

Strong opposition to shifting town centre

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SHIFTING NEITHER SHOP NOR OPINION: Shearwater Gourmet Butchery proprietor Scott Streets, who is unhappy about the strategic plan to move the Shearwater retail centre. Picture: Tony Cross.

TALK of a new \$15 million retail centre for Shearwater could not have come at a worse time, according to local retailers who are in opposition.

“This is the worst possible time to even consider such a plan,” Save our Seaside Village spokesman Guy Barnett said.

“In the current economic climate many retailers are struggling just to keep their doors open. “It would make more sense for the council to talk to existing operators and work with them to develop a new master plan which would reinvigorate the existing town centre.”

The Save Our Seaside Village group has sent a letter to all Latrobe councillors reaffirming their opposition to the council's new strategic plan, which includes development of a new retail centre in the town.

Already the group has collected more than 2000 signatures on a petition against the new town centre.

The Latrobe Council Strategic Plan ‘Our Place, Our Plan’, adopted at last month's council meeting, includes plans for a new town centre in Alexander St, believed to be backed by a big supermarket chain.

Shearwater Gourmet Butchery owner Scott Streets said it was extremely disappointing the council would vote on the new plan without consulting the business owners.

“I have only been here two years, and when we first started there was no talk about this development and all of a sudden it has just popped up again,” he said.

“We struggle through winter and business then picks up again in the summer and the council wants to go and move the town centre 700m down the road - it just won't work.

“The feeling we have from the public is the fact the town centre is within walking distance and it's all in the one area, we don't want people and the foot traffic taken away from where we are.”