

23 November 2020

Victorian Planning Authority

Attention: Emily Killin, Senior Strategic Planner

Bannockburn Growth Plan

Dear Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Bannockburn Growth Plan.

Background

I am the owner of land in the Future Growth Option South area which is part of the [REDACTED]. This property was first settled by my family in 1850 and for many years has been a leading prize winning enterprise. The merino stud is currently one of the largest in Victoria.

General Comment

1. I have been concerned for some time about the encroachment of housing on productive agricultural land. While new housing is required for a growing population, I think the VPA should be encouraging higher density (multi-storey) housing to maximize the availability of productive land for food and fibre production. They don't make land anymore!
2. The Poplars merino stud is a large integrated enterprise requiring considerable infrastructure and economies of scale to remain viable. Loss of a significant area of land would have a severe impact on the future prospects of the family farm. A portion of the property has already been lost to the railway line and sewerage treatment plant. The ability to purchase alternative land should the proposal proceed is not guaranteed.
3. I am opposed to the Future Growth Area South being included in the Plan as to do so would be contrary to several of the principles regarding agriculture that the Plan itself espouses (refer to following comments).

Bannockburn Growth Plan

1. Vision and Principles – Both these sections emphasise the need to enhance the agriculture sector and complement the strong agricultural role of the Shire. This is directly contradicted by including a significant portion of a significant agricultural enterprise in the Growth area.
2. Re-zoning – It is essential that the staged implementation of development includes a staged approach to re-zoning. Agricultural land in the Growth areas will not remain viable if re-zoning and rate increases are made prior to the need for the land.
3. Economy and Employment – The need to address the rural-urban interface mentioned in the Agricultural section is critical. Buffer areas must be established, preferably of open space, not just lower density housing. The impact of stray or off-leash dogs on a sheep enterprise can be quite devastating. These buffer areas should apply to each stage of development as it may be many years between the stages.

I would appreciate acknowledgement of receipt of this submission.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]