



Planning Strategy
City of Greater Geelong
PO Box 104
Geelong 3220

By email to statplanning@geelongcity.vic.gov.au

SUBMISSION re DRAFT BARWON HEADS STRUCTURE PLAN

Dear Sir/Madam,

We thank CoGG and the Strategic Planning team for the time and resources they have put into this process. The community feels listened to and involved in this review process. An excellent example for other parts of the CoGG juggernaut to learn from and follow.

As a community we have put a lot of time and energy into this process and expect that the resulting Structure Plan will be given more status than its predecessor. We also expect the level of consultation will be an adequate indication of community consultation for future requests we might make for interim protections. We don't agree with some of the recommendations, which reflect State Government Policy, but put our coastal village and lifestyle at risk. We have always felt Barwon Heads is disadvantaged by the number of "responsible entities"; we urge CoGG, Vic Roads and Barwon Coast Committee of Management to make more issues trans boundary and co-ordinate planning.

This submission is on behalf of the Barwon Heads Association, "the BHA". We have about 210 members and close relationships with other groups in Barwon Heads. Our members are residents or ratepayers in Barwon Heads. These are our objectives:

- To advance the progress, welfare, and development of the community residing within Barwon Heads and District
- To provide a forum for discussion of matters affecting the community
- To represent the community in discussions with Federal, State and Municipal Governments relating to its progress, welfare and development.

We have a long history of involvement in strategic planning for Barwon Heads, and have learnt a lot recently from our involvement in the 9 Bridge Rd review and other planning objections. We influenced the recent panel decision to recommend permanent protection for the heritage house at 9 Bridge Rd following a process of initiating interim controls.

The main themes that recur in our engagement with the community and council are:

- the importance of maintaining a coastal village character;
- sense of place;
- cultural identity;
- protecting vegetation;
- strategic planning support; and
- concern at the rate of development of the town with consequential loss of heritage.

We look forward to the final report and supporting our submission before a Panel.

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PART 1

1. KEY INFLUENCES - We note the extent of these influences.

1.1. Policy Context

Not a designated growth zone - We know that Barwon Heads is not a designated growth zone, however there has been little apparent assessment of the impact of the 2 major growth centres, Armstrong Creek to the west and Ocean Grove to the east, on Barwon Heads, its community and its facilities. There are daily impacts of heavy through traffic, and an significant increase in visitors to our beaches and vibrant shopping centre.

Town Centre classification – We accept that the growth will reflect the current retail hierarchy of small to medium businesses; however wonder how many cushions can be sold and nails painted in our little village. The IHDA is extensive and has been identified due to its close proximity to the town centre. There are a number of assumptions that don't apply to our little coastal village, that increase the risk of over development and contribute to the slow wearing down of the coastal village culture and the evolution of "new suburb" style development. How do we reclassify the IHDA?

No intense commercial or industrial development – we strongly support this and will rigorously defend this principle.

State and Local Planning Policy - One needs extensive expertise in planning to understand the complex web of Federal, State and Local Government policies and procedures.

State Policy for residential development seems to override the protections for coastal and sensitive environments in other legislation. There are obviously conflicting policies with different agendas. We repeat our view that the IHDA model does not work in a small coastal village which is a not a growth zone. It might be a tool that works for inner city suburbs on transport networks. The scale of development, the potential height of 11m in the IHDA DDO and the 400m radius from a town centre do not allow a proper transition zone from the town centre commercial 1 zone down to the neighbourhood residential zone. Can the radius be reduced to a 100m radius from the town centre to better reflect the coastal nature of the town?

Local Planning Policy relies on a complex maze of planning schemes, reviews, plans and the CoGG planning administration structure, can be a real burden to small towns like ours, and organisations like the BHA trying to protect our coastal amenity. We have expressed our concern at the considerable risk of negative impacts from the statewide residential zones; and are still concerned that our small, low lying coastal town does not have the capacity to embrace these changes. The BHSP2017 has recognised that Barwon Heads is not a growth area and that we do have constraints in regard to our fragile environment, together with flooding and stormwater issues. The non negotiable requirements, even with a restatement of the residential zones is still considerable with heights of 11m, & 3 stories appearing to be possible in the General Residential Zone 1. If CoGG doesn't have the authority to limit the height we request that this are is reclassified to the Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

The complexity and opportunity for application of a range of policy and statutory controls requires simplification. The complexity results in significant confusion in the community and seems to have empowered Building Surveyors who have the authority to sign off on buildings and developments with little apparent scrutiny.

1.2. Natural & Urban Environment

There is an urgent need for better coordination between all the agencies in order to actually protect the environment. Currently there is no example of any agency being particularly effective.

A principle of the 2010 Structure Plan was to protect the landscape character of the town and it was directed to encourage retention and enhancement of existing vegetation.

We support this principle and directions of the BHSP2017 which include the direction to “encourage retention and enhancement of existing vegetation on roadsides and reserves using locally indigenous plantings that respects the informal coastal qualities of the town”. Retention of existing vegetation should not be limited to roadsides and reserves.

The existing principle of encouragement of retention and enhancement of existing vegetation should be strengthened to provide planning control over existing significant trees on private land.

The need for better co-ordination with public landowners and agencies was recently highlighted with the advertising process for the new drain that CoGG is planning to build into the Barwon River.

There is growing concern about the impacts of developments upstream on the ecosystems and the impacts on the Barwon Estuary. Our geography is vulnerable to climate change; our coastline includes a broad estuary system, fragile dunes, long surf beaches with significant Aboriginal and European heritage. Our beach is now every ones beach and must be protected and preserved.

1.3. Demographics And Social Profile

Our age structure has changed over recent years with a significant increase of younger families living in town. We are no longer considered to be a retirement village and holiday destination. The local school will reach 500 students this year. This energy and youth was reflected recently in the campaign to keep the library open. Our reputation has changed to being a great place to live and bring up children. The requirements of young families and teenagers should be mentioned in the BHSP2017.

1.4. Township Facilities & Services

The recent decision by CoGG to close the Barwon Heads Library has highlighted the level of reliance by locals on walking and cycling to the library and school. Instructions to get on the bus or go by car do not fit with the community profile.

The message from the community to CoGG is “don’t take away existing community services at time of significant growth and change”

1.5. Transport And Physical Infrastructure

The BHSP2017 does not cater for the increase in traffic resulting from the major growth zones on our boundaries.

Traffic is and will continue to be a significant issue for the community. The Council appears to have ignored the Traffic Management and Parking Plan 2010 and abandoned any serious attempt to achieve significant improvements. It is a Council responsibility in conjunction with Vic Roads to monitor and control traffic. There is a considerable increase in very heavy vehicles going through town, and squeezing around the very tight

Golf Links Rd/Bridge Rd corner. It is not acceptable to rely on the community to liaise with Vic Roads on these matters.

There is acknowledgement that Public Transport is limited at best with little to support the frail and elderly. The summer free shuttle bus is organised by Barwon Coast Committee of Management "BCCM" with support from CoGG and local businesses. This service could be greatly improved with better communications, signage and partnering with CoGG.

1.6. Village Centre Growth, Residential Lot Supply And Further Development

We agree that the Barwon Heads town centre is appropriate to cater for growth to 2031. We are concerned that commercial interests are keen to creep into residential areas, and expect the BHSP2017 to inhibit this.

PART 2 - SPECIFIC COMMENTS

2. SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

The decision to retain the existing settlement boundary at its current location and not to expand on the western edge of the township is supported. The policy basis for this decision presented in Section 3.3.1 (Urban Growth) is also supported.

Comments

The subject land to the west of the existing settlement boundary is low lying, has poor surface drainage and high water tables which are likely to be within 1 m to 2 m of the ground-surface. These issues are likely to be exacerbated with the effects of climate change. It is noted that the State datasets show that there are issues with potential future sea level rise for the Murtnaghurt swamp area and that the local coastal assessment did not assess this area west of the settlement boundary.

Construction activity in this area is likely to expose acid sulphate soils and saline groundwater which would, without effective and ongoing treatment and management, would result in acid water drainage to the Murtnaghurt Lagoon and the overflow channel connecting the lagoon to Lake Connewarre. Without effective controls, construction activity would also increase the turbidity, temperature and nutrient loads to these Ramsar wetlands and hence increase the risk of adverse impacts on their ecological values.

Any development is likely to result in an unacceptable risk to the ecological values of the receiving water bodies due the natural characteristics of the subject land and the receiving environment and potential deleterious changes to the at source storm water characteristics. Furthermore climate change is likely to increase the flood risk. Any attempts to rezone the farmland for purposes other than farming must be prevented.

We endorse the submission from the Save Barwon Heads Alliance.

3. PLANNING ZONES - The following approach is recommended by CoGG in the BHSP2017:

- Rezone Residential Growth Zone to General Residential 1.
- Increased Housing Diversity Area (IHDA) to be retained; although removed from land south of Bridge Road.
 - New Design and Development Overlay – the Barwon Heads IHDA area.
- General Residential Area to be rezoned to Neighbourhood Residential Area. - New Design and Development Overlay - Barwon Heads Incremental Change Area.

A summary of the design response to recognise the unique coastal design character of Barwon Heads includes:

- Provide space around buildings and separation between buildings, landscaped front gardens and retention/ planning of indigenous vegetation.
- Appropriate consideration of building materials and high quality non- suburban design styles.
- Height of buildings will depend on design and being able to meet the coastal design character outcomes.

Comments

We understand that the IHDA Design and Development Overlay encourages a need for smaller dwellings, provided it is the right type and design of dwelling and is in the right design context and scale. The choice of residential zone recognises recent State changes to the residential zones. However there is still a mandatory height of up to 11m and up to 3 storeys. This is excessive and will have a significant impact on the existing character of the main part of old Barwon Heads. We consider the “township zone” is more appropriate in order to protect the character and amenity of coastal villages like ours. The Urban Growth, Supply of urban land (VPP 11.02-1) ensures that there is sufficient land available to meet forecast demand and to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15 year period. However, it is clearly stated that residential land supply will be considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town by town basis. This is a critical point for Barwon Heads, which is not required to meet any residential growth target for the municipality.

General Residential Zone -1 GRZ-1

- Rezoning the present RGZ is supported. However the application of the GRZ-1 to such a large part of Barwon Heads will result in many of the negative impacts of the RGZ. The mandatory height of 11m and up to 3 storeys, is excessive.
- The design and development overlay described in the draft will provide some protection but is inadequate.
- Removing the area south of Bridge Road from the GRZ-1 is supported on the basis of discussion provided in the BHSP2017 documentation.
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Barwon Heads Incremental Change. NRZ- Barwon Heads
 - Rezoning the present GRZ to NRZ –Barwon Heads is supported, provided the mandatory height of 9m and up to storeys 2, are not exceeded.
 - The design and development overlay “DDO” as described in the draft is acceptable provided it is strictly applied.
- Limiting the mandatory height for Barwon Heads to 9m is the obvious solution. The cap of 11m will invite opportunistic development in old Barwon Heads which still maintains significant old Barwon Heads character and coastal heritage.
- Reduction of the IHDA
 - Reducing the IHDA area to 100m of town centre and rezone remainder neighbourhood residential zone to reflect the coastal design character of the town. The proposed extension of the IHDA takes it to over 1/3rd of the town which is too extensive.
 - This policy has not delivered the desired increased housing diversity nor increased the density of residents in the nominated area. As noted by CoGG representative (19 June 2017 BHA meeting) we have been informed that approximately 75% of single houses are replaced with a larger single house. (We are not sure of this statistic, and it appears that there are more multi-unit townhouses replacing single dwellings. e.g. Golf Links Rd, Geelong Rd, Hitchcock Ave.)
 - This brings into question why the IHDA area, which determines the GRZ-1 area should not be reduced to, say, a 100m radius of the ‘activity center’. This would be reasonable in that a larger area the township would be a NRZ, providing more homes and site coverage suited to the size of the township and opportunity to retain vegetation.

- Exemptions for single dwellings.
 - The Draft Structure Plan recognises that smaller dwellings are being replaced by large dwellings and “the intent of the Increased Housing Diversity Area to provide smaller and more diverse housing forms is not being met”. It also acknowledges this under “Threats to Barwon Heads” on page 74 where it states “the main threats to the preferred neighbourhood character of Barwon Heads includes the following: The consolidation of individual house lots and the development of those lots with large, bulky dwellings that are inconsistent with the existing pattern and rhythm of detached houses and multi-unit developments existing throughout the township.”
 - We do not support the total exemption of planning permit applications (p20) for single dwellings from advertising and third party appeal rights. It is critical that residents in adjoining properties are informed about proposed developments. There have been a number of examples where Rescode has not been followed and dwellings have been (approved) by Building Surveyors with significant anguish to neighbours, particularly when significant breaches are subsequently discovered.
 - We request that planning permits for single dwellings be advertised as a precautionary measure to enable the orderly planning for Barwon Heads.

- Interim height limits for Barwon Heads
 - The purpose of an Interim Height Limit in Barwon Heads via an Interim Planning Scheme Amendment is to reflect and uphold the integrity of the Draft Barwon Heads Structure Plan 2017. The Draft Barwon Heads Structure Plan 2017 proposes to cap height limits to 9 m across the majority of land outside the Commercial Zones currently located within the Residential Growth Zone Schedule 3 and General Residential Zone Schedule 2 applying a somewhat blanket provision.
 - At present, the current planning controls allow for buildings to be constructed up to 10.5 metres height. Without an interim height limit overlay, the township is vulnerable to further erosion of the neighbourhood character with further ad hoc and excessive built form of 3 storeys or 10.5 metres.
 - As a precautionary measure and to ensure longevity of this unique coastal village of Barwon Heads, the interim height control will provide the community and Responsible Authority with certainty that future development cannot exceed 9 metres.
 - The interim height control will expire as soon as the rezoning of the land as specified under the Draft Barwon Heads Structure Plan 2017 has occurred with the new DDO 39A and DDO 39B.

Further action requested

- **Limit the mandatory height for Barwon Heads to 9m.**
- **Reduce the IHDA to 100m from the town centre and rezone remainder neighbourhood residential zone to reflect the coastal design character of the town and maintain the town character.**
- **Introduce advertising for single dwellings as a precautionary measure to enable the orderly planning for Barwon Heads.**
- **Apply for an Interim Height Limit in Barwon Heads via an Interim Planning Scheme Amendment to reflect and uphold the integrity of the Draft Barwon Heads Structure Plan 2017, to cap height limits to 9 m across the majority of land outside the Commercial Zones currently located within the Residential Growth Zone Schedule 3 and General Residential Zone Schedule 2.**

4. **TRAFFIC AND PARKING** - The structure plan recognises the complexities around traffic and parking in the town due to the two-month holiday peak. No major improvements are recommended.

4.1 Traffic

We strongly believe that traffic and parking are serious issues throughout the year, and are less seasonal now than five years ago. The short sighted placement of the Barwon Heads Bridge and the encroaching growth areas requires continual monitoring and planning in order to preserve the amenity and town character.

Barwon Heads has always been disadvantaged by the split responsibility for traffic and parking. It makes it easy for CoGG, Vic Roads and BCCM to independently plan and blame the other for gaps or disconnects. It is not acceptable that no major improvements are recommended in the **BHSP2017**, and the only action is that Council will continue to monitor the parking situation and identify potential future infrastructure that could be undertaken subject to community feedback and budget availability.

This is too vague. The discarding of the Barwon Heads Traffic & Parking Study and the generational GTA work has left a significant vacuum that the **BHSP2017** fails to address. Why should we rely on a panel to recommend that a further assessment is required?

The Barwon Heads Traffic & Parking Study was originally prepared by GTA for CoGG during 2002 + 2003. Since then the Bridge was built and further study by GTA in 2008 was commissioned, but excluded “the strategic issues of the future routing of any extensions to the Geelong Ring Rd and the location and impact of an additional bridge over the Barwon River. The 2010 report reads as if the Bridge has not been finalised and refers to the parking deficit and the proposed development at Armstrong Creek.

Since this report was finalised in 2010 the following has changed:

- The Bridge has been built
- Armstrong Creek development has a growing population adding to infrastructure stress
- Large trucks are using Barwon Heads as the regular route, through the main street Hitchcock Ave, as well as the arterial roads
- The extension of the Geelong Ring Rd diverts traffic through Barwon Heads
- Ocean Grove population is growing rapidly north of the existing township
- There are nearly 500 students at the Barwon Heads Primary School
- The Barwon Heads Rd is in a poor state for the increasing traffic and cyclists
- Climate Change and significant storm surges have been identified as having the potential to flood the Spit
- There is increasing stress on parking provision for the increase in visitors and “locals” from the new growth zones who are now adopting Barwon Heads for facilities and coastal recreation
- 50k speed limits have been introduced throughout town, with 40k speed limits in more congested parts of town. There needs to be further analysis of 40k zones and their continuation

Further action requested

- **Include a Barwon Heads Traffic & Parking study in this BHSP2017. We don't need to waste the Panels time arguing for a more up to date professional analysis it is obvious that the previous work is out dated and needs to be renewed.**
- **Priority Action corner of Hitchcock Ave & Geelong Rd**
- **Be more consistent with 40k zones especially through residential and commercial areas.**

4.2 Parking

Most of the parking in Barwon Heads is on the street, on residential roads, in Church grounds or provided by BCCM. The practice of allowing significant waivers of parking requirements for each and every development has resulted in a spread of commercial parking into residential areas. There is very little enforcement, and poor signage to car parks. Employees of local businesses occupy car parks that should be occupied by shoppers and visitors. There are poor facilities for the disabled.

All surveys and information relating to parking provided for new developments seem to be based on the coldest day mid-week in June and do not reflect the actual parking habits and impacts.

There are few loading zones, with most commercial loading using parking bays in Hitchcock Ave or blocking driveways. Developments don't appear to make proper arrangements for rubbish storage and collection. The failure to include these facilities in every development has the potential to have a detrimental impact on the town centre, its usability and its liveability.

We know that most of the units in Hitchcock Ave are listed for holiday lets. This can have a significant impact on street parking capacity.

We note that there are systems for residential carparking permits in Ocean Grove and other parts of Geelong especially around the commercial areas. Over the next 5 years we would expect that residential parking permits are considered for areas bordering the town centre. We would expect that residential parking permits would only be issued to existing dwellings, and not to new developments seeking waiver of parking.

Further action requested

- **Enforce current parking restrictions**
- **Restrict the size of developments to reflect the impacts of the reduction of parking on surrounding areas**
- **Require Developers & Parking Consultants to include parking assessments taken over summer and weekends rather than mid week in winter**
- **Deny resident parking permits to new developments which seek waiver of parking and require disclosure at the time of sale.**

4.3 Pedestrian Amenity

The recent BH Pedestrian Safety Project, was initiated by local residents which resulted in lobbying and funding from our local Member of Parliament Lisa Neville.

The BHA took a leadership role in co-ordinating the various agencies and liaising with Vic Roads. This project was aimed to slow traffic in both Hitchcock Avenue and Bridge Road in the vicinity of the local shopping areas to enable pedestrians safe access to shops and cafes. This project set a priority towards the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in this small

seaside town considering the increase in cars, trucks and busses. The consultation process took over a year and involved meetings with the stakeholder group and the final presentation of three options to the community via two public consultations sessions in August and September 2015. Vic Roads followed the community response where 77% of respondents preferred the zebra crossing option.

There was significant community concern that the zebra crossings were causing long traffic queues in and out of Barwon Heads during the 2017 holiday season. Vic Roads agreed that the perception that there has been a significant increase in traffic volumes through Barwon Heads in the last few years is correct, however, aerial photos of Barwon Heads in January 2015 show traffic queued on the bridge and the Ocean Grove spit at the same lengths as 2016/17. Like many seaside towns along the coast over the last few years, traffic through Barwon Heads has suffered considerable time constraints during the holiday season. The increase in population growth both at Armstrong Creek and Ocean Grove will add to traffic to and through Barwon Heads. This is an increase in commuters as well as holiday traffic.

There is considerable pedestrian activity in the northern part of town that needs further action.

Further action requested:

Include consideration of the following in BHSP2017:

- **Vicinity Barwon Heads Hotel: the concentration of pedestrian and cycling activity in the proximity of the two bridges will require constant monitoring, and should have a significant influence over the design of any changes to the Barwon Heads Hotel.**
- **Northern end of commercial zone in Hitchcock Avenue needs better pedestrian amenity, especially near the Dr's surgery.**
- **Vicinity The Barwon Heads Primary School: this area has significant pedestrian and cycling activity twice a day. It cannot be addressed by putting signs on the footpath. Consideration to making this a permanent crossing 24/7.**
- **Vicinity of Bop Bop kindergarten also has significant pedestrian activity. Consideration to making the Geelong Rd crossing permanent 24/7.**
- **Vicinity of skatepark: consideration of pedestrian crossing.**

4.4 Footpaths

We have refreshed our memories of the significant document "Equity Justice Access" commissioned by CoGG in 2012. This survey had 600 responses and provided a substantial range of information on the walking habits and preferences of people in Barwon Heads. We are not sure why this survey was commissioned and then ignored. We know there is an increase in young people on bikes, older people with gophers and people pushing prams. People want to feel secure and there is a growing conflict between various users within the town. Older people are wary of the uneven surfaces and tripping.

There are also a number of footpaths that suddenly stop. Council should initially identify these and complete them.

Further action requested

- **What happened to this report?**
- **How has it been referenced to influence the BHSP2017?**
- **What is the footpath strategy for Barwon Heads?**

4.5 Public Transport

We know that public transport is the responsibility of the State Government. The current 55 bus service is inadequate for the community. Council should be better prepared to work with the local communities to plan for public transport across the Bellarine. There is discussion about a community bus during the year, this should not be discounted and should be included for further consideration in the BHSP2017.

4.6 Cycling Network

There is a substantial increase of cyclists old and young through town and across the Bellarine. It is not appropriate for them to share the limited walking paths and further consideration should be given to expanding cycling lanes, especially on the Barwon Heads & 13th Beach Rds. Council established a 13th Beach Working Group in 2011, and published a draft report "13th Beach Road, Barwon Heads Bicycle network summary report May 2014". The report concluded that "there is community support for improving patronage and safety to pedestrian and bicyclists accessing to 13th Beach Rd, whilst protecting existing vegetation". Ewing Blyth Drive has been widened, but nothing has happened on 13th Beach Rd since then except for some yellow lines.

4.7 Vic Roads - access to Barwon Heads

The Barwon Heads Road - the current project to enable access to Warrillily has caused significant disruption to Barwon Heads, and has resulted in the potential of four sets of traffic lights within 2 kilometres, if lights go in as proposed at Rainbow Riders (if it ever drains). These lights will significantly slow access to Barwon Heads.

The Barwon Heads Road duplication to Mt Duneed Rd - this is an important project for Barwon Heads. The duplication does not extend to Barwon Heads. The actual road is in very poor condition and is dangerous to Barwon Heads. We note that Vic Roads states in its Information Update April 2017 "*we are also undertaking a planning study for Barwon Heads Rd, between settlement Rd, South Geelong and Lower Mount Duneed Rd*". Many are surprised that the recent works did not include duplication.

The New Bellarine Link - Vic Roads also reported that there had been significant progress towards building the new Bellarine Link connecting Torquay with the Bellarine Highway and so adding a new river crossing to aid traffic flows around the north of Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads. Modelling shows that this will alleviate some of the current traffic stress. The benefits of the Bellarine Link are listed as:

- Smoother and more reliable travel to the Bellarine Peninsula
- Reduction of traffic, particularly heavy vehicles through Geelong CBD
- Improved travel times for community and business
- Improved connection to the growing coastal areas of Drysdale, Clifton Springs and Portarlington

Some of us wonder what, if any, impact it will have on removing the heavy vehicles and reducing traffic through Barwon Heads.

Vulnerability of Barwon Heads to being cut off - Barwon Heads and Ocean Grove are vulnerable to the single crossing of the Barwon River, especially with the Ocean Grove population about to triple. Traffic jams over the summer period over the last few years have highlighted this vulnerability. The Spit Rd is narrow, with significant pedestrian activity. The Inundation Summary Report also identifies the eastern bank of the river at Ocean Grove as vulnerable to flooding. There needs to be a proper plan for another river crossing to service Barwon Heads and Ocean Grove.

5. **PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT** - Protecting the natural environment is very important to residents and for the future of the village of Barwon Heads.

Comments

We note that the BHSP2017 continues to recognise the importance of the environmental context of Barwon Heads, including significant landscape, ecological and recreational value and a need to protect the non-urban break.

It is disappointing that Council does not apply harsher penalties to residents and developers when Moonah trees are removed from properties where new houses are to be built. These trees need to be protected as they are such an important part of the special character of Barwon Heads.

A principle of the 2010 Structure Plan was to protect the landscape character of the town and it was directed to encourage retention and enhancement of existing vegetation. We support the principles and directions of the BHSP2017 which include a direction to “encourage retention and enhancement of existing vegetation on roadsides and reserves using locally indigenous plantings that respects the informal coastal qualities of the town”. We submit that retention of existing vegetation should not be limited to roadsides and reserves. The existing principle of encouragement of retention and enhancement should be strengthened to provide planning control over existing significant trees on private land.

BHSP2017 refers to buildings needing to RETAIN and provide vegetation and landscaping for softening of buildings but except for the Warrenbeen Court area of the township there are no proposals of any vegetation protection applying to private land. Currently developers remain free to remove all existing vegetation from building sites. This is happening regularly. The existing planning direction to encourage retention of vegetation has failed and requires stronger planning control to “protect the landscape character of the town” principle of the Structure Plan. There should be no diminution of the Principle. The development of multiple dwellings on a lot has significantly contributed to loss of open space to enable retention of existing vegetation or planting new vegetation and is in conflict with the principle of landscape protection of the town character. Planning officers should be required to give greater consideration and more weight to requiring developers to retain existing vegetation.

The Barwon Heads Residential & Landscape Character Assessment conducted by Hansen Partnership identified significant areas of informal vegetated/canopy trees areas in the private landscape character of Barwon Heads. The report stated “Landscaping and vegetation make a very important contribution to the character of Barwon Heads” and “Existing vegetation within the township has not been identified by an ecological study as being significant in its own right or to warrant protection by an Overlay control.” To our knowledge no such study has been undertaken and accordingly such conclusion is not justified. We have undertaken a partial assessment by a qualified arborist and have identified substantial areas of significant indigenous, native and exotic trees worthy of protection.

We believe that significant trees, particularly existing mature Moonah trees, should be protected by a Vegetation Protection Overlay which applies to private land. It is inadequate and unsatisfactory planning to permit complete removal of vegetation on a lot and only require the planting of an immature canopy tree as a replacement.

Further action requested

- **Significant trees, particularly existing mature Moonah trees, should be protected by a Vegetation Protection Overlay which applies to private land.**
- **Planning officers should be required to give greater consideration and more weight to requiring developers to retain existing vegetation**

6. WARRENBEEN COURT AREA

We strongly support the proposed introduction of an Environmental Significance Overlay to the Warrenbeen Court Area and to some remnant Moonah trees on farmland north of Tait's Road.

Comments

Coastal Moonah Woodland ("CWM") are officially listed as endangered. All of this was known and intended to be resolved at the time of the subdivision in 1999. We further submit that the private restrictive covenant affecting the Warrenbeen Court area provides very limited and inadequate vegetation protection to the existing Coastal Moonah Woodland. In view of the extensive community consultation which has already taken place, we believe that Council should introduce an Interim control as soon as possible to protect this unique area until the process of a permanent control can be finalised.

Further action requested

- **Interim ESO as soon as possible to protect this precious area in Barwon Heads while the permanent ESO is finalised.**
- **The Environmental Significance Overlay should include the adjacent areas in Saratoga Avenue and Cottlesloe Drive, and also on private land in these streets.**
- **Consideration should also be given to protecting the old Moonahs on private land in Barwon Terrace and River Parade which are adjacent to the existing Vegetation Protection Overlay affecting roadside reserves.**

7. OTHER MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE

7.1. Storm water management.

It is not adequate to state 'opportunity to follow best practice when planning for future development', followed by 'urban storm water runoff poses a substantial threat to wetlands and sensitive coastal environments'. An unfortunate legacy of our past is the many storm water pipes discharging untreated storm water runoff into the estuary. It is not unreasonable to expect 'best practice' to include, gross pollutant traps, wetlands to remove fine sediments and most importantly to reduce the nutrient load in estuary.

To illustrate our concern that this is an inadequate approach we only have to consider the construction of the new storm water pipe at Ozone Road to the estuary. This storm water pipe will discharge untreated, potentially polluted storm water into the river. Sadly the 'opportunity' to follow 'best practice' has been missed or was it willfully ignored? The reasoning for this poor judgment remains a mystery to the community. It is not clear from answers provided by CoGG how much of the catchment of Barwon Heads drains through the pump station in Clifford Pde, and how much of the water that will enter the Barwon River via the drain has been filtered. There is no baseline testing that CoGG has knowledge of or can refer us to. The only filtering is at Clifford Pde.

7.2 Industrialisation

It is pleasing that the report recognised that "Barwon Heads is not a designated location for intense commercial or industrial development". The Council should therefore refuse permits which have an inappropriate use for land or which create a negative impact on adjoining properties and their neighbourhood. Any proposals to commercialise or industrialise the town or adjacent farmland should be prohibited.

7.3 Library

Although this matter has not been addressed in this Draft Structure Plan the feelings of the Barwon Heads community have been well publicised and brought to Council's attention. We believe that our library is an asset which our community needs and its low cost to operate, with no cost for maintenance, cleaning or security, should make Council realise this is a wonderful, sustainable model which needs to be left in our village for future enjoyment and benefit to us all.

7.4 Round the Heads Trail

This is an admirable concept and should be encouraged. At this stage many parts of it seem to be unrealistic and will be expensive through private land. There are a number of walking paths and iconic laneways already in Barwon Heads; but not suitable for shared use with cyclists.

We support a proper link from 13th beach resort to the Barwon Heads Primary School for cyclists and pedestrians

There is an urgent need to connect from the Stephens Pde track to the Surf Lifesaving Club.

8 Old Kindergarten

The BHA has always supported the retention of the old kindergarten site in Clifford Pde for community purposes. In 2016, the Barwon Heads Arts Council Inc. engaged a consultant Michael Mitchener to undertake a Needs Assessment to determine the need and demand for a Community Arts Hub in Barwon Heads. Extensive community consultation included survey (344 received, broad demographic), a community forum and stakeholder interviews. The Needs Assessment concluded sufficient demonstrated need due to demographic analysis and demographic projections, results of community consultation, gap analysis of

current arts offerings as well as future tourism visitation forecasts for the Bellarine Peninsula. The assessment supported the notion of a multi-use facility. We support this and have encouraged the BHAC and the Barwon Heads Senior Citizens to work closely together towards this end. There are a number of groups and individuals who would benefit from the establishment of the Barwon Heads Community Hub.

9 Rural Land

The rural views towards the wetlands on either side of Barwon Heads road west of town are important in creating the sense of place for the coastal township. The rural space provides a very important scenic and ecological buffer between the wetlands and the township. Any development of these areas would erode the expansive open rural spaces that are of immense value to the environment, the community and the values of the Bellarine Peninsula.

10 Jirralinga

Jirralinga Koala and Wildlife Sanctuary should be identified and acknowledged as a Special Use Zone (or similar) for the purposes of upholding the Sanctuary environmental and land use values. Not only is Jirralinga a tourist destination, it provides critical care unit for injured wildlife often being retrieved from the RAMSAR Wetland and Barwon River areas. The park holds vital environmental qualities and goes to conserve and preserve native fauna. This should be reflected in a land use proposed. The 5 acres located at 170-200 Tait's Roads, Barwon Heads is buffered by farming land, endangered Moonah communities and the RAMSAR Wetlands. The rezoning of this land will also secure the longevity of the sanctuary by protecting the integrity of the park from surrounding land uses now and into the future in addition to providing the sanctuary with clear land use guidelines for future sanctuary improvements.

11 Safety

The community is increasingly aware of safety risks and participate in a number of Safety forums. The Bellarine Community Safety Group and the Bellarine Community Support Register. It is important that the BHSP2017 identifies this as a priority and incorporates consideration of safety impacts especially when considering planning applications; building design, streetscape and lighting. (For example new buildings with recessed door ways and poor lighting should be discouraged through the planning process).