

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

4 March 2018

Victoria State Government
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

RE : SUBMISSION - DRAFT MACEDON RANGES LOCALISED PLANNING STATEMENT

Since 2004, [REDACTED] has existed to encourage the development of [REDACTED]. Its current members are drawn from a number of segments of the [REDACTED].

The [REDACTED] acknowledges the intent and content of the Macedon Ranges Localised Planning Statement. However, [REDACTED] is concerned that the suggested population growth will overwhelm much of the outlined protection strategies.

Tourism and Recreation, as noted in the Localised Planning Statement (within the wide definition of the *Visitor Economy*), is the third largest economic contributor to the Shire economy after the Government and Health sectors and the largest contributor in the private sector economy. Tourism Macedon Ranges believes that **the importance of the Visitor Economy to the Macedon Ranges Shire's long-term economic sustainability needs to be recognised and clearly stated and protected in the Localised Planning Statement.**

Tourism and Recreation benefits from and indeed relies, for the sector's success, on the appropriate management and insightful forward planning of all the Domains outlined in the Policy Statement.

Our members' concerns are that the Localised Planning Statement's Vision will not be able to be met. For the vision to be met, considerable change to Shire development philosophy, zoning / land use restrictions (eg Place of Assembly is prohibited in many parts of the Shire) and explicit decision criteria for Council Planning Officers (to facilitate objective and consistent decision-making over time and with fellow Planning Officers) will be required.

1. Potential **population growth** is not easily understood nor its impact outlined in the document. Population growth in the Shire is driven predominantly by the State's net migration increase and the provision of affordable residential property in reasonable proximity to central Melbourne. This is augmented by the attractive lifestyle a peri-urban rural shire has to offer.

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council Settlement Strategy 2011 (Page 3) provides Council's recommended population growth by settlement. Gisborne and Kyneton are set to grow to 14,700 and 8,600 by 2036 (up from 8,900 and 5,700 respectively in 2006). Romsey is set to grow from 4,100 to 6,000 residents and Riddells Creek from 3,500 to 6,100.

The LPS advises that the State sponsored Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan and Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050 identify the largest settlements – Gisborne and Kyneton as becoming “Regional Centres” supporting populations of 10,000+ residents and Romsey growing to a Large District Town of 6,000 – 10,000 residents.

██████ believes that the attributes that attract residents and visitors to the Shire, will be lost by the end of the Planning Period (2050), possibly as early as 2036, if population growth and development follows the trend of recent years. It notes that while the State Government is proposing an LPS to protect the Macedon Ranges, it is at the same time dictating growth levels that will threaten the character of the Macedon Ranges. This is most notable for the towns of Gisborne, Riddells Creek, Romsey and the Shire’s showcase town of Kyneton.

██████ expresses its disappointment that the long-term settlement boundaries are yet to be determined for Gisborne and Romsey (due to ongoing projects) in order to understand and estimate the population increase and loss of rural amenity of the local areas.

██████ recommends that a review of the population growth forecasts that inform the Shire’s settlement strategy and the State Government’s LPS be undertaken jointly by the State Government and Macedon Ranges Shire Council to ensure that the proposed growth will not threaten the very attributes that the LPS aims to protect. Initially growth should be focused on the infill areas within the existing settlement boundaries and those identified to 2036. The 2036 boundary must be considered as fixed with no further growth beyond these boundaries permitted. Further growth will then only be possible through medium scale development and creative and efficient use of land within the fixed settlement boundaries – subject to appropriate height restrictions

██████ also recommends that an appendix be added to the finalised LPS that includes population estimates, generated under the assumptions of both existing and proposed urban density levels, and detail the implications for the provision of services (especially water and transport) to the Shire, from both State and Shire level resources.

2. The LPS highlights the need to **protect the Shire’s unique natural beauty**, its 19th century built heritage and rural landscapes. History has demonstrated to residents that many land developers are only interested in cash-flow and wealth creation and not in the long-term interests of the Shire in the decades that follow their activity. Examples of this are evident in the Brooking Road area of Gisborne and in areas adjoining the Shire such as the rapidly expanding urban sprawl of Sunbury and Diggers Rest. All are the result of land sub-divisions. In contrast, house and land developments such as the Baringo development at New Gisborne require the developer to master plan the whole development and show built-form plans with considerations to all elements of the development including streetscaping, green space, access, supporting retail and aesthetic. Unless Council has strong and detailed

Localised Planning Schemes, down to streetscape and retail precinct level, the local town character will continue to diminish.

█ recommends that:

- a. No further land-only sub-divisions to be permitted within the Shire.
- b. Future development to be based on the house and land package development model, with a limited proportion of land-only blocks controlled via covenant, to ensure that the built-form is in keeping with the rest of the development.
- c. The Shire's Planning Department receives sufficient additional funding, if required, to ensure that appropriate planning guidelines and planning tools are in place to manage development based on this model.
- d. Kyneton, with its historic Piper Street and residential built-form heritage, requires special protection to maintain this unique town's appeal for both residents and visitors. Kyneton's population growth projections must be reviewed to ensure the proposed population growth will not detract from the unique nature of the town.
- e. Retail space development should be compelled to reflect the "village style" aesthetic as opposed to bland big-box retail developments.
- f. Village street-scape and infrastructure improvements should reflect the "village style" aesthetic.

3. There is a long-standing practice in rural areas to reduce minimum **land sizes** over time. At some point land becomes uneconomic for traditional and even innovative agricultural activity. How is it proposed to "*encourage the use of rural-zoned land for agricultural purposes?*" (page 22)

█ recommends that in current Farm Zones, economic viability be included as a consideration when determining minimum subdivision size.

4. The Statement's nine Domains and their accompanying **Objectives and Strategies** are stated at a high level of abstraction, with a requirement that Local Government *must have regard to and act consistently with the [Local Planning] statement* (p6). What does this mean in practice? How will Shire Planners and Councilors conform to this requirement? Aside from four yearly Council elections, how will Council and its Officers be held to account in delivering outcomes that consistently embrace the Statement objectives?

█ recommends that guidelines be included in the Localised Planning Statement on how Statement delivery is measured and made available to Shire residents in a timely manner.

5. **Monitoring and Review.** *To provide long-term certainty for the policy area, the statement will be reviewed every 10 years* (p7). The implication of what is stated in this section, is that the review is directed to the content of the Statement rather than a review of performance of the various Government Departments and Agencies and Shire Council in fulfilling their mandate under the Localised Planning Statement.

█ recommends that the 10 yearly should review consider not only the ongoing relevance and suitability of the Statement, but also how each of the

Recommendations to the Draft LPS:

1. Population Growth:

- a. A review of the population growth forecasts that inform the Shire's settlement strategy, and the State Government's LPS, be undertaken jointly by the State Government and Macedon Ranges Shire Council to ensure that the proposed growth will not threaten the very attributes that the LPS aims to protect.
- b. An appendix be added to the finalised LPS that includes population estimates, generated under the assumptions of both existing and proposed urban density levels, and detail the implications for the provision of services (especially water and transport) to the Shire, from both State and Shire level resources.

2. Protect the Shire's unique natural beauty:

- a. No further land-only sub-divisions to be permitted within the Shire.
- b. Future development to be based on the house and land package development model, with a limited proportion of land-only blocks controlled via covenant, to ensure that the built-form is in keeping with the rest of the development.
- c. That the Shire's Planning Department receives sufficient additional funding, if required, to ensure that appropriate planning guidelines and planning tools are in place to manage development based on this model.
- d. Kyneton, with its historic Piper Street and residential built-form heritage, requires special protection to maintain this unique town's appeal for both residents and visitors. Kyneton's population growth projections must be reviewed to ensure the proposed population growth will not detract from the unique nature of the town.
- e. Retail space development should be compelled to reflect the "village style" aesthetic as opposed to bland big-box retail developments.
- f. Village street-scape and infrastructure improvements should reflect the "village style" aesthetic.

3. **Rural land sizes:** In current Farm Zones, economic viability be included as a consideration when determining minimum subdivision size.

4. **LPS Objectives and Strategies:** Guidelines be included in the Localised Planning Statement on how Statement delivery is measured and reported and that this information is made available to Shire residents in a timely manner.

5. **Monitoring and Review:** The 10 yearly review should consider not only the ongoing relevance and suitability of the Statement, but also how each of the strategies are being delivered and that the outcomes sought can be objectively observed.

6. **Operational integration of LPS Strategies:** An estimate of the additional work to be generated for Policy Planning staff to meet the LPS integration task be conducted and appropriate resources made available from the State Government so that Shire Council can deliver the new mandate.

7. **Policy and Council Practice Conflict:** Council conducts a review of its planning policy to identify and consider areas where the policy could potentially conflict with the intent of the LPS.
