

- PRIORITY 1: PLANNING CONTROLS

## BACKGROUND

Macedon/Mt. Macedon will always be an area to be considered for its rural and environmental sensitivity for any development, whether that development be domestic, a commercial business house or building.

The policy document from the State Government titled 'Statement of Planning Policy No. 8' (SPP8) has served the area of the Macedon Ranges for many years to protect its villages from being over developed. SPP8 has been in place since 1975 and has always had an overarching say in the protection of the Macedon Ranges environment.

The growing trend in both present and future strategies from various State Governments to push the 'urban sprawl' into regional and country areas and the lack of adequate town planning zones and overlays for Macedon and Mt. Macedon in areas that are vulnerable and need protection from development, is sounding 'the danger alarm' for the environment. In the 2010 State Election, community and resident groups used their voting leverage to now have commitment that SPP8 will be reinstated and will again be a main saviour to our local environment and offer it protection.

Over the years many changes have occurred in and around the villages of Macedon and Mt. Macedon that have had a significant impact on the character of the district. Some of the events to have impacted are (and in no particular order):

- (a) Ash Wednesday bushfires, its' short and long term effects
- (b) Various town planning overlays that have been implemented by the MRSC
- (c) A new Calder Freeway re-alignment
- (d) Natural gas for the area (not all)
- (e) Sewerage system for the area (not all).

## COMMUNITY FORUM IDEAS

The community forum held on the 6 November 2010 was decisive in the level of importance placed by the community on the 'out of touch' planning issues that are present in the Macedon/Mt. Macedon area. This was shown by the largest number of votes being given to commonsense town planning controls.

A summary of the community needs that impact town planning and require addressing are (and in no particular order):

1. Housing for older people
2. Clarification of town planning overlays
3. Controlled population growth
4. Better communication/transparency of any requirements that affect the community being considered by MRSC or council officers
5. Planning schemes to accommodate diversity
6. Ensure the rural character and environment of the villages and districts are maintained and protected
7. Maintain and enhance existing infrastructure to accommodate the fire risks and evacuation of the area
8. Ensure a safe network of linkages, both pedestrian and vehicle, are in place to accommodate the diverse population present. From school age to mature persons reliance on daily access to the village is important especially the older generation with reduced mobility.

#### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To encourage the community to be proactive in understanding the current planning policies and familiarise themselves
2. To encourage the community to take note of proposed changes that may occur and put their views and energies into writing a submission to the MRSC
3. To achieve a working partnership fostering proper consultation and open communication between both local and state authorities, the Macedon Ranges community and other interested stakeholder groups and to nominate appropriate accountability
4. To promote sensible and controlled town planning that is sympathetic to our village character and environmentally sensitive
5. To protect the area and the environmental character from any proposed developments that will have an undesirable impact for the community
6. To promote tourism and showcase the visual beauty of the Memorial Cross and surrounds, historic gardens and the relaxed and friendly atmosphere of the local business establishments so that our village businesses are sustainable and remain viable
7. To further protect historic treescapes such as Honour Ave's trees planted in memory of local persons that served in the 'Great War' and apply for State Heritage listing
8. To understand the impacts of the Draft Settlement Strategy adopted by the MRSC and, if required, make a consolidated submission to the State Government with any community concerns

9. To encourage the community and groups to be involved in making submissions to the State Government, who is currently reviewing state planning laws
10. To understand the effects of the Bushfire Royal Commission guidelines and consider their application for town planning policy guidelines adopted by the MRSC
11. To maintain both a business and private community that is sustainable to attract funding to the area from various sources to maintain the ideals of the community
12. To advocate that the State Government keep their commitment to reinstate SPP8
13. To achieve the removal by the MRSC of the antiquated and inappropriate town planning overlays currently present in Macedon/ Mt. Macedon, especially since the introduction of natural gas and the sewerage system
14. To accommodate the needs of the community, the MRSC and the State Government.

#### COMMUNITY ACTION REQUIRED

Ways the community can act to achieve common sense town planning controls are to:

- Champion proper town planning zones to accommodate and remove development overlays that are no longer relevant to the area
- Strengthen the urgency to bring forward immediately the 'Macedon Overlay Review' that is identified as a committed project in the current 2011/2012 budget year
- Achieve adequate consultation and multiple community meetings with the MRSC and other stakeholders to discuss and formulate town planning guidelines that would come to fruition by instigating the preparation of a town planning scheme amendment
- Actively seek the inclusion of SPP8 in all and any new town planning scheme amendments.

Areas where the community can assert its influence to activate change within specific Town Planning Zones (*Business, Mixed Use and Residential*) are:

1. Business Zone
  - (a) Identification and implementation of guidelines and policy that ensure the business CBD is maintained in the village character and boundaries are clearly defined
  - (b) Implementation of development parking policies that are clear to any developer and the community
  - (c) Implementation of a Traffic Management Plan to accommodate:
    - (i) Motor vehicle movement

- (ii) Adequate parking and give due consideration to angle parking at appropriate locations to increase safety
- (iii) Safe pedestrian access and movement within the CBD
- (iv) Pedestrian network paths to allow residential areas to commute to the CBD without vehicles and promote a green environment
- (v) Transport and bus loading and unloading so as not to interfere with the total movement of vehicles and pedestrians in the CBD
- (vi) Tourist signage to encourage the use of local facilities and raise awareness of the location of various tourist attractions and local services
- (vii) Provide safe entry/exit to local parks including designated vehicle stopping
- (viii) Provide safe pedestrian crossings for schools and movement of minor age population.

## 2. Mixed Use Zone

- (a) Identification and definition of any area outside the designated business zone that can accommodate passive mixed use zone such as:
  - (i) Home Occupation
  - (ii) Bed and Breakfast
  - (iii) Boutique Accommodation

## 3. Residential Zone

- (a) Allow infill development to occur and maintain the character of its surrounds to accommodate the now implemented sewer system and natural gas availability
- (b) Allow dual occupancy to accommodate the need for housing for older people and people wishing to downsize their dwelling and place of abode  
NOTE: This would provide the opportunity for long time residents to stay in the area instead of looking for unit accommodation in neighbouring towns (such as Sunbury etc.)
- (c) Ensure implementation of planning policy to allow dual occupancy only and not multiple dwellings on existing infill or new lots
- (d) A dual occupancy lot to require a minimum land size of a total of 800sq.m. or more
- (e) Land holdings greater than 800sq.m. can only apply for dual occupancy if appropriate. Implementation of planning policy to protect the substance of SPP8 and not allow multiple dwellings (e.g. no multi unit site development)
- (f) If land holdings greater than 800sq.m. are approved for dual occupancy then the MRSC (together with community consultation and input) should develop and apply a planning policy that not only protects the character and environment of the area, but also prohibits further subdivision of the allotment unless the town planning zone allows it.

This policy should be designed together with community consultation and input.

## OUTCOMES

Remove town planning anomalies that have become redundant since the implementation of the sewer system.

Achieve a Town Planning Policy and Guidelines to provide capacity and diversity to accommodate and house the ageing population, especially close to services and facilities.

Protect and enhance the rural character and lifestyle of the Macedon/Mt. Macedon villages.

## STAKEHOLDERS REQUIRED

Macedon Ranges Shire Council (MRSC)

Councillors

State Government

CFA

Power company (distributor)

Transport – Bus companies

Macedon/Mt. Macedon businesses

Macedon/ Mt Macedon Community and Planning subcommittee

Macedon and Mt. Macedon District Business and Tourist Association (MMMDBATA)

## WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN FIRST

Actions the Planning subcommittee seeks to deliver first are, to:

- (a) Ensure that the community has been fully informed and the process is compliant with the wishes and needs identified at the community forum on 6 November 2010
- (b) Present the plan to the MRSC for acceptance prior to budget approvals in June 2012 and as a submission to the planning review
- (c) Ensure that opportunities are provided for the community and the Planning subcommittee to be kept informed at all times on planning controls within the Macedon Ranges, particularly in Macedon and Mt. Macedon
- (d) Achieve MRSC commitment to implementing the 'Macedon Overlay Review' within the 2011/2012 budget year
- (e) Achieve MRSC commitment to commence a Traffic Management review and deliver a Traffic Management Plan with considerable input from the community and interested groups.