

SUBMISSION – BANNOCKBURN SOUTH EAST

Precinct structure plan

Like most people living in Australia today I am very aware of the difficulties many individuals and families face when seeking appropriate accommodation. Hence, I understand the need for the Government of Victoria to address the housing shortage which has led to this critical situation.

I have been a resident of Bannockburn since 1992. At that time, my home at [REDACTED] was at the outer limit of the township. Since then, the town has seen significant growth in the number of dwellings, the development of a P-12 school and a new shopping complex to name but a few. This has seen the town become a vibrant community with for example, extra medical services, a dental practice, fast food outlets and more service stations. Residents no longer rely on a visiting library service but have a well-stocked library on site close to the water park at the “heart” of Bannockburn. It is therefore, not surprising that the Government has deemed the area to be one suitable for further expansion.

Having now read the 73-page document entitled as above, I would like to take the opportunity comment on certain issues.

- **Public transport** - Unfortunately, Bannockburn and the surrounding district lacks any meaningful public transport system. At present, the only service is via the Ballarat to Geelong VLine coach service. The first coach to leave Bannockburn travelling to Geelong leaves the High Street at 7.01am Monday through to Friday arriving in Geelong Railway station at 7.30am. The following two services en route to Geelong leave Bannockburn High Street at 10.07am and 4.12pm respectively. There is also an extra service on a Friday evening leaving at 8.46pm. The return trips from Geelong Station are at 7.40am, 10.50am and 5.45pm. Again, there is an extra Friday evening service at 9.25pm.

As a result, most families living in the area need to have two or more vehicles since many workers commute to either Geelong or Ballarat. Some also make the trek to Melbourne. Even if one partner is at home with children, a second vehicle may be necessary to transport children to playgroup, school, or medical appointments, particularly if the latter are at a hospital or specialist service. Given that the plan envisages the building of 4685 new dwellings to accommodate approximately 13,820 persons, it is highly likely that there will be a much heavier toll on the local road network unless a much improved public transport system can be developed.

I note that this matter is mentioned on page 21 as Objective O6 which describes the need to “[d]eliver a network for roads, active transport and public transport that is permeable and integrated.” At G11 on page 22 the guideline states that “street layouts should provide multiple convenient routes via direct off road active network parks to major destinations such as local parks, sporting reserves, community facilities ... local town centre, train/bus

interchanges and significant employment areas both within the precinct and in surrounding areas.” However, I was unable to find any specific information regarding planning to develop increased availability of public transport.

In section 3.6 (Infrastructure coordination) at Guideline G45 there is an acknowledgement that “Development staging should have access to: ‘Proximity to significant existing public transport infrastructure or public transport service.,’” A similar sentiment is given under G47 where it is stated that “Development should consider Environmentally Sustainable Development principles, such as the inclusion of, but not limited to: [a]ccess to public and integrated active transport networks.”

Whilst these general principles as stated above, are highly commendable, the fact is that unless there is a commitment to providing increased public transport there will almost certainly be a massive increase in the traffic using Burnside Road as this will continue to be the main thoroughfare to the Hamilton Highway and a major part of the journey into the township of Bannockburn which will continue to be the primary shopping centre for many residents.

I would query therefore, if the Victorian Planning Authority intends to hold discussions with VLine regarding the provision of extra coach services or alternatively with VicRail to ascertain the possibility of providing a rail service to the area. The existing rail line from Geelong to Ballarat is currently used predominantly for freight but at times a special passenger train does run on the track. I am not aware as to what if any changes / improvements would be required for a regular passenger service to be introduced but this matter could be explored.

- **Provision of pedestrian crossings** – Given the intended increase in population it would appear important to consider the need for pedestrian crossings at sites near the existing schools as it is likely that these will need to cater for an increase in enrolments, at least in the early years of development. Similarly, a well signed crossing area allowing access to the existing shopping centre would be helpful for both young families and the elderly residents of the town as the High Street is likely to experience a considerable traffic load particularly at school times.
- **Traffic control signals** – For reasons above, it might be useful to consider the benefit of installing traffic control signals in the main township.
- **Car parking in existing shopping area** – The available car parking in the recently opened shopping centre is limited, has poor security surveillance and has only a single entrance / exit for customers. These issues would need to be improved once patronage increases.

Finally, I would like to thank the Victorian Planning Authority for permitting residents of Bannockburn to make formal written submissions regarding the South East Precinct Structure Plan and hope that these comments may be of some use.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

15 June 2025