



**ACT
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The Active Fund

Residents say new structure plan overlooks environment

Homes to flood Lara



DIRT TRACKS: Daryl, Angela and Sarina Blair with neighbour Terry Edwards on Lara's McHarrys Rd.

Ditch dirt before development: Daryl

CHRISTIE PEUCKER

LARA resident Daryl Blair equates his battle with bureaucracy to that of the Kerrigan family in the classic Australian film *The Castle*.

Authorities say they can't force a developer to seal the road he lives on. But Mr Blair says "it's the vibe" of common sense that should see him win the battle.

Mr Blair and his neighbours had taken to putting up signs on their properties along and near McHarrys Rd, petitioning excessive development in the township without the addition of adequate infrastructure.

Mr Blair believes the dirt road he lives on cannot adequately carry the surplus traffic flow expected from an 800-lot L. Bisinella Developments subdivision at the junction of his street and Buckingham St.

He has petitioned the City of Greater Geelong to seal the road or close it off entirely at the southern end but has met opposition on both fronts.

"In sheer desperation we've put signs up. We're taking our fight to the streets," Mr Blair said.

"We've had enough of development until they provide proper shops and infrastructure."

Surveys by council obtained by

The amendment would effectively pave the way for a high density residential housing development proposed by L. Bisinella Developments.

Mrs Goatman said, while she understood it was natural for a town to expand, hundreds of new homes in that location increased the likelihood of flooding downstream within Lara's town centre and St Lawrence Park. "Growth is a good thing but in designated areas," Mrs Goatman said. "Lara has a lot of physical constraints being undulating and with the flooding. This is why it hasn't been developed in the first place."

But council planning strategy and economic development manager Terry Demeo said the structure plan carefully considered the need to manage flooding and stormwater run off.

"The newly adopted Lara Structure Plan notes that parts of the

water course in Lara could be subject to flooding and that if development were to occur in some areas, best practice water management principles would be required because of the low lying nature of the land," Mr Demeo said.

Residents also believe a housing subdivision could be disastrous for Serendip's breeding programs, with the possibility of domestic cats and dogs on the loose.

Mrs Goatman also said current infrastructure couldn't support the township as it was.

Without a sitting ward councillor, Mrs Goatman said the township would struggle to get their opposition effectively heard. Windermere ward councillor Cameron Granger in on a leave of absence after being charged last month with failing to disclose a conflict of interest and failing to leave the council chambers during a vote.

CHRISTIE PEUCKER

LARA residents believe key environmental considerations have been brushed over in the town's latest structure plan.

And that could have potentially devastating consequences should rezoning and new construction occur, they say.

Township of Lara Care Group (TLC) spokeswoman Sheryl Goatman said hundreds of residents were opposed to the rezoning of land on Caddys Rd opposite Serendip Sanctuary, which has been earmarked in the 2009 outline to switch from Rural Living to Residential 1 zoning.

Last Tuesday, the City of Greater Geelong voted to exhibit a planning scheme amendment incorporating the changes after an independent panel previously listed it as a "high priority for residential development".

Lara developers stunned by Guy

ALISON APRHYS
PROPERTY

A \$70 MILLION proposed residential development near the Serendip Sanctuary in Lara has been dumped by State Planning Minister Matthew Guy, shocking the developer but delighting locals opposing the plan.

"The proposed Residential 1 Zone directly to the south of the Serendip Sanctuary is inconsistent with the overwhelming community interest," Mr Guy said.

The development which would have comprised a 380 lot subdivision on 38ha bounded by Caddys Lane, Wandered Rd, Serenade Creek and Flinders Ave, had previously been earmarked in a City of Greater Geelong plan for rezoning from Rural Living to Residential.

L Bisinella Developments sales manager Richard Bisinella said he was shocked and outraged by the decision.

"It's a blatant corruption of the planning system," he said.

"The incompetence and cynicism apparent in this decision is an absolute disgrace (and) we will be taking every legal avenue

Serendip supporters left with plenty to smile about



Matthew Guy gets a hug from Sheryl Goatman yesterday. Photo: REG RYAN

PETER BEGG
COMMENT

YESTERDAY'S announcement by State Planning Minister Matthew Guy to knock back a housing development at Lara, coming on top of his decision to block the Spring Creek development at Torquay in July, appears to have created something of a pattern, at least in this region.

available to us to fight the Minister's decision and expose his sham planning system."

But Mr Guy's decision surprised and delighted members of the Township of Lara Care Group (TLCG) and earned him a hug from Sheryl Goatman and loud cheers from other TLCG supporters. After eight years of protesting, Ms Goatman said it was great news.

"This is a victory for the environment, for Serendip, for Lara, for Geelong and for

Victoria," she said. Under the Lara Structure Plan approved by the Mr Guy, a number of alternate areas remain available for future consideration to achieve increased land supply.

Mr Guy informed the City of Greater Geelong yesterday morning, and has formally written to advise Council.

However, it appeared that the minister's office neglected to inform the developers.

When initially contacted by the *Geelong Advertiser* for his

In July, Mr Guy said the Coalition Government would listen to the community's views, and yesterday's decision was further proof of that.

What it means for the developers is a dramatic shrinking of their bottom line.

But for the township of Lara, the growth won't stop there – just not in that particular area. Soon it will no longer be a township.

response to the decision, Mr Bisinella appeared stunned by the news.

Ward councillor Cameron Granger yesterday welcomed the decision, and said it was a win for Lara.

"There is plenty of room around Lara with our town boundaries being expanded to the west," he said. "There was never any need for this in an environmentally sensitive area.

— with PETER BEGG

Hoots of joy at home plan rethink

By **JASON DOWLING**
CITY EDITOR

THE champagne is flowing among supporters of Serendip Sanctuary at Lara, south-west of Melbourne, after Planning Minister Matthew Guy scrapped plans to build hundreds of homes near the sanctuary, a decision the developers described as "blatant corruption of the planning system".

Mr Guy said the plan to allow the housing close to the 250-hectare sanctuary was "inconsistent with the overwhelming community interest".

He said the area was "valued by the community as a lower-density rural-residential buffer between the urban area of the town and the Serendip Sanctuary".

The decision follows an eight-year battle by developers to have the land rezoned and approval of the housing plan by City of Greater Geelong in April.

Sheryl Goatman, from community group TLC Group Lara, said the group was elated by the minister's decision.

"The integrity of the rural land that buffers this sanctuary remains intact... that prevents open-slather development and the opening up of our rural land, which would jeopardise the natural assets of Serendip Sanctuary and the You Yangs region," she said.

Roger Smith, from tourism operator Echidna Walkabout, said Mr Guy had made a "terrific decision".



Supporters of the sanctuary feared the housing would lead to domestic cats and noise encroaching on the sanctuary.

According to Parks Victoria, more than 150 bird species have been spotted at the sanctuary, which is home to some of Australia's rarest birds.

The developer had proposed a vegetation buffer between the homes and Serendip to protect the sanctuary and yesterday lashed out at Mr Guy's decision.

"We are shocked and outraged at this decision. It's a blatant corruption of the planning system. The integrity of the planning system has been sacrificed on the altar of short-term politics," Richard Bisinella from L. Bisinella Developments said.

"This is a purely political decision designed to counter recent media commentary that the minister has been making too many decisions in favour of developers with the right political connections at the expense of community groups," he said.



Not about to be knocked off its perch: A tawny frogmouth at Serendip Sanctuary.

PICTURE: CRAIG ABRAHAM

Urban sprawl threatens to overrun wildlife sanctuary

26/11/11
The Age Page 9

BY JASON DOWLING

TWO hundred and fifty hectares of pristine native fauna and flora less than an hour's drive from Melbourne is in grave danger from urban sprawl, according to locals and tourism operators.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy will next week announce his

decision on a planning application to rezone land adjacent to Serendip Sanctuary at Lara, south-west of Melbourne, to allow hundreds of new homes.

The planning battle has lasted more than eight years with opponents of the rezoning arguing the influx of domestic cats, noise and suburbia will ruin the sanctuary and hurt local tourism operators.

The developers say a vegetation buffer between the homes and Serendip will protect the sanctuary. According to Parks Victoria, more than 150 species of bird have been spotted at the sanctuary, which is home to some of Australia's rarest birds.

Sheryl Goatman, of community group TLC Group Lara, said they were outraged by the housing plans, saying "it is the

death knell, it will just become an urban park".

Roger Smith from tourism operators Echidna Walkabout said they were also very concerned by the housing proposal.

L. Bisinella Developments said it would not be proceeding with the plan if it threatened the sanctuary.

Mr Guy said he had met with locals this month and had visited

the area and understood the importance of the sanctuary and would make a considered decision "for the entire community".

Opposition planning spokesman Brian Tee said "the Baillieu government's poor environmental record means that the rare animals and the tourism businesses that rely on this last remnant of pre-European bush may soon face the chop".

... and out of town

PLANNING Minister Matthew Guy said he would make a considered decision about the fate of Serendip Sanctuary "for the entire community" ("Urban sprawl threatens to overrun wildlife sanctuary", *The Saturday Age*, 26/11). I wonder if the "entire community" will include conservationists and

nature lovers or the native fauna that would lose the safety of this Noah's Ark — and thus face extinction.

Grasslands are Victoria's most endangered habitat and Serendip has been a breeding area for endangered eastern barred bandicoots as well as free-ranging kangaroos, wallabies and emus. It also has a program of captive-breeding brolgas and bustards and other rare birds. It is a tourist attraction.

The government remains largely indifferent to wildlife and natural values. It wants a bigger economy at all costs. It is hard to say "no" to developers.

Vivienne Ortega, Heidelberg Heights



Cuddly creature:
Kylie Kidd with an eastern barred bandicoot yesterday.
Picture: MIKE KEATING

HERALD (SUN - WED 30th MARCH 2011)

Banding together to save rare little coots

VICTORIAN conservationists are bringing one cute Aussie critter back from the brink of extinction.

A cluster of eastern barred bandicoots will scurry into their semi-wild environments today at

Angus Thompson

Serendip Sanctuary in Lara. It's part of a breeding program to save the endangered marsupial.

Conservation Volunteers Australia regional manager Kylie Kidd said the eastern

barred bandicoot existed only in captivity and supported environments in Victoria.

She said she could hardly contain her excitement at holding one of the cuddly youngsters. "They're such cute little creatures. The

little guy I had today was just amazing. He's almost extinct in Victoria."

The program is supported by Parks Victoria and the State Government's Vision for Werribee Plains project.

Ms Kidd encouraged the

public to get involved in saving the species. "Anybody who just wants to do a day's volunteering, come and work with the bandicoots," she said.

"Bring these little guys back. They are such a beautiful little species."



rural land development in Lara say the council and the developers have not considered the effect high-density housing will have on the community and the environment.

Despite receiving 666 submissions and a petition containing 2410 signatures, council last week voted to approve the re-zoning, which would allow L. Bisinella Developers to move forward with plans for a housing estate opposite Serendip Sanctuary.

"Council has ignored our voice... Is it development or is it democracy?" protester Sheryl Goatman said.

"It's like we can't have a say in our home, our town."

She said she and other members of the Township of Lara Care Group were not against development but wanted it to be in keeping with the "semi-rural" feel of the town.

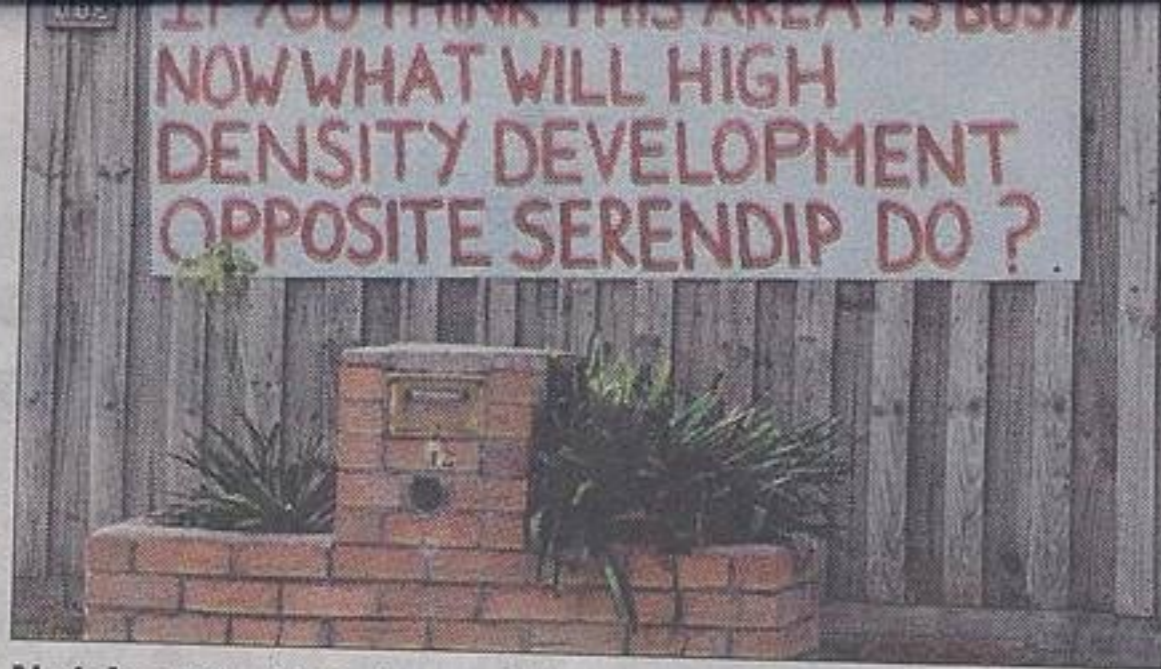
Current restrictions generally prevent subdivision, but new residential zoning would allow at least 380 houses to be built on the land.

The 227ha wildlife sanctuary opposite the proposed development site is home to endangered native wildlife, including the eastern barred bandicoot, which experts said would be under threat from high-density development.

Mrs Goatman said that the developers considered the sanctuary to be like a zoo and wanted to turn it into "an urban park in an urban matrix", instead of allowing native birds and animals to roam freely.

"If council had any conscience or intelligence to acknowledge what we have instead of being influenced by the developers... they would protect the natural assets for us all to enjoy," Mrs Goatman said.

Former ranger and team leader at Serendip Sanctuary, Michael Helman, said he had witnessed many native animals "ripped apart" by



Not happy: Nearby residents air their concerns.

domestic animals.

He said current low-density housing had meant such threats could be minimised.

He said he was "disturbed" by the plans for the new Sanctuary Views Estate because a high volume of housing would mean the wildlife park would be a "veritable smorgasbord" for cats and dogs.

Three years ago, Mr Helman said, Serendip Sanctuary received a report from environmental expert Kevin Woods that detailed the impact urban growth had on native wildlife.

But that report had not swayed the council's decision.

"It is distressing to me that the City of Greater Geelong and the independent panel have chosen to ignore the Woods report and I wonder why," Mr Helman said.

Residents said the Woods report was just one of the warnings not properly considered during the decision-making process.

Developer Richard Bisinella declined to comment on community concerns but directed a spokesperson to issue a statement on the proposal.

"The issues have been thoroughly canvassed over a long period and we have nothing further to add at this stage," the developer's spokesperson said.

The Gittins family lives on one of the newly re-zoned properties.

Lizanne Gittins said they had to elevate their

house when they built because the area was a known flood plain.

Mrs Gittins said that despite the risks, she and her husband chose to build because of Lara's rural feel.

"We always assumed that it would be sold off in acre blocks and that's why we bought here," Mrs Gittins said.

She and her neighbours could not believe that her family's property had been re-zoned.

Ward councillor Cameron Granger said there were no rules to stop a third party from applying for zone changes.

Cr Granger said he was "shocked" last week that his fellow councillors had voted to allow the development to go ahead, but understood the difficult position they were in.

Cr Bruce Harwood said parts of Belmont, in his ward, were becoming choked by development and it was only fair to "share the burden" of the region's growth.

But Cr Granger said L. Bisinella's Grand Lakes Estate development was already "shouldering its weight".

"The thought that residential housing would creep up to the You Yangs disgusts me," he said.

"Lara is one of the few places in City of Greater Geelong that has quite a unique identity.

"Lara likes to be Lara. It doesn't want to be part of Corio. It doesn't want to be part of Werribee."



Under threat: A pair of Cape Barren geese wander over the site of the proposed 380-house development at Lara this week.

Photo: ALISON WYND

PROTECT SEI



G/Ad. THUR 17th Nov. 11
Objectors still waiting for a decision

Sub-division silence

PETER BEGG

LARA'S Serendip Sanctuary was a "hidden jewel" recognised by the international community, Labor's state planning spokesman Brian Tee said yesterday.

"We get 40,000 visitors, and it's something that our children who come here through our schools are getting to see and getting to appreciate," he said.

"I think it's the last remnant of what was a more widespread (wildlife habitat) and with the encroachment this is the last pocket."

Mr Tee was speaking after a tour of Serendip and the surrounding area yesterday, which was organised by objectors to a housing sub-division in Caddys Rd.

Objectors to the Caddys Rd sub-division have repeatedly said an urban sub-division would be incompatible with a free-range zoo like Serendip.

Tour operator Roger Smith, of Echidna Walkabout Tours, was also on hand to explain the importance of the sanctuary to tourism.

Mr Smith said he had taken 500 overseas tourists off cruise ships berthed in Melbourne to Serendip in just the past week, and the tourists thought they were in the outback, with kangaroos bounding by and wallabies quietly grazing.



PROTECT THIS POCKET: Brian Tee, front left, meets Lara residents at Serendip Sanctuary yesterday.

Photo: TONY KERRIGAN

"The great thing about it is it's so quick and easy to get to, and that's really one of the main reasons we come here," Mr Smith said of his wildlife

tours. He said the cruise ships often only stayed in Melbourne for one day and Serendip was ideal because it was less than an hour away.

There is still no word on when State Planning Minister Matthew Guy will announce the future of the planned sub-division.

City of Greater Geelong adopted the C73 planning scheme amendment containing the Caddys Rd development in April, and it has been with the minister since June awaiting his approval.

Township of Lara Care Group (TLC) spokeswoman Sheryl Goatman met with Mr Guy on Tuesday, but she said there was still no indication when a decision might be announced.

"Matthew is obviously aware of the issues, this is the second meeting we have had with Matthew, and he is listening to all of our concerns," she said.

"He's reviewing all the issues before he makes a decision on C73 and that's the best we can hope for.

"It's been on his desk for several months now and naturally we would like to know what the outcome is to put the matter to rest.

"It's coming up to nine years next year - it's been a long haul."

A spokesman for Mr Guy said it was not the first time the Lara group had met with the minister, and the development was still being considered by the State Government.

peter.begg@geelongadvertiser.com.au

Estate spurs wildlife fears

Andrea Hamblin

MOMENTUM is building in the protest against a proposed housing estate to be built opposite Serendip Sanctuary in Lara, with protesters demanding answers from the Victorian Planning Minister this week.

Ecotourism operators have also joined the fight against the Caddys Rd development, saying local tourism and the park's flora and fauna would suffer.

International wildlife tour operator, Echidna Walkabout's Roger Smith, said the City of Greater Geelong had not consulted them on the decision.

"Twenty years' experience tells us that the housing development will be the death knell of Serendip Sanctuary as a serious

■ PROTEST

contender in the international tourism business," Mr Smith said.

"In our letter to (Planning Minister) Mr (Matthew) Guy we stated that wildlife tours will cease if the development proceeds.

"International visitors come to Australia to see our unique wildlife in the wild. They don't want to look at stressed wildlife next to a noisy housing development.

"We will be forced out of Serendip and will take our business, our investments and our employment opportunities out of the region."

Township of Lara Care Group's Sheryl Goatman said the meet-

ing with Mr Guy and a wildlife tour with his Opposition counterpart Brian Tee was a chance to reiterate the residents' appeal for State Government action to overrule Geelong City's "shameful decision".

"TLC Group will make the case to the minister that to rezone this land sets a dangerous precedent for open-slather development and places Serendip Sanctuary, and the very survival of its wildlife, at risk," she said before yesterday's meeting.

"Lara residents recognise that Lara is designated as a growth region in the City of Greater Geelong... (but they) say appropriate development is needed in appropriate regions."

Mr Guy was not available for comment yesterday morning.

Sanctuary's fate still up in the air

Andrea Hamblin and Peter Begg

OBJECTORS to a major housing development in Lara are holding out hope that the State Government will overturn the decision to allow the subdivision near Serendip Sanctuary.

Township of Lara Care Group members last week met with the state Planning Minister, Matthew Guy, to plead in person for the Caddys Rd development to be downsized from high-density housing to acreage blocks.

"Here at Lara, we live amongst it (the environment) and we see it every day, and it really highlights why we feel so strongly and why we have stood together to see this through because it's incalculable, the environmental repercussions that would occur if this development went ahead," TLC group spokeswoman Sheryl Goatman said.

Ms Goatman and other members also met with Labor state planning spokesman Brian Tee last week, who said Serendip Sanctuary was a "hidden jewel" recognised by the international community.

"We get 40,000 visitors, and it's something that our children who come here through our schools are getting to see and getting to appreciate," he said.

"I think it's the last remnant of what was a more widespread (habitat) and with the encroachment this is the last pocket."



Support: Opposition planning spokesman Brian Tee meets Lara residents at Serendip Sanctuary last week. Photo: TONY KERRIGAN

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

City of Greater Geelong adopted the C73 planning scheme amendment containing the Caddys Rd development in April, and it has been with the minister since June, awaiting approval.

"(The Minister) is reviewing all the issues before he makes a decision on C73 and that's the best we can hope for," Ms Goatman said.

"It's been on his desk for several months now and naturally we would like to know what the outcome is to put the matter to rest.

"It's coming up to nine years next year - it's been a long haul."

A spokesman for Mr Guy said it was not the first time the Lara group had met with the Planning Minister.

He said the housing development was still being considered by the State Government.





Lake
Serendip

Serendip
Creek

Hovells
Creek

FROM THE AIR: Lara is transformed into a flood plain with the You Yangs behind.

LARA TOWN MEETING

**THURSDAY 18TH NOV 2010
at 7pm**

Lara Town Hall - 1 Flinders Ave

**Councillor Granger and COGG
Officers will be there to answer
your questions. So come along,
ask questions and voice your
concerns.**

Protect Lara

Protect Serendip

Protect our way of life!









WELCOME TO
SERENDIP
SANCTUARY

MP backs Lara fight

PETER BEGG

THE State Government must listen to communities when it comes to new housing estates such as the Caddys Rd proposal in Lara, Federal Labor MP for the inner Melbourne seat of Wills Kelvin Thomson said at the weekend.

Mr Thomson was invited to look over the proposed housing development site and its relationship with the nearby Serendip Sanctuary.

The Member for Wills said he was familiar with Serendip as a young person, and was keen to see that it was protected.

"It's remarkable to have a place so close to Melbourne where people can see kangaroos and emus and Cape Barren geese just grazing in the wild," he said.

"It is a great asset and likely to become more important over time."

Lara residents opposed to the Caddy's Rd development have taken heart in recent weeks after State Planning Minister Matthew Guy said he would review it.

Mr Thomson said he was aware of the latest developments and was

hopeful the area near Serendip would not become a suburban development.

"I have become concerned that with population growth people are losing their rights in relation to planning decisions that state and local governments are making," he said.

"It's my view that residents have a right to a say in what happens in their neighbourhood and their community.

"I have also seen with Melbourne's rapid population growth that we are seeing both high-rise and urban sprawl."

Mr Thompson said we should be looking at a more stable population rather than the rapid growth that is taking place.

Lara RSL president Ken Simons, who was on hand on Saturday to help show Mr Thomson around, said residents had been fighting the Caddys Rd proposal for eight years.

"We're pleased that the minister is actually having a look at it but we don't know if he's going to OK it or not," he said.

"Hopefully he'll knock it back."



**GREEN
FOR AUSTRALIA**
Australia
Protect

Save our
Green Wedge

Save our
Green Wedge

KEEP YOUR
HANDS OFF
MY BOUNDARIES
Green Wedge
Mr. [unclear]

Wyndham
time to defend the bound
South
Wedge
development in our Green
add food miles to our Vegies
Cook is Choking
roads are blocked
schools are full
our

WINNING
GREEN WEDGE
FOREVER

CHANGE
EDGE

Dismayed at Caddys Rd decision

ON Tuesday night (12/4) the Geelong City Council voted on the Caddys Rd development in Lara.

This has been going on for approximately eight years. The vote to abandon this development was defeated. In doing so, those councillors who voted for the project have totally ignored the will of the people, the lack of infrastructure and environmental issues to name a few.

Councillors have now shown their collective hands and have really given approval to in-fill development in inappropriate areas all over Geelong.

They are now on record. I feel sorry for all of us when trying to deal with councillors who don't give a damn what happens outside their own wards.

To those who voted to abandon this part of the Lara Structure Plan, at least you tried.

Lionel McWilliam,
Lara

G/Ad. 15/4/11.

Lara plan gets city go-ahead

PETER BEGG

GEELONG city councillors last night agreed to include the controversial Caddys Rd land as an area for conventional residential development in the new Lara Structure Plan.

Ward councillor Cameron Granger had moved an alternative recommendation calling for the Caddys Rd proposal to be removed from the new expanded residential plans for Lara.

Cr Granger said that over 650 submissions and 2400 signatures on a petition against the development could not be ignored.

The Caddys Rd subdivision will see up to 380 housing lots developed near Serendip nature sanctuary. The position of the development near the wildlife sanctuary was one of the main objections to the development.

Cr Granger said land

for long-term growth at Lara could be accommodated quite easily to the town's west.

"There is simply no requirement for infill development at Caddys Rd," he said.

Cr Granger was supported by Crs Andy Richards, John Doull and Barbara Abley.

But Crs Rod Macdonald, Bruce Harwood, Stretch Kontelj and Eddy Kontelj spoke against leaving Caddy's Rd out of the growth plans for Lara.

Cr Harwood said parts of Belmont, in his ward, were becoming choked by development and it was only fair to share the load.

"I cannot support this on the grounds of sharing the burden," Cr Harwood said.

Cr Stretch Kontelj agreed that Geelong could not keep carving up blocks for units, with six units on one particular block in Marshall St, Newtown, to try and keep

up with the pressure for development.

"I think we are going to be challenged by the sheer numbers of people coming from Melbourne and the west (of Melbourne) to Geelong," he said.

"The pressure is on these areas (Geelong's northern areas) to share the burden."

A number of Lara residents attended last night's council meeting at City Hall, and applauded when councillors spoke out against the Caddys Rd development.

But Cr Granger's alternative was lost, and Cr Macdonald proposed another alternative, which included Caddys Rd in the Lara Structure Plan.

Cr Macdonald's recommendation was agreed to by Crs Bruce Harwood, Stretch Kontelj, Eddy Kontelj, Jan Farrell, Ron Nelson and John Mitchell. Cr Kylie Fisher was absent.

Geelong Ad. 13/4/11.

FRI DEC 11th - GEELONG IND.



Having a say: Kim Conway and Sheryl Goatman have created a facebook site to oppose a housing development at Lara.

Housing objectors go online It's out of site

BY ANDREW MATHIESON

OBJECTORS to a proposed residential development on Lara's rural fringe have formed a facebook group that attracted more than 650 members in its first five days.

Save Serendip Lara - No Residential Rezone has proven a hit on the social network site since resident Kim Conway created the group last Friday.

The site followed a public rally five days earlier against plans to re-zone land off Caddys Road for several hundred new homes.

Mrs Conway said most members demanded that Lara's northern outskirts remain rural, citing concerns about homes built on

floodplains and the impact on wildlife at adjacent Serendip Sanctuary.

"We're trying to show to the people in charge that it needs to be stopped, that Lara is saying it doesn't want this and that their voices need to be heard," she said.

Township of Lara Care Group spokesperson Sheryl Goatman urged the facebook group to keep the debate clean.

She believed the community was united in opposition.

A petition with more than 2400 signatures against the proposal had gone to state parliament and council, Mrs Goatman said.

L Bisinella Developments spokesperson Richard Bisinella said he had been unaware of the

facebook group but respected the right of residents to object.

"But we can only respond through the planning system," he said.

Mr Bisinella believed that councillors should disregard facebook posts when considering whether to send the proposal to an independent panel.

The company would be happy for a panel to consider the plan, he said.

"It's my opinion that, the more contentious it is, the more reason why it should go to a panel."

Mr Bisinella said the development would have to include a 50-metre vegetation buffer between homes and the sanctuary to earn planning approval.

Lara housing anger

PETER BEGG

Confusion as Serendip subdivision plan deferred

LARA residents were left angry and confused last night after Geelong city councillors deferred a vote on controversial plans for a housing subdivision opposite Lara's Serendip Sanctuary.

A number of Lara residents attended last night a council meeting at City Hall, and held up banners in the public gallery protesting against the proposed Caddys Rd development.

But when the Lara agenda

item, which was the first of the reports called, Cr Rod Macdonald moved that the item be deferred for a month.

His deferral motion was seconded by Cr Andy Richards.

Council procedure allows for no debate on a deferral motion, a point Acting Mayor Cameron Granger had to be reminded of before it was quickly put to a vote.

It was this apparent haste,

and lack of any debate or reasons given, that gave rise to anger and confusion among the gallery.

"What grounds for deferral?" one resident shouted. "That's a disgrace," shouted another.

The residents continued to discuss the situation out in the foyer as the rest of the meeting progressed, and at one stage city CEO Stephen Griffen tried to move them

on, only to be asked to explain what had happened in the meeting.

The Caddys Rd subdivision would see up to 380 housing lots developed near Serendip nature sanctuary. In a report to last night's council meeting council officers recommended its acceptance. The officers' recommendation is also in line with an independent panel which heard submissions on the project.

But Township of Lara Care Group spokeswoman Sheryl Goatman said before the meeting that her group had many concerns with the panel hearing process.

Ms Goatman said the number of submissions opposing the development had been unprecedented in the history of the City of Greater Geelong.

"Where the proposed development is it is documented in

the Lara structure plan that the Serendip Creek and Hovell's Creek catchment area is the most dangerous and fast flowing water," she said.

"We've just had Windermere Rd cut off and that was just moderate flooding."

But one of the developers of the area, Bisinella Developments, said before the meeting that engineers had identified any areas that might be affected by once-in-100-years flooding and there would be no housing built on those areas.

Lara set for town boundary

PETER BEGG

A PLANNING panel has released its findings into a new structure plan for Lara which sets the town's boundary and consolidates the town centre.

Geelong city council's planning councillor Andrew Katos said the panel had also made recommendations on commercial opportunities including Avalon Airport and the proposed intermodal transport facility, protection of the surrounding rural landscape and nomination of areas appropriate for residential development.

Among the areas considered for residential development was the Caddys Rd area, which has been earmarked for 380

lots of conventional housing.

Cr Katos said the panel considered submissions on a number of issues, including the proposed intermodal transport facility, requests for commercial rezoning and environmental issues.

He said the independent panel made a number of recommendations, including:

SUPPORT for consolidation of Lara's "urban core" before the release of new growth area or greenfield sites;

SUPPORT for a mix of both residential and low-density residential development within the urban core;

SUPPORT for the Caddys Rd area to be developed for conventional residential development;

THE need to reinforce and maintain the rural character of the town; and,

SUPPORT for the economic opportunities identified.

In relation to the Caddys Rd site, Cr Katos said the panel felt Serendip Sanctuary and conventional residential development could co-exist next to one another.

He said the panel also accepted a 50m buffer to the sanctuary was appropriate and the buffer could incorporate landscaping, wildlife corridor and cycling or walking paths.

Cr Katos stressed the panel's recommendations must still be voted on by councillors at a future meeting.



CONCERNS: Lara residents Barrie and Zac Kinnersly, Sheryl Goatman, Graham Lizanne and Angus Gittins and Anne and Brian Faithfull are petitioning against a proposed high-density housing development.

Residents to fight scheme

CHRISTIE PEUCKER

OPPONENTS to a proposed development of high-density housing just metres away from Serendip Sanctuary in Lara will ramp up their campaign today when they meet with Lara MP John Eren.

The Township of Lara Care Group will voice its opposition to the proposed 380 lot subdivision, which it believes will have devastating consequences on the area by destroying the natural habit of animal and bird life, increasing the chances of flooding and put added pressure on infrastructure already at breaking point.

To be known as Sanctuary Views, the 38ha development area bounded by Caddys Lane, Windemere Rd, Serendip Creek and Flinders Ave, has been earmarked in a City of Greater Geelong plan for rezoning from Rural Living to Residential 1 to make way for the development proposed by L. Bisinella Developments.

Group spokeswoman Sheryl Goatman said signatures, collected during the past month, would be handed to Mr Eren, Victorian Planning Minister

'We've just got to stop Lara growing uncontrollably. It should be developed in a way the community wants but the developers get all the say and the facilities can't keep up.'

— GRAHAM GITTINS

Justin Madden, Environment Minister Gavin Jennings and the City, as part of a submission to the Lara Structure Plan, due to go on public display in a matter of days.

The petition follows a mushroom of anti-development signs popping up across the township in the past month.

Resident Graham Gittins said while he accepted urban growth, the high-density development was too much for the town, and believed it should be developed as acreage like the surrounding properties.

"We're not being pikers saying that we've got our bit and don't

want anyone else here," Mr Gittins said.

"We've just got to stop Lara growing uncontrollably. It should be developed in a way the community wants but the developers get all the say and the facilities can't keep up."

Mrs Goatman said there was currently only four car spaces for picking up and dropping off students along Flinders Ave outside Lara Primary School, a school which services 600-plus students. She says the area could not cope with the traffic from a further 380 homes.

Neighbouring land owner Barrie Kinnersly said his greatest concern was flooding, having already had problems getting continued insurance for his property.

Former Shire of Corio councillor Brian Faithfull agreed, having witnessed flooding firsthand on a number of occasions.

Without a sitting ward councillor Mrs Goatman said the township felt hamstrung.

Windermere ward councillor Cameron Granger in on a leave of absence after being charged for failing to disclose a conflict of interest and failing to leave the council chambers during a vote.

Geelong ^{northside} NEWS

Close to home

WEDNESDAY, April 20, 2011

www.geelongnews.com.au



Save our sanctuary: Lara residents claim a proposed 380-house development will endanger wildlife at nearby Serendip Sanctuary.

Photo: ALISON WYND

Paradise lost

Andrea Hamblin

GEELONG Council is putting Lara residents and wildlife at risk by approving a 380-house development opposite Serendip Sanctuary, protestors say.

After eight years, Lara residents last week lost their battle against the controversial proposal to rezone land on Caddys Rd, on Lara's boundary, from acreage blocks to high-density housing allotments.

A spokeswoman for the Township of Lara Care Group said residents were shocked that the council approved re-zoning the land, much of which is privately owned and occupied, and despite its proximity to an endangered

wildlife sanctuary.

"It's very clear that for the whole of Geelong, it's open slather for development no matter what the cost is," Sheryl Goatman said.

Councillor Cameron Granger

was vocal in his stance against the re-zoning but said he was told by other councillors that Lara needed to "share the burden" of the region's population growth.

FULL REPORT, Page 5

SEPT '10



AT RISK: Serendip Sanctuary will be threatened if housing goes ahead nearby, claims reader.

Photo: GLENN FERGUSON

Lara sanctuary at risk to housing plans

THE recommendation by an independent panel to rezone land opposite Serendip Sanctuary, Lara, for high-density residential development is another example of the State Government and developers riding roughshod over council planning decisions and community interests.

The future sustainability of Serendip is now at risk with the prospect of high-density housing being recommended up to its boundary, despite previously identified risks likely to have a negative impact on its wildlife.

Again it would appear short-term profits for developers are to win out against preserving a facility for the long-term benefit of future generations. There is no similar site within a 100 km radius of Melbourne but presumably, this is of little consequence to State planners.

Hopefully, the council will reject the panel's recommendations.

If it goes ahead, you might as well take down the sign at the entrance to Lara which proudly proclaims "Rural Living at its Best".

Barry White,
Lara



PUBLIC RALLY



Walk for Serendip
Walk For Lara



When: SUNDAY 29TH NOV.

Where: Serendip Sanctuary Entrance

Time: 11 am - 12 Noon

A Short walk from Serendip Sanc
to Serendip Creek Reserve Windermere Rd Lara

Help us to:

Protect Serendip Protect Lara
From proposed high density residential
development directly opposite
Serendip Sanctuary

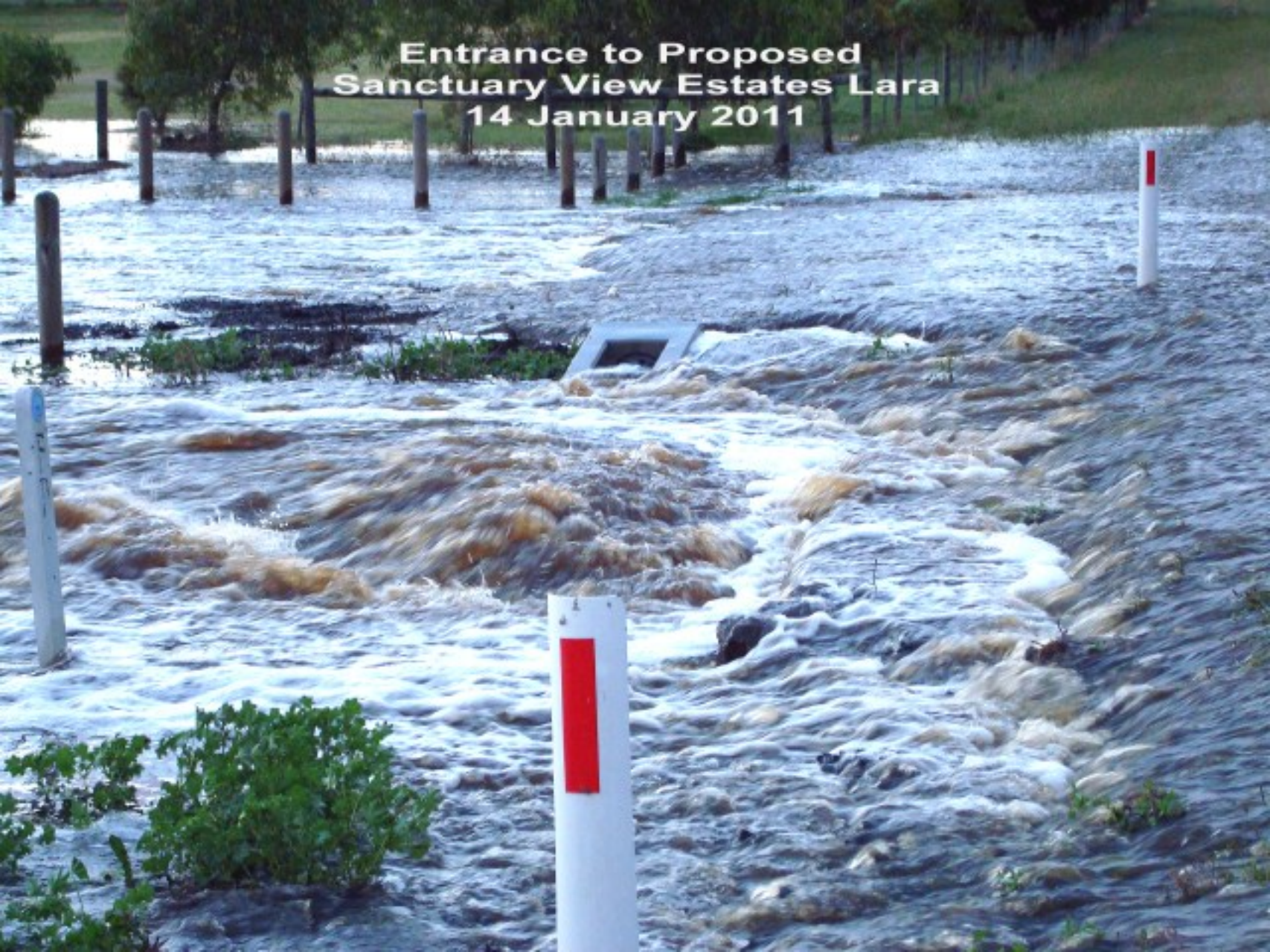
Come on Lara , stand up for our
town and make your voice count !!

Melways: Map 423 (D,2)

Organized by the TLC Group Lara INC

www.tlcgroupplara.com

**Entrance to Proposed
Sanctuary View Estates Lara
14 January 2011**













PROTECT SERENDIP



POLICE

PROTECT SERENITY

Police

Police

MCF 854
VICTORIA - THE PLACE TO BE.



WYO 693





Sanctuary Views Estate, Lara
Designed to protect and enhance the natural values
of Sanctuary Views and Lara

DON'T BUG ME

DON'T BUG ME

