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A new community association has been formed to oppose Mitchell Shire Council's proposed Significant Landscape Overlays.

Protect Our Farms says the SLOs will threaten to impose restrictive regulations on farming operations in parts of the shire.

The group has launched a website to raise awareness about the proposed overlay in the Pyalong, Tooborac, Tallarook and Trawool areas. Group chairman Geoff Alberts said there had been no mention of compensation

for the hundreds of owners of properties affected by the proposals.

He said the proposed overlays would cover 12 per cent of Mitchell Shire (excluding Puckapunyal, Military Area, Kinglake National Park and Tallarook State Forest) and an incredible aggregate of about 25,000 hectares of land in Tallarook, Trawool, Pyalong and Tooborac.

The shire says the purpose of the overlay is to identify, conserve and enhance the character of significant landscapes. The overlay triggers a

planning permit for buildings and works.

The SLO does not trigger a planning permit for uses such as grazing and cropping.

The Protect our Farms group said the visual appeal was being advanced ahead of protection for farm enterprises.

The group is worried that the removal of native vegetation would require planning permission, but the shire, in a statement issued on August 1, says removal of native vegetation regrowth is critical for fire safety, grazing and cropping.

"The SLO will not prohibit the removal of native vegetation regrowth," the statement said.

Mr. Alberts said nearly 400 properties, with an estimated combined market value between \$300 million and \$500 million, were impacted by the proposals.

"Agriculture is the backbone of our shire, supporting local employment, promoting sustainable land use and being vital to the fabric of rural communities and neighboring towns," he said. Tooborac resident Lyndon

Arnel said the council had not consulted landholders properly.

"We are finding out from each other rather than from the officials who should be keeping us informed," Mr Arnel said.

Council officers recommended several changes to the SLO provisions for Pyalong, Tooborac, Tallarook and Trawool Valley in response to farming operation concerns.

The shire said there were a total of 119 submissions submitted during consultations.

It said there was strong support from various state authorities and community groups, concerns from property owners about the impact of the overlay on farming operations and requests for adjustments to overlay extents and provisions.

Based on the feedback, several updates have been made to the SLO planning provisions to minimise the impact on farming operations.

The shire is expected to decide on a landscape assessment study recommending the overlay on August 19.