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Tuesday, 29 June 2010

**Objection to the Proposed Subdivision of 2564 Roses Gap Road Wartook
Application Number 10-103**

The Wartook Environment Group wish to lodge this objection to the proposed subdivision of 2564 Roses Gap Road Wartook. WEG represents a significant number of the property owners in the Wartook area committed to the protection of the natural environmental values of their region and wishing to maintain the amenity of their neighbourhood.

As existing property owners WEG members are working to conserve the natural values of their environment and protect the characteristics that attracted their acquisition of land in the district.

Our objection to the proposal is based on planning scheme objectives and procedural propriety.

1. The Farming Zone which applies to the land for which the subdivision is sought specifies a minimum lot size of 40 hectares. While clause 35.07-3 provides for the possibility of creating a smaller lot for an existing dwelling, to use this device to further subdivide a relatively recent subdivision is not in keeping with the spirit of the Zone to maintain larger lot size. This objection is especially relevant when the lot sizes proposed are already so significantly smaller than the zone minimum size, and the permit for the existing dwelling was given subsequent to the last subdivision of this land.
2. The previous subdivision of this land was granted under the short lived smaller lot size that applied at the time, with a specification that the block sizes averaged out to a set minimum. Allowing a subsequent subdivision will repudiate those conditions rendering Council decision inconsistent and incompetent.
3. Approval of this application is against the general principles and precedents established for the Farming Zone; to recognise the succession needs of farmers and the opportunity for retiring generations to continue to live in their existing residence when the farm is relinquished to a new owner. This fact is acknowledged by the need for an "in principle" decision by Council before allowing the application to proceed.

4. This application is against the ESO1 Wartook Tourist Area objectives:
“To ensure impacts of development upon the Grampians National Park and surrounding environment are minimised. To encourage development that is in harmony with the environment and the community”
The application is not accompanied by a land management plan (Required for all applications for Subdivision).
The application has not been referred to Parks Victoria /DSE as required by the overlay.
Etc.
5. Increasing the number of lots in this area results in more fencing and further fragmentation of the environment, changing wildlife movement patterns and natural vistas, both antipathetic to preservation of the natural character of the area.
6. The Department of Sustainability and Environment, Country Fire Authority and the Bushfire Royal Commission are all flagging concern about increasing the residential density in bushland areas. To encourage larger numbers of dwellings into an area so vulnerable to bushfire threat would be at odds with good planning practice for fire prone areas. The creation of another lot on this property would be counterproductive to general CFA objectives, for while it does not confer any building permit rights on the second property, there is not prohibition on the owner seeking a building permit.
7. The Council has been less inclusive in the processing of this application than the planning scheme objectives and residents require. Several adjacent land owners have not been informed of the application neither has there been any public notice given to inform the neighbourhood of the proposal.
8. Given that Council is in the midst of a Planning Scheme review it would appear premature to process an application that could well be at odds with imminent revision of zone requirements.

These points are a summary of our objections to the proposal and we are willing to provide more details of concerns as required.

Please give our group sufficient notice of any proceedings on this application to allow engagement with the process.

Yours truly



David Thompson
For the Wartook Environment Group