

Enquiries: Rick Traficante
Telephone: 9433 3212



17 April 2019

The Hon. Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning
PO Box 500
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Minister

Re: Dumping of large volumes of soil/fill in rural areas

You have recently received correspondence from our neighbouring Council, Yarra Ranges Shire, dated 6 February 2019, regarding the above issue.

In that correspondence, Mayor Cr Tony Stevenson wrote to you and made the following key points:

- Significant levels of dumping of soil and fill are occurring in the Shire of Yarra Ranges and in other peri-urban councils, which is having an adverse impact on the quality of rural land and further, raises the risk of contamination.
- The State Government's Victoria Planning Provisions are inadequate in facilitating councils to effectively prevent the inappropriate dumping of soil and fill.
- The Minister should make immediate and particular reforms to the Victoria Planning Provisions, to introduce a particular provision which will allow councils to better prevent inappropriate dumping of large volumes of soil and fill.

This issue in rural areas continues to be a source of strong frustration and risk for our community and for all of the peri-urban councils.

The issue of dumping of large volumes of soil/material is also a problem within Nillumbik Shire, resulting in greater compliance concerns being raised and having to be attended to.

Nillumbik Shire is a prime target for continued concern in this space, given our north-western proximity to Whittlesea and the huge amount of work taking place in and around Donnybrook, Wallan, and Mernda, our location makes the trucking of material and disposing quickly and cheaply, with companies taking advantage of major arterial road connections to our Shire.

Rumours of some landowners being enticed with claims of often substantial monetary returns for the acceptance of fill material, far cheaper for the dumpers than taking it to a licensed landfill, reinforces this real threat.

Without proper control and or the ability to carefully consider this activity, the dumping may result in irreversible damage and/or time consuming and costly rectification exercises, which affect our green wedge values. Of particular concern is the risk of potential damage being made to existing and future land used for food production, waterways and ecosystems.

There is also a significant concern around the threat of the dumped material (when there is no checking mechanism), introducing contaminated material and rubbish (particularly builders' rubbish) into our valuable agricultural and pristine rural environments, and the resultant impacts on both the environment and human health.

Based on the above, Nillumbik Shire Council shares the concerns raised by Yarra Ranges Shire Council and also seeks your immediate attention to the proposal to alter the Victorian Planning Provisions to address this important issue.

Our officers would be happy to further a meeting with your team or supply additional information to support our concerns if required. They can contact Mr Rick Traficante, Interim Manager Strategic Planning on (03) 9433 3212 or email rick.traficante@nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Egan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cr Karen Egan
Mayor

Copy: Cr Tony Stevenson, Mayor of Yarra Ranges Shire Council