



Frequently asked questions on the Statement of Planning Policy

What is the Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy (formerly known as the Localised Planning Statement)?

The Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) identifies what is significant about the Shire and sets out objectives and strategies that need to be considered when making relevant land use planning decisions. The SPP has been prepared by the Department of Land, Water, Environment and Planning (DELWP), with input from Council and the Victorian Planning Authority.

The SPP also establishes long term settlement boundaries for our townships based on structure planning work implemented through the current planning scheme. The introduction of long term settlement boundaries is a first for regional Victoria, providing the same rigorous protection as Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary.

What is the status of the SPP?

The SPP was endorsed at the Ordinary Council Meeting of 24 July 2019.

The Macedon Ranges were declared a distinctive area and landscape under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Under the Act, a 'responsible public entity' (RPEs; including councils and other government departments and agencies) must act in accordance with the SPP when carrying out its functions. The objectives of the SPP are binding on RPEs, and the strategies are to be treated as recommendations to which RPEs must have regard.

The SPP is included in the Planning Scheme via Clause 51.07 – Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy. Existing zones, overlays and particular provisions continue to apply across the shire.

Why has the Victorian Government prepared a Statement of Planning Policy for Macedon Ranges Shire?

In 2015 the Minister for Planning appointed an independent advisory committee to determine whether the current Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme provided adequate protection of the significant values, attributes and character of the shire.

The recommendations of the committee were endorsed by the Minister for Planning and detailed in its final report on 27 July 2016.

One of the key recommendations of the committee was the preparation of an SPP that would recognise the significance of the shire, provide a basis to strengthen future planning policy, and introduce long term settlement boundaries. The committee also identified gaps in the existing planning scheme, including the protection and management of landscapes of visual and environmental significance.

Following the release of the final report of the committee, DELWP commenced a process to prepare the SPP with input from Council and the Victorian Planning Authority.



Which townships have long term settlement boundaries?

Long term settlement boundaries have been (or will be) applied to towns throughout the shire that are expected to grow. These include Gisborne, Kyneton, Romsey, Riddells Creek, Lancefield and Woodend.

The SPP indicates that once these boundaries are applied they will be subject to the same rigorous protection as that of Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary, which can only be altered with the approval of both houses of Parliament.

In the long term, any changes to settlement boundaries will need to be supported by a rigorous and detailed assessment, which would also require community consultation.

What does it mean if my town doesn't have a long term settlement boundary?

Towns that do not have long term settlement boundaries are not identified for growth beyond existing boundaries. Any future development will be contained within existing township boundaries that are established through land use zones within the planning scheme. These zone boundaries will continue to apply.

Why doesn't the SPP include settlement boundaries for Gisborne and Romsey?

The township structure plans for Gisborne and Romsey both require review, and are therefore not considered appropriate to form the basis of long term settlement boundaries.

Council has received funding from the Victorian Government to prepare new structure plans for both Gisborne and Romsey. Once prepared and implemented, these plans will be used to inform the application of long term settlement boundaries to both townships.

In the interim, policies in the current planning scheme will continue to apply, providing guidance for the planning of these townships.

I've heard that the settlement boundaries in the SPP are going to result in a doubling of population and township size – is this true?

The settlement boundaries are based on the content of the current planning scheme, including policies that apply to each of the townships. These policies have been subject to extensive community and stakeholder engagement in recent years, and were adopted by Council and approved by the Minister for Planning prior to the preparation of the SPP.

The SPP provides an indication of the expected future population of each township in the shire. Some of the larger towns are expected to accommodate more growth, while smaller settlements with fewer services are not.

Any future growth of these townships will be required to demonstrate consistency with the role and function of the township as set out in the SPP and the planning scheme. These policies seek to ensure that planning for townships effectively balances growth with the need to retain the unique features and characteristics that makes the Shire an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Any growth of townships will be managed to ensure that it meets local housing need, protects the local environment, and is supported by adequate infrastructure including open space, community facilities, transport, and services.



Has the SPP been prepared in consultation with the community?

DELWP undertook consultation on the SPP between 15 December 2017 and 5 March 2018. Overall, 480 people participated in consultation on the SPP, with a total of 207 written submissions, 134 online survey responses, and 140 attendees at community drop-in sessions. A Consultation Findings Report was prepared in August 2018, explaining the outcomes of consultation and how discussions with the community informed the preparation of the final SPP. The Consultation Findings Report is available on the DELWP website.

Were Traditional Owners consulted on the Statement of Planning Policy?

Yes, the Statement was developed in partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung as the traditional custodians of the land.

How will the SPP impact on my planning permit application?

Planning permit applications will continue to be assessed against the content of the planning scheme, together with the objectives and strategies of the SPP.

It is anticipated that the preparation of a Planning Practice Note will provide further information about how the SPP will be used in decision making across Council (see below).

What happens next?

DELWP has committed to work and consult with Council on the preparation of a Planning Practice Note to guide the application of the SPP. A timeline for this process is yet to be established.

Where can I find out information about related policies and strategies?

- **Gisborne Structure Plan**
mrsc.vic.gov.au/town-planning-projects
- **Romsey Emerging Options Paper and Structure Plan**
mrsc.vic.gov.au/town-planning-projects
- **Landscape Assessment Study**
mrsc.vic.gov.au/Landscape-Assessment-Study
- **Biodiversity Strategy**
mrsc.vic.gov.au/biodiversity