



#3 Errors and misleading statements in relation to Hanging Rock Reserve

In examining the proposal for development at Hanging Rock it became obvious that a number of facts were incorrectly stated. We have tried to point these out to Council so that decisions can be made on the basis of correct information. Council policy is that if an error occurs in documents produced by Council, that error would be corrected at the earliest opportunity.

“The East Paddock was originally used for grazing so has no environmental or other relevant overlays.”

This statement was made in MRSC Hanging Rock Information Bulletin #2 September, 2013.

But it is wrong.

The East Paddock area is affected by three overlays in the Local Planning Scheme of the Macedon Ranges.

1. Environmental Overlay [Eppalock Proclaimed Catchment]

The Environmental overlay is relevant because Smokers Creek, part of the Campaspe waterway system, runs through Hanging Rock Reserve.

2. Vegetation Overlay [VO8 Cobaw Biolink]

The area between Cobaw State Forest and Macedon Regional Park, that includes Hanging Rock Reserve, has been designated the Cobaw Biolink by Macedon Ranges Shire Council, in a specific vegetation overlay. The aim of this overlay is to develop a network of native vegetation that enables safe passage of wildlife between the Cobaws and Mount Macedon.

3. Significant Landscape Overlay [SLO1]

Hanging Rock is iconic to the Macedon Ranges and the significance of the landscape, as seen from Hanging Rock and the surrounding area, has been recognized repeatedly by Macedon Ranges Shire Council. Tourism is a major source of income for the Shire and 70,000 people visited Hanging Rock Reserve in 2012-2013 to simply enjoy the natural environment.

Permits have been refused for housing in the East Paddock, and that land was eventually purchased to prevent inappropriate development and protect the scenic vistas. Power to the Reserve was installed underground for the same reason. Planning permission for a telecommunications tower on the hill immediately to the north-east was refused to protect the views (Council Officers quoted the same overlays as the basis for refusing approval of the tower).

The Macedon Range and Hanging Rock sit at the centre of the Shire. These sites are the geographic and symbolic heart of the region. The Shire logo is not only a reflection of the geography; it is a reflection of the priority the community gives to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

The aims of the Hanging Rock Action Group have been consistent.

1. Have Council undertake Community Consultation
2. Distil the real issues and facts of the proposed development
3. Raise community awareness of the issues

No correction has been made of this significantly misleading statement.

Surely Councillors and the Community are entitled to be told directly that a gross error was present in the Hanging Rock Information Bulletin #2 issued in September 3013.

Why doesn't Council publish a correction as per their stated policy?