farming families. It has always attracted people to the area. The role that tourism today plays in the economy is acknowledged in the draft SPP, which states that ‘visitor numbers are forecast to increase by 30% from 5.8 million people to 7.5 million in 2027’ (Page 44, draft SPP). Recreational golf remains a major draw card for visitors of all ages.
8. The Tourism section of the draft SPP encourages opportunities to increase the diversity of visitor experiences on the Bellarine Peninsula, such as cultural and recreational draw cards and recognises that green breaks are important for tourism.
9. However we believe there is a valuable opportunity to specifically recognise the role of golf, not only its social, recreational and landscape contributions but also its economic contribution. This recognition would help guide and ideally encourage potential growth of these important assets.

10. To this end, part of the land at [REDACTED], which adjoins the Barwon Heads Golf Club's northern boundary and is located within a 'green break'¹, has been tentatively identified by the Club as being able to accommodate growth in the form of an additional playing course. Recognition in the draft SPP of this potential growth would therefore provide greater strategic clarity for the Club.

The Barwon Heads Golf Club

11. The Barwon Heads Golf Club is located at [REDACTED] and is within a Special Use Zone Schedule 3 (SUZ3) which provides for a use of a Private Golf Course². A number of planning overlays and other environmental values apply to the site.
12. The Barwon Heads Golf Club plays a significant community role and has 1750 members - one of the largest membership totals in Australia.
13. Demand for membership is the highest since the mid 1990's. As a result of its success and community demand, it now takes approximately 2 years to become a provisional member of the Club. Member and Public Rounds have increased from 45,000 to 54,000 from FY2020 to FY2021.
14. Younger members are playing more golf due to the "Working from Home" phenomenon. These rounds are generally earlier or later in the day. Demand for the Club's Par 3 course is increasing from both members and the local community, and the Club's Junior Program and two new Women's Beginner Clinics are fully subscribed.

¹ Green breaks are identified as "Potential location for agricultural, natural resources and/or nature-based tourism land uses that protect and enhance significant landscape features"

² Pursuant to the SUZ3, the Purpose of this Zone is "To provide for the use and development of private golf courses" and "To ensure that the use and development of land for the purpose of private golf courses does not prejudice the amenity of surrounding areas."

- In recent times, the Club has seen many members relocate from Melbourne to Barwon Heads or the Bellarine Peninsula. Golf in general has seen an increase in demand due to its ability to be played outdoors, socially distanced and without sharing equipment.

Map 12: Proposed Barwon Heads protected settlement boundary



16. Please refer to the web links below for access to reports and articles on the state of the Australian golf industry:

The new golf is ... golf after pandemic drives push to play a round, The Age, Henrietta Cook, 24th June 2021

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/the-new-golf-is-golf-after-pandemic-drives-push-to-play-a-round-20210623-p583jr.html>

Rounds are booming – the future is in your hands (GBAS 2021)

https://3bed79fd-9e6a-42e4-902e-a37302d1a41b.filesusr.com/ugd/1353be_25a3b82e40264b739a57cdf988f061eb.pdf

2020 Australian Golf Competition Rounds Trends and the Impact of COVID-19 (Golf Australia)

https://assets.ctfassets.net/3urhge2ecl20/5Bw1gQsKY2o2ICNJQ3KD7N/7ad4f9e575f7103a3849956b6095896c/GA_Competition_Rounds_Report_-_YTD_August_2020.pdf

Golf Summer Boom, Mark Hayes, 11 March 2021

<https://www.golfaustralia.com.au/news/golfs-summer-boom-562051>

Potential Expansion – [REDACTED]

17. Part of the land at [REDACTED], which adjoins the Barwon Heads Golf Club's northern boundary, has been tentatively identified by the Club to accommodate future growth.
18. While the idea of an expansion is at the inception stage, and there are no immediate plans, the Club feels that it is very important that this potential is reflected in DELWPs long-term decision-making agenda and the draft SPP is a key strategic platform for this to take place.

19. The land is currently located within both a Farming Zone and a 'green break' as identified on Map 12. In accordance with the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPPs), a "golf course" is defined as an 'outdoor recreation facility' which is nested under the 'leisure and recreation' group. In the Farming Zone, leisure and recreation is a Section 2 (Permit Required) land use.
20. The Purpose of the Farming Zone, however, puts a strong emphasis on encouraging and retaining productive agricultural land, and there is very limited policy that encourages non-agricultural activities. This is, of course, appropriate in principle; however, there will also be cases where it should not be applied.
21. Council's 'Bellarine Peninsula Localised Planning Statement (September 2015)', with the map referred to at Attachment 6, recognises that the Bellarine is "*...a popular tourist destination with attractive beaches, quality golf courses...*". However it falls short of recognising the significant role that these recreational assets have from a health, social, economic and environmental perspective.
22. So, while we accept that the current zoning allows an application to be made, and also that the draft SPP does not discourage golf courses, we think there is an opportunity to encourage these activities in the draft SPP, particularly as it relates to the Barwon Heads Golf Club.
23. The Barwon Heads Golf Club is identified as being of state significance⁴ due to the site's exceptional *visual values*.
24. We submit that this reinforces the role that the Barwon Heads Golf Club has on the landscape values of the area, and that opportunities to enhance this should be maximised, or at the very least acknowledged.

⁴ The definition of state significance under the draft SPP is "A quality of environmental, landscape, economic and cultural heritage value important to the State of Victoria."

Submission Summary:

This submission is supportive in the main of the *Draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy*; however, we do wish to make the following observations:

- The SPP should be revised to acknowledge that “Green breaks” can also include recreation uses, such as golf courses and other activities that build on the landscape significance.

Currently green breaks are only identified as “*Potential location for agricultural, natural resources and/or nature-based tourism land uses that protect and enhance significant landscape features*”.

- The SPP should be revised to acknowledge that, in addition to *tourism, agriculture and natural resources* (at page 44), golfing plays a significant role in the health and wellbeing of the community and also generates a number of environmental, social and economic benefits, such that where opportunities exist for growth, this should be encouraged.
- The SPP’s Objective 2 (Strategy 2.3) on page 33 should be revised to recognise the role of recreation (i.e. golf courses) in green breaks and can also build on existing state and regionally significant areas as identified on Maps 3 and 4.
- The SPP should be revised to specifically recognise the role of the Barwon Heads Golf Club, given its reference as being of ‘state significance’; in addition, opportunities to facilitate an expansion of this significance should be encouraged.



ATTACHMENT 1

Planning Zones

- [LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONE \(LDRZ\)](#)
- [LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONE - SCHEDULE 1 \(LDRZ1\)](#)
- [NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTIAL ZONE \(NRZ\)](#)
- [NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTIAL ZONE - SCHEDULE 6 \(NRZ6\)](#)
- [RURAL CONSERVATION ZONE \(RCZ\)](#)
- [RURAL CONSERVATION ZONE - SCHEDULE 10 \(RCZ10\)](#)
- [SPECIAL USE ZONE \(SUZ\)](#)
- [SPECIAL USE ZONE - SCHEDULE 3 \(SUZ3\)](#)



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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| C1Z - Commercial 1 | CA - Commonwealth land | CDZ - Comprehensive Development |
| FZ - Farming | GRZ - General Residential | LDRZ - Low Density Residential |
| MUZ - Mixed Use | NRZ - Neighbourhood Residential | PCRZ - Public Conservation and Resource |
| PPRZ - Public Park and Recreation | PUZ1 - Public Use-Service and Utility | PUZ6 - Public Use-Local Government |
| PUZ7 - Public Use-Other Public Use | RCZ - Rural Conservation | RDZ1 - Road-Category 1 |
| RDZ2 - Road-Category 2 | RGZ - Residential Growth | SUZ - Special Use |
| Water area | Water course | |

ATTACHMENT 2

1900 Barwon Heads Road, Barwon Heads

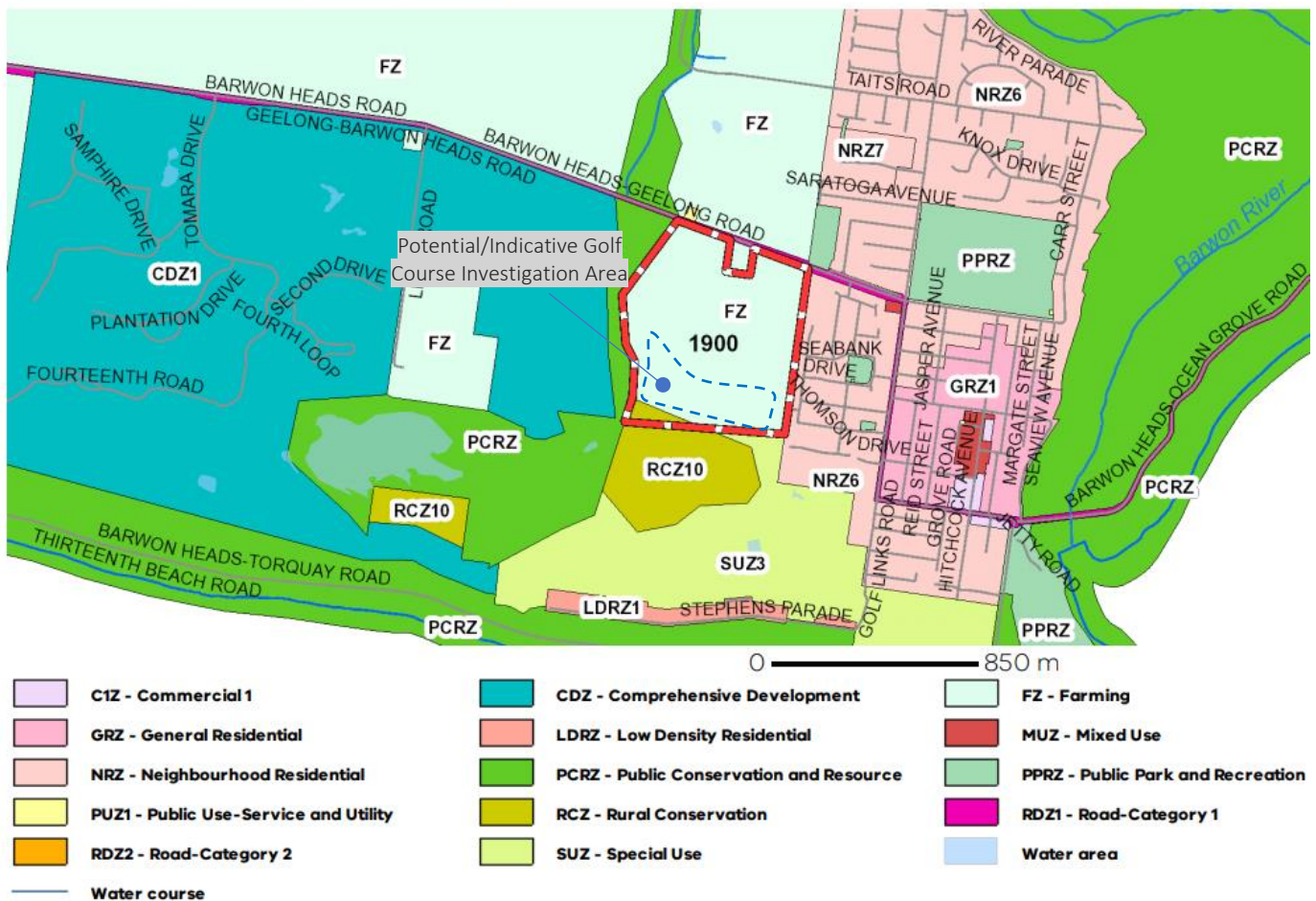
Planning Zones

FARMING ZONE (FZ)

SCHEDULE TO THE FARMING ZONE (FZ)

RURAL CONSERVATION ZONE (RCZ)

RURAL CONSERVATION ZONE - SCHEDULE 10 (RCZ10)



ATTACHMENT 3

Map 12: Proposed Barwon Heads protected settlement boundary



LEGEND

Protected settlement boundary	Waterways	Activity centre
Declared area boundary	Lakes	Increased Housing Diversity Area - Incremental change
Urban Rural Interface	Wetland	Incremental change
Green break	Parks and reserves	Minimal change
	Golf course	
	Main road	
	Local road	

ATTACHMENT 4

Map 3: Proposed Bellarine Peninsula declared area framework plan



LEGEND

- Regional city
 - District town
A large town providing a diversity of housing, services and employment for a large, diverse population, which has a strong relationship with surrounding villages and rural areas
 - Village
A small settlement with a small population, which integrates with its rural and natural surrounds
 - Protected settlement boundary
 - Declared area boundary
 - Protected settlement boundary to be defined subject to strategic planning work
 - Local Government Area
 - Urban area
 - Rural living
- Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage**
The entire declared area and beyond is Wadawurrung Country. The declared area's Aboriginal cultural heritage values must be conserved, strengthened and promoted in partnership with the Wadawurrung.

Landscapes and environment

*Landscapes - Conserve and enhance the declared area's significant landscapes with the greatest protection provided in areas of highest significance**

State significant landscape: Bellarine Peninsula Southern Coast

**Note: Areas not designated as state significant are the regionally significant Swan Bay, Lake Connewarre and Barwon River, and Bellarine Northern Coast and Central Hills landscapes*

Road corridor views
Manage the development of infrastructure to maintain views to the rural hinterland and/or coasts

Significant view

Waterways
Conserve and restore native vegetation along waterway corridors

Lakes

Ramsar wetlands

Parks and reserves

Golf course

Tourism, agriculture, natural resources and infrastructure

Green breaks
Potential location for agricultural, natural resources and/or nature-based tourism land uses that protect and enhance significant landscape features

Strategic water assets

Support recycled water use

Aquaculture

Sub regional theme park

Sport and recreation precinct

Airfield

Safe harbour

Ferry route

Highway

Main road

Rail Trail

Movement network
Support a sustainable transport network that enhances the declared area's distinctive attributes

Source: DELWP

ATTACHMENT 5

Map 4: Landscape significance areas



LEGEND

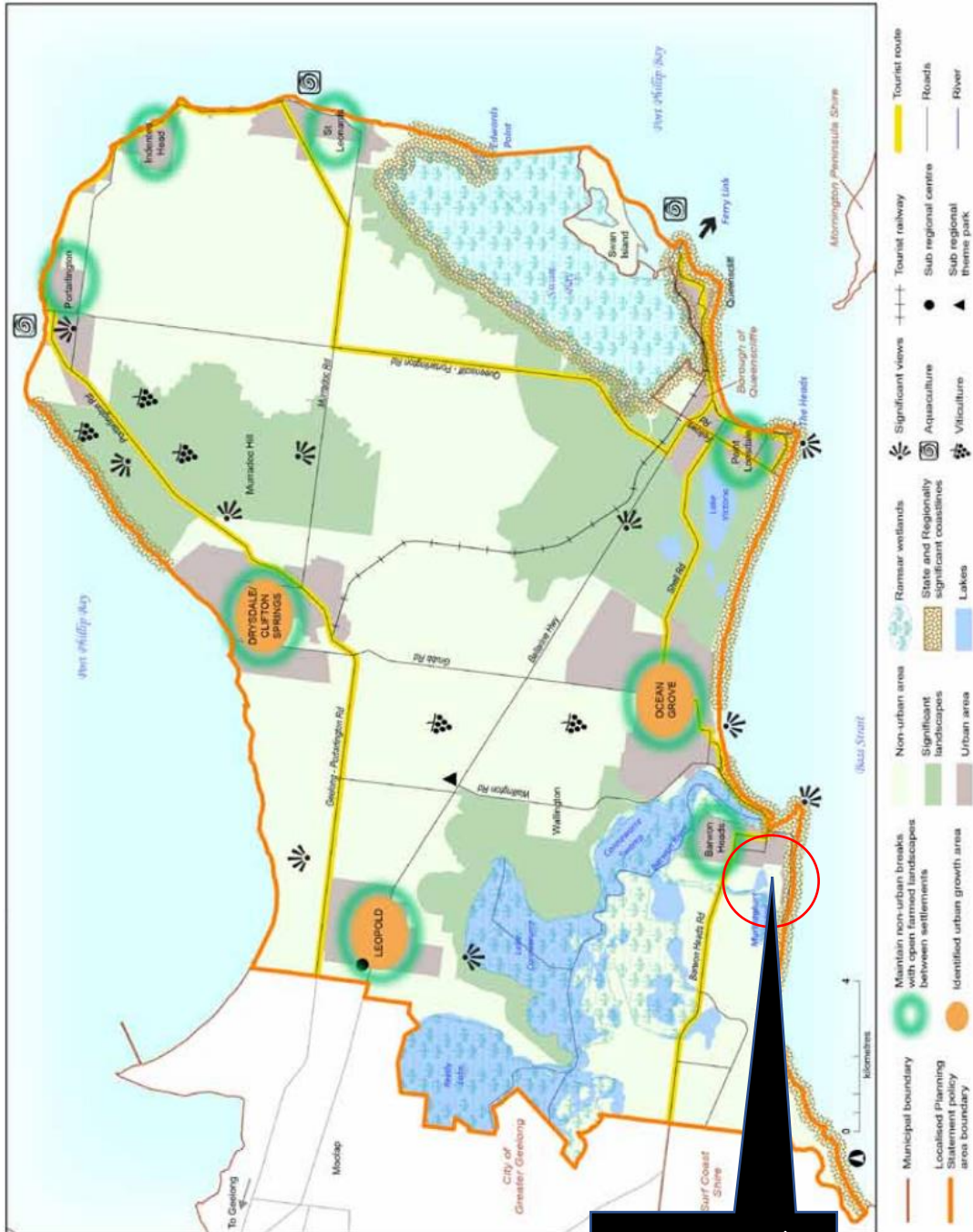
- | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---------------------|
| | Regional city | | State significant landscape:
Bellarine Peninsula Southern Coast | | Road corridor views |
| | District town | | Regional significant landscape:
Lake Connawarre and Barwon River | | Significant view |
| | Village | | Regional significant landscape:
Swan Bay | | Waterways |
| | Protected settlement boundary | | Regional significant landscape:
Bellarine Northern Coast and Central Hills | | Lakes |
| | Declared area boundary | | | | Ramsar wetlands |
| | Protected settlement boundary to be defined subject to strategic planning work | | | | Highway |
| | Local Government Area | | | | Main road |
| | Urban area | | | | |

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ATTACHMENT 6



Barwon Heads
Golf Club

Bellarine Peninsula Localised Planning Statement SEPTEMBER 2015

