



Mt Barker & District Residents' Association Inc

PO Box 19 Mount Barker, South Australia 5251

For the community Weekend Herald

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This is the first in a series of monthly articles that the Mt Barker and District Residents' Association will present to you in 2016.

Importantly the first article will feature a topic which is dear to all of our hearts – whether we live in the towns, settlements or rural areas of our district – the preservation of prime agricultural land. Council's community consultation for a new plan 'to protect, improve and focus on positive rural outcomes' is now awaiting your feedback. The plan includes 'new and innovative approaches to stimulate our rural economy'. Without new ways of using our land, we risk losing it again to developers in a few more years.

You will recall in 2010 the massive outcry to the Government's rezoning of 1300 hectares of this District's prime agricultural land. Despite over 500 well written submissions and 120 verbal presentations over 5 nights, the Ministerial DPA still proceeded. The result was a loss of extensive primary lands, used for decades for agricultural pursuits, now to be transformed to a sea of grey rooves.

Public outcry in 2010 was intense. Now is your chance to once again have a say about the remaining land that must be retained in our district. We need an Urban Growth boundary; we need farmers and others to be able to make a decent living from agricultural and horticultural pursuits. We need to cut down the food miles between food production and food sales. (is that the correct term?). We need you, the community to have a voice about this. The Council web site states:

'This Development Plan Amendment (DPA) will introduce greater flexibility and certainty for primary producers to generate farm income whilst at the same time protecting valuable farming land and scenic landscapes. It also incorporates eight additional areas of high biodiversity value into the Conservation zone to afford them greater protection.'

The Council consultation sessions are a 'must go to' session if you really care about the retention of primary production land in our District. These forums, the first since 2014 will enable you to ask questions about the DPA and be well informed about the future focus of this development. You need to ask your local Elected Member about the details as well. They are your voice in the Chamber. It takes 6 raised hands to pass a vote at Council. Your feedback to your local Councillor can, and does make a real impact on many decisions.

Details are on the Council's web site at: <http://www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/page.aspx?u=1169>

Further reading:

<http://indaily.com.au/opinion/2016/02/10/why-capping-adelaides-urban-sprawl-is-good-for-everyone/>

<http://indaily.com.au/news/2016/02/09/property-sector-urges-mps-to-back-no-brainer-reforms/>
