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The Coordinator
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Barwon Heads Association Inc
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30th March 2009

Submission re Planning Scheme Amendment C159 Barwon Heads Structure Plan

Dear Coordinator, Strategic Implementation,

The Barwon Heads Association supports the Planning Scheme Amendment C159 Barwon Heads Structure Plan and its objectives for retention of the existing urban boundary, protection of the unique character of Barwon Heads, consolidation of the town centre with a diverse mix of uses and activities, and protection of the surrounding rural landscape and its coastal and river setting.

In particular, we would like to express the Association's strong support for the retention of the town boundary and the rezoning of Stage C of the 13th Beach Residential and Golf Estate, for reasons including the following:

- Barwon Heads is not a designated growth area and is situated between two major growth corridors — Armstrong Creek and Ocean Grove.
- Any expansion would set an undesirable precedent for urban sprawl along the entire western boundary on both sides of the Barwon Heads-Geelong Road. This would destroy the village atmosphere of Barwon Heads and would contravene the policy imperative for coastal townships to have a clearly defined, compact form.
- Any expansion would cause environmental destruction of internationally significant wetlands — i.e. Murtnagurt Lagoon, Lake Connewarre and the Barwon River estuary which are all part of the Port Philip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site. Australia has a mandate under the Ramsar convention to protect the ecological integrity of Ramsar wetlands.
- Expansion would cause congestion, over-crowding and over-burdened services and infrastructure. Barwon Heads is already stretched to the limit of capacity during holiday times and at weekends. The infrastructure and services are only just coping with increasing numbers of visitors and tourists on top of the increased housing density that is occurring in Barwon Heads.
- Despite the sweeteners and promises that have been proffered by developers, there is no community benefit. There is nothing that developers could offer the community that would outweigh the losses that would be incurred from expansion of Barwon Heads.

- State policy such as 'Coastal Spaces' and the 'Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008' prohibit township growth in sensitive coastal environments. Policies say development may be permitted within existing urban areas, but non-urban areas between coastal towns should be protected from development, particularly environmentally sensitive areas (such as coastal wetlands), low-lying areas like Barwon Heads, and significant rural landscapes such as the rural areas of the Bellarine Peninsula.
- There is no rationale for moving the boundary on the basis of lot supply. Barwon Heads is experiencing increasing housing density (e.g. single houses are being replaced by multiple units, apartments or other dwellings) and there is an ample supply of property on the market.
- Barwon Heads is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change due to its low-lying nature and proximity on all sides to wetlands and other water-bodies. For these reasons, the 'no risk' approach dictates that there must be no increase of urban development outside the current town boundary.

We note that in correspondence from the Planning Minister to Council regarding the development of Stage B of the 13th Beach Residential and Golf Estate, the Minister stated:

"I agree with your Council that strict limitations are necessary to manage future use and development of Stage C of the resort to maintain the green break to the Barwon Heads township. Therefore, the approved Comprehensive Development Plan includes the following restriction: "Land east of Lings Road – no development or buildings to be used as accommodation or commercial purpose". I urge Council to reflect this outcome in the revised Barwon Heads Structure Plan which is currently in preparation" (Minister Madden 5 June 07)

It is essential that Stage C of the 13th Beach Residential and Golf Estate be rezoned to the appropriate rural zone and we strongly support this rezoning recommendation in Council's proposed Planning Scheme Amendment.

The Association supports the proposed low-density zone to restrict the intensity of development in the Stephens Parade area where there is limited infrastructure and environmental qualities that require protection.

The Association strongly supports the implementation of a 50k speed limit for whole town.

The Association supports the implementation of relevant flood overlays in the future as per the 2005 Flood Management Study.

The Association supports further work to apply an Environmental Significance Overlay in the coastal areas in and around Barwon Heads.

We support the encouragement of development which provides for the planting or protection of native vegetation around buildings and minimises impacts on roadside vegetation. Furthermore we request council enforce this by means of requiring landscape plans as part of development applications, actively encouraging use of indigenous plantings and applying penalties for non-compliance.

We support the development of further vegetation studies in Ewing Blyth Drive and Golf links Road area and Warrenbeen Court.

We support the introduction of a Significant Landscape Overlay to properties in the Barwon River environs to ensure that development respects the coastal and river setting by maintaining low-scale development, protecting and sharing views and vistas, protecting recreational values of the river front, and retaining and enhancing native

vegetation.

We note that much of the native vegetation in the Barwon Heads area is of high conservation significance and requires stringent protection. We urge Council to ensure that planning controls for vegetation protection are specific to the types of coastal vegetation found in Barwon Heads. The planning controls must protect valuable coastal species such as Coast Beard Heath which may be hundreds of years old but still not be tall or have a large circumference of trunk. We are concerned that overlays such as the proposed SLO for the Barwon River environs are not adequate to protect important specimens of vegetation which have a single trunk circumference of less than 0.5 metres measured 1 metre above the ground, or which are less than 3 metres high. We note also, with concern, that the overlay does not protect 'dead' vegetation which provides important habitat for local native wildlife.

We support the retention and restoration of the traditional subdivision pattern in the street, particularly with respect to street frontage, rectilinear blocks and "orthogonal" street layout. We object to any further "cul de sac" development and any "gated" treatments to subdivisions. We believe as per currently recommended street layouts for sustainable suburbs and town developments, the town should continue to reinforce the "gridded" and "lane way" nature of the original township and provide simpler pedestrianised routes through the town.

We request Council review the current heritage overlays and provide more stringent requirements for the retention of buildings noted within the heritage overlays, whether specific to the building or of contribution to the streetscape, and therefore neighbourhood character.

We support the mix of housing types, particularly around the town centre, including the provision of housing choices for elderly persons. Furthermore we request council note housing choices for other rapidly increasing demographic groups, for example single parents and single persons.

There is concern that the height and density of development should be more limited than what is currently permitted. We accept that a higher level of building density is appropriate for the town centre however we are concerned that what has been proposed is too dense and would allow buildings that are too high for this small coastal village. We believe the proposed new Design and Development Overlay for the Mixed Use Zone in the town centre should include a height restriction of 9 metres and a restriction of the mass of development to provide for outer space.

We are concerned to note that the DDO for the Mixed Use Zone contains the following exemption and we believe it's important for community views to be taken into account and for there to be an opportunity for community members to participate in the planning process.

Exemption from notice and review

An application to subdivide land is exempt from the notice requirements of Section 52(1)(a), (b) and (d), the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the Act.

We are concerned about the increase in traffic and lack of planning to address the impacts of this. We are particularly concerned that there has been inadequate analysis by any of the key stakeholders of the impacts of the re-zoning of Golf Links and Bridge Roads to a major Arterial Road. The Maunsell report prepared for the Bridge project is out of date and based on flawed assumptions. Where are the up to date studies that

consider the traffic impacts of the Geelong By-pass, Armstrong Creek, the proposal to build 2 new bridges and other growth impacts of the Bellarine Peninsular?

We strongly support the bringing forward of the East- West link project. Can the prioritisation of this very important project be included in the Amendment so that it can be brought forward to help achieve the objectives of the Amendment?

It is apparent that Barwon Heads is about to become a major link in the freeway system across the Bellarine Peninsular with absolutely no mitigation measures to protect the town at all. In particular there has been no analysis of social, environmental and economic impacts of significantly different infrastructure on the town.

The specific risks of air pollution generation, noise pollution and surface runoff of water pollutants which will result from the increased traffic seem to have been also been ignored.

The Association strongly supports the 'vision' for Barwon Heads as stated in the Structure Plan and we look forward to working with Council to achieve this vision:

"In the year 2016, Barwon Heads will be a unique, sustainable, residential and environmental hub; a landlocked community surrounded by pristine river, coast and wetlands. An intimate community which supports all age groups and provides a place of belonging for residents and visitors alike; where human impact is managed to support the fragile natural surroundings by:

- clearly defined limitations on urban development
- protecting and nurturing natural surroundings by managing human footprint
- supporting walking, cycling, fishing, sailing, surfing, swimming and generally enjoying what our coastal village has to offer in an environmentally sensitive way." (page 7, Barwon Heads Structure Plan December 2007)

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Waite

President, Barwon Heads Association