

## Response of [REDACTED]

In 2014, after much public consultation, the Macedon Ranges Shire produced the Woodend Town Structure Plan and Neighbourhood Study ("the Structure Plan"). In it the town boundary of Woodend was identified by the council and by state government - Statement of Planning Policy number 8.

I am writing to express my strongest opposition to a new piece of draft legislation - Distinctive Areas and Landscape legislation ("DAL") introduced by the state government that does little to protect our town, its recognised boundaries or the significant landscapes surrounding Woodend. In fact it is a regurgitation of the proposed boundaries pushed so hard by Villawood and other developers that many of us in Woodend worked hard to ensure that they did not come into fruition.

The Macedon Ranges community in 2014 clearly stated what they wanted for Woodend and the DAL is not what the great majority of townspeople wanted for their town.

In my submission I will outline why Woodend should stay within its present boundaries.

At present people have a choice as to whether they can live in a small or large town in the Macedon Ranges on a rail link to Melbourne. Large towns: Kyneton, Gisborne, Sunbury. Small: Malmsbury, Woodend, Macedon, Riddells Creek. If one looks at the area under consideration at Woodend and compares this with Kyneton's, the expansion, if adopted, would actually make Woodend slightly larger than Kyneton. One of the main reasons given that people choose to live in Woodend is that it is a small township.

Tourists choose to come to Woodend because of its size, rural feel and easy accessibility past the town boundary to picturesque rural landscapes.

If the boundaries under consideration were to be adopted, the feel of the town would be destroyed for ever and Woodend would become another Gisborne or Sunbury. The countryside needs a diversity of townships, each with its own unique character be it size, heritage buildings or environmental surrounds. If successive governments continue to allow urban creep in all its small towns within commuter distance of Melbourne, we will end up with a conurbation such as Bosneywash (as in the USA) or in Victoria from Portsea to Geelong. It is imperative that we maintain our small townships and villages, especially in the Macedon Ranges, as its diversity offers a real escape for people from Melbourne for a day or a weekend.

The Villawood piece of land in the north-west consideration area is now zoned farmland and rural conservation and contains significant rural views to the west of the Calder Highway which is officially listed as significant landscape overlay. It is an important rural view under the Avenue of Honour for Woodend citizens and visitors alike. It is a view that changes with the seasons and never fails to impress. It is a view that, either leaving or coming to Woodend, gives the town its rural feel.

This land also happens to be an important agricultural resource for the future. A good deal of the land is first grade basalt soil zoned farm land and with an eye to the future should be kept as such.

Villawood bought this land, zoned farmland and conservation, for development and have constantly attempted to have the zoning changed. We have a strict 40 ha housing policy in farm land zones and the council is to be commended for adhering to this policy despite continuing pressure from real estate agents, landowners and developers.

Finally Woodend is a tourist hotspot in the Macedon Ranges. It is an easy drive from Melbourne for lunch, and then time to visit Hanging Rock, Sanitorium Lake, Mt Macedon, Camels Hump or across to Trentham Falls. People don't want to come to yet another urbanised township for the day - they want to visit what seems to them a rural village. This is one small town in the Macedon Ranges that should adhere to its present designated township boundaries.

A reminder of the aims of the DAL. It aims to ensure the state significant landscapes and the environmental and cultural values of the Macedon Ranges region are protected and enhanced for current and future generations.

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