



DAVID MORRIS MP

*Member for Mornington
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Environment
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government*

24th June 2010

The Mayor and Councillors
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
Private Bag 1000
ROSEBUD VIC 3939

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Re: **Proposed Mount Eliza Skate Park**

I note that the Council intends to consider again the location of the proposed Mt Eliza skate park at your next meeting.

While this matter is of course entirely, and appropriately, a matter for the Council it is an issue which has been raised directly with me by almost one hundred constituents in recent weeks, the majority of whom have requested that I take up the matter on their behalf.

I have followed the process undertaken by the Council from the beginning, and attended at least two public meetings on the subject at the Mt Eliza Community Centre. I fully support the construction of a skate park in the Mt Eliza district. There is a clear demand for such a facility given the current demographics and the projected population changes, but the location is unfortunately not as clear cut.

Three sites close to the Village are identified in the officer's report as "Consistent with the Sport and Recreation Victoria Skate Facility criteria..." i.e. John Butler Reserve, Rotary Park and Mt Eliza Community Centre. With respect, that is not the only question that should be asked in relation to these sites.

Other issues to be considered should include:

- What will be the impact on the community, and particularly on the amenity of current users of these reserves and of residents whose homes closely abut these reserves?
- What will be the impact on the streetscape in proximity to proposed facility?

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- Will construction of a skate park impact negatively on the excellent work done to re-vamp the Mt Eliza commercial area in recent years?
- How many trees will need to be removed in the course of the construction of the facility?
- Should the Council move to change the use of a Council reserve from passive recreation to active recreation (which would be the effective outcome in at least two of the three sites) without going through a thorough public consultation process?

The officer's report has highlighted a number of other issues with each of the individual sites, including the necessity of obtaining a Heritage Permit in at least one case, the impact of a Heritage Overlay in another, the potential loss of car parking spaces, and the potential loss of twelve to fifteen mature pine trees.

A matter which has not been canvassed in recent reports is whether the capacity exists to create adequate buffers to protect the amenity of adjoining residences. If that should prove impossible to achieve, with a consequent impact of property values, it is likely that the Council might face further action from disaffected residents.

I have no doubt that the "ideal" location for a skate park is probably close to the village centre, and if Mt Eliza were to be developed today that would certainly be the appropriate place for it. Mt Eliza is obviously not in that category, and the Village is a fully developed residential and commercial precinct with no large, visible, vacant sites available for consideration.

There is no appropriate site close to the Village, and I hope the Council will not proceed to construct a skate park on any of the inappropriate sites that are listed for consideration on Monday night.

I urge the Council to abandon any plans to construct a skate facility in the Mt Eliza Village, and to proceed to the construction of the facility in an appropriate location which does not impact in such a negative manner on the residents of Mt Eliza.

Yours faithfully,



DAVID MORRIS MP