

Plan Melbourne – Refresh Discussion

The following comment is contributed in the hope it can be included towards the review of *Plan Melbourne* which was drawn up in 2013. Since that time considerable information has become available which makes it imperative for planning to be revised according to current trends and requirements for genuine sustainability.

While the whole of the *Plan Melbourne* document covers a wide area of inner and outer Melbourne and suburbs, residents in the outer south east growth corridor municipality of Cardinia Shire were not very well informed about its provisions, tending to assume they are not part of Melbourne. However, relevant maps indicate general reference to green wedge, agricultural districts, planning for development and environmental conservation areas. It is therefore important to specifically define the areas covered by *Plan Melbourne* as compared to its relevance to outer Victorian regions.

There are over seven growth corridor municipalities expanding on the perimeter of Melbourne at present. It is becoming evident that creating unlimited car-dependent communities on the outskirts of Melbourne has not been successful. Councils cannot keep up with infrastructure costs. Traffic congestion on the freeway now requires a government funded extra lane and when that reaches capacity another will be necessary. The consequent emissions will do nothing to assist the climate change reduction target. There is need to achieve future balance between sustainable, healthy residential development and the current rapidly increasing housing density which possibly could lead to increased social problems in future years.

At the same time, it is vital to adhere to the commitment to lock down the urban growth boundary especially in the south east where a 2012 Logical Inclusion process took over hundreds of acres of Gippsland farmland with good food growing potential simply because of land speculation by investors and an ambitious developer. The only means of preventing such continuing incursions into green wedge is to permanently seal the urban growth boundary so there will be no incentive for land banking and farmers will not be forced to leave their land.

In summary, we would hope to see *Plan Melbourne* refreshed and adapted to the need for a permanent urban growth boundary to allow for sustainable development, a slow down in the pressure of population growth, increased priority for preservation of open space, green wedge, natural environment and agriculture to ensure the future health and survival of our community.

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