

THE RANCH:

a family with
passion and vision

PR  SSOR
TOWN PLANNING



How it began....

The Ranch has been creating memories of fun, adventure and friendship for Victorians for over 30 years. Known previously as Ace-Hi Ranch, the property is set within an idyllic Mornington Peninsula landscape of rolling green hills and Coastal Moonah Woodland. The property, an adventure park, has been offering accommodation, horse riding, school camps, adventure activities, environmental and cultural education and events since the 1980s.

The unique site was acquired (in its entirety) by the Neary family in 2016 and managed by Jodi and Aaron Neary. During this time the property was re-branded as 'The Ranch Mornington Peninsula (MP)'.

The Neary's goal was to build "a first-class action sports facility. A fun, inclusive, safe and inspiring environment where people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds can participate and become part of a rapidly growing action sports community."

To achieve this, the Neary's proposed to alter the existing conditions of The Ranch and develop a World Class Action Sports Facility. The park will include a mountainboard and mountain bike park, an indoor and outdoor skate park, a lake and cable park, a snowboard and aerial action zone, an extension to the existing accommodation, event infrastructure and car parking. This facility is anticipated to attract nearly 500,000 visitors per year and create employment opportunities for the local community.

Jackie first became involved in the project in 2021 and was drawn to the Neary's passion and creativity and their humble desire to serve the adventure community. She was able to swiftly review and assess the work that had been done to date and create a strategy for the project moving forward.

This strategy involved submitting an amendment to the existing planning permit for the park, instead of applying for an entirely new approval, resulting in significant cost savings for the clients.

The Planning application...

This application required a highly considered and strategic approach, supported by input from a broad team of specialist consultants. Jackie coordinated contributions from experts in traffic engineering, acoustics, native vegetation management, bushfire assessment, wastewater management, and planning law, to ensure Council received a comprehensive and robust body of evidence.



Given the park was proposed within the 'Green Wedge Zone', it required a special understanding and consideration of the broader intention of the zone and associated planning policies. Jackie drew on her extensive experience—both from her years working within Council and her time as a private consultant—to navigate these complexities.

The delicate balance of political and community expectations, while respecting the complex planning controls that applied to the site, required careful judgement and a strategic reconciliation of competing priorities.

The Outcome...

After Council granted approval for the project, objectors lodged an appeal with VCAT.

Before the VCAT process progressed, Victoria's Planning Minister, Sonya Kilkeny, exercised her call-in powers, removing the matter from VCAT's jurisdiction. The Minister then referred the proposal to the Priority Projects Standing Advisory Committee (PPSAC) for assessment. That resulted in approval of the project.

