

Advocate Newspaper

Council move to relocate Shearwater CBD

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SMALL business owners at Shearwater came en masse to Monday night's Latrobe Council meeting as councillors discussed a motion to pass the latest strategic plan for the region.

Part of the plan includes the potential for the Shearwater CBD to be moved from its current location to Alexander St, a development business owners in the current CBD oppose.

Members of the Save Our Seaside Town community group sat in the public gallery with arms folded as three of its representatives took to the floor to plead their case with the council.

Save Our Seaside Town spokesperson Guy Barnett implored the council to defer its decision to adopt the strategic plan and said if the CBD was moved it would have detrimental effects on the town.

"We strongly oppose council's proposal to accept the strategic plan," Mr Barnett said.

Mr Barnett said the local business community at Shearwater, as well as members of the community group, would like more time for consultation.

"Council has not undertaken an economic impact study," Mr Barnett said.

"They have not done a retail floor space audit."

Nicholas Dodd, owner of Shearwater Resort, said his business also strongly opposed the plan, saying it would have "catastrophic consequences on the existing CBD".

Latrobe Council general manager Gerald Monson said he took on board the public gallery's comments on the situation, but did not see what deferring the decision (to accept the strategic plan) would achieve.

"The land has been rezoned a long time ago (to commercial)," Mr Monson said.

"If an application comes to council, then council would have to judge it on its merits."

Mr Monson said the strategic plan was not set in stone, but was more of a guideline and took into account projected growth and plans to optimise that growth.

The motion to accept the new strategic plan was carried.