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6th Feb 2018

Subject: Submission to DELWP

Objection to current Draft LPS and or changes Woodend Township Boundaries

To: DELWP & MRSC

Statement: As a Woodend Resident I would like to state that I Do NOT Support or give approval to expansion or movement of the current Woodend Township Boundaries as suggested in the LPS.

I categorically object to any proposed change in Status or inclusion of the so called "Settlement Strategy study area" as detailed in the LPS drawings.

My View: What is proposed in the LAP is overarching legislation that has the capacity to govern decision making regarding land use in the Macedon Ranges for decades to come, whether this is a decision of the Council, the Minister for Planning, VCAT or another government organisation.

The Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill 2017 focuses on geologic, geomorphic and ecological features and cultural attributes of human occupation and emphasises the importance of these. Statement of Planning Policy No. 8 prioritises the protection and use of natural resources for water supply, tourism, recreation and nature conservation, with a secondary focus on agriculture and forestry. In introducing the bill to Parliament, the Minister for Planning referred to the natural environment, significant water catchments, agricultural land and heritage townscapes of the Macedon Ranges.

The objectives included in the draft legislation emphasise protection and conservation of the landscapes, environment and heritage of a local area. It includes the welcome addition of the recognition of the traditional owners of land.

The declaration of an area of Victoria to be a distinctive area and landscape requires identification of unique features and special characteristics including its settlements.

The Statement of Planning Policy will be the key driver in decision making and in future changes to the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme including rezoning and changes to township boundaries. It is critical that the Statement is an accurate representation of community values and expectations.

There are various processes set out in the draft legislation as well as amendments to other Victorian Acts. If interested in these, it is recommended that you review the bill.

While I support both the intent and content of the draft legislation. However, I am also very concerned that the Localised Planning Statement is being used to satisfy consultation on a Statement of Planning Policy as I do not support the LPS.

The Localised Planning Statement is meant to respond to the recommendations of the Macedon Ranges Protection Advisory Committee and we would also expect it to respond to the draft legislation and Statement of Planning Policy No. 8; these documents should be the starting point for

the current LPS. I do not think that it does this. The ongoing position of the Council (2014 LPS and Macedon Ranges Protection Advisory Committee submission) has been dressed up. However, it has not conceded its focus on economic development and tourism and it has very little focus on protection policies or integrated outcomes. The LPS does not even concede the need for protective legislation and dismisses the relevance of Statement of Planning Policy No. 8.

Woodeniers worked extensively with the Council to develop the Woodend Town Structure Plan that was adopted in 2015. The plan confirmed the Settlement Strategy's 2011 conclusions that there is adequate land within the existing town boundary for housing and employment growth to 2036 and potentially beyond. The existing town boundary was confirmed with adoption of Amendment C98.

It is disrespectful to the Woodend community – and contrary to the draft legislation – to see a new, expanded settlement boundary included in the Localised Planning Statement.

My position is that there is no basis for this boundary change. The investigation areas referred to in the LPS were included in the town structure planning project at the request of the Amendment C84 panel. The preliminary review of these areas – some of which are in the Rural Conservation Zone – highlighted many development constraints including high fire risk, flooding and loss of a high value heritage township entry. This is addressed in the final structure plan document and would be apparent to anyone who has read the document.

To extend the boundaries now ignores the most recent strategic work for the Woodend township and opens the door to speculative development, pressure for premature rezoning's and a loss of proper and orderly planning, in direct conflict with the desire to protect the unique features and special characteristics of the area and manage growth pressures.

My position is that the Localised Planning Statement should be scrapped, and a proper Statement of Planning Policy should be written, preferably by someone associated with the preparation of the draft legislation. The new Statement of Planning Policy should not only incorporate the outcomes envisaged by Statement of Planning Policy No. 8 it should also complement the new legislation.

The existing Woodend settlement boundary should be declared as a “**protected settlement boundary**” under the new legislation to ensure protection of surrounding natural areas, water catchment and farmland and the heritage townscape and approaches as foreshadowed by the Minister in his second reading speech to Parliament.

Yours

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