



Media release

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Water catchment planning strengthened by VCAT decision on Macedon Ranges

Western Water and Macedon Ranges Council have welcomed a Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decision that reinforces State Government planning controls in open drinking water supply catchments.

Western Water General Manager Sustainability Rob Franklin said a recent VCAT decision restricting development of a property in a rural conservation zone of the Campaspe River catchment near Woodend sets a benchmark for future planning decisions in sensitive environmental areas.

"This landmark decision reinforces new Ministerial guidelines for planning permit applications in open drinking water catchments," Mr Franklin said.

"It gives greater certainty to water corporations and councils in planning for the protection of catchments."

Mr Franklin said the recent VCAT ruling pertains to a proposal to develop a property in a rural conservation zone of the Campaspe River catchment near Woodend and upholds a joint application by Western Water and Macedon Ranges Shire Council to refuse a development permit.

The proposal involved development of four dwellings on a 72Ha site, each on an individual allotment, within Western Water's Campaspe River Catchment, which is a sub-catchment of the larger Eppalock Water Supply Catchment.

Macedon Ranges Mayor Rob Guthrie said the VCAT decision affirmed Council's Local Planning Policy Framework for Macedon Ranges Shire and its aim to support viable and sustainable farming practices by restricting residential developments in rural zones.

"The State Government guidelines are quite clear that if there is a potential risk associated with waste water systems due to increasing housing density, planning authorities need to err on the side of caution rather than risk," Mr Guthrie said.

"In areas such as this, abutting the headwaters of the Campaspe River system and the Lake Eppalock catchment, it is imperative that local planners have the backing of such guidelines.

"Because of its access to Melbourne, the Macedon Ranges faces ongoing development pressures, which it is managing in conjunction with the government through its town planning policies and urban sprawl restrictions," he said.

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