PLAN MELBOURNE REFRESH

SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to the Plan Melbourne Refresh - Discussion Paper and the associated questionnaire, JAC Land has made a number of recommendations, which address important issues affecting Melbourne’s peri-urban land needs, to be included in the proposed update to Plan Melbourne.

A metropolitan strategy that does not consider the future of our peri-urban areas will not guarantee the long-term viability of the essential industries and regional infrastructure that Melbourne relies upon.

JAC Land recommends that the Plan Melbourne Refresh adequately acknowledges and plans for our peri-urban areas and the important contribution they can make, as we grow to a city of approximately 8 million people over the next 30 years. The way in which our city’s peri-urban areas are managed will greatly influence Melbourne and Victoria for generations to come. The Ministerial Advisory Committee must ensure that the update to Plan Melbourne provides a comprehensive plan for Melbourne’s peri-urban land to ensure that these vital areas are managed in a sustainable and productive manner.

It is clear that there are certain functions that a city the size of Melbourne needs, which cannot be performed inside the existing urban area. Large-scale fresh food production, energy generation and waste management are just a handful of activities that must be carefully accommodated in non-urban areas, if Melbourne is to continue to be considered as the world’s most liveable city.
INTRODUCTION

JAC Land appreciates the opportunity provided by the Victorian Government and the Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) to respond to the Plan Melbourne Refresh - Discussion Paper. We hope that the input within our submission provides valuable assistance in the formulation of the forthcoming update to Plan Melbourne.

There is a very important role for peri-urban land. There are certain land uses and activities that a city the size of Melbourne needs which cannot be performed inside the existing metropolitan area. How we supply food, how we provide energy and how we manage waste are activities that must be carefully planned in areas outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

In order to ensure our ongoing food and energy security, we must ensure that significant landholdings on the city’s periphery are identified, protected and able to flourish as hubs for agriculture, horticulture and energy production. It is also pivotal that these landholdings are able to accommodate buffer zones between on-site activities and sensitive uses in the surrounding area.

We must continue to support local jobs and economies in peri-urban areas. Identifying appropriate landholdings and supporting their responsible development will be a key driver in securing the ongoing success and sustainability of our valued peri-urban agriculture and horticulture industries.
These vital, productive landholdings can be identified by the following principal attributes:

- **Size of Land** – single parcels of land, or clusters of common focus, greater than 1,000 hectares.
- **Location** – these areas will be located outside the UGB but within approximately 50 kilometres of the Melbourne CBD.
- **Control of Land** – single ownership or consolidated landowner groups with a shared single focus.
- **Buffers** – ample land will be available to ensure that defined buffers can be created to avoid the confluence of urban and peri-urban uses.
- **Proximity** – located close to existing and planned key arterials, dedicated freight networks, ports and airport facilities. Located close to accessible, safe and attractive local areas to support the ‘20 minute’ neighbourhood principle.
- **Physical attributes** – unique geographical attributes that permit functions required (topography, water supply, climate, soil quality, etc)
- **Infrastructure and services** – the ability to cost effectively integrate new land uses with existing infrastructure and services.

By formally acknowledging these areas of future significance and zoning them to support the productive uses, new peri-urban orientated employment and innovation clusters can be created in outer areas. This will ensure that townships like Eynesbury can grow and create a further wave of ancillary jobs and services.

JAC Land is a land development consultancy that brings together a wealth of experience and a demonstrated ability to find opportunity in challenging projects. Our work ranges from managing award-winning residential and commercial developments to visionary greenfield and infill development concepts.,. Our specialist team is positioned to work with other developers, private investors, Government organisations and institutions. We strive to add value at each stage; from acquisition and project conception to planning, capital raising and marketing. Our expertise enables us to apply innovative solutions to any challenge during the development process.

JAC Land is working with the Woodhouse Pastoral Company to deliver the future vision for Woodhouse Station.
Woodhouse Station is a landholding of significance
- 4,989ha
- 37km from CBD
- Single Ownership

4 Minutes from the proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring Road

6 Minutes from Melbourne Rail Network

35 Minutes to Melbourne's two international airports

Interfaces with Western Grassland Reserves

Vision to create Australia's next food bowl and protect Victoria's biodiversity
**BACKGROUND**

Eynesbury Station was originally part of a much larger pastoral holding of over 41,000 hectares known as Exford which was owned by Simon Staughton. In 1852, 12,383 hectares was subdivided from the landholding to create the township of Melton. Before his death in 1863, Staughton subdivided the balance of Exford into four properties for his sons. Samuel Thomas Staughton acquired the Eynesbury section. It has been owned by the Woodhouse Pastoral Company for the last 69 years, and it is known as Woodhouse Station.

Woodhouse Station surrounds the existing township of Eynesbury. The township is a master planned community of approximately 4,500 homes built around a championship golf course and the heritage listed Homestead. Woodhouse Station comprises approximately 4,953 hectares and it is located only 37km from Melbourne. The property straddles Australia’s second (City of Wyndham) and seventh (City of Melton) fastest growing urban areas. The landholding is currently used for a mixture of agricultural activities; it has access to high voltage power, natural gas and recycled water. It is also adjacent to a nationally significant Western Grasslands and Grey Box Forest.

Woodhouse Station represents a significant development opportunity for major growth in Melbourne’s west; it is projected to create up to 21,000 jobs (modeled by Hill PDA), stimulate approximately $11.3 billion of investment and contribute $1.65 billion in annual GDP to the Victorian Economy. Victoria’s newest food bowl, a 200+ hectare glass house precinct, lies at the heart of plans for the landholding.

Victoria is Australia’s largest food and fibre exporting State. The value of food and fibre exported from Victoria reached a record $9.4 billion
in 2012-13, accounting for 29 per cent of all farm exports from Australia. The Victorian Government has identified the food and fibre industry as one of six sectors to underpin economic and jobs growth, and it has committed to doubling Victoria’s agricultural production over the next 20 years.
WHY MELBOURNE’S PERI-URBAN AREAS MATTER

Peri-urban areas contribute significantly to Melbourne as a sustainable, connected, competitive and global city and therefore we need to plan for peri-urban land much more carefully and efficiently than we have before. As such, peri-urban land needs to be given adequate recognition in the Plan Melbourne.

Over 50% of Victoria’s vegetables and 17% of its fruit is grown within 100 kilometres of Melbourne (Carey & McConell, 2011). This land is not only a major source of fresh food, but also an important employment generator for peri-urban communities.

However, over the last 50 years, sprawling urban development has led to the loss of much of Melbourne’s productive peri-urban areas, which will never be reassembled again or returned to commercial food production.

Continued urban encroachment into peri-urban areas should be a major concern for the refresh of Plan Melbourne. It is clear that there are certain functions that a city the size of Melbourne needs, which cannot be performed inside the existing urban area due to unviable land costs. Large-scale, fresh food production, energy production and waste management are just a handful of activities that must be carefully accommodated in non-urban areas if Melbourne is to continue to be considered the world’s most liveable city.

We need to recognise and protect large-scale landholdings in single-ownership within peri-urban areas, and encourage the formation of peri-urban employment and innovation precincts. If not, where will we grow the fresh food we need? Where will the next generation of renewable energy precincts be located? Where will we manage our waste and recycling? Plan Melbourne must identify significant land holdings, allowing for complementary industries to grow in tandem with existing adjoining peri-urban townships.
ENERGY PRODUCTION

In order to accommodate a population well beyond six million, a significant transformation in Melbourne’s energy systems will need to occur. The Refresh of Plan Melbourne must be unequivocal in its support for appropriately located renewable energy production facilities in Melbourne's peri-urban areas as a viable and appropriate location and activity. In the coming decades, if we are to provide power to the millions more residents that will call Melbourne home we will need to increase electricity production in an increasingly carbon-constrained market place.

A bipartisan approach to energy production is paramount, especially as the environmental and economic cost of carbon continues to rise. Energy production and agriculture are seen as complementary industries and often exist in the same space. As such, there is an opportunity to develop both solar, geo-thermal and wind farms within peri-urban areas that have traditionally been used for agricultural and horticultural uses.

Like some forms of agriculture, it is evident that energy production precincts need to be situated within large landholdings that can accommodate the buffer zones necessary to protect nearby sensitive uses. Consequently, Plan Melbourne needs to identify and reserve landholdings that fulfill the locational characteristics necessary to support the orderly development of energy infrastructure in Melbourne’s peri-urban areas.
WASTE MANAGEMENT

Melbournians produce enormous quantities of waste every day; amounting to millions of tonnes per year. As part of planning for essential services a city the size of Melbourne needs, its principal strategic land use policy to address the city’s future waste management needs?

Much of the waste we generate contains valuable substances and an increasing proportion can be reclaimed and made suitable for reuse. Businesses and government can play a major role in developing the necessary technology to further reduce our waste footprint and increase the percentage of it we recycle. Waste management facilities within peri-urban areas can play a leading role in the evolution of this emerging industry.

CREATING PLACE

Real character is the key ingredient to creating great places. The difference between a ‘space’ and a ‘place’ is that the latter is an attractive location that people want to inhabit. Great places evolve out of good design, they recognise the history of a location and are environmentally sustainable.

For example, Eynesbury’s well-preserved heritage, relationship to significant environmental areas such as the Grey Box Forrest, and the master-planned setting with high quality ‘Australian architecture’ contribute to it being an interesting and attractive place to live. It is of a higher calibre than the neighbouring towns of Melton and Werribee and protected by buffers of environmental land that mean it will never be joined into their sprawl.

The village of Eynesbury needs to be supported by the planning system to grow from its current status as a dormitory village in to becoming a sustainable township of adequate size to sustain schools, shops and community facilities.
20-MINUTE NEIGHBORHOOD

The principal of the 20-minute neighbourhood should be both refined and also expanded. It needs to be extended to include the idea that on average **people should live no more than 20 kilometres from where they work.**

Woodhouse Station can create a variety of local jobs to allow the citizens of Eynesbury, Melton and Werribee to achieve the aspiration of living close to their employment.

CLOSED LOOP SYSTEMS

The vision for Woodhouse Station embraces a concept of a sustainable closed loop, with it generating its own power requirements, recycling water and other waste materials on site. The site has the potential to be a carbon neutral development.

HIGH VALUE AGRICULTURE

The intensive agriculture activities planned for Woodhouse Station have the capacity to represent Australia’s next food bowl. The site’s zoning, topography, climate, proximity to Melbourne, easy access to different classes of labor, connections into the domestic and international export transportation networks, large land size (capacity and buffers), single ownership, availability of high quality recycled water and energy make it an ideal location for the production of food. This opportunity needs to be fostered by the planning system and all three tiers of Government.
ENVIRONMENT

The biodiversity and the specific species of flora and fauna contained in parts of the Woodhouse Station are significant. The master plan for Woodhouse Station protects these areas of high value in perpetuity whilst creating jobs in the other areas. Evidence based and integrated land use planning needs to be applied to the planning of the whole site, otherwise there is a high risk that fragmentation of the land will occur and the values will be lost as different and less-strategic agriculture activities occur. All three tiers of Government need to work in a collaborative manner to protect the site’s environment whilst facilitating the permitted agricultural activities, that will create the large numbers of new jobs and contribute significantly to the State’s economy.
GREEN-WEDGE

Woodhouse Station provides the green buffer between the sprawl of Werribee and Melton and the master planned township of Eynesbury. Green-wedge land needs to have an appropriate use, as the Government cannot purchase it all as parks. Activities, which are not very compatible to residential development such as agriculture, waste disposal and energy generation are all appropriate and should be encouraged in green-wedge zoned land.

The property is characterised by:

- A northern area of intact contiguous medium-high value vegetation
- A high value Grey Box Forest adjoining the northern area
- A central section of degraded and fragmented low-medium value vegetation (due to existing farm operations)
- A southern area of intact contiguous medium-high value vegetation, of which part of the land has been acquired by the Government and the balance is to be acquired.

LEGEND

- Gray Box Forest - 346ha (9%)
- Contiguous habitat - 1,273ha (21%)
- Degraded habitat - 0.038ha (34%)
- Land subject to Public Acquisition Overlay - 1,332ha (22%)
- Land sold for Western Grassland Reserve - 1,000ha (17%)
- Woodhouse Station boundary
SUGGESTED SPECIFIC AMENDMENTS TO THE 2014 EDITION OF PLAN MELBOURNE

Plan Melbourne currently makes the statements highlighted below concerning the future role of peri-urban towns. Our peri-urban towns need to be planned to be sustainable, not just dormitory villages from which their citizens commute to Melbourne. The provision of local jobs is the key ingredient to sustainability. It is suggested that a ‘housing and employment strategy’ should be prepared for every peri-urban township. An arbitrary target of one job for every new house should be set, monitored and adjusted over time, based on the success and rate of growth of each town. This would mean that the local council would only grant new building permits when a new job to match the population growth had been created.

These initiatives list below from Plan Melbourne need to be expanded and townships like Eynesbury, that are located within growth area councils, which have distinct boundaries, and buffers, that will prevent them joining the urban sprawl of Melbourne, need to be included.

Woodhouse Station has the capacity to generate 21,000 jobs (modeled by Hill PDA). 5,000 of these jobs can be created in the intensive agriculture sector, which is permitted under the existing land use zoning. Without a supportive planning system this opportunity will not be realised and Eynesbury will languish as a dormitory village rather than growing into a highly attractive and sustainable township.

The proposed edits to Plan Melbourne are shown in red.

INITIATIVE 6.2.1
BETTER MANAGE MELBOURNE’S PERI-URBAN REGIONS, INCLUDING DESIGNATING TOWNS FOR GROWTH

The peri-urban regions include major state infrastructure assets including water catchments and waste management and recycling facilities. More particularly, the peri-urban regions encircle metropolitan Melbourne with townships on or close to the major transport corridors attracting considerable population growth. We need to manage future growth in the peri-urban regions to optimise their potential to accommodate additional housing and employment, while protecting their productive land, strategic economic resources and biodiversity assets. Consistent with regional growth plans, planning schemes should:

- define land areas within the peri-urban regions that are strategically important to the metropolitan area, and the state, for agriculture, natural resources, housing growth and recreation
- coordinate planning across the peri-urban regions, and between local governments
• safeguard the interests of the state in the development and conservation of local resources
• assist in implementing the directions of Plan Melbourne, and regional growth plans.

In the short term

Support local governments to prepare and implement policy statements for the peri-urban region and their potential growth centres and small towns.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT, PLANNING AND LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE (PLANNING)

In partnership with local governments, develop peri-urban town plans to increase the supply of land for housing and local employment opportunities that will attract population growth out of Melbourne. Potential towns include Ballan, Bacchus Marsh, Eynesbury, Kilmore, Broadford, Warragul-Drouin and Wonthaggi.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING AUTHORITY

Determine whether any areas (such as parts of the Mornington Peninsula) should no longer be considered to be part of metropolitan Melbourne.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT, PLANNING AND LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE (PLANNING)
CONCLUSION

It is clear that Melbourne relies on a number of intensive activities that cannot be performed inside the existing urban area. Large-scale, fresh food production, energy production and waste management are just a handful of activities that must be carefully accommodated in non-urban areas if Melbourne is to continue to be considered as the world’s most liveable city.

Plan Melbourne 2016 needs to contain actions that encourage and facilitate development. It needs to be a ‘road map’ for Melbourne’s growth and not another document that inhibits desired growth from occurring or that introduces additional red tape.

The Plan’s actions need to be clear, with delivery timeframes and accountable Government organisations (Councils, MPA/VPA, DELWP) that are adequately resourced. The implementation strategy needs to have different pathways, that recognise projects of significant scale, magnitude and the desirability of the industries they activate.

JAC Land suggests that it is critical that a comprehensive plan for Melbourne’s peri-urban areas is necessary and should be integrated within the refresh of Plan Melbourne.

JAC Land appreciates the opportunity to make this submission and we would welcome the chance to continue our involvement throughout the Plan Melbourne refresh consultation process.

For further information on the submission, please contact:

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