

20 August 2021  
Mr. Richard Wynne  
Minister for Planning  
PO Box 500  
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Minister,

**My submission on the draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy**

As a resident of Barwon Heads for the past 20 plus years I write to generally support the Draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy.

The idea of a distinctive set of planning tools for The Bellarine peninsular is a good idea. Positioned as it is close to Melbourne, the Bellarine presents an ideal opportunity to grow Victoria's natural tourist assets while also protecting what is left of its significant coastal and rural environment.

Unfortunately, not only are guidelines needed to realise this vision, but a cultural change is also required. Regional identities are protected by many countries in Europe and accepted by their populations and their visitors. This has yet to occur with any legislative force or intent in Australia. With the City of Greater Geelong waiving 'neighbourhood character' the necessary critical mass of heritage type housing is being undermined. Overlays are piecemeal or inconsistent and easily manipulated if expense is no problem. Medium density housing has been generally accepted but is creating unintended consequences unabated by any sympathetic building codes. (cutting of access to sunlight for example.)

Why is this important?

How a place 'looks' is essential to building identity and identity is essential for preservation of natural assets. The Draft's protection of settlement boundaries around all Bellarine Peninsula settlements, is useful but on its own will be eroded in a matter of a decade.

The protection from urban sprawl for the Bellarine Peninsula's attractive rural landscape and significant environmental features requires:-

- 1 The broad and educated support of the people of the Bellarine for a cultural change from 'anything goes.'
- 2 A strong legislative framework which has popular acceptance
- 3 economic support for farmers
- 4 strong support for existing heritage and a stop to the 'build any fashion you like' planning regulations.
- 5 fair balloting for existing camping grounds without exceptions
- 6 the proper policing of pet animal regulations
- 7 The establishment of a separate Bellarine Council so the already exorbitant rates can work exclusively for the people of the Bellarine.

I note the wording of the draft is dotted with the usual ambiguous language which allows for manipulation. Terms such as 'would likely', 'consider', 'where relevant', 'be aware of', 'encourage' should be replaced by 'prohibit', 'must' and 'require'.

Although I support the intention, as stated, behind this extensive project I have little faith in its success. Perhaps 'better than nothing,' will give those who have spent hours and hours on this proposal some hope.

Yours sincerely,

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