

SHAPING GREATER DROMANA PLAN

Strategic Planning

Mornington Peninsula Shire

strategic.admin@mornpen.vic.gov.au

Firstly, it is hard to consider a future vision for 'Greater Dromana' without considering what happens in the rest of the Peninsula, and indeed Greater Melbourne and Victoria. Therefore, our comments and suggestions have a broader focus than just Dromana – as it is undeniable that what happens outside Dromana's boundary will have impacts within Dromana – and must be considered.

As it stands, current Planning approval processes offer no certainty for the community, only an ever increasing sense of anxiety over the next 10-20 years, let alone further into the future. As such, to deliver its Vision, we suggest the initiatives outlined in MPSC's Draft Plan will be insufficient to deal with population growth impacts and the related pressures on our community infrastructure and environment within Dromana, the Shire, Melbourne and Victoria.

To make any inroads implementing your Vision, a whole of Council change of focus is needed.

BROADER PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ISSUES:

Environment and Ecosystem protections must be moved to the forefront of projects and planning.

First do no harm. We know, but still seem to be collectively denying, the current Business as Usual approach to development is driving the alarming loss of open space and habitats, species, quality of

life, overstretched services, less cohesive communities etc. etc. So, continuing to assess planning applications and projects under existing frameworks, which appear to focus on developers financial and design demands, is not helping. It is time to direct development to fit the environmental constraints of the area rather than assuming we can continue to degrade the environment to suit unsuitable plans and projects.

We make the following suggestions as some of the necessary inclusions in that process along with some commentary on several local issues we see as some of the most important to resolve in order to contribute to the sustainable biodiverse future described in Council's "vision".

Preserve and expand tree canopy

- Encourage development applications and designs that retain mature tree cover of sites
- As a standard, refuse applications that require extensive removal of established native/indigenous vegetation.
- Offer incentives to developments that sign agreements to retain and enhance existing tree cover on sites.
- Routinely provide information on the irreplaceable value of trees to health, wellbeing and community wide benefits through regular notices, rates invoices, permit application processes, etc.

Along with the visual amenity and essential wildlife habitat provided by vegetation, a growing body of evidence shows that trees contribute substantially to cooling the environment and reducing the need for artificial air conditioning, and thus reduction in Greenhouse gas emissions.

A recent Curtin University/CSIRO study¹ found that one mature tree can transpire up to 150 litres of water per day. In a hot dry location this produces a cooling effect similar to two air conditioners running for 20 hours.

Trees are a very effective means of blocking the sun's radiation and, depending on the species and its maturity, up to 95% of the incoming radiation can be blocked. Trees can reduce a building's temperature by directly blocking radiation through windows and cooling the surrounding air, and can also keep the soil cool thus providing a sink for heat from the building. Evapo-transpiration and shading can reduce air temperatures by 1 to 5 °C. In outdoor environments trees provide immediate

¹ <http://ehia.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/CoolCommunities.pdf>

cooling and protection from the sun's rays, as can be felt as soon as one steps from the sun into the shade of a tree.

Clearly, the benefits of retaining and restoring trees in urban areas must be a key component of planning strategies and policy, so at the very least we urge Council to address the significant loss of vegetation by requiring permit applicants to replant the site with suitable native/indigenous species – and then follow up with routine compliance assessments- an essential process which seems to be sadly lacking at present.

Trees have been providing us with free and irreplaceable protection from runaway climate change, and their future role will be even more important as our planet and our local neighbourhoods continue to heat up. Tree protection and replacement efforts must be of the highest order. As such it is unacceptable that proposed developments either fail to incorporate adequate landscaping or green space, further detracting from the overall quality of the environment, or enforcement is lacking. Where previously, well vegetated sites provided natural cooling, shading and absorption of excessive storm water runoff, extensive concreting of many sites and significantly larger roof area exacerbate run off from the site.

*Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017-2020*² also confirms that a greener suburbia means shadier, cooler townships, lower flood risk for people and assets and less storm water and nutrients entering waterways, including Port Phillip Bay – all issues relevant to Dromana's future.

The Adaptation Plan also confirms that a greener environment in our cities and towns benefits human health, reducing mortality, improving general health and wellbeing; increasing physical activity and fostering social cohesion.

These matters do not appear on Councils or governments balance sheet, and until they do, we will have little chance of protecting what we have left to sustain us – even at our current Victorian population numbers let alone 10 million by 2050 and 20+ million by 2100, as is projected.

Population growth and Tourism

Victoria's apparent addiction to the highest population growth rates in Australia along with the well established and influential Tourism and hospitality industries pose a range of infrastructure and

² https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0024/60729/Victorias-Climate-Change-Adaptation-Plan-2017-2020.pdf

environmental problems, but perhaps particularly so for attractive coastal locations, especially those, like Dromana, easily accessible from Melbourne.

Although population growth is invariably identified as a positive economic boost for the state, and tourism as a positive boost for tourist destinations, there is rarely if ever any commentary on the myriad negative economic, environmental and social impacts of a burgeoning tourist/day tripper influx to coastal regions, including ongoing damage to natural areas, costs of restoration or rehabilitation of damaged areas, rubbish removal, loss of amenity for local residents - beach parking, road traffic, the growing jet ski noise issue, lost enjoyment of natural areas, and reduced access to quiet spaces to “sooth the soul”.

These are real issues for Dromana for access to and enjoyment of the coast, and certainly for the other species we are fortunate enough and morally obliged to share our marine and coastal environment with, and which should be granted equal space in our considerations alongside the purported positive economic impacts of ongoing development and growth.

Need to:

- Understand IPAT³, the equation first developed by Stanford University Professor Paul Erlich et al in 1972, and which remains undeniable to this day, but usually ignored by Planners, developers, and those who pursue the Business as Usual ideology. IPAT expresses the idea that environmental impact (I) is the product of three factors: population (P), affluence (A) and technology (T). As such, population growth and consumption are inextricably linked to the environmental impact that we create as we pursue the current endless growth paradigm. Considered in this light, it seems highly unlikely that unless there is wholesale change to the way we live, we cannot and will not achieve the vision articulated in the Greater Dromana Plan.
- Accept the mathematic reality that a Victoria/Melbourne 2% population growth rate, as has recently been the norm, results in our population doubling in 30 years. Try to visualise the endless and ultimately futile work in trying to deliver services to a population that is growing exponentially, and apparently endlessly.

³ The IPAT Equation: Ehrlich, P.R. and J.P. Holdren, 1972. Critique: One Dimensional Ecology. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 28(5): 16, 18-27. Commoner, Barry. .The Environmental Cost of Economic Growth. In Population, Resources and the Environment. Washington, DC:Pp. 339-63, 1972 & [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-institute-of-technology)

Only once Council and its ratepayers understand IPAT, will it become obvious that the future currently being planned for locally and nationwide, based as it is on Business as Usual, is unsustainable and the vision unattainable.

- Lobby state government to reduce its reliance on runaway growth rate as the only way to support our economy. State government maintains an active advertising campaign attracting migrants to Victoria – most notably via its **Live in Melbourne** “initiative” with its comprehensive information and support packages for attracting businesses and migrants to Melbourne and regional Victoria. <https://liveinmelbourne.vic.gov.au/> It is time to reassess the purported need for this “initiative”.

It is axiomatic that as Melbourne’s population grows, especially if the current growth rate remains, the Mornington Peninsula will face growing permanent and visitor numbers- all of which places additional strain on our coast, hinterland attractions, visual and physical amenity, biodiversity and quality of life your vision is supposedly aiming for.

- Lobby state government to allow Councils to set maximum population numbers based on an ecological assessment of the carrying capacity of particular townships, villages to provide the support services required to sustain its residents- schools, hospitals, medical centres, sporting facilities etc. all in even greater demand as population continues to grow unchecked. Otherwise, we will be forever playing catch-up in an endless bid to build more houses, schools, medical centres etc. all the while trying in vain to save and protect our unique lifestyle, biodiversity and habitats – making it well nigh impossible to achieve - as per Council’s words - *to allow Greater Dromana to celebrate its unique coastal setting nestled at the base of Arthurs Seat. The large township of Dromana will provide local shops, schools, parks, jobs and services for communities living in Dromana and Safety Beach. The area will continue to be a popular place for the many tourists who come to visit. Our economy will thrive, driven by diverse and innovative local businesses and industry. Future development in the area will be carefully integrated, respecting our local character and significant landscapes, and we will ensure our local biodiversity is healthy, valued and protected.*

How can Council possibly deliver future development which is *“carefully integrated, respecting our local character and significant landscapes...and ensure our local biodiversity is healthy, valued and*

protected” when an endless growth juggernaut is bearing down on all the things the Vision purports to protect?

Unless Planners and government accept that infinite growth on a finite planet is impossible, and that we must radically alter what the planning process allows to occur, it will be impossible to achieve what Council offers in its Vision. Rather, the inevitable outcome will be increasing loss of a sense of place and pride for all residents and visitors in an ever dwindling local character, amenity and habitats for other species.

Notably, Council is not alone in having to deal with the pressures of Melbourne’s growth impacting on our local area, and should take heart that Surf Coast Shire and other Peri Urban Councils are lobbying the State government for help to manage the unsustainable levels of population growth they are experiencing⁴.

RELEVANT LOCAL ISSUES:

- 1. Ensure the proposed expansion of the Fuel station and added fast food outlet at Intersection of Marine Dve., Nepean Hwy and Pt. Nepean Rd. does not and cannot in future become a reality. DDO/caveat over the site.**

Another application for the above site, strikingly similar to the one previously rejected at VCAT only three years ago, is now re-submitted. This type of tactic by developers is imposing unreasonable stresses and costs on nearby residents and other affected parties, and an unwarranted extra work load on Council. What is the point of all the effort that goes into a VCAT decision, for it to be so easily challenged/overturned in such a short space of time?

This proposal has already been rejected once at VCAT, yet it has resurfaced again; and with a similar raft of features that would create a plethora of negative impacts on Dromana township, its natural and coastal amenity in this highly prominent site abutting the foreshore reserve and the intersection of Marine Dve, Nepean Highway and Pt. Nepean Rd.

As it stands, current procedures offer no certainty to the community, instead creating a perpetual state of anxiety over what the future holds. By way of example, we understand the McDonalds application to Frankston City Council for the site at Nepean Hwy. Seaford Rd. intersection has been the subject of three Council/VCAT assessments after its initial refusal by Council, and it has since

⁴ <https://timesnewsgroup.com.au/surfcoasttimes/news/peri-urban-municipalities-call-for-help-to-manage-growth/>

been approved and construction is underway. Such scenarios are totally unacceptable for community members to have to tolerate. Council should:

- Lobby state government to update the Planning Scheme to remove the opportunity for proposed developments which have failed at VCAT to be resubmitted, again and again, as a similar proposal, often with only superficial changes to the original proposal.

Our concerns about this proposal include:

Inconsistent with Marine & Coastal Act and Policy

The site is unarguably in a coastal location, as per the Marine & Coastal Act 2018 and Policy 2020 definitions. The site is only approx. 80 metres from the high-water mark at its seaward boundary, and extends to approx. 150 metres from the shore at its rear boundary.

We therefore suggest the current proposal does not meet the clear intent of The M&C Act 2018, M&C Policy 2020, or *The Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014, Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast* (May 1998) and background document *Landscape Setting Types for the Victorian Coast* (May 1998), (which form part of the ESO 25 Decision Guidelines).

Planning Scheme considerations

The proposal is **60% larger** than the existing 2400 sq. metre site, largely on a site that has always been in or adjacent to a residential zone. It has been reliant on “existing use right” from a time long past. It is time to review the convenient reliance on non compliant existing use rights as an easy way to keep operating what are now unacceptable uses of land in a modern vastly changed community with vastly different attitudes to what is or is not acceptable for environmental and neighbourhood amenity reasons.

Indeed, during the 1970s when the then owner applied to Council for a redevelopment of the then relatively small service station and takeaway shop the application was denied as Council determined the proposal was unsuitable for the site. The major issue that determined Council’s refusal was concerns about traffic safety issues on this difficult corner. Of course now 50 years hence- these issues can only be exacerbated.

The 1970s service station and take away shop subsequently closed – and of course Dromana coped without it. That should be the outcome for this excessively large and intrusive proposal on this coastal site, and imposing onto and diminishing the quality of life for nearby residents. The decades long use of this site as a service station/take away/convenience store was never suitable for the site, let alone the now massive proposed expansion.

Approving this major expansion with food and fuel sales operating 24 hours/day/365 days per year would further entrench the non-complaint use of the site, adding even further to the inconvenience, amenity and environmental issues that the current site and its operations impose on nearby residents, landscape and marine and coastal environment.

The application represents unacceptable non-residential development that should be directed to major activity centres which have been expressly developed and located to cater for intensive commercial uses.

The application is a major commercial building which is proposed to expand into the adjacent residential lots and operate fuel, retail and food sales 24 hours/7 days a week/365 days which is out of scale and inappropriate in the residential neighbourhood of Marine Dr Safety Beach.

The application results in the loss of two substantial existing residential lots and at least 3 dwellings (one already demolished by the Applicant). With widespread concern about housing shortages on the Peninsula, it is contradictory to favour commercial development in residential zones over residential uses in residential zones.

Traffic Congestion: As per the previous VCAT hearing findings, entry and exit from the new proposal remains a mess of vehicle, fuel tanker deliveries, pedestrian and cyclist conflicts. Likewise, proposed circulation within the site is a mess of conflicting vehicle movements and will inevitably result in increased congestion on Marine Drive and Nepean Highway, whilst altering egress from the site to Point Nepean Road would result in illegal/dangerous U-turns for any traffic intending to head south or east to the boat ramp.

It is axiomatic that as population growth continues, and boating, Jet ski and tourism numbers continue to grow, and the season for all these activities extend further in line with a warming climate, that these issues can only worsen.

ESO 25 Decision Guidelines include to consider the degree to which a development is dependent on a coastal location, the ability to reduce the number of buildings on the site, and whether the proposed development is likely to cause any deteriorations of the Port Phillip Coastal Area for any reason.

Given that various issues examined by VCAT in 2021 remain in this new proposal, it cannot be possible to establish that this new proposal would now deliver a net community benefit.

The proposed usage is not and never was dependent on a coastal location, and the proposed development is not and never was a suitable use of the site. It is time to address this incongruity and re-zone the site to exclude commercial uses.

Underground storage of diesel and petrol products, the possibility of on-site spills and underground leakage of environmental contaminants and toxicants into nearby streamlines and to Port Phillip Bay is a serious issue. In short, the proposed growth in the customer base that this proposal is reliant on all point to the site being unsuitable to support further growth in the range and intensity of commercial activities into this already congested area. The proposed development cannot adequately address these considerations whilst maintaining a viable business case.

The proposed increase in the various commercial activities on the site and its location so close to the highly valued and narrow foreshore will contribute to diminishing the coastal character of Dromana – which is already at risk of being diminished. Dromana is already suffering extreme stress from increased traffic and parking demands throughout the tourist season – which in itself is extending in time to include most of the year.

The proposed development seeks to expand significantly on an already non-compliant activity in a residential zone. The surrounding residents have endured this already overbearing non-compliant use for far too long, and it is unreasonable and unjustifiable for this activity to continue- let alone expand further into residential and coastal amenity.

The site is surrounded on three sides by traditional residential areas to the east, west and south, with the fourth aspect being Port Phillip Bay, its beach and foreshore. All those entities would benefit enormously from this site being returned to a GRZ rather than further developed into a growing threat to local amenity and our greatest asset – Port Phillip Bay.

The proposal is rooted in the Business as Usual development paradigm which has proven itself to be generally exploitative of our natural world, and the very systems that we are wholly dependent on. It will further diminish the local coastal character of Dromana, and will face various threats in the not too distant future as sea levels rise and coastal conditions worsen. These threats will in turn put increased pressure and costs on Council and its ratepayers to protect an inappropriate development in an unsuitable location.

A very different and challenging future is fast approaching and we sincerely trust that MPSC is planning its responses to these challenges.

As such as part of delivering its vision for Greater Dromana, we request that Council do all in its power – including further legal avenues - to ensure this proposal is not and never can be, approved.

2. Protect and expand Dromana Foreshore Reserve

The environmental works undertaken by the Dromana Foreshore Committee of Management's Ranger program in managing its indigenous flora to support local fauna and enhance the foreshore and the spectacular LaTrobe Reserve is much appreciated

Whilst we understand the DFCM acts on behalf of DEECA, it is obvious that DFCM works contribute significantly to the environmental and visual amenity of Dromana township, which in turn supports the Shire's "vision" for Dromana. As such, MPSC should consider entering into an agreement with DFCM to fund a proportion of its initiatives and works, including:

Dromana is fortunate to have some sections of foreshore, including the LaTrobe Bushland Reserve, which are relatively intact, and which enhance the amenity and ambience of Dromana's beach and foreshore, nearby residential areas and Dromana township. These irreplaceable natural assets benefit Dromana and the Shire enormously, and should be protected, and where possible expanded.

- Fund staged removal of caravanning on Dromana Foreshore Reserve between Anthony's Nose boat ramp and the old boat hire boat shed. Caravanning on this narrow and overused section of Dromana's limited foreshore reserve is an anachronism from a by gone era.

The site extends northwards from the Anthony's Nose boat launching ramp, on this narrow strip, approximately 600m long and 20 metres wide, sandwiched between Point Nepean Road and the

beach. For many decades it has been used as a caravan park and is managed by the Dromana Foreshore Committee of Management (DFCM) on behalf of state government and the community.

This section of Dromana foreshore is wholly occupied by caravans, boats, jet skis, trailers, cars and assorted ugliness of human habitation for over 5 months of every year throughout the holiday and summer season from 1st December to 30th April each year. Then once the vans depart, the area reveals itself as a barren site, largely devoid of vegetation and degraded by months of overuse. DFCM then has to allocate substantial resources to repair and restore the area before it is again occupied 7 months later for another 5 months. Clearly the foreshore's natural and visual amenity cannot recover under that regime of chronic damage.

We submit that Dromana's image as a tourist destination and sustainable environmental model would be greatly enhanced if this eyesore could be removed and the damaged foreshore asset be reinstated and rehabilitated so that the approach to and exit from Dromana is not blighted by what is currently akin to a third world slum.

The foreshore caravan park is a source of revenue for the DFCM so there is likely an inbuilt acceptance of the status quo rather than looking for different solutions to manage this valuable asset. On the other hand, there are considerable costs in the day-to-day upkeep of the caravan park for five months of every year, and given the uncertain climate future we face, its continued operations and upkeep, so close to the shoreline, will become an increasing liability.



F

- **Structures on the Foreshore**

There are 47 caravan sites and due to DFCM's policy of giving previous occupants priority, many families return to the same site each year, and most erect "rigid" annexes beside their caravans.

Aside from the visual disarray and public access issues, although the Dromana caravanners may enjoy living just metres from one of the busiest roads on the Mornington Peninsula, we note that the DFCM and DEECA may be risking costly compensation claims in the event of injury or worse arising if a road accident resulted in vehicles ending up in the caravan park – just metres from Point Nepean Rd.



DFCM provides car parking spaces, ablution and toilet facilities and even clotheslines on the beach for exclusive use of the caravan families. Locals and visitors to this section of beach and foreshore are denied access to these facilities and effectively to the beach year round.



Need for Change

The world has changed since the caravan park was first opened, Melbourne's population has quadrupled, and there is a growing demand for more public open green space from both the local community and visitors. The Peninsula Link freeway opening also means easier access to Dromana from Melbourne's SE suburbs with a large increase in day trippers to the beach.

Dromana is less fortunate than Peninsula towns to the south where foreshores are wider and caravans and tents can be located amongst trees, there's more room for people and vehicles to circulate, and vans and annexes pose less of an eyesore than at Dromana. We also note that Rosebud and McCrae camping areas do not appear to allow rigid annexes.

However, Dromana's foreshore from Anthony's Nose to Foote St., in what could be offering the most visually splendid viewlines, has either been a barren windswept wasteland in the colder months, or a clutter of temporary housing during the holiday season. Over the years the natural environment and coastal amenity has continued to disappear. Tree by tree, bush by bush, the area has been cleared for the caravans, cars and boats, trailers and associated annexes and awnings.

Cyclists are excluded for the 5 months of caravan occupation, forcing cyclists to cross Point Nepean Rd. during the busy summer months. Thus, the presence of the caravans not only reduces public access to the foreshore for passive recreation and beach access, but has also proved a stumbling block for the completion of the Bay Trail through this section of foreshore, given the caravanners object to cyclists passing through the area.



It is time for this precious section of foreshore to be restored to a place of biodiversity and natural beauty where locals and visitors can walk, jog, ride or picnic amongst trees. A cool place in the summer under a canopy of trees, free from air conditioners pumping out hot air.





Non Compliance with Marine Structures Guidelines

As can be seen in the above photos (February 2023) the fundamentals listed in DEECA's *'Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on Victorian Coast'* would not be met by the Dromana caravan park, particularly those relating to views, public open space, local character and sense of place, public access and materials and finishes. As non coast dependent facilities, there is no justification for caravan parks to be near the water and, although this one might contribute to the social values of the users of the caravan park, it diminishes the visual and physical amenity of the coast for the vast majority of beach goers, both local and visitors, and any remaining habitat.

The effect of climate change on the longer term viability of the park also needs consideration. Climate change will hopefully be addressed by a multitude of decisions; a change of land use here should be one of them.

The Marine and Coastal Act 2018 requires that managing agencies obtain Ministerial Consent for foreshore development proposals. Presumably consent has been granted for the Dromana caravan park in the past but it's time for another look at the current inequitable and damaging use being made of this land.

Nor is the foreshore caravan site consistent with Council's long term vision for Dromana. The Dromana foreshore is a unique and valuable resource for the community and it is important that its development is guided by a clear and forward-thinking vision. The foreshore caravan site with its many structures and high density residential population over the summer months, does not align with this vision, and diminishes the visual amenity of the otherwise picturesque views to the Bay and LaTrobe Reserve when approaching or exiting Dromana travelling East or West.

The apparent failure to deal with sullage from the caravans discharging onto the site, then to Port Phillip Bay is another important issue that demands attention, both in terms of human health risk and in meeting the aims of the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan. A healthy Bay is reliant on our actions on land, and a healthy Bay is a crucial element of a vision for Dromana.

It is now widely accepted that working with natural systems is usually the most appropriate and cost effective method for defence against the looming climate change impacts on our coastline. Sensitive rehabilitation of this low lying area will reduce future costs of short lived and less effective hard engineering responses, better protecting the beach and our limited coastal environment – benefitting the whole community. As it stands, the caravans on Dromana foreshore are an obstacle to effective future management of that section of Dromana's coastline.

Alternative Sources of Funding

Recognizing that some families have been returning for many years and have a strong attachment to the park, a staged retreat from the site, progressively reducing caravan sites is suggested - meeting both the intent of the M&C Policy and reasonable community expectations.

This would allow time for the DFCM to source alternative funding, ideally including via MPSC, and for re-vegetation work to be implemented progressively.

There would be a significant expenditure saving if the utilities and other services to the caravanners were no longer needed. A source of funding might be recurrent grants to restore the area, gainfully employing staff formerly working almost exclusively on upkeep of the caravan park grounds, its toilet/washing facilities, rubbish removal and cleaning and restoration works after the caravans depart.

Other sources of funding might include a “foreshore restoration” fee levied on Dromana boatshed owners, or some reapportionment of fees currently paid by boatshed owners to both MPSC and the DFCM to better reflect the level of service provided by DFCM compared with MPSC’s contribution to Dromana foreshore; or other yet to be explored options.

Whatever the funding solution, we suggest MPSC should play a major role as part of its vision for Greater Dromana. The aim and outcome would be to fund important works to protect and enhance Dromana’s overall amenity and its foreshore reserves for the current and future enjoyment of locals and visitors from Melbourne, their children and grandchildren.

Furthermore, what we are advocating is not without precedence. In 1996, with great prescience, the then Rosebud Foreshore Committee recommended that camping be removed from McCrae foreshore from Anthony’s Nose to McCrae lighthouse and the area be restored as a Conservation Zone. With judicious weeding and planting, McCrae foreshore’s natural beauty and amenity is now enjoyed by countless locals and visitors and, we argue, adds enormous value to McCrae, both in visitations, property values, a priceless source of tranquility in our daily lives, and habitat for local species.

We trust that Council will discuss this issue with the DFCM and DEECA, and that steps are taken to return this strip of foreshore to a more accessible and natural landscape, for the benefit of current and future beach and foreshore users and as an essential element of Council’s vision for Dromana.

3. Hillview Community Reserve and Parkdale Estate

We are pleased that Council has become responsible for the Parkdale Estate, and pleased to learn at one of your information sessions that the previous lease has not been renewed. This is a rare

opportunity to reverse the worrying trend of dwindling natural areas and to extend habitats and biodiversity links.

It is now time for Council to drop any reference to “Pat’s Paddock”. The site has always been Crown land, and as far as we knew, always known as Parkdale Estate. So, it is misleading for Council to now refer to the area as Pat’s Paddock. Our extended family has lived in Dromana for nearly 80 years and we’ve only recently ever heard of the area being referred to as somebody’s paddock.

Please remove all reference to “Pat’s Paddock” in your information material given “ Pat” has never owned the site, and is/was apparently on a month to month lease for many years. That deserves no status.

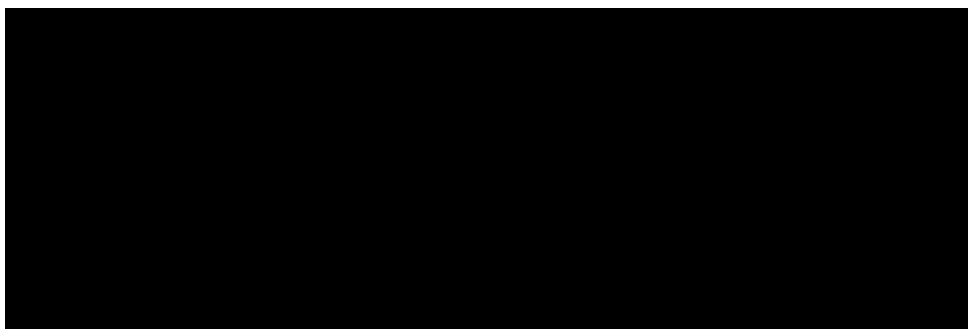
We submit that the area should be added to the adjacent State Park. The Shire is losing significant tree coverage as our population expands and new developments have allowed, in many cases, a total loss of tree cover and habitat for other species. As such, every opportunity to retain and restore tree cover and intact habitats should be taken.

Rehabilitating Parkdale Estate from the years of grazing activities, adding it to the State Park and extending the Park’s largely intact hillside vegetation cover, would ensure retention of important habitats for local flora and fauna and further enhance the visual amenity of the hillside escarpment.

Parkdale Estate should not be used for other infrastructure for playgrounds, active recreation pursuits such as mountain bike riding etc. which is already amply catered for, and already causing significant damage to natural areas and tracks, including from unauthorised use of some areas, at significant cost to the community and wildlife.

Thank you for inviting our submissions and we look forward to seeing the outcome of your community consultations

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature and name of the person who wrote the letter.