



PLANNING FOR ALL OF MELBOURNE

The Victorian Government response to the *Melbourne 2030* Audit



FACT SHEET DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES (DACs)

Melbourne is a growing, successful international city with a population that could reach five million people by 2030. This growth, combined with the challenges of climate change, housing affordability and transport require decisive action. The Victorian Government will take a strong lead in planning for all of Melbourne, in partnership with local government, stakeholders and communities, to enhance Melbourne's highly valued liveability.

The Victorian Government has a responsibility to plan for all of Victoria and make sure that local and city-wide interests are balanced when major planning decisions are made.

State and local governments share a critical responsibility to manage future housing, economic growth and infrastructure needs in a sustainable way.

The decisions taken now will shape Melbourne's future and influence our quality of life for decades to come.

A refreshed planning partnership between State and local government is needed to respond to the challenges we face. This must include more opportunities for State and local governments to reach joint decisions.

COMMITMENTS

The Victorian Government is committed to a stronger partnership with local government, working together to make sure that local and city-wide interests are balanced when major planning decisions are made.

Currently the Victorian planning system provides no alternatives beyond planning permit decisions being made by either Councils or the Minister for Planning.

There is no 'third way' arrangement where the State and local governments can partner in making significant decisions in places of shared State-local interest that have an impact on the wider region.

To address this, the Government will:

- establish Development Assessment Committees (DACs) in partnership with the local government sector, to make planning permit decisions in relation to areas and matters of metropolitan significance, including Melbourne's 26 Principal Activity Centres
- work with the local government sector and the planning and development industry to develop criteria setting out:
 - which areas and matters will be considered as having state, regional or metropolitan significance
 - circumstances in which the Minister for Planning will determine whether a matter or area is of State, regional or metropolitan significance and the decision-making arrangements that will apply.

The Government will consult with the local government sector on the implementation and operation of DACs before they are established. DACs will initially be introduced in Camberwell, Coburg, Doncaster Hill, central Geelong and Preston (High Street). DACs will progressively be introduced across all remaining Principal Activity Centres.

FAST FACTS

- In 2006/07, the number of planning applications lodged for residential alterations and additions dropped from 10,432 to 9,365, due to action through the *Cutting Red Tape in Planning* program.
- In 2006/07 the total number of planning applications fell by two per cent to 49,587. This is the first time the total number of applications has been under 50,000 since activity reporting commenced in 2003/04.
- A recent Auditor-General's Report, *Victoria's Planning Framework for Land Use and Development*, found that the "extent and significance of concerns relating to the processing of planning permit applications by councils suggests that a multi-pronged, system-wide approach, coordinated by DPCD in partnership with councils and key stakeholder groups, is needed to raise the overall standard of statutory planning".



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where will DACs apply?

Development Assessment Committees will initially be introduced to make planning permit decisions in a number of more 'market ready' Transit Cities and Principal Activity Centres. These will be Camberwell, Coburg, Doncaster Hill, central Geelong and Preston (High Street).

DACs will progressively be introduced across all remaining Principal Activity Centres and sites of metropolitan significance.

The 26 Principal Activity Centres are located at:

Airport West	Glen Waverley
Box Hill Transit City	Greensborough
Broadmeadows Transit City	Highpoint
Camberwell	Moonee Ponds
Chadstone	Narre Warren, Fountain Gate
Cheltenham-Southland	Prahran/South Yarra
Coburg	Preston
Cranbourne	Preston-Northland
Dandenong Transit City	Ringwood Transit City
Doncaster Hill	Sunshine
Epping Transit City	Sydenham Transit City
Footscray Transit City	Wantirna South (Knox Central)
Frankston Transit City	Werribee Transit City

Once established, the Minister for Planning will have the option of giving some of the Minister's current responsibilities in places of regional or metropolitan significance to a DAC.

How will DACs work?

Before they are established, the Government will consult with the local government sector to decide how DACs should be implemented and operated. Local councils will continue to develop and adapt local planning policies for their planning schemes and DACs will be required to consider relevant policies in making decisions.

How many DACs will there be?

When fully introduced, 3 to 5 DACs will operate in the metropolitan area, grouped on sub-regions of councils.

Who will sit on a DAC?

Each DAC will comprise:

- 1 independent chair, mutually agreed between the State Government and the local government sector, in consultation with the relevant councils
- 2 standing State Government nominees
- 2 local government nominees.

This new approach will allow for local government nominees to rotate on and off the Development Assessment Committees to ensure representation from the municipality in which an application is based.

The fine detail of the approach will be finalised in consultation with the local government sector.

What criteria will be used to identify sites or matters of metropolitan significance?

The State Government will work with the local government sector and the planning and development industry to develop criteria to be finalised in 2009. This will set out:

- which areas and matters will be considered as having state, regional or metropolitan significance
- circumstances in which the Minister for Planning will determine whether a matter or area is of State, regional or metropolitan significance and the decision-making arrangements that will apply.

Will DAC decisions be able to be appealed?

Yes. There will be the same right of independent review as exists when a council or the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority.

DAC decisions (including failure to make a decision) could be appealed to VCAT for independent review in accordance with the applicable provisions of the planning scheme.

How will councils be involved with DACs?

DACs will be a partnership between State and local government, with each Committee including two local government nominees.

It is intended that council officers will continue to process and report on all applications to the DAC.

Will the Government review the performance of DACs?

The operation of DACs will be assessed within five years.

NEXT STEPS

- Consult in 2008 with the local government sector on the implementation and operation of DACs.
- Prepare legislation to update the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to enable DACs to be efficiently established.
- Establish criteria to identify sites or matters of metropolitan significance in 2009.
- Introduce DACs initially in Camberwell, Coburg, Doncaster Hill, central Geelong and Preston, and then progressively across other Principal Activity Centres and sites of metropolitan significance.