

I am in complete agreement with the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DWELP) Draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy. The policy provides excellent guidance to the City of Greater Geelong (CoGG) for the future development and land use on the Peninsula for the next 50 years.

I provide this submission with reference to St Leonards as my area of greatest interest.

I purchased my house in St Leonards two and a half years ago because of the village feel and sense of community which other towns near to Geelong eg Ocean Grove and Torquay, do not have. St Leonards can be walked around safely with many places to enjoy, particularly the foreshore and Edwards Point.

The existing settlement boundary for St Leonards as designated in the CoGG Planning Scheme (Figure 36, Draft Bellarine Statement of Planning Policy: Settlement Background Paper) should be preserved in perpetuity thus retaining the remaining vital environmental landscape. I am extremely pleased that the St Leonards Golf Club land east of Ibbotson Street has been excluded from any future development considering the vital part it plays in helping protect the salt lagoon.

However with the sudden housing development surrounding the original part of the village many areas of remnant native vegetation and large old trees have been completely destroyed thus taking away from the village and rural feeling. No attempt has been made by the developer (or indeed CoGG for that matter) to replace indigenous grasses, plants or trees, particularly canopy trees, in these new areas.

An article in The Age (18 July 2021) by Nick O'Malley and Miki Perkins talked about cities and towns may be too hot to bare due to the lack of tall shade trees and lack of good planning for public parks, housing blocks not allowing for gardens and unshaded black roads. When walking around some of the new housing in St Leonards, exactly the same potential problems have been observed.

Barwon Water is developing an area of land it owns called Salt Torquay, One Planet Living Action Plan using 10 principles including appropriate tree planting, utilisation of storm water, properties to have rain water tanks, garden space for all houses and no concrete driveways allowing storm water to replenish waterways. Similar principles should be used in future housing development in St Leonards to assist in the repair of the environmental damage currently occurring.

Any infill housing development should take these principles into consideration and also preserve the surrounding style of housing, particularly in 'old St Leonards'. Many modern house designs are ignoring the style of surrounding houses thus destroying the feeling and character of a small coastal village. I agree entirely with the findings of the Claire Scott Planning and Ethos Urban report.

I unequivocally support Proposal for SPP 43: That a protected settlement boundary be applied to St Leonards consistent with the existing settlement boundary in Greater Geelong Planning Scheme Clause 21.14-5

I unreservedly support Proposal for SPP 44: That the St Leonards settlement character statement be incorporated into the Draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP.

I support Proposals 45 and 46 particularly the planning controls for site coverage, permeability and landscaping. My only hope is that CoGG acts quickly in implementing these controls and also monitors the developments.