

MEDIA RELEASE

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**2010 STATE ELECTION:
LAST CHANCE TO "KEEP MACEDON RANGES RURAL"**

Macedon Ranges Residents' Association Inc [MRRA] is asking the people of Macedon Ranges:

Do you want a suburban future of tiny subdivisions, units jammed in everywhere, and houses on every rural lot? Are you up for losing what makes Macedon Ranges so special – its natural environment, country towns and feel, room to move, and personal safety?

MRRA has spent 11 years trying to get the State level planning policy and planning scheme controls Macedon Ranges needs to remain a special, rural area – planning protection that lets residents, not developers, decide what happens here.

MRRA Secretary, Christine Pruneau, says,

"Voters need to know who will stand up for Macedon Ranges at the 2010 election.

In 1999, the Bracks/Brumby government promised to protect Macedon Ranges as an area of high environmental sensitivity... then it said we already had protection... then it said it can't be done.

All the while, residents have had nothing to stop developers and VCAT doing what they want, ruining our towns' rural character and our landscapes with suburban development. We cop Melbourne standards, and our rights to object are taken off us. People are sick of fighting planning applications, and of feeling powerless."

MRRA says that now the State government is trying to get rid of Macedon Ranges' 'must stay rural and be protected' policy (SPP8), and has a plan for this area - which residents haven't seen - that puts around another 20,000 people here by 2036.

"On top of that, metro 'outer suburb' growth areas have been expanded almost to our southern boundary, the Brumby government is waiting to bring in legislation that lets developers rezone land to suit themselves, and big business interests want part of Macedon Ranges shifted into the metropolitan area. Everything is in place to make Macedon Ranges a (very) leafy outer suburb of Melbourne", Ms Pruneau said.

"Earlier this year MRRA handed its 3,000 signature 'Keep Macedon Ranges Rural' petition to the Liberal party, after a fruitless meeting with Labor's Joanne Duncan where MRRA was told State policy and controls 'can't be done'. We also again asked for a meeting with Planning Minister Madden, but again didn't get one.

It's fair to say then that Macedon MP, Joanne Duncan, definitely hasn't 'made it happen' as far as planning protection for Macedon Ranges goes, and the same could be said of Kyneton and Malmsbury MP, Geoff Howard. Experience says the (Brumby) Labor government can't be trusted to provide the protection it promised in 1999 either."

The Association is asking other parties about where they stand. Responses will be published on MRRA's website, www.mrra.asn.au

MRRA says residents should demand some answers too.

"Before you vote, find out who will stand up for Macedon Ranges. Call or email candidates and tell them protecting Macedon Ranges is an election issue for you. Tell them what you want. Write letters to local papers. You can make a difference."

November 27 is the last chance to stop the suburban tidal wave that's racing towards us, the last chance to make sure Macedon Ranges stays special and rural in the future. Please don't waste it."

Christine Pruneau,
Secretary,
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