

Perricoota

Murray River, Victoria

Project Type
Resort Town

Date
2006

ESD Role
Lead Consultant & Urban Designer

Project Size
About 330 hectares

Client
Hillington Valley Pty Ltd

Implementation Status
Council's draft strategic land use plan now recognises the land for urban use, rezoning is expected soon, and the first stage development application is about to be submitted.



With the strong development pressure created by the 'Inland Sea Change' phenomenon along the Murray River, there is the risk eventually of a continuous ribbon of piece-meal development along its banks, as well as further degradation of the region's farmland by rural residential sprawl.

Perricoota Station is an historic farming station on the Murray, and Hillington Valley Pty Ltd have acquired 330ha of it, including 120ha of native forest along 7km of riverfront, linked to a billabong lagoon with an existing marina. The new owners have a vision for Perricoota as a new small, inclusive, sustainable and highly public 'River Town', with a preserved and enhanced forested river frontage. Anyone should be able to visit this 'River Town' and enjoy the river and lagoon. The town should be designed for the 21st Century and beyond. It should be genuinely founded in local culture and heritage. It should accommodate people of all backgrounds who choose to play, reside and/or retire there. Perricoota as an urban settlement will have a legitimate 'Reason for Being', if it can absorb the Inland Sea Change development pressure more constructively for the Community, Environment and Economy of the region.

The new owners commissioned ESD to lead an Enquiry by Design (EBD) in December 2006, working with key stakeholders and relevant government agencies to determine whether, where and how such a vision might be achieved at Perricoota. Government response to the indicative EBD designs was favourable, and the project is progressing well toward rezoning. The new owners are about to submit the first stage development application to form a small, highly urban centre with a small supermarket, leisure and service business and community facilities associated with the existing marina development.

The proposed design features two urban centres, one focusing on the marina, and the other on a 'window' through a narrow section of forests along the river. Existing natural habitat is to be preserved and managed by the owners with public access (mostly limited to golf carts, cycles and pedestrians to minimise impact). Private yards are quite small to preserve space and water, and the existing sewage treatment facility will recycle tertiary treated effluent to the public open spaces and heavily treed, interconnected and walkable street network. Car dependence will be reduced because Perricoota will be relatively self-sufficient, with local services, broadband, and extensive support of home-based businesses.