

2009-07-09

TO: Ms Angela Meinke  
Group Manager Planning  
Bayside City Council



**Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc.**

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## **Requiring a Minimum Area of Dedicated Vegetation Habitat on all Residential Lots**

Dear Ms Meinke,

As you would be aware, there are major changes and reviews currently occurring with respect to State and local planning policy. Beaumaris Conservation Society Incorporated (BCS Inc.) has been closely following the proposed changes, and has made submissions both on the proposed new residential zoning, and also on proposed changes to Victoria's [Planning and Environment Act 1987](#).

BCS Inc. notes that the new residential zoning may provide a positive and perhaps rare opportunity to introduce changes to the Bayside Planning scheme that strengthen the effective application of Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 3 ([VPO3](#)) in protecting the integrity of vegetation character in Beaumaris.

The purpose of this letter is to outline changes to the Bayside Planning Scheme that BCS Inc. seeks to achieve in response to the new residential zoning. Specifically, BCS Inc. reiterates the importance of introducing a vegetation space requirement for both single and medium density development into the Bayside Planning Scheme as an effective means of supporting the vegetation objectives for Beaumaris detailed in VPO3.

[Rule 1.3](#) of the BCS Inc. Constitution includes this concept of a dedicated minimum area of vegetation habitat as a specific objective of the Society, because living plants are a vitally important, but all too often overlooked need for all humans as are air, rain and sunlight.

Below is a summary of some of the major issues identified in the BCS Inc. submission on the new residential zoning, and our understanding of what related strategic planning work is currently being undertaken by Bayside City Council.

### **New Residential Zones for Victoria**

In [its submission](#) on the New Residential Zones for Victoria consultation draft, BCS Inc. noted that the draft states there is an anticipation that the limited change zone would apply to areas with an overlay such as a Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO), which limits opportunities for additional housing. One of the major concerns raised in the BCS Inc. submission was that some areas of Beaumaris currently covered by a VPO may be classified as an incremental change zone, and not a limited change zone. BCS Inc. noted that the focus of neighbourhood character under an incremental change zone is largely defined by housing style, and would provide limited protection for a neighbourhood character that is predominately defined (as is Beaumaris) by the character of its vegetation.

In its submission, BCS Inc. noted that the draft incremental and limited change zoning makes reference to private *open space* and not *vegetation space*. BCS Inc recommended that the concept of vegetation space standards be added to the new zoning standards under Clauses 54 and 55. The purpose of vegetation open space standards is to require a development to include a minimum area set aside exclusively for the planting of vegetation, including canopy trees. As an example BCS Inc. highlighted the recently introduced provisions in the significant trees and landscaping requirements of the Surf Coast Planning Scheme <sup>i</sup>

BCS Inc. presented its submission to the New Residential Zones Advisory Committee and reiterated its concerns that the new residential zone process may lead to a re-examination of the VPO in Beaumaris, and potentially leave large areas zoned incremental change with the resultant limited protection of vegetation character in Beaumaris. In response to its submission the panel chair noted that the consultation draft clearly suggests that areas with an overlay such as the VPO applying to Beaumaris should receive a limited change zoning. BCS Inc. will be seeking to secure a limited change zoning for Beaumaris.

### **Vegetation Space Provisions**

BCS Inc. has on a number of occasions raised with Council planning staff the issue of including a vegetation space requirement for both single and medium density developments in the Bayside Planning Scheme. In response to a BCS Inc. submission to the General Committee of Council, on [25 November 2008 Council approved](#) the following planning initiative “that staff further report on the means by which Council could ensure the provision of adequate space for landscaping opportunity on any site.” BCS Inc. understands that although consultants are currently reviewing the strategic justification for this proposal, the recommendations being prepared for consideration by councillors this month have been deferred to late 2009. Of concern to BCS Inc. is that this deferment may convey the impression to residents that this important issue has been accorded little importance by Council.

BCS Inc. reiterates the importance of introducing a vegetation space requirement into the Bayside Planning Scheme to ensure that the VPO3 is as effective as it was intended to be in protecting the integrity of the Beaumaris vegetation character. The VPO3 objective of retaining the amenity, aesthetic character and habitat value of Australian native vegetation and indigenous vegetation in Beaumaris needs the support of a vegetation space requirement to ensure the vegetation character is enhanced and reinstated into the future, as that is certainly not happening under the present arrangements.

In summary BCS Inc. requests Council to maintain a high priority on reviewing the strategic justification for introducing vegetation space requirements in the Bayside Planning Scheme, particularly in Beaumaris and Black Rock where a VPO applies. Furthermore, BCS Inc. requests that Council examine whether this vegetation space requirement can form part of the submission for the potential limited change rezoning of Beaumaris once the new residential zone proposals are approved by the State Government.

BCS Inc. remains concerned about the ongoing threats to vegetation in Beaumaris, and places a high importance on the above matters. BCS Inc. understands the resourcing constraints on Council planning staff, and it appreciates your consideration of our concerns. If you have any questions on these issues, please do not hesitate to contact Chris Sutton on phone number 9589 1753.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Cerbasi  
President  
Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc.

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<sup>i</sup> Surf Coast Planning Scheme. Schedule 2 to the Neighbourhood Character Overlay shown on the planning scheme map as [NCO2, Lorne Residential Areas](#).