

**Submission
No 193**

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROTECTIONS WITHIN THE VICTORIAN
PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

Name: Ms Sandra McMahon

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SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE PROTECTIONS WITHIN THE VICTORIAN PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Submitted by: Sandra McMahon

I am a qualified landscape designer and horticulturalist, and operate my own landscape design business (*Gardenscape Design*) from [REDACTED], Kilsyth.

We moved to this area in 2008 after a lengthy search for a larger block of land with established trees. We found what we dreamt of - a quiet, unpretentious area with a wonderful rolling tree canopy, which was enshrined in the Maroondah Council's own publication: **'Maroondah Vision - The Strategic Framework', Neighbourhood area 12: Ruskin Park:**

I quote:

***...The preferred future character will be achieved by... (among other points)
..ensuring the retention of existing vegetation, particularly canopy trees***

In the time that we have lived here, we have witnessed the steady erosion of our once prized rolling tree canopy.

I have opposed a number of inappropriate development proposals in the Ruskin Park Neighbourhood Area, and have attended a number of VCAT hearings.

Many people in our area feel powerless against the might of developers, and the toll which unchecked development has taken on the fabric of our local area.

Not only have developers managed to wreak great damage on our rolling tree canopy: there have been innumerable examples of wanton, illegal tree removal by people wishing to make their properties easier to develop, and of surreptitious damage leading to the demise of otherwise healthy but 'inconvenient' trees.

Clearly the current level of fines is totally inadequate to the task of discouraging illegal vegetation removal.

I respectfully submit that this inquiry re-examine the level of fines which may be imposed upon people illegally removing vegetation.

The future of our planet, and of mankind's ability to live on it, has long been proven to depend upon the protection and enhancement of the earth's vegetation.

Now is the time to send a very powerful message to anyone conniving at illegal vegetation removal.