

**Submission to the review of the Planning and  
Environment Act 2009**

**By the Boggy Creek Community Village Project,  
Glenburn VIC**

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Prepared by

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## **Background**

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The community village proposal in Boggy Creek, Glenburn, is an opportunity for Victoria to become a world leader in urban and farm planning and will showcase an alternative sustainable model of human settlement and community. Supported by the Global Foundation of Sustainable Communities, the proposal is to create a sustainable village, which is self reliant in energy, water and food and promotes world best practices in sustainable living and community ownership. This will include a 150-acre organic farm, renewable energy and a compact car free village area including tourism and green employment opportunities. After an extensive search for land, a 350 hectare site within Murrindindi Shire has been selected for the project which meets the variety of requirements needed to establish the first of what is hoped, many sustainable community villages.

For more details see [www.bunjil.com.au](http://www.bunjil.com.au)

## **The Objectives of the Planning and Environment Act**

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Generally the objectives of the planning and environment act need to be upgraded in the current climate of global warming, drought and changing relationships of Victorian landholders with the environment. The Bunjil project suggest a number of ways the objectives of the planning and environment act could respond to the current state of Victoria:

### **1. Community as a focus**

The Boggy Creek project would like to submit that the focus of the objectives should centre on creating resilient sustainable communities that respond and respect the environment around them rather than *'to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land'*. True sustainable communities incorporate all the current objectives within the Act. With sustainable communities as the focus of the objectives it is detailing the outcome of good planning rather than the process.

### **2. Sustainable use of the land**

The objectives should include the encouragement of ecologically sustainability developments that include renewable energy, enhancement of biodiversity and land productivity and reduce the ecological footprint of communities. Ecological footprints are a fantastic way to measure the true 'sustainability' of any development proposal and should be included within the act as a measure to which developments are considered.

### **3. Definition of sustainable'**

The objectives should also define what is sustainable development. Bunjil describes sustainable development as ENVIRONMENT: trying to achieve

food, water and energy self-sustainability while protecting and enhancing natural systems SOCIAL: creating true community that cares for all age groups and needs and encourages community activities and facilities ECONOMIC: that the development will provide economic sustainability by providing meaningful employment and flexibility, create community wealth rather than individual wealth and aim to be debt free SPIRITUAL: that indigenous values and individual spiritual needs can be fulfilled. As mentioned before ecological footprints are also a beneficial concept when measuring sustainability

## **OTHER ISSUES**

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These issues do not necessarily fall under the set questions posed by the Department of Planning and Community Development regarding the Planning and Environment Act however should be included in any review of the act:

### **4. Independent communities**

The current planning system is only targeted for constant urban growth of existing centres. This has been shown to be unsustainable as it leads to increase pressure on existing services and infrastructure, larger distances between services (and greater reliance on the car) and the separation of communities, age groups and each other as cities and towns continue to sprawl into un-walkable, socially excluded urban juggernauts.

The planning system should allow for small independent new communities to be established provided they do not encourage commuting to surrounding larger centres, are 'sustainable (economically, socially and environmentally), walkable and do not displace valuable agricultural land. These new communities should also demonstrate that they will enhance both the natural environment and the existing community they are located within.

### **5. Community Land Trust**

The Boggy Creek project will include a new concept to Australia of ownership being Community Land Trust as an alternative to individual titles and ownership. This will provide more affordable housing and allow the community (and to a certain extent government) to decide what takes place on the land rather than individual decisions. It will result in infrastructure and housing that benefits the whole community rather than the individual.

The planning system should recognise this form of ownership and encourage it, as it will provide solutions to many current issues facing Victoria regarding housing shortages, affordability, lack of adequate infrastructure and poor urban design and development.

**Shane Schmidt**

*Town Planner and founding member  
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