



# PLANNING SUPPLEMENT

to the NCG SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2017

# Planning Supplement to the NCG Spring 2017 Newsletter

## Planning Updates

Barend Frielink, Gary Naughton and Ursula de Jong

The State of Victoria is growing rapidly along with Melbourne, which has been increasing development pressures in the Mornington Peninsula. Over the 2016/17 financial year, MPS saw a 40% growth in planning applications. In the Nepean Ward, the pressure has been especially felt in Sorrento, which has seen the disappearance of the traditional family-owned shops, the arrival of shops belonging to large chains (reducing the feeling of the uniqueness of the town) and finally, the emergence of large scale “mixed developments” along Ocean Beach Road, consisting of apartment complexes with shop fronts. The Committee has been kept busy in order to stay abreast of these and other planning issues, in the context of NCG’s support for appropriate development that balances and prioritises the interests of the environment, heritage, permanent residents, commerce, temporary residents and visitors. What follows is a report on some of these issues, the NCG responses and their status.

Melbourne’s Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) was reformed by the Andrews government in April 2015 to review the document, with feedback sought from community groups and other stakeholders to contribute the “Plan Melbourne Refresh”. Numerous stakeholders, including The National Trust of Australia (Victoria), made extensive submissions in 2015, highlighting among other things, heritage issues arising from increasing densification in existing suburbs, urban renewal, and urban growth areas. Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 was launched in March 2017, with key changes including reforms to residential zones, which puts further pressure on middle-ring suburbs to accommodate rapid population growth, forecast to reach 8 million by 2050.

Reference:

<http://www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/>

## Plan Melbourne Refresh

Following the launch of Plan Melbourne by the Napthine government in 2014, Plan

# Reformed Residential Zones

In March 2017, the Minister for Planning gazetted a planning amendment introducing a suite of changes to Residential Zones. The changes follow the introduction of new residential zones into Planning Schemes in July 2014, and the findings of an Independent Advisory Committee appointed in 2015 to assess the impacts of the new zones. The key changes are:

- Increasing the mandatory maximum height for development in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone from 8m to 9m (2-storey maximum). (This will provide greater flexibility for infill where existing 2-storey buildings are higher than 8m.)
- Increasing the discretionary height limit for development in the General Residential Zone from 9 metres to a mandatory maximum height of 11m (3-storey maximum).
- Introducing a mandatory garden area requirement in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone and General Residential Zone to enhance the garden and open character of residential areas.
- Removing the restriction on the number of dwellings that can be built on a property in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone.
- New requirement for relevant neighbourhood, heritage, environmental or landscape

character objectives to be specified in schedule to Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

Generally, the Neighbourhood Residential Zone is applied to land that has been identified as having specific neighbourhood, heritage, environmental or landscape character values.

However the findings of the Independent Advisory Committee demonstrate that there are huge inconsistencies in the way the zone has been applied in different municipalities across Victoria. The new requirement for relevant character objectives to be specified in the schedule to the NRZ is a welcome change. New practice notes regarding the implementation of the zones are forthcoming, and we need to monitor the implementation of the zones, providing input to planning scheme amendments to ensure that heritage values are included. The Mornington Peninsula Shire has reacted strongly against the changes, which they do not feel are appropriate in the context of the Mornington Peninsula (refer to Hastings residents meeting, organised by Cr Gill and Peninsula Speaks, report below). This issue is very likely to be debated in the lead-up to the 2018 state election.

Reference: <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/planning-reform/reformed-zones-for-victoria/reformed-residential-zones>

## VicSmart

The VicSmart planning provisions were introduced into the Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes on 19 September 2014 by Amendment VC114, and were then extended in March 2017 by Amendment VC135. The VicSmart process allows for planning permits to be issued in under 10 days, removing the need for public notification and third party appeal rights. Prior to the recent changes, only certain subdivisions, minor buildings and works (up to a value of \$50,000), advertising signs, car parking reductions and other minor works qualified for assessment under VicSmart. Following VC135, Planning Schemes will now be updated to include the following additional types of applications:

- A single storey extension to a single dwelling where specific design criteria are met
- Buildings and works up to \$100,000 in residential zones, where not associated with a dwelling
- Building and works up to \$1 million in industrial areas
- Building and works up to \$500,000 in commercial and some special purpose areas
- A range of low impact developments in rural areas (up to \$500,000 in agricultural settings and \$250,000 in more sensitive rural settings)

- Small scale types of buildings and works in selected overlays
- Subdivision, advertising signs and car parking

In theory VicSmart does not apply where other Planning Overlays, such as a Heritage Overlay, are in place, as such overlays trigger a permit application.

Reference: <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/planning-permit-applications/vicsmart>

These provisions however have ‘grey areas’. The NCG notes that the fence at Lot 5 of the Shelmerdine subdivision at Collins Settlement Site was erected under VicSmart. The Collins Settlement Site is on the Victorian heritage Register meaning it has high heritage significance to Sorrento and the whole State of Victoria. The local community groups (including the Nepean Historical Society, the First Settlement Action Group and ourselves) put in objections to the MPS once the permit application for a fence abutting the public land and viewing platform was lodged. We asked that the Nepean Ward Councillors call this application in. The application was withdrawn by the proponents, and then resubmitted under VicSmart. A high impermeable fence has been constructed and obstructs the views from the Eastern Sister across Sullivan Bay to the Western Sister.

# Greater Melbourne Planning Scheme

In March 2017, the State government approved Plan Melbourne, which will guide the growth of Metropolitan Melbourne up to 2050 (<http://www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/>). While the Plan has many merits in trying to keep Melbourne a liveable city in the face of an unprecedented growth spurt, it has unfortunately included the Peninsula, including the Nepean Ward, into these plans. In the Plan, the shires of Kingston, Frankston, Cardinia, Casey, Greater Dandenong and Mornington Peninsula have been grouped together into the Southern Region. It is our understanding that all matters relating to the implementation of Plan Melbourne will be discussed at the level of the Southern Region. Currently, it is not clear how communities and other interest groups will be involved. The implementation of the Plan has started with discussions in the Southern Region councils on how to amend planning schemes.

The Plan appears to have many good ideas and proposals (including the minimum required green space for any site development) but the introduction of a mandatory maximum dwelling height of 11 meters (i.e. three stories) has potentially a severe adverse impact on the Nepean Ward. The fear is that home owners and developers will take the opportunity to build three story houses without having to go through a planning process. Shire officers

are of the view that the current planning overlays for our Ward are strong enough to protect Rye, Blairgowrie, Sorrento and Portsea from the new building heights. This, however, remains to be tested when the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme is revised. The local community groups are not so convinced. A number of meetings have been held across the peninsula. The Committee is following these developments closely and provides a few reports below. We will continue to keep you informed.

## State Government Gazetted Planning Changes

A public meeting hosted by Peninsula Speaks Inc. <http://www.peninsulaspeaks.org>

and Cr David Gill. The meeting was held at HASTINGS COMMUNITY HUB on THURSDAY 22ND JUNE, 7-9 pm. Ursula de Jong's notes from the meeting, address, questions and strategies follow.

THESE CHANGES threaten the Mornington Peninsula and without any consultation would allow:

- 'As of right' Shire wide 3 storey houses
- 'VICSMART' 10 day turn around planning permits with NO community notice and NO right of appeal
- Green wedge controls watered

down and left without enforcement powers

- Rural zones becoming intensive housing areas

The invited speaker was Michael Buxton, Professor of Environment and Planning at the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, RMIT University. Prof Buxton back grounded planning in Victoria, and outlined some of the dangers and implications of the State Government Planning Changes for the Mornington Peninsula. Eddy and Ursula de Jong attended this meeting together with 400+ concerned Mornington Peninsula residents. Everyone was overwhelmed by the large turnout-standing room only.

Professor Buxton stated that nothing is permanent in planning. Communities are always fighting a rearguard action. The saga of Victorian planning is evidenced by incremental change. No-one sticks to plan(s). The Mornington Peninsula (MP) is at a critical moment. Governments need to be made to remember. In other countries planners build on the past – they maintain, remember and take note of the past. A ‘begin again philosophy’ is not a sound one. In the 1970s Alan Hunt and Rupert Hamer planned for a 50-year period. We are at that point now. Berwick must not be allowed to happen on the MP.

The Mornington Peninsula is the peripheral urban hinterland of Melbourne. Regional urban planning has regrettably never happened. This

would allow us to protect the values of an area. This weak regional planning was rediscovered by the opposition, but no-one is talking about protecting the MP, the Yarra Valley, the Macedon Ranges and the Dandenong Ranges. The development community wanted to develop the MP in the 1970s, but a huge backlash stopped this happening. The current government needs to be forced to protect the MP, this can only be achieved via electoral consequences. We can all see the development pressures on the MP, on the edge of metropolitan Melbourne, between the two bays. Strict controls need to be improved and implemented.

Professor Buxton noted the rapid process of change. Melbourne is a changed city. Twelve years ago residential multi-storey development took off. We need to look ahead just as Hunt and Hamer did, 50 years, 100 years. The community needs to outline the type of peninsula they want protected. This takes some thinking.

### **What is the impact of this development pressure?**

Developers claim that planning ossifies place(s). Government planning regulations pursue a sameness in all places and stifle innovation. Some values have been lost on the MP. But amenity, heritage, natural landscapes and resources attract people with ideas. We should develop a series of principles. But Prof Buxton warned that we must be





*Weathered tea tree, MPNP, Photo Ursula de Jong*

cautious in order to maintain future options. The MP is the hinterland of Melbourne, and is the second most productive agricultural region of the State of Victoria. The MP also has inspiring landscapes, health giving restorative places, biodiversity and amenity.

Prof Buxton explained that with the demise of the Regional Planning Authorities, and local government amalgamations, the large Local Government Authorities (LGAs) were supposed to pick up the responsibilities to act as custodians. Councils failed to do this. LGAs and the State Government ignored their responsibilities. There is no corporate sense of responsibility to protect areas and places. That responsibility falls on communities.

### **Threats**

Maintenance of the urban growth boundary

This is critical; but it has not stopped metropolitan expansion; continual chipping around the edges; MP has held to date

### **Changes to planning zones**

Green wedges and rural zones contending with industry and retaining

### **New threats to townships**

Changes to height limits in neighbourhood residential zones, residential zones (now 11m) and commercial zones (no height control). The State Government's loathing of mandated height controls

will lead to a sameness in medium density apartment development across Victoria.

### **VicSmart**

Advantages developers and disadvantages residents. The Government is “getting rid of red tape” and giving over the planning system to the development community.

VicSmart shuts the community out, with no requirement for permits. Increased densification will result without notification or possibility of objections.

Prof Buxton noted that Tourism Victoria proposed rampant development in the MP; that the Department of Agriculture wanted to grow houses instead of crops on MP’s rural land. Prof Buxton stated that “there should be no commercial development in the rural zones”. Stand alone complexes (function / conference centres, restaurants and accommodation) benefit investors, not towns or communities.

### **Mandatory Strategic Framework needed**

The current framework is woeful in protecting values of the MP. Prof Buxton told the community to identify the values of the MP (biodiversity, scenic landscapes, etc) and put in place plans to protect them. Look to Adelaide as an example. Tell the State government “hands-off”, and focus on protecting areas by developing strong mandatory statutory provisions.

### **Townships**

These will only get better if they are planned properly – the MP’s townships are varied, they have the potential to go forward well into the future.

### **In conclusion**

The MP has world-scale values in its landscapes, biodiversity, coasts, public lands, and vibrant amenities. It needs a regional planning focus. Its special values need to be identified and articulated. We need to look back at what was mandated and ensure that the legacy of past planning is not lost. The community and MPSC need to take the lead.

### **Points from questions and discussion**

- DDOs are irrelevant because they are discretionary. Need mandatory controls.
- Do residents have any legal pathways? The State Government has appointed two consultative groups to advise on the redrafting of Victoria’s Planning Scheme: there are no residents on either group. The intent is to remove all impediments to development. The Government and Ministers have dictatorial powers, the Minister for Planning is autocratic.
- Pressure for housing needs with Melbourne’s population set to increase from 4 to 8 million: research shows that a variety



of lot sizes and house types are required, and that there is no shortage of land within the urban growth boundary. Developers are working with two successful models only; land speculation for detached houses; and high-rise developments. Government determines what will happen and where.

- State Planning Policy rules, local policies are only useful for discretionary use. Local strategic approach must be developed, in conjunction with a strategic visionary framework. Local provisions are subservient to State planning regulations. Local need strong use of schedules; with clear wording.
- Strength in local approach to protecting MP's values. But the character of the Peninsula must be reflected in the content and in the lobbying. Mandatory provisions much be implemented. Local residents must voice their opinions.

Cr David Gill stated that "Council is on the residents' side". He said Council is putting planning matters as a priority. Local MPs are on side, and shire planners are on side. Now a community group is needed to help the Shire. Cr Gill made it clear that local provisions are needed, mandatory height limits are needed, and it must be made clear to the state Government that the MP is not a suburb of Melbourne. Politically, the MP is not a swinging seat, so we have to work harder.

The Peninsula Speaks petition was emailed to NCG members. Go to <http://www.peninsulaspeaks.org/>

### **Dr Alan Nelsen's email to MPS councillors**

The email below was sent to all councillors after the July community meeting at Rosebud about the State Planning Minister Richard Wynne's recent planning changes affecting the Mornington Peninsula. It refers to a map handed out at the meeting purporting to show areas on which houses could be built to three storeys. The author is Dr Alan Nelsen, tireless long-time advocate for sensible development on the peninsula and member of the Mornington Peninsula Residents' and Ratepayers' Association:

"The plan handed out at the Rosebud meeting indicating the areas affected by recent state government planning changes in red is misleading. I totally agree with Cr David Gill's statement at the meeting that the plan dramatically underestimates the potential areas affected.

"The "Reformed Residential Zones" document released by the Minister on 27 March 2017 states: "The Councils with building height variations in zone schedules that are inconsistent with the reformed zones will have three years to comply with the new requirements (page 9)."

"Much of the Peninsula is zoned General Residential Zone which government has mandated height

limits of three storeys and 11 metres. This includes Mt Eliza, Mornington, Mt Martha, Safety Beach, McCrae, Rosebud, Rye, Blairgowrie, Sorrento, Portsea and a number of townships on the Western Port side of the peninsula.

“Anyone in these GRZ areas which looks at the plan which was handed out would assume that they have nothing to worry about. Until the shire receives confirmation that existing overlays will continue to apply then a plan should be handed out at the meetings in Mornington and Tyabb which at least shows all of the existing GRZ zones in red as being affected, as well as those which currently do not have an overlay.” Dr Alan Nelsen

## **Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento**

The NCG Committee, along with the wider community, has been alarmed by the increasing number of new developments along OBR, which often contain a large number of apartments. During mid-2016 Mornington Peninsula Shire Council initiated the process of amending the Planning Scheme (known as C204) in relation to the Sorrento Commercial Precinct. The intent of the amendment is to provide mandatory provisions to limit the height and scale of new developments in line with Council

Policy. The relevant policy, adopted by Council in October 2015 is the OBR Commercial Precinct Sorrento Heritage Policy.

Developers submitted objections and the matter was referred to a Planning Panel, appointed by the Minister. In April, NCG Committee members, along with the MPS, developers and the NHS, made presentations arguing for mandatory heights and appropriate setbacks. The Panel report was received in July, rejecting all arguments in favour of mandatory planning provisions, relying on the new State planning provisions and ignoring the relevant local planning provisions. The Council is currently reviewing the Panel report (which has not been made public) and has until the end of July to respond.

Since then we have submitted objections to permit applications for development in OBR. The NCG supports a considered holistic approach to the future planning of the historic coastal township of Sorrento. Over recent years the NCG has worked with the MPSC and its Nepean Ward Councillors and with MPS Planners and Officers, to put in place strategic planning amendments to protect the significance of the Sorrento (all the work leading up to and including C204). In the last two years the NCG has tried to ensure that overlays are adhered to - by objecting to inappropriate development proposals. This has not always been successful. The

proposal at 141-145 Ocean Beach Road, which under the HO1 seeks to demolish an historic building on the site, challenges the height, set back and sight-line regulations, and seeks a waiver from compliance with traffic and car parking requirements, is one example. The Mitre 10 development proposal is also on the list to be considered by NCG.

### **Summing up NCG's objections to 141-145 Ocean Beach Road**

The NCG considers that the existing DDO Amendment C203, previously DDO28, should be adhered to. The design objectives of 1.0 in the DDO28 document must be enforced. The HO1 must not be set aside to demolish the historic house, Sandarne; mandatory height and setbacks should be enforced on all boundaries; the development should comply with MPS policy sight line recommendations; car parking spaces and traffic considerations must adhere to the schedules and regulations that apply to Ocean Beach Road.

Overall, this is a poor proposal which would set an undesirable development precedent in the historic coastal township of Sorrento. The NCG therefore requested that the application be refused in its present form.



*Source: SeaRoad Ferries website*

## **Sorrento Ferry Terminal**

The ferry service between Sorrento and Queenscliff is operated by a private company, SeaRoad Ferries. Currently it is moving more than 800,000 passengers per year. To respond to growing visitor numbers to the Peninsula and demands for modern facilities, the company has proposed to put a new terminal building at the end of the pier (built over water), put in place improved parking and access facilities for pedestrians and cars and improved traffic circulation. Agreement has been reached with PVT for the bus service 788 to stop at the ferry.

The company has been preparing the required preparatory studies over the last three years, and has been working with the Shire and others (VicRoads, DELWP, Parks Victoria) to obtain the necessary approvals. This has resulted in a proposal for a planning scheme amendment (C209), which has been on public display for comments until the end



Sorrento Ferry Terminal Proposed Image. Source: SeaRoad Ferries website

of July. (All relevant documents and plans can be accessed at <http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Building-Planning/Strategic-Planning/Planning-Scheme-Amendments/C209-Planning-Scheme-Amendment>). At the same time, the company has organised public information days in June and July, which were well attended.

A number of issues relating to the proposal have been identified by the Committee, in close coordination with other community groups. These include the height of the proposed new terminal and its visual impact, traffic planning and management in the immediate vicinity and wider Sorrento, proposed vegetation on the pier, and more generally, the visual impact of what is now an unobstructed view from the shore over the bay (except for about 15 minutes per hour when the ferry is

docked). The Committee has met several times with SeaRoad and has submitted written comments on the proposed planning scheme amendment. The expectation is that the Shire will ask the Minister for a Planning Panel (as was the case with C204) which will then hold hearings on the proposals.

### **C209 Planning Scheme Amendment Mornington Peninsula Shire NCG OBJECTION 28 July 2017**

The Nepean Conservation Group (NCG) objects to the process that the Mornington Peninsula Shire (MPS) is following to facilitate the proposals from SeaRoad Ferries. The NCG also has serious concerns about some details of the proposals. The Nepean Conservation Group (NCG) has studied the documentation on exhibit, has had three meetings with

the CEO of SeaRoad Ferries and one meeting with the planning officer of MPS. We have also been consulting with other community groups. The following objections and concerns are, therefore, well-considered.

Below, we outline our objections to the process followed, the traffic management implications and the terminal proposal itself. These three issues are not standalone, and need to be seen on conjunction with each other. A fourth concern is around the bigger picture of the development of transport links from the Great Ocean Road, across the Mornington Peninsula to Phillip Island and beyond.

**1. The proposed planning amendment, C209, and the Incorporated Document facilitate a major commercial development while giving away all future community and ratepayer rights to be consulted on and be involved in the details, any changes or amendments, as would normally be the case with planning permits.** We would like to highlight the following:

- The Incorporated Document unnecessarily covers more than the current SeaRoad Ferries lease.
- The Incorporated Document, clause 5: the community will have no rights to comment on any future changes or amendments or developments – the SeaRoad Ferries developers have carte blanche. This is because the plans that the Incorporated Document

refers to are not complete, nor are they detailed in terms of design, materials used and visual impacts.

- The effect of the Incorporated document is to negate the local overlays contained in the Mornington Peninsula Shire Planning Scheme – that is the Heritage Overlay and the Environmental Protection Overlay as they currently apply to the Esplanade and Point Nepean Road.
- Clause 6 – the community needs to be able to have input, to be part of consultation processes, not be totally excluded from any future considerations

**1. The proposed traffic management arrangements, while having some merit, are not acceptable as they do not address the existing traffic problems in the Sorrento township and are likely to exacerbate these problems.** We would like to highlight the following:

- We appreciate the company's efforts to produce a traffic management plan for the vicinity of the ferry terminal. However, given the traffic and parking problems that already exist, a holistic approach is needed.
- We urge MPS to develop a traffic and parking management plan for Sorrento, in consultation with the wider community.

- In developing such a plan, the Transit Orient Development (TOD) principles of walkability, liveability, connections to the historic coastal town, and actively linking visitors to the heritage of Sorrento need to be considered.
  - The SeaRoad traffic management proposal cannot proceed without an overall plan for Sorrento.
1. **The height and scale of the proposed terminal raise concerns as Sorrento (and Queenscliff on the other side of the Bay) have significant cultural heritage, landscape and coastal values.** We would like to highlight the following:
    - Currently, there is an unobstructed view from the shore over the bay. This would be permanently obstructed.
    - Major use changes are proposed for the SeaRoad Ferry terminal at Sorrento, beyond transit operations
    - At present, the whole jetty, pier and SeaRoad Ferry terminal at Sorrento are very low scale. The SeaRoad Ferry operations use small buildings, almost ad hoc, unplanned. Recreational uses (walking, fishing, sitting, watching, daydreaming, swimming, dolphin swims) are all low key, low impact.
    - We accept that the current arrangements of the car waiting area next to the jetty is not practical and not visually attractive, but it is low key and low impact.
  1. **The SeaRoad Ferries development must be considered as part of and in the context of plans for transport links from the Great Ocean Road, across the Mornington Peninsula to Phillip Island and beyond. We would like to highlight the following:**
    - The impact on the Mornington Peninsula from environmental, social and economic points of view must be considered. The local communities and the people of Victoria must be given an opportunity to consider the big picture, before a Planning Amendment such as C209 is implemented.
- At the Mornington Peninsula Shire Planning Services Committee meeting on Monday 4 September 2017 it was concluded that (Minutes, p.17):**
- The majority of submissions received in response to the amendment have been letters of support. Objecting submissions have related primarily to the commercial use and development





Queenscliff Ferry Terminal Proposed Image. Source: SeaRoad Ferries website

of public land, development character, heritage and landscape. The necessity of the development has also been called into question. It was recommended that Council refers the amendment to an Independent Panel so that the submissions can be reviewed in further detail, and that submissions in relation to traffic impacts are referred to the Advisory Committee appointed by the Minister for Planning.

At the Mornington Peninsula Shire Planning Services Committee meeting on Monday 4 September 2017 it was recommended (Minutes, p.17):

- 1 A. Under Section 23 of the Act refer those submissions to an Independent Panel.
- B. Request the Minister for Planning to appoint a panel under Section 153 of the Act to consider the submissions.

- C. Refer those submissions relating to traffic impacts to the Advisory Committee which has been appointed by the Minister for Planning to consider traffic impacts associated with the amendment.
2. That all submitters to the amendment be notified of Council's resolution in writing.
3. That the Committee resolves that Attachments 1 and 2 to this report be retained as confidential items pursuant to Section 77(2)(a) and (b) of the Local Government Act 1989 and be placed in a separate minute book for confidential items as they contain personal submitter details.

## Queenscliff Ferry Terminal Development Plan – Stage 2

*from p.4 of the September 2017 issue of the Queencliffe Herald (the Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale News)*

“Council and representatives of the Searoad Ferries have met to discuss the Queenscliffe Planning Scheme requirements relating to the ferry terminal upgrade proposal as part of a pre-application process. A Planning Scheme Amendment in 2013 allows Searoad Ferries to complete the redevelopment of the Queenscliff ferry terminal. ...

“The proposed works are part of a \$35 million plan to create beautiful and safe ferry terminal facilities on both sides of the bay to serve local commuters, day trippers and international tourists in Sorrento and Queencliff” Searoad Ferries CEO Matt McDonald said.

“After perusing the plans one local commented: ‘The proposal will be heavily scrutinized for its impact on traders at the harbour and any environmental considerations due to its size and location. Inherent with the development will be the notion of linking Phillip Island and south east coast through the Otways via the great ocean Rd. Sooner or later it will require consideration as to whether towns like Sorrento, Queenscliff, Barwon Head’s etc., are able to handle increased traffic flows.’”

It is time that the residents of Sorrento and Queenscliff worked far

more closely together on such major developmental issues.

## Housing Settlement Strategy

“Peninsula Urban Environment and Biodiversity is under attack by Shire”, writes Cameron Brown, President, Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc. (STS).

Read the Shire’s Mornington Peninsula Housing and Settlement Strategy 2017, [http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/new-website-documents/about-us/meetings-amp-minutes/2017/attachments-2017/173107psa\\_att\\_21\\_1.pdf](http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/new-website-documents/about-us/meetings-amp-minutes/2017/attachments-2017/173107psa_att_21_1.pdf)

Below are some stats from this report, I would like to get a joint letter going in relation to this risk. Looking at the report it seems that the current settlement pattern has been purely based on land capacity (block size, resulting in subdivision infill) in the GRZ rather than capability (This seems to have just be Mathematically calculated).

So basically, housing figures on block size, vs urban flooding vs drainage capacity vs land capability vs environmental constraint. This seems to be the shires answer to the 3 storey issue.

A good example of this is we know Mt Martha and Mt Eliza feature larger block though the shire has indicated that areas can take a large amount of extra dwellings between 2016-31.

- Large blocks are assumed can take infill density of no greater



*New fence on the Eastern Sister, erected under VicSmart. It no longer permits the public to view Sullivan Bay and the Western Sister. Photo Ursula de Jong*

than 1 dwelling for every 450 square metres of site area.

- No regard has been paid to other overlays, (section 4.4) Environmental Significance Overlays, Vegetation Protection Overlays, Land Subject to Inundation Overlays, Erosion Management Overlays, Climate Change and High tide areas at risk. These have not found translated into DDO's in anyway in relation to subdivision size.
- Biodiversity isn't mentioned in the document. The proposal will ultimately see big amounts of vegetation lost to infill development rather than protecting the vegetation and biodiversity. If every block in the current GRZ zones 900 square meters or over subdivides we will lose a huge amount of biodiversity and character

from our townships. From my perspective, the Peninsula's character is predominantly through vegetation, areas that have been too heavily modified (e.g. parts of Mornington) have similar character to Melbourne suburbs. See what the Shire says on page 3 of 32.

- Although there is no single 'character' that describes all of the Peninsula's towns and villages, the consideration of character is a major factor in identifying those areas which may accommodate more or less change while noting that good design is an expected requirement in all areas. The framework that has been established in relation to planning for residential character is outlined in section.
- No mention of Special Use Zone land currently under threat,

STS has written to the minister regarding this, it seems to be being ignored by many Special Use Zones come under Special Purpose Zones in the Planning Scheme. [https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/32132/DELWP0055\\_-\\_ResidentialZoneReview\\_v8\\_weba.pdf](https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/32132/DELWP0055_-_ResidentialZoneReview_v8_weba.pdf) page 5 (There is a large amount of Special Use Zone on the Peninsula stemming from the 1975 conservation plan much with high biodiversity value.

- Identification of a number of “investigation areas”, primarily undeveloped land within the Low Density Zone in Dromana (Collins Road), Mount Martha (Hearn Road), Mornington (Craigie Road), where further consideration of options is considered warranted.
- Identification of proposed changes to the existing DDOs or new DDO areas where it is considered that the existing provisions do not adequately reflect the existing conditions and character of an area. This includes areas of low density subdivision in Portsea, areas east of Racecourse Road in Mornington and land adjoining Bayvista Rise in Somerville. Pg 18 of 32
- Shortage of accommodation that is not camping or caravan is driving up the demand for non-occupied housing, placing pressure on low income groups (e.g. holiday homes, short term investment accommodation Airbnb, etc.).

A further key point in relation to housing and occupancy on the Mornington Peninsula is the continuing high dwelling vacancy rate. The number of unoccupied private dwellings as at Census 2016 was 31.3% (constituting 27,890 vacant dwellings), compared to only 9.1% across the Greater Melbourne. The percentage of unoccupied dwellings has decreased gradually over time (e.g. from 37% of the housing stock in 1991) however the total number of vacant dwellings in fact has increased by approximately 5,000 dwellings since 2011. This point to the continuing strong demand for second (holiday) dwellings, especially on the Southern Peninsula and in the small coastal townships. Pg 12 of 32 see also 15 of 32.

*Cameron Brown, President, Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc.*

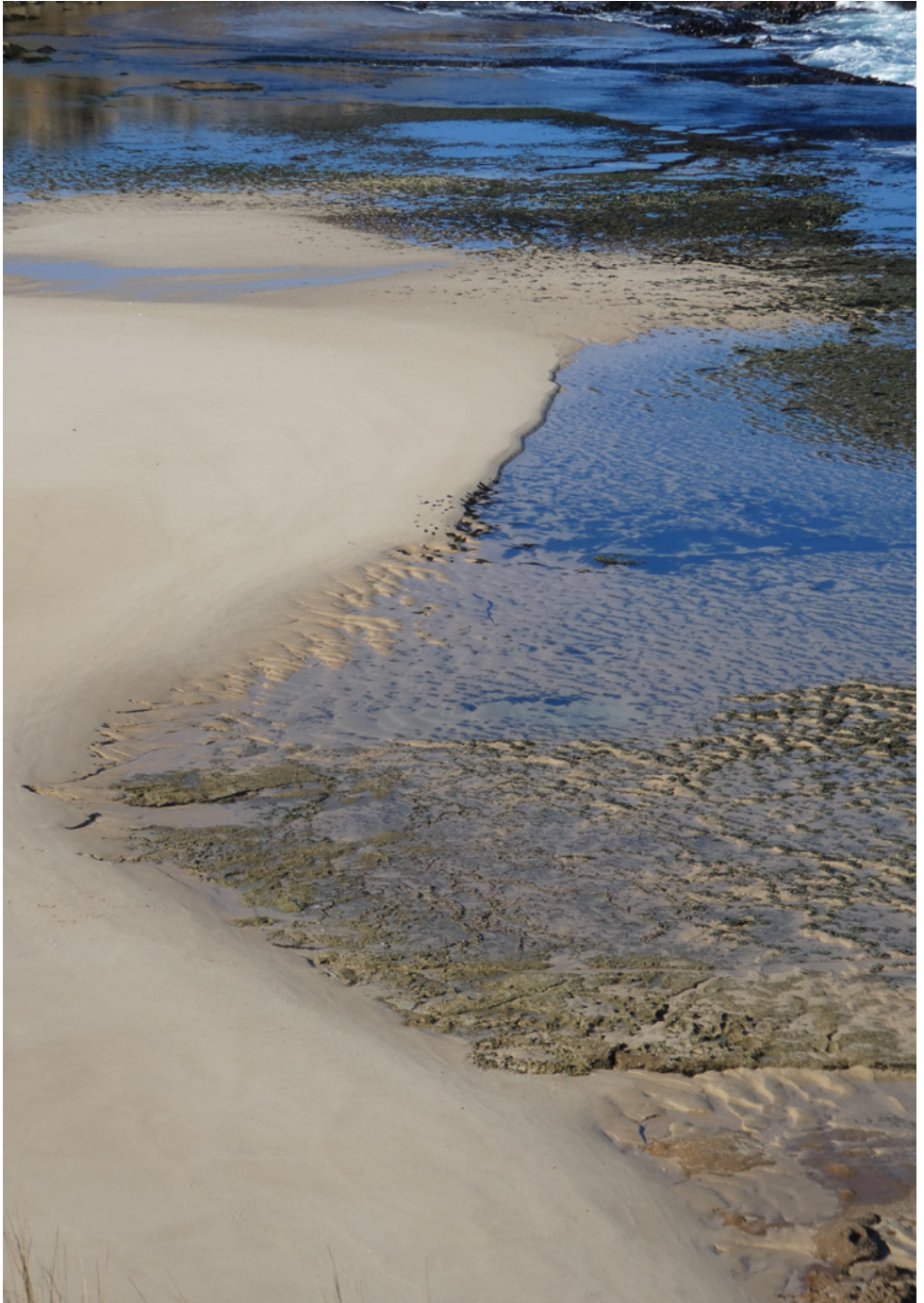
*Right: Low tide, Mornington Peninsula National Park.*

*Front Cover: Lady Wren;*

*Back Cover: Mister Wren.*

*Photos: Ursula de Jong.*







## NEPEAN CONSERVATION GROUP INC

ABN 44 531 738 131 Reg. No. AOO 2079IU

PO Box 157, Sorrento, 3943

[www.nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](http://www.nepeanconservationgroup.org.au) [info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au)