



National Disability Award winner
Australian Human Rights Commission winner

Draft Transcript

Draft Transcript

Surf Coast Shire Special Council Meeting for Hearing of Submissions

Tuesday, 11 March June 2025 at 6pm

About This Document

This document contains a draft transcript only.

This draft transcript has been taken directly from the text of live captioning provided by The Captioning Studio and, as such, it may contain errors.

The transcript may also contain 'inaudibles' if there were occasions when audio quality was compromised during the event.

The Captioning Studio accepts no liability for any event or action resulting from this draft transcript.

The draft transcript must not be published without The Captioning Studio's written permission.

DRAFT Transcript produced by The Captioning Studio
W: captioningstudio.com T: (08) 8463 1639

Draft Transcript

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Okay. We are live, so I'll start the meeting. Good evening, everybody. I'd like to welcome everyone watching this Special Council meeting. I'm Mayor Mike Bodsworth. This meeting is being livestreamed, so a big welcome to those tuning in online and, of course, welcome and good evening to my fellow councillors. I'd like to start by acknowledging that we meet on Wadawurrung Country and that the Surf Coast municipality also includes the Traditional Country of the Gadubanud and Guilijan Peoples of the Eastern Maar Nation. I pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. Surf Coast Council is committed to walking with Traditional Owners on a reconciliation journey that recognises and celebrates culture and the unique land, sea and waterway country of the Surf Coast. I'd like to also acknowledge any Aboriginal people who are joining us tonight.

Tonight we'll be hearing from those who wish to speak to their written submissions regarding the Urban Futures Strategy. To facilitate public access, this meeting is being livestreamed and the recording will be available on Council's website. Due to some unforeseen circumstances, we are unable to live caption this evening's meeting, which is something that we normally do. However, a transcript of the meeting will be developed as soon as possible afterwards and will be uploaded alongside the meeting recording.

If a submitter does not wish to be video recorded, it is their responsibility to turn off their video function and use audio only.

The following procedures will apply during this meeting. Each submitter who is registered to speak will be admitted into the meeting and given five minutes to present their submission. When the timer on the screen reaches five minutes, you must stop your presentation. The timer will turn orange when you have one minute left as a warning and then red when there's 10 seconds remaining. Any requests for additional time need to be made through me, as Chair.

Following your submission, councillors will be invited to ask questions related to your submission, if needed. Councillor questions will also be directed through me as the Chair. In the interests of time, we like to keep the questions brief so we can keep moving through the submitters and give everybody a fair time.

I ask that all participants remain on mute when they are not speaking just to allow the meeting to run smoothly. If a speaker has any technical problems which are not resolved quickly, they'll be removed from the meeting and

Draft Transcript

contacted by a member of council staff. If the issues are resolved, the speaker will then be invited to deliver their presentation at the end of the meeting.

This Special Council meeting is not a workshop and it should not be necessary for officers to be asked to make comment on the submissions. However, if there are any questions of officers, they also should be directed through me as the Chair.

Councillors will not be making any decisions in relation to the matter heard tonight. Decision-making will occur at a future Council meeting, once all relevant information has been received and reviewed. And before we get underway, on behalf of the Council, I'd like to thank all of those who have made submissions for their contributions. Thank you.

I'll now recite the pledge as a sign of councillors' commitment. As councillors, we carry out our responsibilities with diligence and integrity and make fair decisions of lasting value for the wellbeing of our community and environment.

I now turn to Apologies. We do have three apologies for tonight's meeting - from Councillor Liz Patterson, Councillor Libby Stapleton and Councillor Leon Walker. Can I please have a mover and a second or to accept these apologies? Moved by Councillor Schonfelder, seconded by Councillor Phelps. Thank you. All in favour? Thanks, councillors. Those apologies are accepted. And I've just been reminded, looking at my screen, that I can't see everybody all on the same screen. I'm going to change my view. But if you do feel like you need to speak up, councillors, you can say something appropriate like, "Excuse me, Mayor." I've changed my view so now I can see everybody and let's keep moving.

Conflicts of interest. If a councillor or an officer has a conflict of interest, they must declare it now and do so again just prior to the item being discussed. The councillor and/or officer will be requested to leave chambers or for those online to be placed by the host in a virtual waiting room whilst the matter is being considered. Once the matter is resolved, the councillor and/or officer will be returned to the meeting. Are there any declarations of conflicts of interest in relation to tonight's meeting? No? Thank you, councillors. If any conflicts do arise during the meeting, please make them known.

We turn to item 2.1, submissions to the Urban Futures Strategy. There were 53 submissions received, including six from external agencies. Of those 53 submissions, 12 submitters have requested to speak tonight. Our first speaker

Draft Transcript

is John Tebbutt from Growing Winchelsea. Could John please be admitted to the meeting? It may take a moment in between all of these changes of submitters but it is happening behind the scenes. So, John, I can see that you're now on board. We can hear your audio. Thanks, John. We can't see you on video yet, so if you do want to appear on video, you'll need to –

MR TEBBUTT: Do I start video?

MAYOR BODSWORTH: That would be the one.

MR TEBBUTT: It doesn't want to do anything here.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Okay. We can definitely hear your audio. So somebody may contact you –

MR TEBBUTT: Oh, there you go.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: There you are. I can see you now. Thanks for joining us. So I would invite you to present your submission when you're ready. Thanks, John.

MR TEBBUTT: Thanks, Mike. Firstly, I appreciate the opportunity to address Council tonight. This follows probably from a briefing that we had with Tim Waller and his team and our commentary on the Urban Strategy is based upon the premise that this is a foundational document leading to the place plan predicated on the data that's been developed under the Urban Strategy for Winchelsea.

he observations we'd like to make on behalf of Growing Winchelsea are as follows: the Council face a very real challenge to grow and develop Winchelsea community potentially to 18,000 by 2050. How will the Council maintain the character and amenity of Winch growing from 3,500 to 18,000 plus? It's a historic town. It's not a greenfield site and we see this as presenting many challenges. We think it needs a specialist urban designer to oversight and assist council with achieving a holistic view for the future development to maintain the growth within the existing boundaries and not extend it into valuable farming land, to incorporate and preserve the special features of Winchelsea with its beautiful buildings, its various features, its amenity, its environment and the Barwon River. Growing Winchelsea suggests that this requires a bold vision on the part of the council and the council officers to

Draft Transcript

maintain the character and amenity, not only as a place to live but a gateway to the Ottways and to the Western Plains.

Decisions being made now will impact and remain on the town for more than 25 years because what will be done over the next few years will be obviously foundational and very, very important for the ultimate future growth and development and projection of Winchelsea. We at Growing Winchelsea believe it needs strong guidelines for the creation of precincts for the growth, whilst maintaining that lovely country feel.

The needs: we say a designated growth precinct for the residential, recreational, educational, retail, commercial, industrial and cultural aspects of the town. It requires a mix of social, affordable and other housing and this may also involve becoming vertical because of maintaining itself within the borders of the town, and rather than expanding it towards Geelong and towards Colac.

It does raise a very interesting issue that the growth of Winchelsea to 18,000 I think would match what Bannockburn is at about and would probably exceed what Colac is at the moment. So it does present some very real challenges in trying to maintain that character and amenity.

As you are aware, we did a survey of the community a couple of years ago, and whilst there were very diverse views coming from that, one of the very strong comments that was coming through from the community was that lovely country feeling, that how would that be maintained with development. So incorporating a sustainable circular economy, ensuring quality water, air, energy and waste, green spaces, open spaces, employment opportunities, to be able to live and work locally, the infrastructure to support such growth and obviously public transport, and we emphasise not to be dominated by ad hoc development.

Just in closing, I'd like to comment about how great it is - the new pool, mud hut and playground development, having spent some time there apart from the opening the other day, it is a real asset for the town and the council should be very proud of it. Thank you. I beat the clock.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thank you. You did beat the clock. Well done, John. Thanks very much for your submission. Would any councillors like to ask any questions of John? No. Thank you, councillors, and thanks very much for joining us, John.

Draft Transcript

MR TEBBUTT: My pleasure.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Good on you. So our next submitter is Michael Tucker. We'll just have a moment now where we say goodbye to John and we welcome Michael Tucker into the meeting. Hi, Mike. I can see you there now on our screen.

MR TUCKER: Can you hear me now?

MAYOR BODSWORTH: We can hear you. We can hear your audio. We can't see any video yet, so you may wish to take yourself - if you want to appear on video, take yourself to click your video.

MR TUCKER: 'Start my video' - there it is. Here we go.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: We can see you now So welcome and please take it away when you're ready.

MR TUCKER: Right. Thank you very much. Some of my points are the same as John, so I can get over those quickly. I've divided it five topics, saying that from a shopping point of view, we're not going as fast as some of the towns around us, and we really need to think about whitegoods and clothes and all those other things that we don't have at the moment to say how we're going to develop those, and that's going to be through a manipulated development, if you like, by organisations that might need a few years to develop but once they're there, they can then be playing normal rates. And what we have is a large percentage of our population is working outside, so whether it's at Colac or Bannockburn or Geelong or Melbourne, we've got a lot of people working outside Winchelsea, and when they're outside Winchelsea, they do their shopping. So they do all of their shopping and bring it in, leaving very little for the RGA. So we've got to change that practice so that people can say, "I'm enjoying Winchelsea's shopping".

I'd like to mention Colac's exports, both overseas and to the rest of the country, is about \$4 billion and it all goes by truck. What we need to do is have a long-term thinking role of how do we have a double train-track all the way to Melbourne, including that 250 metres between Geelong and South Geelong, because no-one wants to develop it. Three mining companies have said they'll do it. They haven't been asked to do so. Three contractors have been asked to do it and they've turned it down. So we need a double track all the way, and

Draft Transcript

it's not only from Colac; it's from Warrnambool as well. So right now it's a bit of a difficulty for Colac to get past.

So then we move to water pipes. There's some 8,000 water pipes around Barwon, and none of these pipes are written down anywhere. So when we go to Inverleigh-Winchelsea Road, where there are 13 different holders of water, sometimes they're on a pipe and everybody knows about it and sometimes they're not, but Barwon Water will not ever explain to anybody why there's so much water. And we've had three broken pipes on Inverleigh-Winchelsea Road. There was also one just off Matthison Road and no-one seems to take any responsibility. And just in my personal case, when I asked for plumbers who are registered plumbers, could they help me, I got a list of 250 plumbers in Victoria. That was clever! It wasn't helping me a bit. So I got two very clever people to give me formulas and they're about that long and I've got no idea what they were because I'm not a physicist but it turns out that both the Melbourne Water guy and the other fellow both had exactly the same answer with a totally different - so that was good. So, anyway, here I am. It's all working. But, nevertheless, I think we have to - if we're going to have bulk water, we've got to make sure that it's under control.

The industrial estate, unfortunately, has gone north of the railway line. I think it needs to go west. We need to have a side road on the M1 Highway so people can drive into it. By going north of the railway line, you're just creating an absolute havoc on that road. And empty trucks have more damage on roads than full trucks, and I'm sure you're all aware of that, but right now we've got so many empty trucks. I try and count them just because I'm that way inclined, and we've got far too many empty trucks going up and down this road.

So then, finally, I'd just like to say that if we can find some way of inspiring rate payers to be here by having a little (inaudible), that would be great. Time I stopped, I've got four seconds to go.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Okay. Thanks very much for your submission, Mike. Well done. Perfectly timed. Councillors, would anybody like to ask Michael Tucker a question? No? In that case, I thank you again for your submission and we'll see you soon in Winchelsea, no doubt.

MR TUCKER: No doubt.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Michael.

Draft Transcript

MR TUCKER: How do I get out?

MAYOR BODSWORTH: You'll be whisked away by our Governance team. So our next speaker on the schedule is Michael Walmsley. I've been advised that we don't have a Michael Walmsley in the waiting room, but there is a Lyn W, who is going to be admitted and we'll find out if that might be Michael, or Lyn, when they arrive.

So I can see a Lyn W on the screen. We're just trying to find out if that could be Michael. And, councillors, I'm keeping an eye on messages from the Governance team, who are also working on this, for their part. So we might skip to the next speaker, if we can, Governance team. Oh, I can see Lyn or Michael possibly has come off mute. So is it Lyn or Michael that we have with us?

MR WALMSLEY: No, it's Mike. Mike Walmsley.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Okay, great. So we are connected to the correct person. That's fantastic, Mike. So if you'd like to appear by video, you'll need to select your video option Thanks. It looks like you're doing that and about to appear probably. But we can hear your audio. Mike, we've got audio, I think, except you're not speaking at the moment.

MR WALMSLEY: Yes, I'm already go when you are.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Okay. So have you got an option to start your video?

MR WALMSLEY: Yes, I've done that. I'm not sure –

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Okay. We're not seeing it at the moment. So we'll persevere with the audio. So all we've got at the moment is your audio, but we can hear you clearly, so I invite you to go ahead with your submission. Thanks, Mike.

MR WALMSLEY: Yes, thank you very much. Good evening, everybody. I'm Mike Walmsley. I work on a daily basis as a buyer's agent in the real estate industry and I became aware of - I call it 30-10 - you might call it three zero one zero - Princess Highway some two years ago. I had a client that was known to the Knuckey family, and I'll elaborate on that in a moment, and their need to move their manufacturing business out of Winchelsea onto a larger site. So that's

Draft Transcript

why I became involved some two years ago. Unfortunately, the client that was working hard towards seeing the development take place, or the potential development take place, passed away, but because I had a vested interest, I've stayed with it and that's the reason I'm here tonight.

You're aware the submission is seeking approval to extend that the town boundary if possible on the eastern fringe of Winchelsea so as to include 30-10 Princess Highway, with the aim of the property being rezoned and developed into an industrial estate. The property is 20 hectares in size, 50 acres in the old, and it's owned by Damian and Sally LePinot, who have lived on the property for the past 25 years.

There are key drivers backing the submission. One, as I mentioned or alluded to earlier, is the Knuckey manufacturing business. It's a growing business in Winchelsea, as we all know. It employs some 32 staff and it operates from a 15,400 square metre allotment of land which is zoned residential. It's in Willis Street, the main street of Winchelsea. They need to grow their business and that site is too small for them. They've talked about moving out of the area, and once again that was one of the reasons my client was involved. He wanted to see them stay in in the Winchelsea area, which they want to do. They require two hectares of land, and this could happen on this proposed new industrial estate.

Importantly, the current land holding, according to let's say, the most reputable selling agent in Winchelsea, property-wise, that 15,400 square metres probably equates pretty closely to 36 housing lots.

The second key player, which also resides or operates out of Willis Street, the main street of Winchelsea, is Davis Landscaping Supplies and they operate from a 10,500 square metre allotment of residential land, which again could equate to around about 25 smart blocks for residential development. So if these two key drivers, key business people, were able to relocate onto that western fringe of Winchelsea, it would open up the opportunity for at least 60 residential homes to be built within Winchelsea itself.

Without any campaigning, there was an interesting expression of interest list that I've given to you there. One is Knuckeys, who I alluded to; another is Davis Landscaping. I've included them as well. There's a company called BWK Properties. They're a Melbourne-based company that actually approached the owner of the land about developing a highway service centre on his site. Also showing some interest are Away Builders – they're local people – in

Draft Transcript

Winchelsea, and Storage King, who are already operating in Winchelsea but need more land to develop their business. Another expression of interest came from Choices Flooring. They've got three outlets in Geelong - sorry, three outlets - one in Geelong, one in Torquay, another in Drysdale. The owner there is Lincoln Smith, a somewhat local person with land holding in Durang. The other another was from Hunter Cuthill Motors. They're mechanical repair businesses and they've got three businesses in Autumn Street in Geelong West. The director, the owner of that company, is Adam Hunter and he lives locally in Wensleydale. So there's a real interest from local people to bring their businesses to this proposed industrial estate in Winchelsea.

I also had some talks with the Coles Group, the Coles supermarket group - a lady named Louise Woodward, who is their Property Transactions Manager there, and she sees that if the modelling works her way - and she's looking at numbers frequently - she thought that would be an ideal site for a Coles supermarket down the track. So plenty happening there.

There's plenty to talk about. I could go on and on. I've got 30 seconds to go. So thank you for tonight and I put an invitation out to all councillors who, if they'd like to discuss this submission in person in greater length, I'd be more than happy to do that, and I think probably to Tony, Joel and Adrian, it's pretty important that we catch up in the near future, if you've got time. So I'll invite you to a coffee catch-up and hope you can join me and, as I said, I can present a lot more information, a lot more research, we've done on this particular site. So thank you for your time tonight and look forward to catching up again soon.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks for your submission, Mike, and you timed that perfectly. I'll invite councillors to ask questions now. Are there any questions from councillors? No? Thank you, councillors, and thanks very much, Mike, for the submission.

MR WALMSLEY: Thank you.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: No worries. Thanks for joining us. The next submitter is Cameron Gray, so I'll ask the Governance team to please admit Cameron Gray into the meeting. Hi, Cameron. Thanks for joining us. You're on mute at the moment, Cameron, but when you're ready, you've got two submissions, I understand.

MR GRAY: I have, yes.

Draft Transcript

MAYOR BODSWORTH: So we'll firstly present on behalf of Glenmore Street Developments and I'll invite you to go ahead with that one when you're ready.

MR GRAY: Okay. Thank you very much for the opportunity to present verbally. Yes, my name is Cameron Gray. The submission here is on behalf of Glenmore Street Developments, who's a local development company who to date have developed in excess of 150 or so lots on the western side of Winchelsea, opposite the golf course. Those developments have been of larger low-density lots typically, in which our experience is they have been very attractive to the market as people look for larger backyards and lifestyle options.

Without going into too much detail of the Urban Futures Strategy, our submission is based on the fact that the strategy is not really one which clearly identifies the growth needs of the Shire and provides clear direction on the locations and the types of housing which are necessary to meet those needs. For example, we see it as fairly open and non-specific in its assessment of growth, what that growth should look like and where it should go. So it's probably better described as a higher level strategy. It's largely an assessment of the constraints and opportunities. It's an acknowledgment of the supply issues and it's a determination of some high-level principles around future growth. Those are all relevant elements in any strategic review but they don't really deliver an outcome or a scenario in which the additional housing, which is clearly identified as being necessary, is actually delivered - instead the strategy recommends further planning work, further planning processes, take place in order to achieve those outcomes. In our case, that's a place plan or structure plan or similar for Winchelsea.

We think this is perhaps an opportunity lost to more efficiently plan for future growth, and we say that because each strategic process the council goes through, such as the UFS and the proposed place plan, is resource-intensive. They typically take years rather than months. So each recommendation for a separate strategic process incurs significant delay in arriving at an outcome.

So we were realistic, I think, in our submission in not expecting the UFS to incorporate the next step of planning, given the time and resources taken to get the UFS to this point. However, our submission does request that the strategy be really clear, which it's currently not, on the specific actions and time frames of the processes the council needs to commit to in order to meet those growth needs in that 15-year supply.

Draft Transcript

We think that any delays in these next steps really move council further away from the objectives of providing necessary supply and make it more unlikely that the objectives around affordability and diversity are realised in the short to medium term.

So this is why we think it's important that council clearly identifies not just the next steps but the time frames associated with those works, and that's essentially the core request of our submission. I'm done.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Sorry, I'm on mute. There you go. I'll invite councillors to ask questions on Cameron's first submission, noting that he has a second one to follow shortly. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks for your submission, Cameron. Is this a localised issue that you've got concerns about or is it something that you've seen repeated elsewhere?

MR GRAY: Oh, well, apologies. I suppose there are often delays in the strategic planning processes. I do see it elsewhere. They take a long time. I think that's why we need to be really clear about the directions falling out of them and really specific about those time frames because things can drift.

CR BARKER: Thanks.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Barker Are there any other questions? No? Thank you. So, Cameron, I'll invite you to go ahead with your second submission on behalf of Peter McConachie for the Great Ocean Road project. Thanks.

MR GRAY: Thank you. I won't bother to re-introduce myself, but I'm in this case presenting on behalf of Peter McConachie and Great Ocean Roads projects, who are two key landowners in the area in question, and that area is the area that's shown in the Urban Futures Strategy on page 35 and it's known as the short-term residential growth area.

So the themes in this submission are similar to the last but they're more pointed, more specific and more urgent, as I'll hopefully be able to convey to you. They relate essentially to the need to rezone this land as a priority.

By way of background, the land in question has been nominated for growth since 2007 - excuse me - so 18 years or so ago. In 2021, the planning scheme

Draft Transcript

refined that direction from simply 'growth' to 'short-term residential growth', and for those who aren't aware, 'short-term' in a strategic planning sense or strategic planning language essentially means 'now'. The Urban Futures Strategy itself notes in relation to this area that there's an immediate need to increase supply. It also notes that a re-zoning process to facilitate urban residential use should be supported as an immediate priority. So, in this context, that is the need to re-zone this land in the short term, the Urban Futures Strategy doesn't propose anything different to what has historically been the case for a number of years. The term 'short-term residential growth' has essentially been replaced with terms like 'immediate need' and 'immediate priority'. So I think it's clear now, if it wasn't earlier, that the land should be rezoned as a priority.

So despite this direction, which is both current and historic, and unchanged by the Urban Futures Strategy, the need to rezone this land as a priority is not reflected in the implementation measures of the Urban Futures Strategy. In fact, this area is not mentioned at all in the implementation strategy, which is a concern. It's a concern because policy loses effect over time. So if the policy is to rezone the land in the short term, as it's been for a number of years, but no rezoning occurs, then the drivers of that policy, which are typically land supply and affordability, have not been addressed. This is evident in the Urban Futures Strategy, which shows that increasingly supply and, therefore, affordability are not being addressed to the extent required.

I know that Council hears a lot about supply and affordability and related policy and processes, so I thought I'd just put some context around that so that we can link the policy to the actions and the outcomes. We first approached council on behalf of these land owners four years ago, with a view to rezoning the land at a time when the planning scheme identified it as short-term residential growth, as it still does. That rezoning process is not yet commenced. We've continued to liaise with council officers over the past four years, seeking direction and clarity on commencement, and we're hopefully approaching a position where we're not too far away from getting that direction and clarity.

The other key element of the context is the time frames associated with these processes, which I touched on earlier. So a rezoning and development process in our experience is likely to take in the order of six years, so that is the time between commencing a rezoning and the time future landowners are able to purchase properties, is of that order. So it varies, obviously, but I would say that most applications in Surf Coast Shire have that sort of time frame or

Draft Transcript

similar. So that means that the supply needs that are identified today or a couple of years ago, in the case of the UFS, will be six or so years out of date and, in all likelihood, six or so years worse by the time some of that supply is available. And, again, it just highlights the consequences of the gap between policy and implementation.

It's worth noting that a rezoning application and process is predominantly under the control of council. There are no appeal rights. No VCAT, for instance. If the council doesn't support it, it essentially ends, and we think that should give council comfort that whatever shape a rezoning takes, it'll be directed by council until it makes its way to the Minister, and that includes some of the issues raised here today, particularly by Mr Tebbutt, in terms of character but also in terms of urban design and the full range of technical assessments. They can all be dealt with by rezoning.

So, essentially, that's the context of our submission. We simply seek to enhance the implementation section of the Urban Futures Strategy to acknowledge the priority of this area and the importance of this area and to specifically facilitate the rezoning, rather than simply acknowledging it or encouraging it. It needs a real driver and it needs impetus or we potentially risk having the same discussion in a few years time about the supply and affordability.

So our submission is entirely consistent with the Urban Futures Strategy. It's not inconsistent. We're just seeking, I suppose, a direction and a call to act on the policies, rather than have them sitting in a policy document. That's it. Thank you.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thank you very much for your submission, Cameron. Councillors, are there any questions for Cameron? You know cancellation. No? Councillor Schonfelder, thanks.

CR SCHONFELDER: Good evening and thank you for your submission. My question was in relation to supply and demand and the obvious situation that if you have greater supply, then the price of property does not increase as much, and we hear so often every night on the news about the housing crisis and it seems to be the case that the more supply that's available, that does have that economic impact.

MR GRAY: That's right. I'm not an economist but I think if council, for instance, chose to ask their own consultant who informed the Urban Futures Strategy,

Draft Transcript

which is Spatial Economics, they'd concur with that view. It does make a difference. It clearly makes a difference, as does time - the time it takes to do these things.

CR SCHONFELDER: And I think the point you raised about it could worsen the likelihood of lots being available and the demand, I think that's a very good point.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. Are there any other questions for Cameron? Thank you. We'll let Cameron go. Thanks very much for your two submissions, Cameron.

MR GRAY: Thanks.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: And now we welcome Chris McNeil, who is speaking on behalf of Mark Tomkinson. Hi, Chris.

MR McNEIL: Hi. Can you hear me?

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Yes, we can hear you and we can see you.

MR McNEIL: Oh, very good. No matter how many times you do these things, I'm still convinced I'm going to be the victim of an IT disaster! So that's very good.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Hearing you loud and clear and we can see you well. So go ahead when you're ready, Chris.

MR McNEIL: Okay. I do have a very short presentation that I could put up.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Sure. You can share that.

MR McNEIL: I'm not 100% clear on how to in Zoom.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: So there should be a green Share button down the bottom.

MR McNEIL: Yes, there is.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: And then that should give you a window to share.

Draft Transcript

MR McNEIL: It does and I can't for the life of me understand - or maybe - does that work?

MAYOR BODSWORTH: You should get a view of various windows...

MR McNEIL: Yes, I have. Oh, there it is. Is that working?

MAYOR BODSWORTH: I'm not seeing a shared screen at the moment. Yes, it's coming up now.

Mr McNEIL: Oh, that's good. Thank you very much. So thanks for allowing me to present this evening. So my name is Chris McNeill. I'm an Economics Director with Ethos Urban and I'm presenting on behalf of Mark Tomkinson of The Messmates Torquay Pty Ltd.

Just by way of background, the Torquay Jan Juc Framework Plan identifies an area west of Messmate Road for residential development, with the exception of a specific area identified for the western expansion of the existing light industrial estate known as the West Coast Business Park. That's brought that proposal into the strategy itself, and I just note there that the Messmates Torquay Pty Ltd owns or controls land in the area west of Messmates Road identified for future development, including the area identified for ongoing or further westward expansion of the light industrial area.

Now the Messmates Torquay Pty Ltd has long maintained that the area west of Messmates Road identified for future employment should be identified for future residential development, and I agree with their position. Informing the strategy is a recent report undertaken for council by Spatial Economics called the 'Industrial Land Supply and Demand Assessment, June 2024', which I refer to as the Spatial Economics Assessment, and it provides an assessment of industrial land supply and demand at a municipal level and at a township level. And, in my opinion, there are several key elements that are not addressed in the Spatial Economics Assessment.

If we look at employment land in Torquay, there's two main areas which you'd be well aware of - the area around Baines Crescent and then the West Coast Business Park itself. The employment land market in Surf Coast does not operate as a municipal or traditional municipal market; for example, a resident of Winchelsea is unlikely to drive to Torquay for a mechanical repair or for building products. They're more likely to head to Colac or into Waurn Ponds or parts of Geelong. They may go to Torquay but it's not like a normal sort of

Draft Transcript

regional shire where there's a clear hub where everyone gravitates towards. Instead, Surf Coast and Torquay are part of a broader employment market from a land use perspective.

There's also a high proportion of non-industrial uses in Baynes Crescent and West Coast Business Park.

Employment land also in Torquay, in particular, is a high-priced market and unlikely to attract large industrial uses. So there's a few emerging issues around that. So Torquay operates, as I said, as part of a broader mini-metropolitan region and is impacted and influenced by labour markets and the industrial land market at a regional level. And having a regard for transport networks, the current and future availability of large industrial estates at a regional level and the underlying cost of industrial land, particularly in Torquay, it's considered unlikely that major users of industrial land will seek out Torquay specifically as a location for a major industrial use. Large-scale industrial land users will almost certainly be located in Greater Geelong, Greater Melbourne or in less expensive regional markets; for example, such as Winchelsea or Colac, in this context, I note the decision by Rip Curl and likely Osmosis to relocate warehousing from Torquay to Truganina.

I also note there that land tax is impacting on under-used land, including employment land, which is impacting on the viability of future development in this area.

Now in terms of the Spatial Economics Assessment itself, the SEA, in my opinion, the SEA overstates demand for future industrial land. There's a declining rate of population growth and a significant decline in the rate of growth of the working population, and this can be expected to decrease the rate of demand for industrial demand, which is not the sort of increase as set out in the SEA. The SEA approaches its assessment as if Torquay was a normal regional town. In my view, it is not, and its employment land market is greatly impacted by that of Greater Geelong, and the demand for residential land in Torquay represents a significantly greater need than the provision of additional industrial land. That's the end of my presentation. I note even then, five minutes doesn't last long and I've gone over, so I do apologise.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: No apology needed, Chris. You finished a little bit ahead of time actually.

MR McNEIL: Oh, was that the last minute it was telling me?

Draft Transcript

MAYOR BODSWORTH: You were in the last minute, so very good time keeping. I'll ask councillors if anybody has any questions. No? Okay. Thanks, councillors, and thanks very much, Chris, for your submission tonight. Thanks for joining us.

MR McNEIL: Thank you very much.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Okay, right. So our next submitter is Ian Laging. So I invite - I'll ask Governance to let Ian into the meeting. We will see Ian appearing now. Ian, it looks like you're coming off mute and we can see you now. Welcome.

MR LAGING: G'day, Mike, and good evening, councillors, and thanks for listening to my submission.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: No worries. Take it away when you're ready, Ian.

MR LAGING: So my name is Ian Laging. I represent the Airleys Inlet District Association. We have over 500 members who are very keen on, I guess, the environment around Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven, Moggs Creek and Eastern View.

I'm going to focus my comments on the Urban Futures Strategy, which we find is - we support the general principle set out in this document and we actually find it a good document. I'm not going to read from my submission, but rather add to some of the points that we made under various headings that follow the strategy document. Under Population Growth Context, AIDA agrees that the opportunities should be available for our local residents to be able to move into small dwellings as their housing needs change. I think that point was well made in the strategy document. We also agree that there's a lack of affordable housing, including rental accommodation, which impacts the provision of housing for essential workers and those working in the tourism sector.

So we agree with all that but we're very disappointed with the lack of progress and, indeed, funding with the affordable housing project in Fraser Drive, Aireys Inlet, which we believe has great community support. So we make that as aside and I guess a current comment on what perhaps the strategy is up against.

Under the heading Managing Bushfire Risks, again we acknowledge that our coastal townships are located in areas where bushfire risk is a key

Draft Transcript

consideration, and that the existing settlement boundaries should not be expanded. Now, the meaning of the word 'boundaries' is difficult. There's a fairly narrow planning definition of what 'boundaries' mean, and perhaps in a planning sense, it doesn't fully capture or adequately describe the various land uses and activities that's the surrounding conservation zones and how they relate to the township's work. I believe, and AIDA believes, that there is further work required in actually defining what 'limiting growth to township boundaries' actually means.

Under the heading Natural Environment Landscapes and Built Heritage, we agree that the protection of the environment and landscape assets across the shire should be a priority. No question there. We note that in the statement, the development should not impact waterways, that is including stormwater runoff, and other receding waters and that we believe that there's much remedial work to be done in this area along the coast. Now, we acknowledge that there is joint work currently being undertaken by GORCAPA and the Shire, both on riverine and coastal resilience, and we look forward to actually seeing what those studies produce, but I would, I guess, alert you to the fact that we have a lot of talent and interest in this subject within our area and they are a great resource for those who are looking into this matter.

Under the heading Providing Diverse and Changing Housing Needs, we agree with the assertion that increased densities to be supported - for them to be supported by the community, those projects will need to be well done. We believe that all housing types - and this includes second small dwellings, which is fairly controversial in our area - they should comply with all local local planning scheme overlays, and, currently, second small dwellings only comply with both the bushfire and the environment overlay. We have again actually written to the Minister for Planning on the difficulties being caused by excluding certain types of overlay from considering particular dwelling types, and I believe that may be even more complicated in the near future. So we support your planning officers in the difficulties that they have in running these sort of parallel planning activities.

Again, another issue that I guess the Urban Futures Strategy needs to deal with is the sort of changing aspects of state planning regulation. Under the heading Developing Sustainable Communities, again we strongly support 'the growth will be informed by the valued attributes and character of the existing townships', particularly the people of our area are very wedded to the character of our existing township. And to that end, we note that the future growth planning would be based on a place-making approach with community

Draft Transcript

participation at its core. We strongly support that and welcome it, and I think our participation in this particular exercise just demonstrates that.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Ian, you've used up your time so you need to just make some closing comments, if you can.

MR LAGING: Thank you. No, I think I've actually reached the last of my points, Mike, so I'm happy to take any questions on what I've just said.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks very much, Ian. Thanks for making a submission. I would invite councillors to ask any questions of Ian. Thank you. We don't have any questions. So, Ian, thanks very much for your submission tonight.

MR LAGING: Thank you, Mike.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks. Bye bye. So our next submitter is Greg Bursill speaking on behalf of Ratio Planning. We'll wait for Greg to join us. Hi, Greg. Thanks for joining us tonight.

MR BURSILL: I see the lighting not so good on the screen.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: So please go ahead with your submission when you're ready, Greg.

MR BURSILL: Thank you. I'm just going to share a presentation. Okay. I'm representing the Messmate Road Residential Precinct. We are a landowner group committed to creating a positive legacy. We have a comprehensive vision and masterplan. We propose diverse affordable housing delivered with a coastal ecological character. Our shovel-ready project can be considered under the state's Development Facilitation Program in collaboration with Council. We see council's engagement as an Urban Futures Strategy demonstration project.

The subject land is outlined in red on the map on the right, so within the permanent settlement boundary and represents about half of the future settlement area. We've taken the relevant themes from the Surf Coast DEL and also from the Urban Futures Strategy, which are listed on the screen, and we've used those to drive our vision and masterplan. We would like to demonstrate excellence in the delivery of council's Urban Futures Strategy.

Draft Transcript

I have in the room today the landowners. You can't see them but they are at the table. So the landowners represent 98% of the precincts on the map on the screen and includes Integra, who are very passionate about leaving a positive legacy; Make Ventures, known for delivering superior community outcomes, particularly with respect to affordable housing; and ANSEED, a local business owner passionate about the local environment. Messmate is a eucalyptus tree that grows amongst other native Torquay species, so that inspired our vision for an attractive neighbourhood that blends seamlessly into Torquay's environment and community.

The three pillars of our vision are there: country, community and connection. We will restore local ecology and build connection to country, we will create a diverse community and we will connect to local services. Our masterplan provides for 1,300 homes for about 4,000 people. It's a walkable local village layout, with active transport at the heart of the design concept. Local parks are connected by trail circuits and you can walk to the aquatic centre, school or sport, or you can walk into work at the Business Park if you're so lucky to work there. The infrastructure is comprehensively planned out and developer funded, and services are available. We have concepts for a diverse housing and lifestyle offer from townhomes, affordable housing of different types, build to rent and medium density. We will create a coastal ecological village character with neighbourhood character that will be managed both through the streetscape and park designs and with housing design guidelines.

Our landscape masterplan includes a tree-lined park along the settlement boundary, which is the urban rural interface. We will have designed our development to activate Grasstreet Park. We include green streets with bike paths but understorey planting to create biodiversity connections. We use leading edge stormwater harvesting and water-sensitive urban design and local indigenous trees and plants, and a coastal native front garden concept.

So the design of parks and outdoor areas is around natural materials and natural play spaces, intricate spaces to engage the community and to encourage people to have a healthy lifestyle, particularly children. Integrated water management is a key part of our design. We have special designs to allow water to infiltrate, to water trees and gardens, and to cool the area and the village. It's a shovel-ready project. We've done extensive technical work, such that through the DFP process, we could be approved in 2025.

As councillors are aware, housing is a burning platform with very low land supply. There are record low housing approvals. House prices and rents are

Draft Transcript

high, and higher than they need be. Housing construction is therefore urgent. Our look at recent data shows that 2024 financial year, 74 growing commencements in Torquay and 54 year-to-date. So it's still really low. Although there's some four to five years of supply theoretically because not all estates on the market have planning approval, the active available supply is much less than that.

So, firstly, we have been master-planning since 2019. We have participated in council's various strategic planning processes, including this one. Our design includes over 100 build to rent homes for key workers, such as teachers, nurses, emergency workers, social workers, hospitality workers, etc. The DFP process is designed to facilitate projects like ours in regions with low supply like this and allows for construction potentially to commence next year. The DFP criteria require at least 10% affordable housing or else an equivalent contribution, which is 3%, to facilitate delivery of affordable housing. I'll note that council's Affordable Housing Action Plan, which I've got there on the screen on the right-hand side, some snippets from that. and they do talk to council facilitating and concierging projects like ours. So we seek council engagement as an Urban Futures Strategy demonstration project.

Finally, there's about 300,000 construction jobs on site and we will engage and implement with the Traditional Owners around training and employment pathways, landscape design and place names, and any other relevant items. Thank you.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Okay. Thanks for your submission, Greg. I'll invite councillors to ask questions. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks. I did want to ask this question from the previous submitter but it was already asked. If the land west of West Coast Business Park wasn't allocated for residential use, do you have any idea what the land owners would choose to do with it?

MR BURSILL: So I represent the land owners just north of the Business Park, which is designated for residential, and the intention is to develop that as residential. So I'm not aware of any proposals to develop it or any policy to do anything other than that.

CR BARKER: Thanks.

Draft Transcript

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Barker. Thanks, Greg. Are there any other questions? No? In that case, thanks very much, Greg, for coming along and presenting your submission tonight.

MR BURSILL: Thank you for the opportunity.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks. Our next submitter is Penny Hawe. I can see you there, Penny.

MS HAWE: Yes.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: So thanks for joining us tonight, Penny, and I invite you to go ahead when you're ready.

MS HAWE: I've got a slide presentation to share, so let me just put that up please.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thank you. We can see that.

MS HAWE: Okay. So this is something a bit about Friends of Lorne. You can read for yourself there what I've said. I think I just want to emphasise that our interest is on the environment and planning issues for full-time residents, part-time residents, visitors and campers. Here's a summary of what the Urban Futures Strategy said about us. Again, I'll just let you just take a look. It should be easy to see. But we put in inverted commas about the new dwellings because while we agree that we need 60 new households, we really want the council to be more creative than just building new - and that's because one really big fact jumped out at us, and we see it every day here: 69% of our houses are vacant for most of the year. So what we'd like to do - when these houses come up for sale, instead of being sold to other holiday home owners, we want to tilt that in favour of permanent residents. What we want you to do is to use more existing housing stock, and that's because it avoids tree and vegetation removal, it accommodates families and their vehicles, and it's really families that we need down here. We need teachers at the school, health workers, tradies in the town, kids, and volunteers at the CFA and the SES, and if you can buy it yourself - sorry, yes, and also 50% of our key and essential workers have incomes that are too high for the state-defined thresholds of affordable housing, but, nonetheless, Lorne itself is not affordable to them. So we recommend shared equity schemes for purchasing homes for key and essential workers. We would like to claw back a portion of the Mantra when it comes up for lease in 25 years time. If we don't start planning for that now, it

Draft Transcript

won't happen, and we're interested in short-term rental controls and long-term rental incentives.

Can I just say something about the shared equity schemes for home purchasing? Some modelling was done down here and it showed that if you work full time at the school and your partner is part time at the hospital, you could manage a loan for a 50% share of a 1.2 million house. The other 50% comes from private or institutional investors. Now at the time that that modelling was done, there was only one house in Lorne and nine apartments in that category, but there were five houses in Deans Marsh and 17 in Anglesea, and to me that's pretty good when you consider that some families already live in Deans Marsh and attend the school or they rent in areas and they work at the hospital.

What's also good about this type of solution is that there's no limit or cap to the number of people you can help. It's all based on how big your investment funds are to help whoever is eligible. But to pursue an option like this, you have to think big, you have to think outside the box, you have to be proactive and you have to be collaborative.

This is your draft plan for us for our area. I agree with Ian Laging. We really like the emphasis on landscape values and natural environment. Our submission on the Urban Futures Strategy was well represented in the communities in the synthesis of consultations materials that were put together by your officers, so we felt heard, so we thank you for that. But there are two things that seem to have been lost in translation in this final draft version that we would like to see corrected. You say 'support opportunities for housing growth that make efficient use of existing land'. We'd like to say 'efficient use of existing houses and land'. Second, you say 'encourage proposals for housing developments to include a diversity of housing and prioritise smaller dwelling types'. We'd like to change 'prioritise' to 'include' smaller dwelling types because really it's families with SUVs that we've got to accommodate. We've got tradies that are not going to fit into cluster housing and we want to keep those kids in the school. So, yes, we do appreciate that the population is aging and we do want people to be able to downsize and live in Lorne, but we really need to keep the school going and the CFA, and we can't afford to make small dwellings the priority.

Finally, this is your last page and my last slide, and we smiled a bit when we saw it because all the work is still to be done. We really need a differentiated strategy that's going to deal with some of the difficulties, particularly

Draft Transcript

addressing contradictions like how to let people clear around their home for fire, but at the same time, keep the neighbourhood character. We worry that without a lot of extra work now and how people like us will be engaged in it, there'll be a short-term reactive position of just rezoning and increasing density, and we don't think that's really going to help the population that we've got our eye on. It won't fully address our needs if we only do that, so we're asking you to be creative and bold. Thank you.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Penny, for your submission. Do any councillors have questions for Penny? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks for your submission, Penny. I noted your advocacy for the short-term rental controls. Has your organisation considered what the pros and cons of the short-term rental controls are and what short-term might be defined as?

MS HAWE: One of the things we've asked the council to do is to give us the equivalent of the spend map data because we know that the short-term properties are driving a lot of the economy, so we don't want to kill the golden goose here, Paul. We really recognise that this is important. This is what people come to Lorne for. But, on the other hand, there is one bloke in town that owns 20 properties and they're all on Airbnb, so there needs to be some kind of containment if we're going to be able to accommodate our own key and essential workers. I think that that shouldn't just be a values decision. That to me is a mathematics decision. So we should be doing modelling and we should be looking at the costs and benefits of being able to keep a worker in town versus not being able to keep a worker in town, according to the tourist dollar spent.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Barker, for the question and, Penny, for your response. Any other questions? No? Thanks, everybody, and thanks very much, Penny, for the submission, and Friends of Lorne, thank you.

MS HAWE: Thank you.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: So now we have Dale Young. Hi, Dale. I can see your name there. If you can hear me, can you come off mute? I can see you're doing that. And, Dale, just say something so we can hear if you're there. And if you'd like to appear on the screen, you'll need to select to start your video. Can you hear us, Dale? We'll just give a few seconds for Dale to join. Dale, if you can hear us, we can't hear anything from you and we can't see you. So I

Draft Transcript

can see that you're not on mute, but we can't hear any audio and we can't see any video. So I might ask the Governance team to... I can see Dale coming off mute again. It looks like he's trying again. I've just got advice that the Governance team is contacting Dale, so we might just wait for a minute to see if they have any success on that. There you go. Dale, we can hear you now.

MR YOUNG: Can you hear me there?

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Yes, we can hear you. We don't have any video yet.

MR YOUNG: Yes, look, that's my apologies. I have an ongoing issue with my camera, so that's me, not you. So apologies for that, otherwise I would love for you all to see me. Thanks very much, everyone, for your time. I'm not sure if I'm the last or second-to-last speaker but I appreciate we're close to the end. So thanks for the time to hear me this evening. My name's Dale Young. I'm a principal town planner at SMEC and I'm here tonight representing one of our developer clients, Park Lee. I'm sure you're probably familiar with them. They're the owners of the land at 140 Duffield Road, Jan Juc, on the corner of the Surf Coast Highway. With regard to the land - and I'll try and keep this on point; apologies for the delayed start there - my position tonight is to just build a little bit further on the existing submission, not to go too overboard. On behalf of our client, we acknowledge that their land is presently zoned for residential, but it's been locked out of sort of the ability to be developed in the future by the DEL process. I'm not here this evening to discuss the merits of that, nor am I seeking to advocate that the site should be developable for those purposes. It's not sort of the purpose. I mean, obviously, they would like that to be but that's a different discussion and that time has passed. But I guess in the context of this process, I guess I acknowledge that our client's land is essentially on the outside looking in, so the reason being what am I here to advocate for then? Further to the submission, I'm here to sort of advocate on behalf of Park Lee for council's consideration of the 'what now' scenario for their site and the land adjacent to it between there and the existing school site, the Surf Coast campus of Christian College. The 'what now' scenario, given the site's location and the sort of the Western Gateway to Torquay Jan Juc. It's our understanding that the site in future will be back-zoned to a non-urban zone. We're unsure exactly what that rural zone is yet to be. But in our previous submission, we sort of focused on the attributes of the site, both I guess its locational context and also its environmental attributes, opportunities and constraints in the context of a future non-urban zoning applying to that land.

Draft Transcript

To provide council with some consideration on potential use and development scenarios for that land in the context of a non – non-urban scenario, and that submission focused on the context of what is permissible in the rural zones that could or would be applied - obviously only one zone is likely to apply - but we sort of analysed the rural zones in your planning scheme to, I guess, try and find some confluence of some - look, I guess, value adding and sort of highest and best use in a non-urban context that can provide benefit to the adjacent existing and future urban growth areas of the town. Obviously, appreciate it's not going to be their land that gets developed for that purpose, but it doesn't mean that its highest and best use is essentially agriculture. We advocate that there's probably be a bit more to be explored for the site and its surrounds.

So, look, just recapping on our submission, we identified some key land uses there, being our client has a strong belief that the site has potential for a future place of assembly in planning speak - their preference was potential for performing arts centre or a future non-government or government primary or secondary school, and as sort of supported by the relevant economics - there are other key land use that they believe has merit on the site, as do we, given the natural features of the site, is camping and caravan park or potential group accommodation, eco tourism. There are other land uses that are permissible, such as a residential hotel, wineries, etc, but probably to a lesser extent that's part of their vision. I refer to the supporting plan, I haven't shared it here, but that we submitted as part of that submission.

So we would just request, I guess, to keep the dialogue open. It may or may not be a part of this current process but our client is certainly keen to be involved in a future vision for their land, but one that contributes to the existing urban context, but not on - in a non-urban setting on their site. So I just emphasise and conclude that our client has on going aspirations for this site in their vision for a gateway land use there, and they'd welcome dialogue with council in an ongoing manner, whether it's part of this process or ongoing, for future work. I appreciate I'm over time there.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Dale. Thanks very much for your submission tonight. Do any councillors have questions for Dale? No? Thanks, councillors, and thanks, Dale, for presenting your submission tonight.

MR YOUNG: Thank you very much. Apologies for the slow start there.

Draft Transcript

MAYOR BODSWORTH: No worries. Thanks, Dale. So, finally, we have Gareth and Simon from Ample for a 10-minute presentation, speaking on behalf of Simon Loder. So I can see Gareth coming in there.

GARETH: Hello, everybody. I hope you can hear me. Mayor Bodsworth, how are you?

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Good, thank you. We can hear you fine and also see you. Are we expecting Simon as well?

GARETH: I'm not sure if he's going to be - his wife has been away and he's got the kids, unfortunately. He might join us at the end. We have invited along a consultant for the first part of our 10 minutes from MacroPlan and we also have a slideshow, so we a little bit of a complex presentation to put forward, and I'm hoping your Governance team will be able to let Brian in for the first couple of minutes.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Okay. I'm sure the Governance team will be working on that.

SIMON: I'm here.

GARETH: Ah, g'day, Simon.

GARETH: And maybe while we're waiting for Brian to come on board, Chair, I would like to request a few extra minutes. I'm sorry. We've timed Brian at about three or four. We think we're about eight. So we think we're going to go two or three minutes over. We really would like to get to the back end of what we've got to say. Would that be permissible?

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Do your best, Gareth, and I'm sure we'll be able to accommodate you.

GARETH: Okay, thank you.

BRIAN: I am here. It's an amazing feat of technology.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: I invite you to start your presentation whenever you're ready.

Draft Transcript

GARETH: Alright. I'll share the slides. Just firstly, my name is Gareth Bellchambers, and along with Simon Keep (?), we're Ample, a local project management company, and we will be presenting today with a bit more of a personal lens. We're from Regional Victoria and we now raise our families on the Surf Coast. But we have asked Brian to come along from Macroplan, which is Australia's leading urban economics property research and planning consultancy, and, as I said Brian, will present for the first few minutes. So hopefully I can share my screen now and then we can get going. Please tell me if this works. Can you see the slideshow?

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Not yet.

GARETH: My apologies. I do not know how to share my screen.

SIMON: Down the bottom if you hover your mouse –

GARETH: My apologies. Right in front of me. Thank you.

BRIAN: Well, good evening, everyone. I'm Brian Haratis from Macroplan. I have 40 years of experience and 40 years down at (inaudible) so I'm part of the system, the Surf Coast system. Thank you. The draft strategy considers forecast population growth to a planning horizon of 2051 and recommends strategic work to ensure an adequate supply of land to meet future housing employment needs. Thanks.

The population forecasts are as follows, and the VIF is Victorian Future, the UFS moderate growth projections and UFS high growth projections. And as you can see on the screen, 20,000, 17,000 and 26,000. Thank you. And number of dwellings - sorry, just go back please - and the number of dwellings based on the targets is 8,624 and the UFS moderate growth projections, and 11,800 in the high growth projections. Thanks.

Now, 8,000 dwellings would mean 320 dwellings per annum, 320 dwellings per annum. You heard from Greg Bursill you're currently doing 54 in Torquay. So you've got a six times multiplier. So we have calculated existing zoned land to be one test for 1,532 lots. Potential to be rezoned, 1,166 thought lots, less the constrained lots in Torquay, and that would equal a total existing supply of 1,722 dwellings existing supply. Thanks, Gareth.

Winchelsea is a pretty constrained city. I've put the 500 metre and one kilometre radii on the on the screen and they are from IGA. You will appreciate

Draft Transcript

500 metres – I've got a walkable catchment as well. 500 metres and one kilometre from the town centre. Now this suggests you will have to have a brand new centre built because to accommodate the number of people you want to accommodate, the IGA couldn't handle it. You heard from the other chap that Coles were keen but you would have to produce a totally brand new centre and, with that, which side would it be on? The north side, the west side, the east side? Where is it going to be? Also the constraints. If you look at the maps, the green areas and the blue areas, they are highly significant environmental areas and/or flood prone. And so you will have to develop in distant locations.

Just go back, Gareth.

GARETH: I'm just conscious we're running out of time, mate.

BRIAN: Okay. There's the walkable catchment for you in blue. and so that suggests you'd have to do build an entirely new centre. Thank you.

An appropriate and justified expansion for Winchelsea is in the order of an additional 5,000 residents or 2,000 homes, bringing the total of the township to a total population of around 7,500 by 2051. Thanks. As a result, the UFS facilitates accommodation for 3,700 homes, 2,000 in Winchelsea, 1,700 homes in existing towns, or 3,700 new homes in total by 2051. Thanks.

And compared to the dwelling targets, as you can see, it's well short of all the dwelling targets, particularly the Victorian government housing targets. It is unrealistic to think that the Surf Coast Shire can provide 4,000 to 8,000 new homes from high density in-fill supply also. Thanks.

So, in conclusion, you have a problem, and you have a big supply problem, even if you go with the strategy that you're pursuing. Thanks.

GARETH: Thanks very much, Brian. I'm just going to fly straight in because we're very short of time and I apologise about that. Look, I want to put all the stats and numbers and statistics and everything aside. As I said, Simon and I would like to look at this with a very personal lens. The reality is what are we trying to actually achieve here and what are we trying to achieve with this piece of policy and what is it that our Surf Coast Shire needs and wants? As a member of the Surf Coast Shire community – well, both of us, Simon and I - we feel like there's three things that this policy needs to do. It needs to build homes and, in particular, it needs to build homes for our children. We need to

Draft Transcript

house our workers because it's our workers who support the tourism which makes up the largest contributor to our economy, and when our economy is firing, everyone prospers. And we want to protect about our way of life. Now, this is not only the coast and the environment that we love and enjoy, but it's also the character of our townships and our regional character and the fabric of our community, which is everybody in our community, not just the wealthy and people who can afford to live here.

Over the past 100 years, we've been blessed we have been able to do this in a very organic way by growing all of our little regional towns. That's been fantastic but in the past decade, things have drastically changed. All of our towns have become constrained. Property prices have increased significantly. Everything is now unaffordable. Rental stock is below 1%. This is our housing crisis and it's real and it's not going to go away, and we're not alone in this either. Every single council within two hours of any capital city is feeling these pinch. Council knows about this. We've got existing policies. I'm not going to go into them in detail here but in 2021 there was a key worker accommodation crisis because of a lack of a suitable accommodation. In 2021, the Surf Coast Shire did an economic development strategy, and again it highlighted young people were leaving because of a lack of jobs and a lack of affordable accommodation.

In 2024, there was a business survey that found 50% of businesses can't find staff because of a lack of affordable housing. So the evidence is there and we all understand that that's the real problem. The solution is really simple: provide housing is affordable. That's all we have to do. The UFS is the solution. The UFS - and I quote - 'a draft strategy can considers forecast population growth to a planning horizon of 2051 and recommends strategic work to ensure an adequate supply of land to meet future housing and employment needs'. If we deliver this intention, then we'll go a long way to addressing the housing crisis that is burdening our Shire. But there's a really important distinction to make. We can't just deliver homes. We have to deliver homes that are actually affordable to those in our community who need them the most.

Now, what we have at the moment is 616 lots in Winchelsea that can be considered affordable, and 26 lots in Deans Marsh, and the only real indication the UFS gives towards housing that is affordable is, and I quote, 'continue to explore social and affordable housing opportunities on similar sites in each township as appropriate'. Realestate.com says that the median apartment and townhouse price in our coastal-fronting townships is 1.065 million. That's 12

Draft Transcript

times the average salary that our kids or a key worker would have. They are not affordable. They never will be. We cannot find affordable solutions in our coastal-fronting towns unfortunately.

So how did we get here? Well, distinctive areas of landscapes policy got put around Torquay and Jan Juc. Now, we support this policy but the unintended consequences is those two towns used to supply 85% of our growth and that's now been capped. We have eight of our towns that are now constrained. Across all of our existing towns, we only have 1,700 lots at best. Winchelsea has a single growth front. Not only does that present a lot of sovereign risk, but it's only 3,000 homes at best. Infill development, not commercially viable unfortunately. We'd like it to be but it's not, and even if it was, it's totally unaffordable to the people who need it the most. 1,700 plus 3,000 equals 4,700 homes. It's not even half of what we need and the lion's share of them are not affordable. The end of supply is in sight.

Put simply, ladies and gentlemen, we are out of options. We are probably the first Shire in Victoria to actually have vision over the end of our supply. Let's look at this another way. We've got 11,500 kids in our Shire today who over the next 26 years will be leaving the family home to look for a house of their own. That's 500 kids per year. There's nothing affordable in our coastal townships and there never will be. The current supply is 616 lots in Winch and 26 in Deans Marsh. By the time if UFS is approved and housing under it is brought to the market, 3,000 to 4,000 of our own children will have been forced into the housing market and there'll be nothing there for them, and they'll be forced to go and live in Geelong or Colac or somewhere else. I think that's pretty poor.

Even if we took all of the land that is proposed for Winchelsea and gave it just to our very own kids, it wouldn't even accommodate half of them and that would be exhausted in 15 years. And then what? These numbers don't even consider students, single parents, migrants, downsizers, the elderly and key workers and workers in the tourism sector, which makes up the largest contributor to our economy. All these people need access to affordable housing too, if we'd like to call ourselves an inclusive society.

Ladies and gentlemen, I just want to end here. I want to thank everybody who presented tonight and the councillors and the CEO for joining us and giving over their time. It's really great that we can have conversations like this, and this is where these conversations need to be had.

Draft Transcript

I'd also like to thank our planners. They've done a terrific job in preparing the UFS and I don't want to seem like we're ungrateful for their work. They've done a great job and they have highlighted the challenges that we have. But we have to acknowledge that their hands are tied. They're trying to work within existing policy and the historic thinking that got us into this housing crisis is not the thinking that will get us out of it. We call on our councillors to give more agency to our planners and allow them to think out of the box to solve these problems. The UFS falls short. We'd all like it to be the silver bullet, but it isn't. It does not achieve its intentions. You know, just yesterday I was down at Cosy Quarter with my two girls, teaching them how to surf, and I was looking at them thinking how wonderful it would be if they could stay in this Shire and have their families here too, but the reality is there's absolutely nothing in this Shire for them and this document does not give them an opportunity to be here either.

So, councillors, on behalf of my two daughters, the 11,500 kids that live in this Shire, the key workers and the tourism workers who make up the biggest portion of our economy and all our business owners, please don't approve this UFS. It's not the document we need it to be. It needs more work. Solutions exist. Our innovative non-for-profit model is a viable solution that goes a long way to deliver affordable homes on scale in a way that enhances regional character and protects existing township character. And when combined with the UFS, the intention of the UFS is achieved.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Gareth, you need to finish up now please.

GARETH: 30 seconds now and I'll be done. Councillors, we ask for two things from you please: the opportunity to present our solution to councillors in an appropriate forum, which is an external briefing. If it's decided that our solution isn't needed, then fine. We'll pack up our bat and ball and we'll go away happily. That's our promise. If you can see the benefits of our solution, then we ask to identify as a future investigation area in this strategy so that a complete and transparent assessment can begin.

We won't solve our problems with the same thinking that created them, so please, councillors, engage with us, listen to our ideas because we can be the first council in Australia to actually address our housing affordability crisis in a genuine and meaningful way. Thank you.

Draft Transcript

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Gareth, Simon and Brian for your submission. I'll now ask if there are councillor questions. Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Thank you, Mayor. And I'd like to say Brian seems to be an interloper because he's in the Colac Ottway Shire, not Surf Coast, but we can adopt him, possibly, or we welcome him.

My question is: statewide we hear about housing crisis. The stories are terrible. Very touching. People are being evicted because the owners of rental properties are selling, and they have a right to sell. What I think is a no-brainer is development along railway lines and railway corridors, and I just like to know whether you'd like to comment on that.

BRIAN: Yes, I think it's a no-brainer as well but you have to recognise in regional areas, not many people use rail. In fact, about 90% use their car. So if you could get it back to 80%, that'd be fantastic. So that's the reality. People use the train to go to shopping or school or what, but they don't use it to go to work.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Schonfelder. Thanks, Brian, for the response. Are there any other questions? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks for your presentations and, Gareth, you mentioned about this solution that you've got. How many properties are you looking to be able to provide through that?

GARETH: Look, the proposition is... Ideally, I'd like to go into that in an external briefing directly with the councillors, rather than just give a light skim over the detail here, but it's several thousand homes that will be affordable.

SIMON: I think the part I'd like to add is that there's a process that goes through determining the number of homes that are needed in consultation with council and council planners and industry experts. That's not our decision. This is a collaboration. It's not us trying to put a plan in front of the Surf Coast Shire and telling them what we need. It's about saying, "Here's a canvas. We'd like you to get involved in the solution." We're not the experts here. We're just trying to be part of fixing a problem.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: Thanks. Thanks, guys. Thanks, Councillor Barker. Are there any other questions for our presenters? No. Thanks, councillors. So

Draft Transcript

thanks very much to the three of you for joining us tonight and offering your submission.

GARETH: Thanks for letting us go over, guys.

BRIAN: Bye.

MAYOR BODSWORTH: So there are no more submissions tonight. So, councillors, the recommendation is that Council receives and notes the submissions relating to the draft Urban Futures Strategy and, secondly, considers the submissions in a report regarding the final version of the Urban Futures Strategy at a future council meeting. So that's the recommendation before us. Does anybody wish to move a motion? Thanks.

Councillor Schonfelder moving. Councillor Barker seconding. That's as per the recommendation. Okay, thanks, councillors. So we will now put that... Sorry, Councillor Schonfelder, do you wish to speak to that motion? No? Thank you. And Councillor Barker? Do any other councillors wish to speak to the motion? Thanks, councillors. So we'll put that to the vote. All those in favour? Thank you. And that motion is carried unanimously. Thanks, councillors.

So there being no further items of business, I declare the meeting closed at 7.39pm and just thank everybody who's joined us online. And, councillors, can I suggest that we stay online while our audience and presenters leave and we'll catch up after the meeting.

(End of meeting)