

# Victorian Government's Macedon Ranges Draft Localised Planning Statement

## Submission of [REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity provided to provide comments about the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Consultation Draft of the Localised Planning Statement for the Shire of Macedon Ranges.

### *Background*

It's noted that the Victorian Labor Government has introduced legislation into the Victorian Parliament that will allow the region in the jurisdiction of the Macedon Ranges Local Government Authority (MRSC LGA) protection from inappropriate development. And, noted that the Bill before the Parliament is described as an important component in the Victorian Government's commitment to deliver protection to the Macedon Ranges jurisdiction and as a first step towards implementing what is described as "*Plan Melbourne 2017–2050*" and a commitment to strengthen planning protection for Victoria's "distinctive landscapes and valued non-urban areas".

As well, it's noted in the DEWLP information that the *Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill 2017*, together with the localised planning statement being developed for the MRSC LGA jurisdiction, will "promote economic development while conserving the environmental and cultural features that make the region so special". Designated long-term settlement boundaries for townships in the MRSC LGA jurisdiction will be identified as being "expected to grow". And, an objective to "better protect and enhance valued natural and rural landscapes." The townships mentioned are Gisborne, Kyneton, Lancefield, Riddells Creek, Romsey and Woodend, and that they will be subject to the same rigorous protections of Melbourne's permanent "Urban Growth Boundary" – and will require Victorian Parliamentary approval to amend them.

The authors of the DRAFT Localised Planning Statement (LPS) for the jurisdiction of the Macedon Ranges Local Government Authority (MRSC LGA) have endeavoured to identify the Victorian State Government significant attributes of the area while aiming to ensure that State significant landscape, environmental and cultural values of the MRSC LGA are protected and enhanced for current and future generations. And that the LPS also includes long term settlement boundaries based on approved structure plans and planning scheme amendments.

### *Introductory comments*

The proposed "peri-urban" proposals before the Victorian Parliament require a focussed "whole of government" approach to implement. There are many Victorian Government agencies that will need to work well collaboratively to achieve "win-win" outcomes for, at least, the ratepayers and residents, business & commerce, community and religious organizations, local government and the Victorian Government. This should be given in "day to day" government, but it is certainly a major objective in looking to the future in the Victorian & Melbourne "peri-urban" conversations.

There are many words that present & describe policy objectives and aspirations, and historical, heritage and cultural backgrounding. It traverses objectives relating to MRSC LGA jurisdiction - landscape, environmental, bio-diversity, water resourcing, heritage, human habitation (urban & rural), agriculture & primary industry matters, tourism and recreation, transport and infrastructure.

Population growth estimates and climate science predictions, and their possible impacts for planning, including government infrastructure resourcing, and the necessary attention to implementing community development policy objectives, are not provided in much depth to the reader of the LPS. Clearly the Federal and State Governments will be important stakeholders in providing financial incentives for people to live in the “peri-urban jurisdictions”.

The Victorian Parliament’s desire to address significant issues resulting from the present, and predicted future, growth of Melbourne, requires the Parliament to address population & settlement policy and planning, including the policies that are important to assist community development.

### ***Planning for Local Communities***

It is well known that political parties give a high value to the importance of community development, infrastructure, services, and population health and wellbeing. And when there is quickening population growth in “greater Melbourne”, these policy objectives are particularly relevant when considering the need to address “sustainable growth areas”, in areas surrounding “greater Melbourne”.

Intentions by the Victorian Government to focus on the “peri-urban” areas surrounding Melbourne, requires the government to reveal its proposals in implementing its programs and policies, which includes its budgetary planning for the allocation of State Government resources to achieve its objectives. The “whole of government” approach would require thorough consultation with the local government authorities and the Federal Government.

“Encouraging” people to consider moving to “peri-urban” areas would be assisted with a thorough knowledge of a government’s planning policies and the incentives to achieve the intended objectives.

The more a “community spirit” is created, the more resilient a community will become. This can be assisted by the way the Victorian Government and the MRSC LGA plans the infrastructure for communities. An example of what NOT to do is the proposed plan for development in Kyneton where increasing numbers of dwellings would be situated in an area (Kyneton South, along Trentham Road) with one access road to the centre of Kyneton, which involves using an historic two lane bridge which would be very difficult to widen. There are important human life risks with the planning issues south of the Campaspe River, where there are already existing urban properties with one entry/exit (Trentham Road), with more land being developed for residences. There is a good case for another bridge to link the southern residents to Edgecombe Road on the northern side of the Campaspe River.

Housing options are vital – public & private – for those affording to purchase their own home and for those people who require rental accommodation. People with a diverse range of needs and abilities are being “encouraged” to live in “peri-urban” areas. There is, presently, a shortage of rental accommodation. This creates issues for the MRSC LGA in its negotiations with property developers in the provision of the types of housing suitable for low income earners. A Victorian

Government's policies with regards the availability of low cost housing ("social housing") is very relevant in this MRSC LGA scenario.

There are people who require "supportive accommodation", quite apart from what may be offered via the evolving National Disability Insurance Strategy. What funding is being considered for community housing agencies whose geographical operations include the MRSC LGA jurisdiction? How much emphasis is being given, for instance, to those policies and strategies currently operational under the Federal & States national mental health policy in the planning provisions being proposed for the MRSC, Yarra Valley & Mornington LGA jurisdictions? And for those with other forms of disability?

The reality of an "ageing population" in Victoria presents challenges for the Victorian Parliament in allocating resources for infrastructure, services and programs. This will be very relevant as public policy options are considered for assisting population health, including the availability of venues to achieve community development and wellbeing objectives. Moreover, there are issues to be addressed as to the availability of accommodation for the "ageing" who prefer independent living accommodation.

In the area of "community development" there is wisdom in considering the role of the Victorian Government in allocating resources to assisting LGAs and communities in the provision of "open space" and community venues in the townships of the MRSC LGA. There is an excellent opportunity for the Victorian Government to negotiate with the MRSC LGA, the Goldfields Library Corporation and community organizations and residents, for the use of the former Baynton Street primary school precinct, to be utilised by Council, community organizations, artisans, business, residents and tourists for a range of activities and events. There is "open space" as well as the school building that could form a Kyneton & District Town Square. And even possible for the primary school precinct, at least, to be managed by an incorporated community organization with the support of the Victorian Government with terms and conditions agreed upon. In the MRSC LGA such an initiative would be in keeping with policies and programs that attract people to live in rural areas.

We stress the importance of recognizing the knowledge of local people in the planning of matters, including infrastructure, affecting their communities. To have one set of planning constraints for all communities may well deny the value of local knowledge and wisdom. Consultation processes should be taking account of such matters.

### ***Planning for Local Communities – the challenge of reducing carbon emissions***

In a place where there is a strong feeling of community people are ready to help others who have lost someone or something through difficult circumstance such as fire, flood, severe storm, accident or ill health.

This sense of community is really important in times of stress such as bushfires, extreme heat conditions or family misfortunes. It will be extremely important as we face the threats ahead due to climate change.

As carbon emissions continue to rise. the planet retains more heat and temperatures increase. This will cause more extremes in weather (droughts, violent storms and, in some places, floods). In these circumstances mutual support is going to be increasingly important.

What humans are doing to our planet is frightening. The emission of carbon dioxide(CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere is like putting an extra blanket around the Earth. Without **any** CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere

the Earth would be a very cold planet –an iceball probably. But if you have too many blankets on the bed you get too hot!!! Our planet is heating up. And as it heats up we are melting ice that reflects the sun's heat, exposing more water (around the poles) which absorbs more heat (and therefore adds heat to the planet and probably changes weather patterns); melting permafrost that releases methane - a very powerful greenhouse gas (GHG) that therefore increases the problem. These are feedback mechanisms that cause the continuation of global warming beyond that due to initial CO2 emissions.

If we are serious about preventing catastrophic climate change, all governments, and every community and individual, must do as much as possible to prevent further GHG emissions and temperature rises.

This means:

- promoting the use of renewable energy especially on local government buildings
  - battery or mini hydro storage especially where feasible
  - encouraging residents to buy local produce
  - minimizing tree and bushland clearance
  - minimizing waste that goes to landfill and effective recycling of as much as possible.
  - removing plastic use as much as possible (Plastics are organic materials that contain such elements as carbon(C), hydrogen(H), nitrogen(N), chlorine(Cl) and sulfur (S). They are made from raw materials such as oil,natural gas and coal. The first step in making plastics is the polymerization of the raw materials, resulting in a product called a monomer
  - reduce car use or convert to electric vehicles
  - provision of land transport to connect townships, where no rail connections.

It's suggested that the MRSC LPS to be presented to Parliament include policy statements about the Victorian Government's policies and strategies in reducing carbon emissions. And what it would expect from the MRSC LGA, businesses, community and religious organizations, and residents. And, therefore, being willing to highlight its contribution to Australia's commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

### **Water resources**

The LPS provides backgrounding about water catchments and supply. This would be a vital factor in the Victorian Parliament's consideration about the provision of water supplies in the MRSC LGA.

Population growth and resulting urban growth areas will create various demands for water resources (home and garden needs, sewerage). Rural areas will require domestic water for their residences as well as for other needs - agriculture, horticulture, edible gardens, primary produce et al.

Governments, businesses, industry, residences, community & religious organizations, sporting and recreation reserves, will all require the need for water resources..... whatever the climate

conditions! Rainfall will be vital for water supplies - catchment areas, domestic water tanks (urban & rural), and the Coliban & Campaspe River & tributaries et al.

Kyneton is blessed with Coliban Water's treated recycled sewerage water plant. Be grateful! A wonderful help to the MRSC for Kyneton's botanical gardens, sporting grounds, parks and racecourse.

Btw, note the importance of the Hepburn Shire LGA to MRSC LGA to water issues. Trentham and district, in the headwaters of the Colioban River, is on the border of the MRSC LGA. It is a drinking water catchment of Kyneton and other townships further down the catchment. Worth remembering the need to note the relationships between neighbouring LGAs.....from various dimensions!

There have been attempts to "drought proof" Victoria following lengthy drought conditions, especially in Central Victoria, including, of course, the MRSC LGA jurisdiction. The Victorian desalination plant will, apparently, assist the east of Victoria and Greater Melbourne. Perhaps, if so, that may allow other water authorities to the north and west of Melbourne to assist the MRSC LGA, Hepburn Shire LGA and Central Victorian LGAs.

Presumably, the Victorian Government's water agencies and "experts" have various contingency plans in place that would address any drought issues affecting the planned "peri-urban" areas coming within the Parliament's consideration.

*Use of local government boundaries for planning purposes – an issue needing to be addressed?*

It is hoped that the Victorian Parliament will take account that it is addressing the issue of Melbourne's population growth by focussing on population movement to "peri-urban" areas with the use of the LGA boundaries for the jurisdictions of the Macedon Ranges, Yarra Valley and Mornington.

Is there a risk of the Victorian Parliament not addressing thoroughly the issues of the relationship of the landscape's ecology, topography and geography, rivers and tributaries, catchment areas, bio-diversity, urban & rural land and property use etc. Neighbouring LGAs are very important to the "peri-urban" LGAs selected to help out the Victorian dilemma of population growth and the effects upon its capital city.

Thinking of Trentham, again, it may be valuable for the government's planning authorities to assess the place of Trentham and district when thinking of the locations and characteristics of townships that lend themselves to a "peri-urban" "frame of reference". For Trentham, consider its population growth rate and its socio-economic links (including movements of its residents to the east of the Hepburn Shire), as well as the water catchment issue mentioned above. S

Perhaps there lies a bigger issue of changes in LGA boundaries if the Parliament continues to focus on LGA boundaries for its "peri-urban" planning response to population growth in Melbourne and elsewhere.

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