Review of the Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations - Comments

There are a number of very good strategies suggested in the draft review document and we fully support the State Government’s intentions with this review of native vegetation clearing regulations. However, for the Southern end of the Mornington Peninsula (Rye to Portsea) what is being suggested will have minimal impact on conserving native vegetation in this area.

What would protect the denuding of indigenous vegetation on the Southern end of the Peninsula are the very factors the review has omitted from its terms of reference. That is:

It should be noted however that the structure and wording of overlays is not within the scope of this review. Similarly, Clause 52.48 that includes bushfire protection exemptions around dwellings and fences will not be considered in this Review. (refer page 8).

It is the very wording of overlays AND bush fire regulations that are the main contributors to the clearing of indigenous vegetation. Many parts of the Peninsula are not bush fire prone – check when the last bush fire happened down here, it might take a bit of searching. Apart from the national parks most of the coastal southern peninsula is simply bush road/drainage reserves and (what was once Moonah) and tee tree filled front and back coastal gardens.

The modern trend of clearing entire blocks and building holiday homes that stretch from boundary to boundary are now easily permitted, one could even say are encouraged under bush fire protection legislation. Owners are clearing vacant blocks of land not even on the market that were once filled with indigenous fauna and flora. Why, because under the fire regulations they can!

Overlays are essentially discretionary documents and if there is State legislation over riding those Council specific overlays, they become useless no matter how well intentioned or worded.

We ask that the Bush fire regulations be assessed – in relation to their impact on the loss of indigenous vegetation (and fauna habitat). Sanity needs to prevail when identifying those areas of real bush fire risk vs those of minimal or no risk such as areas along the bay coast of the Southern Peninsula. If the Government doesn’t take action soon coastal and other indigenous vegetation will soon disappear.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very critical issue of conserving indigenous and in particular coastal vegetation and habitat. Should you have any queries about the above comments please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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