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RE: South East Shepparton PSP to unlock residential development in Greater Shepparton

The Committee for Greater Shepparton welcomes the release of the Shepparton South East draft Precinct Structure Plan.

We appreciate the significant undertaking by the VPA to progress the Plan to this stage, and this is reflected in the substantial additional resources provided for the public's consideration and feedback.

Like many regional cities, Greater Shepparton is experiencing significant shortfall in land available for residential development. This is reflected in both the cost of residential blocks, and the supply of residential properties.

Housing - the economic handbrake

Our Community Connector Program has supported the relocation to Shepparton of more than 100 professionals since January 2024, and more than 600 since the Program began in 2021 to work in specialist and professional roles in more than 100 local businesses from health to food manufacturing. As a result we have first hand experience of the competition for housing in Shepparton, with our relocating professionals representing 1 of more than 50-60 applicants for each rental property. We are also keenly aware of the housing shortage impact on local business and our regional economy.

Flood resilience and recovery

Unlocking new residential lots with up-to-date flood mapping and planning controls – as is the case with the South East PSP - is key to Greater Shepparton's recovery and resilience to future floods and natural disasters. The October 2022 floods proved this. Not one house in Greater Shepparton's newer estates experienced flooding, in contrast homes predating contemporary mapping, controls and design remain uninhabitable with little prospect of a speedy or affordable rebuild. With no alternative land available, there is no capacity for residents to relocate permanently or temporarily to allow older sites to be redeveloped from the ground up to contemporary standards.

Current PSP at risk of no material impact on land supply.

We welcome the release of more land for residential development however we are concerned the current PSP's development costs - estimated at more than 60% above equivalent recent local developments - are at a level that is not viable in the Greater Shepparton residential market. Proceeding with the proposed community, road and drainage infrastructure requirements, and the proposed cost sharing model will price the development out of the market and as a result the immense work to date will have no material impact on the supply of residential land in Greater Shepparton.

Implications for freight links

In 2023 the Federal Government cut the partial funding that had been allocated for the GV Bypass. As a result, and for the foreseeable future, Doyles Road will continue to be the default heavy freight route for north-south traffic through/around Shepparton. The PSP proposes several new intersection treatments, including roundabouts, and a signalised pedestrian crossing that will cut across Doyles Road. Given the ongoing role of Doyles Road in the State and National freight network, the road infrastructure costs should be shared across all beneficiaries.

Community Facilities

The PSP includes significant community facilities in addition to open spaces. These facilities are in addition to Greater Shepparton's existing Sports Precinct, multiple AFL grounds and against a backdrop of changing community preferences and participation. We wholeheartedly support the inclusion of open spaces and appropriate facilities but are not convinced of the immediate need for the additional infrastructure such as club rooms.

In conclusion, we remain concerned the proposed PSP will be priced well above the local market and this will delay the critically needed residential development. We would like to see some form of Government funding support for development infrastructure which is more realistic in the current market, and that will enable the land to be developed quickly.

C4GS welcomes the opportunity to discuss our submission with you and to elaborate on our concerns and possible ways forward.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Nieuwenhuizen
CEO
Committee for Greater Shepparton