

# **PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **CONTEXT**

The Government's 2004 Economic Statement *Victoria: Leading the Way* identified that the timely facilitation of projects of State and regional significance is critical to the Victorian economy. The Statement announced changes to provide for faster planning approval processes for such projects, including the creation of a new Priority Development Zone (PDZ) and the establishment of the Priority Development Panel (PDP) to support these new arrangements.

### **THE PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

The PDP is a multi-disciplinary panel of experts with skills and experience in planning and planning-related fields, such as urban design and architecture, land economics, social research, transport planning and engineering.

The PDP is an advisory body, not a decision maker. The PDP provides independent advice to the Minister for Planning on matters referred to it. The PDP has been established to:

- identify ways to provide faster approval processes for developments of State and regional significance.
- work closely with Project proponents and local government to speed up decision-making processes.
- provide expert planning and multi - disciplinary design advice

The PDP provides a comprehensive assessment of Projects with a view to identifying and resolving relevant issues, reducing delays in decision making and achieving desired strategic planning outcomes.

The PDP is established as an Advisory Committee under Section 151 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. This section provides that the Minister may establish committees to advise on any matters which the Minister refers to them. This section also provides for a panel to regulate its own proceedings.

### **PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

The focus of the PDP is on Priority Development Projects that achieve Government planning policy and strategies, in particular the key directions of Melbourne 2030 – planning for sustainable growth (Melbourne 2030).

“Priority Development Projects” are defined as projects that meet a majority of the following criteria:

- Are of State or regional significance;
- Relate to the planning or development of key strategic redevelopment sites, Transit Cities, and Principal or Major Activity Centres identified in Melbourne 2030;

- Involve structure plans or urban design frameworks, large mixed use development proposals or use of the Priority Development Zone;
- Are of a substantial scale;
- Raise complex issues.

## **SCOPE OF ADVICE**

When the Minister refers a Priority Development Project, the PDP will provide advice as required, in relation to:

- The strategic context of the Project, including the consistency of proposed developments or plans with Government planning policy, in particular with the objectives of Melbourne 2030.
- The statutory planning arrangements, including appropriate development provisions, mechanisms for the implementation of structure plans, and opportunities for the application of the Priority Development Zone.
- The planning and design merits or otherwise of proposals, including desired built form outcomes for strategic locations, and the appropriate type and scale of development.
- Other matters that will assist in achieving faster approvals processes such as special management arrangements or coordination across government agencies to facilitate outcomes.
- Any other matters that the PDP considers appropriate having regard to the particular Project.

## **REFERRING MATTERS TO THE PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

The Minister may refer matters to the PDP as his own request or at the request of local councils or proponents.

A PDP Advisory Note sets out the process and criteria to be met by local councils and proponents for referring Priority Development Projects to the PDP.

## **PROCEDURES**

In providing advice the PDP will work closely with local government and proponents. Procedures will be flexible and tailored to the circumstances of the case. They may include but are not limited to:

- Formal or informal hearings.
- Written submissions.
- Project presentations and briefings.
- Workshops.
- Consultation with relevant people or authorities.
- Establishment of 'project working groups' to consider specific issues referred by the Chairperson.

- Obtaining specialist advice from appropriate sources, including external consultants, councils, or government departments or agencies.

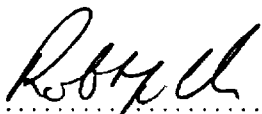
## **REPORTING**

The PDP will provide a written report to the Minister in a timely manner in response to each request for advice. The report is provided via the Chair. In urgent cases, the Chair may provide advice directly to the Minister. The report may be released at the Ministers discretion.

In addition to such reports, the PDP may also provide reports to the Minister on the general and future operation of the PDP. This report may also identify opportunities and make recommendations as to the PDP's role and operation.

## **REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed after 12 months or earlier at the discretion of the Minister.



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**ROB HULLS MP**  
**Minister for Planning**

Date: .....

13/2/06