

Project: **Ballarat
North**

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30/09/2025

Victorian Planning Authority
(re: Draft Amendment C256ball / Ballarat North PSP)
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Dear Victorian Planning Authority / City of Ballarat Planning Team,

Re: Submission on Draft Amendment C256ball – Ballarat North Precinct Structure Plan

I am writing to express my concerns and objections to the proposed Ballarat North PSP (Draft Amendment C256ball), and to request that the planning authorities reconsider the development of new greenfield residential estates in agricultural land at Ballarat North. Instead, I strongly urge that we focus on more sustainable, infill and densification in the existing urban area to meet growth.

Key Points of Concern

1. Loss of Agricultural Land and Landscape Character

The land north of Ballarat is currently agricultural in nature. Expanding the urban footprint into productive farmland will reduce the land available for food production, damage rural character, and erode the scenic and environmental qualities of the region.

2. Urban Sprawl and Infrastructure Burden

Extending urban development further out imposes significant costs: new roads, utilities, storm water management, public transport, schools, parks, etc. These costs are often borne by the community. Sprawl tends to increase car dependency, degrade environmental outcomes (e.g. habitat loss, increased pollution), and place pressure on council services.

3. Existing Urban Areas Underutilised

There remains substantial opportunity to increase housing density in existing suburbs and brownfield sites. This would allow better use of existing infrastructure, reduce commute times, and make more environmentally sustainable outcomes possible.

4. Commercial Infrastructure

Rather than pushing further into agricultural land, Ballarat urgently needs investment in essential services within already expanded urban areas, such as Winter Valley and Lucas. Recent growth suburbs are already experiencing shortages of schools, childcare, healthcare facilities, and hospital capacity. Before considering new estates, planning should first prioritise strengthening schools, hospitals, and health infrastructure in current growth areas to ensure the community's needs are met.

Desired Alternatives / Requests

To address housing supply, growth, and affordability, while preserving the best of Ballarat's environment, I respectfully request the following:

- Prioritise infill development in existing urban areas before granting approvals for large-scale new greenfield subdivisions. Strategies might include: higher density housing (townhouses, apartments, mixed use), redevelopment of under-used parcels, enabling more accessory dwellings.
- A thorough comparative analysis of the costs and benefits of greenfield vs. infill development, including economic, social, environmental and infrastructure costs, to inform decision-making.
- Strengthened protections for agricultural land, open space, landscape character, and heritage sites in all planning policies. Any transition of land should require rigorous justification and minimisation of impact.

Conclusion

While I understand there is strong demand for housing and land supply for Ballarat's growing population, I believe expanding into agricultural land should be a last resort—not a first. Ballarat has substantial potential to accommodate more growth within its current footprint in ways which preserve the rural landscape, reduce infrastructure burden, lower environmental costs, and improve liveability.

Thank you for considering this submission. I hope the planning process will genuinely explore alternatives to greenfield expansion before proceeding.

Yours faithfully,

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