

Whorouly South,
Victoria 3735

12th April 2017

Productivity Commission,
National Water Reform Inquiry.
GPO BOX 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

This submission to the Issues Paper is an example of the lack of information available at "grass roots" level.

The Rural City of Wangaratta and members of the Victorian State Government appear to have no interest in discussing National Water Reform with ratepayers and residents. I reference my submission to the Regulation of Agriculture Productivity Commission Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Alison G Walpole
Rural resident ratepayer.

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Development over floodplains risky

10-4-17

AFTER witnessing the devastation as a direct result of an extreme weather event in Queensland and NSW, I am alarmed that the Wangaratta North West Growth Area Structure Plan is not being seriously questioned by the residents of Wangaratta.

What more is it going to take?

Given that Wangaratta is located around three significant waterways, with the last of numerous significant flood events being in October 2016, I hold grave concerns around a "development plan" to be rolled out across a documented 'floodplain'.

Any loss of life is a disaster.

Is the drainage plan sufficient to cope with any future unprecedented severe weather events?

What guarantees are there?

Are developers underwriting the physical and financial cost to homeowners?

Is Wangaratta council guaranteeing the growth structure plan?

It may be prudent for Wangaratta residents to question the wisdom of this current plan.

It's too late to seek answers after the event.

Wangaratta ratepayers are seemingly going to be left to contribute one third to the reconstruction and ongoing maintenance of "levee banks" that are designed to provide a degree of "safety" to past planning decisions.

Not sure 'unprecedented severe weather events' understand the intent of levee banks?

Future Wangaratta planning must be designed to be "flood proofed" to ensure future "homeowners" have a solid foundation upon which to build.

With the data/technology available today there is no excuse to expose future homeowners to risk.

History is a great teacher for those willing to learn.

A new paradigm of thinking will ensure that nobody gets 'sold down the river'.

Knowledge without action is just knowledge.

Wangaratta residents deserve a safe future.

Peter Forsyth,
Wangaratta landowner,
Geelong

Published in full 5-4-17

Whorouly South,
Victoria 3735

The Editor,
Wangaratta Chronicle,
37 Rowan St,
Wangaratta 3677

Dear Sir,

Last week on 28th March 2017 the report of the Australian Productivity Commission inquiry into REGULATION OF AGRICULTURE was released.

agriculture@pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/agriculture/report

Submissions and public hearing transcripts are available on the website.

This INQUIRY has direct influence on the future of Rural City of Wangaratta communities yet the Council made no submission. In my submission NO 46 I included reference to RIGHT TO FARM controls.

Once again we have the development of legislation by Federal, State and Local Government. Local Government is subservient to the State Government yet receives grants direct from the Federal Government. Also we have the financial influence of the questionable 'unconstitutional' Council of Australian Governments. Our local elected Councilors need to understand and talk with us about this situation which concerns, among other things, land tenure, the banking and financial industry and marketing.

Yours sincerely,

Alison G Walpole
Rural, resident, ratepayer.

2nd April 2017

5-4-17
LETTERS TO EDITOR

**Focus needed on
agriculture inquiry** 5-4-17

LAST week the report of the Australian Productivity Commission inquiry into 'Regulation of Agriculture' was released.

It can be accessed at agriculture@pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/agriculture/report.

Submissions and public hearing transcripts are also available on the website.

This inquiry has direct influence on the future of Rural City of Wangaratta communities yet our council made no submission.

In my submission I included reference to 'right to farm' controls.

Once again we have the development of legislation by federal, state and local government.

Local government is subservient to the State Government yet receives grants direct from the Federal Government.

We also have the financial influence of the questionable 'unconstitutional' Council of Australian Governments.

Our local elected councillors need to understand and talk with us about this situation which concerns, among other things, land tenure, the banking and financial industry and marketing.

Alison G Walpole, Whorouly South

Wangaratta Chronicle 29-3-17

Majority needs to be heard by council

I WAS dismayed that a council that values consultation and transparency was readily able to admit that the level of consultation re the Waldara Low Density Residential Precinct – Background Report was more ‘informing’ than consulting.

Incredibly the Waldara Strategic Drainage Plan (June 2015) was deemed an ‘internal technical document’ that did not go out for public consultation.

The drainage plan that will clearly impact land-owners’ financial and physical safety was not considered worthy of consultation?

Selective transparency and informed consultation. What council opined (see below) in the agenda of the February 21 ordinary council meeting beggars belief.

16.3 Planning Scheme Amendment C61 - Waldara Low Density Residential Area - Consideration Of Panel Report “... the ‘majority rules’ view is not always the best outcome - when drafting controls, planners must rely on all available information not just the views of the community - it is not a popularity contest.”

How can council be critical of stakeholders/landowners concerns around inadequate consultation but not prepared to be transparent nor consultative in order to avail landowners of all the available information that the planners have access to?

Any chance the ‘majority view’ could have access to the facts?

And to then flippantly state ‘that it is not a popularity contest.’

For current and future landowners (ratepayers) indeed this is not a popularity contest, it is the very essence of their families’ current and future livelihoods.

There is a great opportunity for the ‘newly elected council’ (popularity contest) to 100 per cent engage, inform, explain, consult and truly value the ‘collective voice’ of the Wangaratta community.

The “majority view” of Wangaratta residents needs to be respected.

Peter Forsyth,
Warby Range Road ratepayer

HAVE YOUR SAY

WE welcome your letters to the Editor. Priority is given to typed/mailed letters under 250 words. Every letter must have your full name, address and a daytime phone contact number supplied for verification purposes. Any letter may be edited for reasons of space, content or legibility.

Email edit.chronicle@nemedias.com.au

Fax (03) 57219447

Post Letters to the Editor,

37 Rowan St, Wangaratta 3677

Mayor's call for Big Buffalo spot on

I CONGRATULATE mayor Ken Clarke on his comments about Big Buffalo.

The truth is for the last 20 years we have been governed by crisis politics.

That is, we deny there is a problem with water and a growing population until we have a drought- then when reality strikes we plough through the Melba forest to put in an ill-conceived north south pipeline.

Beautiful forest is torn apart because our Victorian Government holds to an ideology that dams are inherently bad.

We then spend millions on a desalination plant so we don't build environmentally bad dams, instead we need dirty coal-fired powers stations to turn salt into fresh water. Crazy.

And I'm also sick to death of the argument that we "need a business case" to do it.

I don't recall a business case for the pipeline or the desalination plant - rather necessity overrides ideology.

The Prime Minister has instantly won support for the expansion of the Snowy Rivers Scheme not because it's an original idea but because it makes sense.

Congratulations Ken for having the courage and leadership to voice what everyone in the North East has been thinking for ages.

Alan Boyle, Wangaratta

Give and take with council services

WITH all respect to Mr Fox's letter (*Wangaratta Chronicle* 22/3) suggesting auctioning the saleyards, I would suggest to he and other ratepayers - could we also look at auctioning:

The Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre (WPAC) - ratepayers contribute about \$1 million per year;

Aquatic and sports centre (WISAC) - ratepayers contribute about \$500,000 per year;

Target car park - ratepayers will contribute about \$12 million over 20 years (sorry, we cannot auction it, council doesn't own any asset).

The saleyards provides a good service to many ratepayers. The investment now completed was 10 years late.

It would be interesting to know what percentage of total rates is paid by ratepayers who buy and sell cattle at our local saleyards - maybe these people do not access the



FINISHED PRODUCT: The Early Holden Car Club of Wangaratta Inc held a celebratory barbecue at GOTAFE Wangaratta's automotive centre to thank members of the pre-apprenticeship program who had helped complete work on the club's gear trailer. The trailer has been a work in progress for the club for the past decade and has been constructed using the back end of a 1960s era FB Holden in order to transport the club's barbecue equipment and other club supplies. Picture at the barbecue lunch (from left) are Jacob Gordon (GOTAFE automotive apprentice), Lester Hilli (Early Holden Car Club of Wangaratta Inc), Mark Ward (team leader GOTAFE automotive), Skye Keys (GOTAFE automotive apprentice) and Phil Dryden (Early Holden Car Club of Wangaratta Inc).

PHOTO: Kylie Wilson

WPAC or WISAC or cause council to spend about \$200,000 looking after stray cats and dogs.

There needs to be give and take in how ratepayers' funds are utilised.

Paul O'Brien, Greta

The beauty of the King Valley's people

OUR son and his fiancé were married in the King Valley on the March long weekend and our many guests from Melbourne, across Victoria and interstate marvelled at the valley on many levels.

The marriage ceremony and wedding reception were held at Dal Zotto's winery at Whitfield against the magnificent backdrop of mountains, grapevines, majestic red gum trees and beautifully tendered gardens and lawns.

But the beauty of the valley runs far deeper than all of that and it is for the residents of our smaller community of Edi Upper that I reserve the most praise.

Volunteering as a fundraiser for the local community hall and recreation reserve, local residents helped Helen and I host a function

at our home on the Sunday following the wedding.

Members of the Edi Upper community worked tirelessly from 7.30am until 9pm and again our guests marvelled at this wonderful demonstration of community spirit and at people's commitment, friendliness and generosity.

Sincere thanks to all in our fantastic community.

Danny O'Donoghue, Edi Upper

HAVE YOUR SAY

WE welcome your letters to the Editor. Priority is given to typed/emailed letters under 250 words. Every letter must have your full name, address and a daytime phone contact number supplied for verification purposes. Any letter may be edited for reasons of space, content or legibility.

Email edit.chronicle@nemediamedia.com.au

Fax (03) 57219447

Post Letters to the Editor,
37 Rowan St, Wangaratta 3677

Copy

Whorouly South,
Victoria 3735.

2nd February 2017

The Editor,
Wangaratta Chronicle,
37 Rowan St.,
Wangaratta 3677

Dear Sir,

An article "Secret council vote hinders plan to make history" by Ailia Dow, Melbourne Age 31st January 2017, discusses the approaching election on 3rd March 2017 for President of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). It is suggested in this article an issue is about the performance of the MAV.

The Municipal Association of Victoria is incorporated by an act of the Victorian Parliament, the Municipal Association Act 1907, and governed by the State Council. Further information is available on the internet. The Rural City of Wangaratta Council is a member of the Municipal Association of Victoria.

At the recent Council election we voted for candidates to represent and respond to us. Unfortunately emphasis on a code of conduct limiting response by our elected Councilors is hindering democratic government. A situation which I think should be referred for investigation by the Victorian Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely,

Alison G Walpole
Rural resident ratepayer RCOW.

LETTERS TO EDITOR

13-2-17 Ombudsman should become involved

AN article "Secret council vote hinders plan to make history" in the The Age (January 31) discussed the approaching election on March 3 for president of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV).

It was suggested in this article an issue is about the performance of the MAV.

The MAV is incorporated by an act of the Victorian Parliament, and the Rural City of Wangaratta Council is a member of the MAV.

At the recent council election we voted for candidates to represent and respond to us.

Unfortunately emphasis on a code of conduct limiting response by our elected councillors is hindering democratic government.

It is a situation which I think should be referred for investigation by the Victorian Ombudsman.

Alison G Walpole, Whorouly South

PUBLISHED/EDITED

6-1-17

Copy

Whorouly South,
Victoria 3735.

1st January 2017

The Editor,
Wangaratta Chronicle,
37 Rowan St.,
Wangaratta,
Victoria 3677.

Dear Sir,

It is disappointing the Steve Kelly article "Mayor's focus on planning" Chronicle 30th December 2016 makes no mention of current discussion by both State and Federal Government of RIGHT TO FARM legislation. Just 12 months ago on 27th January 2016 your paper published an article by Wangaratta Practicing Accountant Ken Clarke "DO YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO FARM?". Now Cr Clarke is the elected Mayor of Wangaratta it would be helpful if he would explain current State and Federal Government consideration of legislation which will affect future planning of our RURAL city. I have requested information from Rural City of Wangaratta Council CEO Brendan McGrath and understand holidays delay response.

In October 2016 the Victorian Government's response to the Animal Industries Advisory Committee's Final report "Planning for sustainable animal industries" was released. I received a copy from the Federal Member for INDI Cathy McGowan who I contacted concerning Federal Government RIGHT TO FARM legislation.

I understand the Rural City of Wangaratta Council has made no response to the Australian Productivity Commission report of its Inquiry into the Regulation of Agriculture in Australia released 15 November 2016. The Federal Government is required to table the report in each House of the Parliament within 25 sitting days of receipt.

There are many submissions to this Inquiry available to down load from the Inquiry website. Submission No 66 from, the Australian Property Institute Inc, NSW Division, 1st March 2016 was prepared in consultation with a committee of registered Land Valuers including Albury representation. I quote

"This submission to the Productivity Commission (PC) on the issues paper entitled Regulation of Agricultural Land has been prepared by the Australian Property Institute (API) as part of ongoing research efforts and dissemination of factual and dispassionate information about the worth of property rights in Australia, compensation assessments for such rights and management of such rights."

Reference is made to Land Tenure and use, Environmental protection, Water and Investment.

2/

A key question addressed in the issues paper

"whether a regulation, and the way it is implemented, imposes an unnecessary regulatory burden"

Background information to the "RIGHT TO FARM" debate and RURAL LAND PLANNING.

I understand that within Victorian politics there is discussion of the need for the Federal Coalition Government to complete a full cost-benefit analysis of the roll out of the Murray Darling Basin Plan which includes the Federal electorate of INDI.

We need our elected representatives at Federal, State and Local Government level to provide relevant information to the people they represent.

Yours sincerely,

Alison G Walpole

Resident rural ratepayer RCOW.

Copy OMBUDSMAN VICTORIA

CHRONICLE 6-1-17

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Relevant information key to leadership

It is disappointing the article 'Mayor's focus on planning' in the *Wangaratta Chronicle*, December 30 makes no mention of current discussion by both state and federal governments of right to farm legislation.

Just 12 months ago the *Chronicle* published an article, written by the now mayor Cr Ken Clarke, in his capacity as a columnist, titled "Do you have a right to farm?"

Now Cr Clarke is our mayor it would be helpful if he would explain current state and federal government consideration of legislation which will affect future planning of our rural city.

I understand the Rural City of Wangaratta council has made no response to the Australian Productivity Commission report of its Inquiry into the Regulation of Agriculture in Australia released November 15, 2016.

I understand that within Victorian politics there is discussion of the need for the Federal Government to complete a full cost-benefit analysis of the roll out of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan which includes the federal electorate of Indi.

We need our elected representatives at federal, state and local government level to provide relevant information to the people they represent.

Alison G Walpole, Whorouly South

Mayor's focus on planning

PLANNING is the number one issue on Rural City of Wangaratta Mayor Ken Clarke's radar as he poises himself to make Wangaratta a place that residents can be proud of again.

He and no doubt several councillors want to focus on how they can make the planning process more streamlined for people to start up a business in the rural city.

Cr Clarke believes there is a perception that it is difficult to get plans approved in the rural city and he wants this to change.

More encouragement of

Room for improvement to entice more development in the rural city



BY STEVE KELLY
skelly@nemedia.com.au

business people and enterprises to come to Wangaratta, assisted by streamlined processes, is an integral building block in his plan to entice development in the city.

Cr Clarke said other neighbouring councils reportedly welcome the chance to create new business with open arms,

but unfortunately in Wangaratta it's not seen as the case.

With a population of just over 27,000 municipality-wide, the notion is to lift the resident-base above 30,000 so growth can become self-generating.

But to achieve this, Cr Clarke said there needs to be industry and jobs to support this greater population.

"We've got to do everything we can to get them to come here and not go to Benalla or Wodonga," he said.

But while getting them to

invest in Wangaratta might be one side of the coin, the other is making land available which can be used for a new industrial zone, as North Wangaratta is now at capacity.

Cr Clarke sees potential in Avian Park, suggesting the former greyhound racing track could become the new industrial estate in the city.

"I don't think we'll ever get greyhound racing back in Wangaratta, so is it worth keeping the track for one trotting event a year?" he asked.

The CBD and the retail sector can also not be forgotten as a provider of income to the \$1.46 billion gross regional product, but Cr Clarke said some councillors want more focus on the rural areas.

"We are looking at the CBD plan and there was discussion this month on the next stage of the Ovens Street redevelopment opposite the Co-Store," he said.

"There is a little bit of animosity from a couple of councillors who see that

we're spending the bulk of our money in Wangaratta and not out in the sticks.

"But as Alan Clark (rural city director of infrastructure) said, that's where all our roads are so they get a hell of a lot more than what's spent in the city."

The budget for roads in 2016-17 is \$7.5 million and Cr Clarke said rates capped at two per cent from next year will reduce revenue by an extra \$123,000, putting more strain on service delivery and capital renewal.

30.12.16

Copy

Whorouly South,
Victoria 3735.

20th December 2016

CEO Brendan McGrath,
Rural City of Wangaratta,
P O Box 238,
Wangaratta, 3676.

Dear Sir,

I reference the attached email from Rebecca Golia, your office. I would appreciate a written response from you, CEO Rural City of Wangaratta, to this situation.

I attach copy my letter to you of 5th December 2016 and reference the Victorian Ombudsman report "Investigation into transparency of local government decision making" 15th December 2016

It is disappointing the elected Rural City of Wangaratta Council has made no response to the Australian Productivity Commission report of its Inquiry into the Regulation of Agriculture in Australia released 15 November 2016. The Federal Government is required to table the report in each House of the Parliament within 25 sitting days of receipt.

There are many submissions to this Inquiry available to down load from the Inquiry website. Submission No 66 from, the Australian Property Institute Inc, NSW Division, 1st March 2016 was prepared in consultation with a committee of registered Land Valuers including Albury representation. I quote

"This submission to the Productivity Commission (PC) on the issues paper entitled Regulation of Agricultural Land has been prepared by the Australian Property Institute (API) as part of ongoing research efforts and dissemination of factual and dispassionate information about the worth of property rights in Australia, compensation assessments for such rights and management of such rights."

Reference is made to Land Tenure and use, Environmental protection, Water and Investment.

A key question addressed in the issues paper

"whether a regulation, and the way it is implemented, imposes an unnecessary regulatory burden"

Background information to the "RIGHT TO FARM" debate and RURAL LAND PLANNING.

I have read the Victorian Government's response to the Animal Industries Advisory Committee's Final Report October 2016. As yet I am not aware of any information released by the RCOW Council about this report which has major influence on Rural Land Planning.

Yours sincerely,

Alison G walpole

Copy

Whorouly South,
Victoria 3735.

4th December 2016

CEO Brendan McGrath,
Rural City of Wangaratta,
PO Box 238,
Wangaratta 3676

Dear Sir,

I attach for your attention the announcement by the Productivity Commission of presentation to the Australian Government of the report of the public inquiry into **REGULATION OF AGRICULTURE** dated 15th November 2016. Under the Productivity Commission Act 1998 the Government is required to table the report in each House of Parliament within 25 sitting days of receipt.

I also attach copy of my submission to this inquiry dated 5th February 2016 and the edited submission No 46 published on the inquiry website where mention of my correspondence with the VICTORIAN OMBUDSMAN is deleted.. Included in this submission is an article published Wangaratta Chronicle 27th January 2016 "Do you have a right to farm?" by Ken Clarke, Wangaratta Certified Practicing Accountant. Copy attached. Cr Ken Clarke is now the elected Mayor of the Rural City of Wangaratta. I read in the minutes of Rural City of Wangaratta meeting 22 November 2016 a Notice of Motion, moved by Councillor Amery, to review the adopted planning scheme amendment C69 and Land Strategy 2015.

Your attention is requested to submissions to the Regulation of Agriculture inquiry from Property Right's Australia Inc, No 45 and their supplementary submission No 254 August 18th 2016 and attached copy No 286 8th September 2016. All submission are available on the Inquiry website.

I have also attached a selection of relevant correspondence indicating the wide area of influence of Rural City of Wangaratta elected Council decisions.

Yours sincerely,

Copy to Victorian Ombudsman
Cr Harvey Benton (Agriculture Committee)

Alison G Walpole
Resident rural ratepayer.

Whorouly South,
Victoria 3735

25th April 2017

The Editor,
Wangaratta Chronicle,
37 Rowan St.,
Wangaratta 3677

Dear Sir,

Through your paper I apologize to the people I congratulated on their election to the Rural City of Wangaratta Council. I had not realized the position would be such a threat to their integrity until I watched the video of the 18th April 2017 Wangaratta Rural City Council meeting.

After studying the meeting agenda published on Council website I expected a meeting with Councilor discussion and minor presence of Council staff.

On 15th December 2016 the Victorian Ombudsman released a new report of investigation into the transparency of Local Government decision making. This included examination of 12 focus councils, including Campaspe Shire Council. Cr Adrian Weston, Campaspe Mayor, said "the Ombudsman investigation into local government transparency was wide-reaching and its findings will have implications for all councils across Victoria". I recommend Cr Weston's article, available on Campaspe Shire website, to ratepayers and residents finding it difficult to understand the role of Local Government in the Rural City of Wangaratta.

To quote Cr Weston "Residents may not always agree with decisions made by Council but transparency allows them to understand the reasoning and discussion behind the decision".

Yours sincerely,

Alison G Walpole
Rural resident ratepayer.