

PROPOSED 'SOUTHEAST BELLARINE COASTAL STRATEGY'

FEEDBACK FROM THE TRUSTEES AND TENANT OF [REDACTED].

OVERVIEW: Our land of approx. 50 acres is zoned FZ (Farming Zone). It is owned by the [REDACTED] (SFET) and leased to me, the author of this paper. As the tenant of the property, I am conducting an 'Agroforestry' enterprise which will eventually cover the entire area, growing timber for the furniture and craft wood industries.

THE LAND: The land is comprised of mostly flat terrain which has been mined for shell grit, with a couple of banks of sandy loam. The banks (approx. 10 acres in total) have not been mined and are thus relatively pristine apart from having been cleared of vegetation a long time ago for farming purposes. This flat land however, is severely degraded and uneven (see old photograph below, taken when the mining was in its heyday, together with a contemporary drone photo demonstrating natural regrowth). This land will take some time to rehabilitate.

LAKE VICTORIA DRAINAGE CHANEL: The property is bisected south to north by a CoGG drainage easement which was reserved in 1994 to carry the overflow from the lake through to Swan Bay via 'The Point' development, to prevent potential flooding in the lower areas of the 'Hollywood Estate' in Point Lonsdale. It is a critical piece of infrastructure with water flow measurement and content-testing currently being conducted by 'The Point' developer, Moremac Pty Ltd, as part of their planning agreement with the CoGG.

Management teams have access to the channel mouth via a roadway constructed through the western section of our property, by agreement with the trustees of SFET. Technically, access for maintenance and water testing for this facility should be confined to the easement; the cost to the Council however, in destroying native vegetation to make this possible, is considered by the trustees of the property to be unwarranted and unnecessarily costly whilst mutual goodwill in the current arrangement prevails.

THE TRUSTEES' FUTURE PLANS FOR THE PROPERTY: The trustees of the property have invested in the land with a view to providing a 'Connection with Nature' for future generations. They are content at this stage to encourage the Agroforestry enterprise so that the land over time will be fully restored with a covering of mainly native vegetation. When selected trees are eventually harvested, it is envisaged that they will be replaced on a one-for-one basis.

In accordance with the leasing agreement, I am at liberty to explore other compatible income generating enterprises on the land if I wish.

To assist with the conduct of my business, the trustees have provided a safe crossing into the property plus a farm shed/workshop fully serviced with power and town water. They are in the process of trying to provide a satisfactory waste-water system as well. Perimeter fencing of the property will also be constructed over the next couple of years.

WEEDS AND PESTS: Following a comprehensive Environmental Report on the property, the owners have been confronted with the daunting task of removing a massive invasive weed and rabbit infestation. I have undertaken this task as part of my lease agreement. It is understood that this 'eradication' process may take some years to complete.

ADJOINING PROPERTIES: The properties immediately adjoining ours are zoned 'Farming' as well. As far as the trustees are concerned that is fine except for the adjoining land to the east (the 'McMahon' shell grit works).

It is felt that it is poor planning to fail to soften the transition from intense Residential (along Santa Monica Blvd) to the farming zones to the west, which includes our own adjacent property. Furthermore, it seems unreasonable to expect McMahons to try to continue with some form of Primary Production alongside intense residential land, assuming the shell grit works will become redundant in time. To rezone some of McMahon's land would thus seem only fair and reasonable. This would also seem to accord with the stated long-term objectives of the CoGG's 2009 'Point Lonsdale Structure Plan', especially when the inference contained on p.11 which clearly suggests that some form of residential subdivision may be appropriate at some future date.

THE BALANCE OF LAND EAST OF THE ENTRANCE TO MENHEERE'S QUARRIES:

We have not consulted with landowners west of Lake Victoria towards Collendina, but owners to the immediate north of the lake are generally in accord with the objective of maintaining a 'green corridor' along both sides of Lake Victoria. If however their farming enterprises eventually prove to be nonviable, some have expressed a wish to be able to subdivide their land into one or two smaller allotments. In terms of maintaining the overall landscape of the area, this too seems a not unreasonable expectation.

SUMMARY: Landowners are being asked to endorse the overall stated objectives of the Southeast Bellarine Coastal Strategy. I am convinced that most will support the objective of creating a 'World Class Environmental Precinct'. Their enthusiasm for the task, however, will be enhanced if some flexibility is shown in terms of their modest aspirations for the future.

August 31st, 2021



The western section of our property circa 1984.



The same section in 2021.