05 December 2011

OSISDC SUBMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to your committee

My submission covers the outer suburban area of the Diamond Valley, principally the townships of Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge in the shire of Nillumbik on the north eastern fringe of the Melbourne metropolitan area.

Nillumbik was designated a Green Wedge shire in 1975, which restricted subdivision in the non urban areas to 8 hectares (20 acres) as this classification applies to private as well as public land. Land holders with smaller title sizes had those titles taken off them without compensation even though it was advised.

The three main townships are in a corridor which follows the Diamond Creek and has large tracts of flat flood prone land unsuitable for housing but perfect for public open space. There is a single track rail line to Hurstbridge from the city which was to be duplicated in the 1960’s but wasn’t, but I believe the funding was allocated by the Brumby government and plans exist for this to happen. Running parallel with the train line is the main road which also has all the easements for widening through to StHelena but has also been stopped. Alongside the road runs a gas mains and a water mains and there is a large capacity sewerage system. All this infrastructure is heavily under utilised as there is no development allowed.

Diamond Creek township has the largest shopping precinct with two major supermarkets, three banks and two service stations and a number of strip shops as well as a small industrial area with repair shops and trade supply and services. WattleGlen has a general store and Hurstbridge has a bank outlet and a small supermarket as well as strip shopping. Many of the small retailers are finding it tough as there is no growth and many customers travel out of the area for work and spend there money elsewhere. All three have primary schools, Diamond Creek has a large modern secondary college. Hurstbridge had a large secondary school adjacent to the railway station on a large flat site which is still available and would make an ideal spot for a new school or another public facility.

Most of the large vacant tracts of land in the corridor are freehold with the elderly long term owners keen to sell so land availability is not an issue.

I would like to conclude by saying the Green Wedge which was implemented in 1975 by the Hamer Government has had its day. It is now a dated concept as much has changed in
town planning and the provision of public open space, where the Green Wedge failed as the majority of land it covers is in private ownership and not available for public use

I hope my comments prove useful
Andrew Bean