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## Peninsula Planning

*Posted on 16 June 2017*

For most of the second half of the 20th century there was bipartisanship for sensible planning on the Mornington Peninsula. Successive generations recognised that growth was both welcome and inevitable, but that if it was to occur it had to be managed properly to ensure that the special character of our Peninsula was retained for the benefit and pleasure of all Victorians.

As Melbourne's population continues to grow, particularly to the south-east, so too does the need for access to all the pleasures that the Peninsula provides. Maintaining our green wedge, and non-urban areas, and the individual character of our towns and villages is a crucial part of that equation, but unfortunately, in recent years, the bipartisan commitment to properly manage growth has been lost. Firstly, a little over 10 years ago, the Bracks Government decided the Peninsula was really nothing more than an extension of the metropolitan area, and applied "Melbourne 2030" controls to local development. The council and the community fought those changes, and although it took a while, were largely successful in rejecting the bulk of the measures imposed. While it's certainly true that some developments that would previously have been rejected did get built, most of the really intense developments did not get off the drawing board. The election of the Coalition Government late in 2010 created an opportunity to again consider the types of planning controls that were appropriate for the Peninsula. A committee (which I chaired) was established to consider what planning controls would both best serve our immediate needs, and protect the Peninsula for the future. In addition to Council planning staff, and the Mayor, I was joined by local surveyor Andrew Lovelock, and by well-known Flinders resident and Peninsula activist (in the very best sense) Ranald McDonald. We undertook extensive consultation, and building on the excellent work that had already been done by the Council, and produced the Mornington Peninsula Localised Planning Statement. The statement was inserted into the planning scheme as State Policy, and recognises that the Peninsula should be planned as an area of special character and importance with a role clearly distinct from, but complementary to, metropolitan Melbourne and the designated growth areas. A number of strategies are included in the statement, which is intended to guide decision-making on the Mornington Peninsula by every Department, public authority, Council and Responsible Authority. Of critical importance was the commitment to the establishment of a strong and

consistent policy framework for future land use and development, including the use of mandatory controls and standards, to manage the particular pressures on our coasts, towns and villages.

Unfortunately, the current Minister for Planning, Richard Wynne, while not removing the statement from the planning scheme has sought to diminish both its role, and effectiveness, through the introduction of the new "General Residential Zone". This zone will permit not only dramatically increased density, but also the construction of 11 m high dwellings without a permit!

To make matters worse, there was no consultation with our community, not even with the Council, before the zone was introduced.

These changes are a fundamental threat to the character, particularly the coastal character, of the Mornington Peninsula. If this new policy is not reversed the low-key residential nature of our towns and villages will be devastated!

Successive generations of our Mornington Peninsula community have stood firm whenever the essential character of the Peninsula has been threatened. It's time once again for our community to band together, to stand up against the imposition of these controls, which if left unchallenged will without doubt turn the Peninsula into just another extension of Melbourne suburbia.

It's time for all citizens to work together, and to work with the council, and to make sure the Andrews Government consigns these truly awful planning proposals to the dustbin in which they belong.