

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Officer South Employment PSP](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission - Officer South Employment PSP
Date: Wednesday, 25 October 2023 12:59:13 PM
Attachments: [Objection to VPA PSP.pdf](#)
[Darcfield Flood History.pdf](#)
[Melb Water Planning Letter 3rd Sept. 2020.pdf](#)
[VPA Letter Sarah Doring Oct 2022.pdf](#)

To Victorian Planning Authority
Level 25, 35 Collins Street MELBOURNE VIC 3000
osepsp@vpa.vic.gov.au

RE: Objection to Planning Strategy - Officer South Employment PSP

By Chairman of Directors Darcfield Cooperative Ltd
Peter Harris
Contact Details [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Affected Property [REDACTED]

Please find attached: -

- Objection to VPA PSP.pdf – Reasons and details of the submission relating to Officer South Employment PSP.
- Darcfield Flood History.pdf – Details of floods on our property since 1978
- Melb Water Planning letter 2020 – Concerns about increased flow rates in creeks
- VPA Letter Sarah Doring 2022.pdf – Concerns about flow rates and flooding
- Pictures 92, 93 & 100 – Supporting photographs.

Regards
Peter Harris



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To Victoria Planning Authority

25 October 2023

Objection to Officer South Employment PSP

1) As the owners of the property at [REDACTED], the Darcsfield Cooperative Ltd. strongly oppose the approval of the Officer South Employment Precinct PSP on the basis that insufficient consideration and planning has been given to the flow of water from the proposed retarding basins which will result in increased likelihood of flooding of our property, severely impacting our ability to utilise our land.

2) This proposed development should not be approved until Melbourne Water has developed and implemented definite improvements to Cardinia Creek and Lower Gum Scrub Creeks, all the way to Westernport Bay to mitigate the risk of flooding of properties downstream of the proposed development.

3) The concept of using Retarding Basins at each new development has been shown not to work because they are discharging into creeks that are not being maintained, or developed to increase their capacities and manage the increased water flow. The Retarding Basins certainly take the peak flows out, but they continue to discharge high volumes downstream for another 3 to 4 days keeping the creek levels full, or overflowing. This does not allow any flooded properties to recede until the creek levels drop.

4) We have been very concerned about the poor flow of the creeks and the more frequent flooding from much less rainfall to the Cardinia area. We have had numerous correspondence and meetings with Melb Water Maintenance, Melb Water Strategic Planning and the VPA since mid 2020. In May 2020, we raised a Works Request to Melbourne Water to clear the creeks all the way to the bay. This has not been completed.

The devastating effects on downstream residents is explained in two letters that we have attached to this submission.

The first letter dated 3rd September 2020 was to Melb Water Strategic Planning with a cc to Mr Brent Mclean of the VPA.

The second letter dated 17th Oct 2022 was to Victorian Planning Authority outlining our serious concerns. We also submit the photos numbered 92, 93 and 100, referred to in this letter.

5) We are aware that a major asparagus farmer, downstream of us has sold up to get away from the increased flooding, and other neighbouring farmers are intending to sell up if the regular flooding continues. We will also seriously reconsider our options if we see that new developments to our north are allowed to proceed without ensuring the creek capacities will handle their development without affecting downstream residents.



6) We attended the VPA meeting on 18th October 2023 and met Sarah Doring and other VPA staff. Sarah confirmed that they worked with Melbourne Water Strategic Planning and is not aware of what Melbourne Water has planned to improve the creek flow downstream of their precinct. She referred us to Melb. Waters Your Say website. There was a Draft DSS document for Lower Gum Scrub Creek work, number 1402, but it has not been released. We are in the process of organising a zoom meeting with Melb Water Planning, to discuss these concerns.

7) We have read VPA's documents and Melbourne Waters Strategic Planning report produced by their consultants, Engeny, and neither convinces us that the creeks will be improved to reduce the frequency of flooding or damage to our property.

8) Our analysis of the report from Engeny to Melbourne Water relating to mitigation of water flow:

- Shows the development of the new Precincts north of Princess Freeway between 2010 and 2020 have already had a significant impact on downstream properties showing the inability of the creek system to cope with the increase of water flow
- recommends additional and more frequent desilting of the creeks.

The principal of the modelling in the report is to have mitigating strategies in place to emulate the predevelopment conditions which existed in 2010.

The report doesn't take into account

- Larger rain-fall conditions than that considered in the report. It is only based on a minor storm.
- The development that has occurred South of Princess Freeway since 2020. It only considers developments north of the freeway.
- The additional runoff that will occur from development of the Officer South Employment PSP
- The retarding basins – although delaying the peak flow in the creeks, they increase the length of time the creeks are at high levels preventing the flood gates from draining properties for 4 to 7 days.

According to Engeny's report, based on a minor storm in October 2020.

- the precincts developed from 2010 to 2020 have increased downstream water levels by 120mm.
- The development south of Princess Freeway are expected to increase the inundation depth by a further 80-110mm.
- Any increase in water levels due to the Officer South Employment PSP have not been considered. -

According to the Engeny Report, mitigation works proposed are intended to provide interim reduction to the regular flow inundation experienced by the properties along Lower Gum Scrub Creek until further development of downstream local and upstream drainage schemes is undertaken such that drainage assets proposed as part of these schemes can provide a long-term solution.

Run off from is being shunted form one creek to another. The fact is the creek system is not capable of coping with the current development conditions up stream much less with continual development increasing the flow rates and this shows that there are serious down-stream problems.

Schedule of Flood History to the DARCS Field CoOperative Property.

We have attached our listing of the floods since we bought the property in 1978. The frequency and with much less rain is obvious since the developments with retarding basins commenced in 2010. You can see that we were not flooded in October 2020, which is when Engeny based their report on.

CONCLUSION

Darcsfield Cooperative limited strongly objects to the proposed Officer South Employment PSP on the grounds that:

- The planning of the proposed new development does not adequately cater for the increased water runoff from the development and how that water will be managed to mitigate increase risk of serious flooding on our and neighbouring properties.
- The Engeny Report underestimates the level of inundation that will occur at our property.
- Obstruction by private wetlands area needs to be altered to prevent excessive flooding of Cardinia Road
- A total rethink of the maintenance strategy of the creeks and flood gates need to be considered. Currently they do not appear to be in accordance with the guidelines listed in the Koo Wee Rup and Langwarrin Flood Protection District Customer Service Charter.
- The capacity of the creeks has significantly been reduced due to diminished maintenance and growth in vegetation.
- The drainage system was designed to drain the flood plains to cope with agricultural conditions and are now being used to cope with large development in the Beaconsfield, Officer and Pakenham areas.
- The outlet capacity of the drains needs to able to cope with increasing flow rates by widening and desilting, The local creeks and drains are only being marginally

Darcsfield Co-operative Limited

ABN 71 156 273 136

Secretary

maintained. In some creeks the vegetation has not been cleared in the past 40 years and in other areas only cleared to the width of a frontend loader bucket. If the capacity of this end of the drainage is not improved then there should not be any further development up stream.

We await the results of your consideration to this objection and we are certainly available to meet with you to explain our concerns.

Regards

Peter Harris



Chairman of Directors

Darcsfield Cooperative Ltd

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Flood History

Recording of Floods at Darcsfield Co-Op Ltd. [REDACTED] by N Morrish Oct 2022				
When	Approx Rainfall	Approx Depth	Did it enter Clubhouse	Comments
Sept, 1984		800mm	Yes, new carpet	Pic in Darcs 25yr book by Monty
Oct. 1990		600 mm	Yes, new carpet	
17th Sept1991		300mm	No	Flying again in 3 days
6th Feb. 2011	185mm in Officer	1500mm	Yes, new carpet	Went in 4 days. Dry for W/Bee in 7days
June. 2012		250mm	No	
July, 2012	100mm in 3 Hrs	600	Yes 200 Deep	Called Koo Wee Rup Flood
In this period Most of Officer, Nth of Freeway, is developed, with retarding basins releasing water for longer, plus a 600mm pipeline, scheduled for another creek, now feeds into Gum scrub Creek.				
1st May, 2020	71mm in 3 days	400mm	No	7 days to go. GumScrub Very Bad Condition
Sept, 2020, Melb Water cleared half width of Gum Scrub Crk plus illegal fences, south of Fowler Rd to past Manks Rd. Gum Scrub Crk stills requires extra work to make it flow better.				
25th Aug 2022	22mm	150mm	No	Only paddocks. Not on Airfield runways. Partly open, West runway and much of the pits not usable
14th Oct, 2022	50mm in 24hrs	400mm	No	4 days to drain off runways. Flying facilities not usable for two weeks
29th Oct,2022	34mm in 24hrs	650mm	Yes	7 days to go. GumScrub very Bad Flow

Strategic Planning Manager

Officer South Employment Precinct Structure Plan

Attention Sarah Doring

Re Poor Flow of Cardinia and Gum Scrub Creeks in Cardinia Area

Hello Sarah, we are a group of owners whose land is affected by the poor flow of Gum Scrub and Cardinia Creeks. The main problem is Gum Scrub Creek.

We got together in May 2020 when the flooding badly affected our properties. The creek flow was so bad that the water stayed on our properties for at least a week longer than normal. All our land is Peat Clay and this became very soggy. Farmers had to remove cattle from their paddocks for at least 3 months. We raised a Works Request to Melbourne Water to improve the flow and fix faulty flood gates and levee banks. We met with their Mr Tom LeCerf, Maintenance Co-ordinator and he quickly commenced work to remove illegal fences and clear vegetation for half the creeks width, leaving the other side for habitation. This was done South of Fowler Rd bridge towards the bay, past Manks Rd. We are still talking with Tom about improving some faulty areas and he is reporting back to us.

We are also in contact with James Hogdsen, Melbourne Water Senior Strategies Engineer, because we are aware he is investigating how the capacity of the creeks in our area will handle the proposed 1000Ha Officer South Employment PSP. We have raised our concerns in 2020 with James and we cc'd your Director, Mr Brent McLean. On 4th August 2022 we had a Zoom meeting with James, Tom and the consultants who showed us preliminary flood mapping of our area once the proposed development is completed. It showed a substantial increase in flooding to our properties. We are waiting for them to finalise their study and to have another meeting.

We are aware that you are scheduled to have Community Engagement late 2022, where we would like to be involved and hope it is not too late. Are we able to attend?

We also note on page 28 of your Officer South Employment PSP Place Based Plan document, it refers in Drainage Mapping to "Concerns regarding drainage as flood impacts the precinct and will require significant outfall works." Does this include work to the creeks downstream.?

Also on page 32 it states "A commitment is needed pre PSP that there will be state funding available for road networks". Are you also budgeting for creek improvements downstream for improving the flow of water away from your precinct?

We are not against the development but we are seriously concerned that we will not survive if subjected to increased flooding. We believe improvements to the creeks downstream are essential for our existence.

Sarah, whilst writing this letter on Friday, flooding began to our property and also to your precinct. The farm, Meat Me At Gate, in Cardinia Rd, began to flood, picture, Pic 80, attached. Police closed off Cardinia Rd at Ballarto Rd and also down at Kaduna Park, near Princess Freeway. Police said some streets in Kaduna Park were flooded. Sarah, this has happened from only 49mm falling in Officer and Officer South on Thursday and Friday. Cardinia Rd was still closed at 5.30pm Saturday night. Farmer John Hobson said the only other time it was blocked was in Feb 2011 when 185mm fell in Officer/Cardinia. Patterson Rd beside your precinct was also flooded. The pathetic condition of Gum Scrub Creek at Cardinia Rd is not helping your area. We have photos of Gum Scrub on East side of Cardinia Rd. Wilmotts on the opposite side of Cardinia Rd were also flooded.

We, the Darcsfield Co-Op and the Baillieu property, know we are in a flood retarding basin but it normally took 100mm to flood us. Now that Officer is developed to the North of the Freeway, we are getting flooded too often and because Gum Scrub is not flowing properly, it remains on our properties for much longer. It will be much worse when your precinct and Cardinia Rd precincts are developed, unless the creeks are improved. Today we are compiling another letter to James Hodgson and Tom LeCerf, with documented photos and times to show how Gum Scrub Creek is not flowing. We will cc you and Olivia Akdeniz at Cardinia Shire.

For your reference we attach photos, Pic92, Pic 93 and Pic 100 (yes we have many flood related photos on file) These were taken by drone at 10am Sat. 15th Oct and we have a very good video of the area.

We consider this matter to be urgent therefore could you please ring Norm Morrish [REDACTED] [REDACTED] ASAP and send your replies to Norms email, who is in constant contact with the farmers.

[REDACTED]

Best regards

Peter Harris, Director Darcsfield Co-operative Ltd

[REDACTED]

Norm Morrish, Facilities Mgr. P&Darcs Model Aircraft Club

[REDACTED]

Peter Jonoski, Farmer

[REDACTED]

John Hobson, Farmer

[REDACTED]

Geoff Hobson, Farmer

[REDACTED]

Matthew Brown, Mgr, Ballieu Property

[REDACTED]

To Melbourne Water Strategic Planning Officer South.

3rd September 2020

PO Box 4342 Melbourne Vic 3001.

Attention Mr James Hogdsen, Senior Strategies Engineer.

Email : [REDACTED]

Re Recent Floods, 3rd May & 24th August, from Gum Scrub and Cardinia Creeks

Dear Sir,

We, the DARCSFIELD Cooperative, are the owners of [REDACTED]. It consists of 106 acres bound by Fowler Rd, Wenn Rd and Lower Gum Scrub Creek. 76 acres are leased to a cattle farmer, the other 30 acres is our radio control model aircraft field with 160 members. We bought the land in 1978.

We write this letter because we are aware you are investigating the capacities of creeks in our area as part of your design study for how the catchment creeks will handle future developments in the Officer area. We and our adjacent farmers are very concerned about recent flooding to our properties and we know that there is increased flow into Cardinia Creek and Gum Scrub Creek for a longer period as the developed estates release water from their retarding basins. We are also aware that the Officer South drain has been redirected from Cardinia Creek into Gum Scrub Creek. The condition of both creeks is extremely poor due to vegetation growing in the creeks. At present the water flow is basically static when they reach the Ballarto Rd bridge, as can be seen by **Photo A**, of Gum Scrub Creek, looking south on Ballarto Rd bridge. It clearly shows cut reeds held back by tea trees and other vegetation.

We know we are in a flood retarding area, but the farmers are not. The flooding on 3rd May 2020 resulted in 300mm flood depth to us and our farmers to our west, from just 75 mm of rain over 4 days. The most recent flood, 24th August resulted from only 25mm over 2 days and has again flooded the farmers and some of our land. We and the farmers are extremely upset that this has happened and urgent action needs to be taken by Melbourne Water to ensure we are not flooded again by such low rain falls, especially with the predicted wet spring and summer approaching.

Our land is peat clay and normally the flood waters recede within 3 days, even the large floods of 2011 and 2012. The May 3rd flood of 300mm remained on our property for an extra week due to the water levels remaining so high in our adjacent creeks as the upstream retarding basins continued to release high volumes of water. Our peat clay became water logged. This plus the rain in May, June, July and August has prevented our farmer from driving onto our property. He has transferred many of his cattle to another property. Our runways have also been too soft to mow and conditions were not good for our members when they were able to attend the field in the limited Covid times. We have never experienced such conditions since 1978.

In early May we met with Tom Lecerf, Melbourne Water and neighbouring farmers to discuss the flood waters. We then, on 12th May, sent Melbourne Water a Works Request letter, co signed by the farmers. Tom immediately initiated an environmental study so that he could clean out half the creek width of both Gum scrub Creek and Cardinia Creeks in July and August. This work has started but slow progress due to the wet weather. They are at present doing Gum Scrub creek, south of

Ballarto Rd, to give improved flow to the bay. They have done beside our property, but two illegal fences across the creek still need to be removed when water level drops. We are in regular contact with Tom and he is very good to deal with.

Our works request raised the faulty flood gates as a serious problem, especially along gum scrub creek. Jonoski's, the farmer at end of Fowler Rd have 3 flood gates and Tom said they were able to repair 2 of them. Unfortunately the repairs did not work and water flowed back into their property via all 3 flood gate drains on Sunday, 23rd August. Jonoski's used a diesel pump to send it back over the levee bank to reduce their flooding. **The design and construction of all flood gates in the area needs further serious investigation.**

Tom also discovered a low levee bank on David Youngs property that is a main contributor to flooding the farmers in the land wedge between Gum Scrub creek levee bank, Cardinia Creek levy bank and Ballarto Rd, this includes the Jonoski's and the Hobsons. We believe, when we were talking to David Young in May, that he will make it difficult for Melbourne Water to access his property for levee repairs and Gum Scrub Creek cleanout. **This needs to be sorted as soon as possible by Melbourne Water.**

The third contributor to the farmers recent flooding is the illegal fence across Gum Scrub creek at the Fowler Rd bridge. The attached **Photo B**, shows the cut reeds against the fence acting as a dam wall. Water was 300mm lower on downside of the problem fence. Photo was taken 9am Monday 24th August. Tom immediately sent an excavator to remove the reeds, or fence on Monday, 24th. **Photo C**, taken at 4pm on the same day shows the water at maximum level in Gum Scrub Creek, beside our property. **Not acceptable for only 25mm of rain.**

We are very concerned about further developments to our north and on 26th August, we spoke to Mr Brent McLean of the VPA about our concerns. He advised us to send you this letter and cc him.

James our biggest concern is the future design of the drainage system to be able to cope with increased developments to our North. We are concerned with what design flows you use to calculate when the creeks are so full of reeds, tea trees, blackberries, vegetation and rubbish. The water flow is basically stagnant for Cardinia, Gum Scrub and Toomuc Creeks. The vegetation in Toomuc Creek is actually worse than Cardinia and Gum Scrub Creeks, when viewed from Ballarto Rd bridge. In comparison we have looked at the creeks/drains in Bayles and Coralynn and they are clean with swift moving water.

What flow calculations would you use when the creeks are cleared for half their width to the bay and then do you intend to clean all the creeks in our area to their full width to enable maximum flow. We believe Melbourne Water will be doing a drone video of the thick vegetation in the creeks adjacent to Wenn Rd and our flying field. Please contact [REDACTED] of the time and date to make sure our members at the field are made aware. At present it is closed due to Covid.

James, we look forward to your reply and meeting you on site, with our co signed farmers to discuss your plans, when lockdown restrictions are eased. Our future is totally in the hands of Melbourne Water because if future developments increase flow into our adjacent creeks and regular flooding occurs then our land will not be suitable for grazing or a model airfield.

Best regards

Peter Harris Dated

President. Email : [REDACTED] Ph [REDACTED]

DARCSFIELD CoOp. [REDACTED]

Plus list of adjacent farmers, not signed due to Covid travel restrictions.

1) John Hobson [REDACTED]. Ph [REDACTED]

2) Geoff Hobson [REDACTED]. Ph [REDACTED]

3) Damien Fitzgerald [REDACTED]. Ph [REDACTED]

4) Peter Jonoski [REDACTED]. Ph [REDACTED]

5) Matthew Brown [REDACTED]. Ph [REDACTED]

CC to the following :-

a) Brent McLean, Director Outer Melbourne. Victorian Planning Authority.

Email : [REDACTED]

b) Officer in Charge, Shire of Cardinia. Email : [REDACTED]

c) Edward O'Donohue MLC. Email: [REDACTED]

d) Tom Lecerf, Melbourne Water Service Delivery Program Leader.

Email : [REDACTED]





