

## CARDINIA SHIRE COUNCIL MELBOURNE 2030 AUDIT SUBMISSION

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### INTRODUCTION

Cardinia Shire is diverse. From the hills to the plains, we have a rich range of natural and built environments and communities. We are experiencing areas of continuing stability and areas of rapid growth. Physically, Cardinia Shire comprises 1,280 square kilometres of land and is situated 50 kilometres south-east of Melbourne. With a population of around 60,000 people, we are one of the fastest growing Victorian municipalities. The Shire is one of eight 'Interface Councils' forming the perimeter of metropolitan Melbourne and providing a transition between urban and rural areas.

Cardinia Shire Council has a huge responsibility to manage urban growth and support its diverse communities. Council embraces this challenge and responsibility. We are working to balance the needs and requirements of our 27 rural communities as well as the urban growth corridor of Beaconsfield, Officer and Pakenham. Council has identified the following seven major challenges for the coming five years:

- managing population growth
- strengthening communities
- managing the natural and built environment
- assisting economic growth
- supporting agriculture
- partnering with other levels of government
- developing Council capacity within limited financial resources.

Cardinia Shire is experiencing population growth that will continue beyond the next 15 years. By 2011, we are expecting our population to increase by almost 27 per cent or 16,000 people to a total of 75,400.

Key issues affecting Cardinia Shire Council in relation to Melbourne 2030 and its implementation are:

- Growth area infrastructure
- Alignment of government departments and agencies
- Funding and funding programs
- Green wedge land use and land management
- Implementation
- Implementation in the planning system
- State Government/Local Government partnership
- Implementation priorities.

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### **GROWTH AREA INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### **Comment**

There continue to be issues with infrastructure provision for growth areas. While Melbourne 2030 is part of the State Planning Policy Framework, the commitment to achieving the policy aims of Melbourne 2030 is patchy across State government departments and service authorities. While it needs to be recognised that tensions will remain, with sometimes competing objectives within Melbourne 2030, government action and responses remain limited.

#### **Recommendation**

Significantly greater resourcing of infrastructure programs, particularly in the area of transport infrastructure.

#### **Rationale**

Opportunities are being lost to bring about change consistent with M2030, particularly in the area of transport, with new communities establishing with few alternatives to the private car for travel.

### **ALIGNMENT OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

#### **Comment**

Greater alignment needs to be achieved across State government and across service authorities. Planning by most Council's is on at least a four year cycle, with many infrastructure programs and plans extending beyond this. This is not reflected by planning at State Government level, where two years is often the extent of funding commitments. Significant change is needed in this area with long delays, backlogs and lack of certainty in many areas of infrastructure provision. Establishment of the Growth Areas Authority is a significant response to these issues, but the full benefit of a co-ordination role is yet to be realised.

#### **Recommendation**

Establish infrastructure programs with funding commitments for at least a 5 year period, but preferably 10 to 15 years.

Pursue co-ordination across State Government, and across all levels of government.

Ensure funding programs are complementary and build on, rather than repeat, the work of other studies or programs.

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### **Rationale**

Greater co-ordination across government will reduce the resources required in implementation, and achieve outcomes with greater consistency with M2030 Directions.

### **FUNDING AND FUNDING PROGRAMS**

#### **Comment**

Funding criteria are often different across State and Federal Government Departments. This ranges from lack of access to funding streams because Cardinia is seen as 'urban', to insistence that road are 'rural' and don't require pedestrian or cycle paths, and extend into funding agreements that fail to build on similar work already undertaken, or the skills of another level of government. Resolution of these issues is needed to effectively implement the directions of Melbourne 2030, and to maximise the benefits of government funding programs.

Reliance on a myriad of funding programs, developer contributions and the possibility of future funding allocations is not resulting in good outcomes for the growth corridor.

#### **Recommendation**

Ensure programs are complementary.

Ensure that the cost of what is usually state funded infrastructure is not shifted in local developer contribution plans.

#### **Rationale**

Effectively implementing the directions of Melbourne 2030, maximising the benefits of government funding programs, and achieving equitable distribution of infrastructure costs.

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### GREEN WEDGE LAND USE AND LAND MANAGEMENT

#### Comment

Access to funding for Green Wedges, and the treatment of Green Wedge areas is also a significant issue. A number of funding streams are not available to farmers in the Green Wedge despite the often more complex issues associated with these areas. While management plans are to be prepared for the Green Wedge, there has not been the required resourcing of preparation of these plans or a suitable commitment to leading the process. Part of the issue is that many Councils, including Cardinia, fall into more than one Green Wedge and that this presents difficulties in co-ordination at the local government level. As with many aspects of Melbourne 2030 there is a broader leadership or co-ordination role to be filled.

#### Recommendation

Co-ordination of Green Wedge management issues at State Government level.

Provide access to funding streams for farmers in the Green Wedge areas of Cardinia on an equivalent basis to that provided to farmers in areas not considered part of the metropolitan area.

#### Rationale

Effective implementation of policies relating to the Green Wedge.

### IMPLEMENTATION

#### Comment

In a number of important areas the expectation is that this will be picked up by local government. It needs to be recognised that this is not always possible or appropriate. The terms of reference for the Audit Expert group appointed include to give advice on 'The effectiveness of local government's role in the implementation of *Melbourne 2030*'. While there is an important role for local government, there are many cases where local governments should not be the lead agency. This was recognised in the draft Melbourne 2030 implementation plans. Examination of the draft implementation plans released with Melbourne 2030 shows many short term actions with State Government departments as lead agencies where little or no progress has been made. In many cases these are fundamental to achieving the policy objectives of Melbourne 2030.

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### Recommendation

Active management and greater resourcing of M2030 implementation, and greater focus on the lead agency role assigned for State Government in many of the implementation plans released as part of M2030.

### Rationale

More effective implementation of M2030.

## IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM

### Comment

Improvements to the planning system are required to:

- Streamline the process of implementing structure plans and urban design frameworks
- Provide mechanisms that balance competing objectives, and subsequently provide certainty for the community and development industry
- Readily allow the establishment a preferred future character for new residential areas
- Achieve improved sustainability in developments, with the State Government taking a lead role rather than the current responsive approach.

### Recommendation

Put in place an improved process for implementation of structure plans and urban design frameworks where extensive consultation has already occurred.

Provide a simpler process for putting in place vegetation management plans for development in the growth corridor.

Make changes to the Victoria Planning Provisions.

### Rationale

More effective implementation of M2030.

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### **STATE GOVERNMENT/LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP**

#### **Comment**

A partnership approach to M2030 implementation is required, with clear recognition of both State and Local Government roles, and a focus on identifying potential policy conflicts earlier when strategic work is being undertaken.

#### **Recommendation**

Clearly identify matters of state and regional significance, and avoid Ministerial or departmental intervention in matters not of state or regional significance.

#### **Rationale**

More effective implementation of M2030.

### **IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES**

Implementation priorities should include:

- Agreed infrastructure programs across Federal, State and Local Government that deal with at least a 5 year timeframe, but ideally 10 or 15 years with a significantly increased commitment to public transport provision
- Community infrastructure provision in sequence with development
- Transport infrastructure (especially public transport) provision ahead of development
- Improvements to the planning system as outlined.