

9. Melbourne Metropolitan Strategy

The Liberal State government has promulgated a new Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Strategy. *Plan Melbourne* attempts to achieve a massive task, to provide almost 1.6 million new dwellings for a population of 7.7 million people by 2051 with over 61 per cent of growth will be in the established city and over 39 per cent in growth areas. Will it succeed?

Professor Michael Buxton has said:

'The current metropolitan plan, Plan Melbourne, is the seventh in thirty three years, a plan in under every five years. Planning is now intensely politicised, with each government rejecting the previous plan. This has to stop. The world cities which function best are those which develop and implement plans over the long term and stick to these plans. A process must be developed which leads to all major political parties, business and community groups agreeing and supporting the long term implementation of an integrated strategic land use and cross-sectoral plan for Melbourne's future. If the current process continues, then short term, sectoral priorities will lead to Melbourne becoming a dysfunctional city.'

The previous strategy, Melbourne 2030, was introduced by the Bracks Labor government in 2002 and was amended in 2008. Melbourne 2030 has been criticized on various grounds including the failure to have an identifiable body responsible for implementation. Planning, Treasury, Infrastructure and Human Services, the Growth Areas Authority, the VCAT, VicUrban, VicRoads and VicTrack all had a say.

Therefore one of the core features of the new strategy is to establish a Metropolitan Planning Authority. The MPA is responsible for strategic planning and advising on infrastructure needs. Plan Melbourne also proposes five metropolitan subregional groupings of local councils to work with the Metropolitan Planning Authority and collectively plan for jobs, housing and investment infrastructure and services. Post Phillip would be part of the Central Subregion along with the Melbourne, Stonnington, Maribyrnong and Yarra Councils.

However, the government has not created a new body. It simply renamed and expanded the authority that had overseen development in Melbourne's outer suburbs, the Growth Areas Authority. Professor Michael Buxton has said:

A metropolitan planning authority must be reinstated with broad cross-sectoral strategic planning powers, responsibility for developing major brownfield sites and other strategic locations, and development of the planning system. This authority cannot be set apart from local government and community interests but must be managed by a broadly based board accountable to government. If not, it will fail. The Growth Areas Authority was a major factor in the failure of Melbourne

2030 because it represented sectional spatial planning, lobbying for greater outer urban growth in contradiction to the strategy's intention to limit and transfer outer growth. There is no indication that the Metropolitan Planning Authority will in any way meet the need for an effective planning authority.

The role of the MPA will be crucial for all the residents of Port Phillip. It was the MPA that was responsible for the Fishermans Bend Strategic Framework Plan.

Melbourne must have a successful metropolitan planning authority. unChain would like the parties and the candidates in Port Phillip to comment on how the MPA should be structured and should operate.