



Swan Bay Environment Association Inc.

P.O. Box 143, Queenscliff 3225
Reg. No: A 00 1 7279 U
ABN 12847527692
<http://sbea.webuda.com>

Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning
PO Box 500
Melbourne
Victoria, 8002

26 May 2020

Dear Sir/ Madam

Bellarine Peninsula Distinctive Areas and Landscapes

The Swan Bay Environment Association Inc. would like to make a submission on Bellarine Peninsula Distinctive Areas and Landscapes released in April 2020.

50 year vision

We support the draft vision and note particularly to the stated vision that “Bellarine Peninsula is powered by renewable energy and produces net-zero carbon emissions”. We strongly support this vision, but are concerned that there appears nothing in the policy domains that might contribute to achieving this vision. Neither the ‘Economy and Infrastructure’ nor the ‘Environmental risks and resilience’ policy domains provide any policies that may help lower carbon emissions locally. The section on climate change details the serious consequences of climate change for the Bellarine and that it requires a “genuine coordinated response”.

We suggest a 50 year vision should identify sites suitable for zero emission energy sources. While it is difficult to be certain of the site requirements of all zero carbon energy sources, the need for elevated positions without nearby housing for wind power generation should be part of this long term planning process. Decentralisation of our energy sources should be part of long term planning. Any potential sites with sharp escarpments suitable for small scale hydro storage should also be identified and protected.

Biodiversity and environmental values

There is an error of fact that concerns our group, which is particularly concerned about the protection of Swan Bay. “The Lake Connewarre wetlands complex is the ‘jewel in the crown’ in the Bellarine Peninsula, being Victoria’s largest water body listed under the Ramsar convention”. This is only true if the word ‘estuarine’ is inserted. Most Ramsar areas in Victoria are larger than Lake Connewarre. Swan Bay is of similar size and importance to Lake Connewarre/Reedy Lake and is also a Ramsar site, although its status as such is not mentioned in the report. Both sites also support several migratory species that are subject to international treaties (CAMBA, JAMBA and ROKAMA, with China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, respectively).

The Bellarine Peninsula is characterised by many small pockets of remnant vegetation and small wetlands. A mechanism that enabled them to be managed collectively, in a more integrated manner, is highly desirable, otherwise the focus will tend to be on the larger more robust areas/wetlands as the smaller and more vulnerable areas become degraded further.

Yours sincerely

Greg Parry
President