

Victorian Planning Authority
c/- Bannockburn Growth Plan
Level 25, 35 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Submission to the Draft Bannockburn Growth Plan

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Draft Bannockburn Growth Plan. As a long term Bannockburn resident I have a keen interest in the future of our township. In my opinion how it navigates its way through the various development pressures will be a big factor in determining its livability in years to come.

The community has expressly declared a desire to retain a country town character and how that is planned to be managed through this process is of particular interest. I have often heard the phrase locally that 'we don't want to become another Lara' which is regarded as suffering heavily from poor planning decisions.

My submission will have a focus on the following areas.

- Retention of a rural character
- Truck bypass route
- Impacts on the Bannockburn Flora and Fauna Reserve
- Impacts on Bruce's Creek and into the Barwon River.
- Indigenous involvement and recognition through sympathetic design around the waterway.

Retention of a rural character

“The community indicated the neighbourhood character of Bannockburn in its rural setting should be an important consideration when planning for growth. The consistent use of tree species throughout a town can contribute to enhancing the character of a rural town. Street trees are also critical to avoid the urban heat island affect, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance amenity.” Draft Pg 57.

I believe this treatment is pretty standard for urban developments as well therefore hardly going to be a significant factor in retaining said rural character. Larger trees supported by larger block sizes and nature strips would be a different matter and should be considered as part of the Plan. I support the elements listed for consideration in a design guidelines for Bannockburn.

“The community identified the protection of Bannockburn’s rural character as the most important issue when considering the town’s growth. Housing design guidelines can be developed and implemented in future precinct structure plans to ensure character is considered as part of future subdivisions.” Pg 39

I would also include initiatives to control and even reduce light pollution within the town as it runs the risk of losing its view of the night sky, something which sets it apart from Geelong.

Truck Bypass Route

As a resident who lives on [REDACTED] the increase in traffic on the Geelong Road over the last 10 years has impacted our livability. Those I know who live on the thoroughfare have flagged their intention to move. They had counted on some relief when the proposed truck bypass route was being discussed in 2013.

In the GHD | Report for Golden Plains Shire - Bannockburn Heavy Vehicle Alternative Route Study, (31/29982) such a route had a lot of community support.

“70 per cent believe an alternate heavy vehicle route would have a very positive impact on Bannockburn because it would: – Improve road safety; and - Improve the character and amenity of the town centre.” Page 14

While the Draft recognises “The second arterial connection provides an alternative heavy vehicle route for through-freight” there doesn't seem to be any plans for properly buffering it from future housing developments to the south (the north will likely be buffered by the power easement).

As such isn't the issue simply being transplanted?

From the GHD Report:

“The Steering Committee also identified that Option 1 and Option 6 should not be assessed further as they go through existing residential areas, which the Committee considered a ‘show stopper’ for these options.” Page 23

Yet the Draft shows this is a likely result of what is proposed in the Growth Plan. Amenity and livability for residents should prevail and a southern buffer for the intended road be included.

Impacts on the Bannockburn Flora and Fauna Reserve

I believe others have addressed this in their submissions but I will make the point that under the new bushfire regimes we are now experiencing the retention of large life cycle blocks adjacent to the Bannockburn Flora and Fauna Reserve is desirable. At the moment the houses are setback within these blocks thus easing the threat from the Reserve. By keeping them it provides a better interface and it means the threat within the bushfire overlay is respected. Pushing the industrial zone to Old Base Road does not and instead means the fire mitigation measures are borne by the Reserve and not the development as detailed in the Bushfire Risk Assessment. This is contrary to Figure 3 in Alluvium's Bannockburn Catchment Assessment which shows the fire buffer within the growth area itself rather than impacting on the Reserve.

Impacts on Bruce's Creek and into the Barwon River.

Development threats to our waterways has been a huge issue within this Shire. Destructive stormwater volumes and the movement of nutrients with other wastes into our waterways are having enormous impacts. Bruce's Creek flows into the Barwon River which in turn flows through Geelong and into the RAMSAR wetlands at Lake Connewarre.

The recent Barwon River Ministerial Advisory Committee examined planning issues as part of their role in detailing new protections for the watercourses of the Barwon Catchment which includes Bruce's Creek. I understand their report is to be released by the Minister at the end of this year. It may well be that buffer zones along Bruce's Creek will be strengthened by the resultant Action Plan. I feel acknowledgement of that upcoming report would be worth including with in the Growth Plan. <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/waterways-planning/barwon-river-action-plan/overview>

My understanding is that the Golden Plains Shire has not seen a single Integrated Water Management Plans through to fruition. The Draft's Principle 6 starts off strong enough with "Ensure sustainable use and management of water" but then has as an action "Encourage Intergrated Water Management (IWM) initiatives.". IWM treatment of these developments should be baked in to the draft not just encouraged. I have seen enough push back from developers on projects within the

Shire to have little confidence that they are likely to engage without it.

Indigenous involvement and recognition through sympathetic design around Bruce's Creek.

Bannockburn was originally called Wabdallah. The rich range of artefacts along Bruce's Creek, which still nurtures some scar trees, give testament to the role it has played for the Wathaurung. Many other creeks in our area do as well. Just to the south west of us explorers who first moved out along the Barwon River camped opposite where Native Hut Creek joins. They wrote of the numerous huts they could see up the creek from their camp, thus the name. Mia Mia Creek is further to the west.

Its headwaters of Bruce's Creek lie in Lethbridge and early maps show the top section being referred to as Muddy Water Holes. It was known for its prominent Aboriginal oven sites which could still be seen from the train in the 1880s, fifty years after colonisation.

“Numbers of the mounds could be distinguished from the carriage windows of the Geelong and Ballarat Railway, at Bruce's Creek, near Lethbridge”. Rev Peter MacPherson 1884.

<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-344468367/view?partId=nla.obj-344478280>

The Growth Plan can be a great opportunity to bring together current strong Wathaurung water values along with history, biodiversity and enhanced environmental outcomes centred around Bruce's Creek. An example is the Harpley Discovery Trail.

<https://communities.lendlease.com/victoria/harpley/living-in-harpley/harpley-discovery-trail/>

In my discussion with Emily Killin of your team last Wednesday I was invited to detail IWM options for consideration. Given the time frame for this submission I haven't had the chance to articulate them here. I have reached out to others and will look to forward them on once received.

Kind regards,

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