

action 14: liveable cities and towns

Through the responsible development of our cities and towns, we can live more sustainably than we do now. We can be more productive with our natural resources and land, and reduce our impact on the natural environment, while improving the social and economic well-being of our communities.

What we will do

14.1 Melbourne 2030

We will map the native vegetation of Melbourne, secure the first reservation of grasslands and develop management plans for all the green wedges around Melbourne as part of the implementation of *Melbourne 2030*.

Improved environmental management is fundamental to *Melbourne 2030* - the Government's strategy to manage future growth in a sustainable way.

Implementing *Melbourne 2030* will play an important role in ensuring we remain one of the world's most liveable cities by minimising our urban impacts on the environment.

The continued implementation of *Melbourne 2030* will:

- map the native vegetation of Melbourne to allow for better conservation and to assist developers to minimise impacts on biodiversity;
- investigate the location of a grasslands reserve west of Melbourne to secure the first reservation of this endangered ecosystem; and
- upgrade the protection of urban rivers and streams through a review of land development standards.

Green Wedge Management Plans will be developed for all the green wedges around Melbourne, to integrate land management, conservation and development activity.

Melbourne 2030 has established an urban growth boundary to help protect important flora and fauna habitat and landscapes that make Melbourne a great place to live and raise a family.

The environmental objectives in *Melbourne 2030* are being comprehensively considered in the development of new communities.

The Government recently established the Growth Areas Authority (GAA) to help plan and manage the development of new communities in the designated growth areas on the suburban fringe. The GAA will support the development of and review Precinct Structure Plans that will form the basis for the land use and infrastructure and service provision for new communities.

Included in those plans will be provisions to protect important areas of native vegetation. The opportunity will now exist for planning, investment in infrastructure and development in Melbourne's growth areas to be integrated and help communities to be more energy efficient, use less water, be less car dependent, and more protective of the natural environment.

Governments around the world are grappling with how to maintain a city's accessibility, while reducing traffic congestion and related environmental impacts
John Brumby, Treasurer

I want to see our beautiful planet preserved for our children and our children's children
Olivia Newton John

14.2 Transit cities

We will continue to promote high quality residential development close to transport and other services through 13 Transit Cities across Victoria.

The 2006 State Budget contained a further \$219 million to be invested in 13 *Transit Cities*, a key demonstration project of *Melbourne 2030*.

It is a joint land-use and transport initiative to encourage high quality, liveable and sustainable urban environments in Footscray, Geelong, Ringwood, Ballarat, Bendigo, Box Hill, Broadmeadows, Dandenong, Epping, Frankston, Latrobe Valley, Sydenham, and Werribee.

VicUrban

VicUrban is the Victorian Government's sustainable urban development agency. Its aim is to create sustainable communities in regional and metropolitan Victoria, consistent with Government initiatives

VicUrban has an important role in the Government's metropolitan strategy, *Melbourne 2030*, and in the implementation and delivery of the *Transit City Program*. VicUrban has been nominated as the lead agency in four Transit Cities.

VU is currently working with Housing Associations to pursue affordable rental housing opportunities in VicUrban communities for low income and disadvantaged households across VicUrban communities in growth corridors or in the established urban area. VU is continuing to implement market based strategies to deliver a range of well-located, diverse and affordable land and housing opportunities.

In the past year, VicUrban has developed a draft Sustainability Charter, to ensure that its developments achieve sustainable outcomes consistent with government policy. Other sustainability initiatives include a demonstration house at Werribee Fields, expected to be ready 2007 and VicUrban is building a model sustainable development at Aurora, Epping North.

By consolidating development, the *Transit Cities* program will simultaneously help coordinate urban growth and meet the rising demand for smaller households. As well as being more convenient, encouraging wider use of public transport is critical to controlling car-dependence, looking after the environment, and the long-term sustainability of Victoria.

14.3 Cutting environmental red tape

We will pursue regulatory changes in the areas of building, planning and environment that improve environmental outcomes for all Victorians.

The Government will continue to pursue regulatory changes in the areas of building, planning and environment that are aimed at enhancing environmental outcomes for all Victorians – and these will be designed so as to provide individual households and businesses with clarity, certainty and flexibility.

To achieve this Government will review all building, planning and environment regulation and cut red tape by a minimum of 15 per cent over the next three years.

Through this review areas in need of updating and strengthening will be identified and acted upon and supported by targeted outcomes, clear information and appropriate enforcement.



14.4 Better buildings

All buildings have environmental impacts that can be minimised. Buildings consume or are responsible for:

- 40% of the world's total energy use;
- 30% of raw material consumption;
- 25% of timber harvest;
- 35% of the world's CO₂ emissions; and
- 40% of municipal solid waste destined for local landfills.

The Government has already made a strong start in Victoria with the implementation of 5 Star energy and water efficiency requirements for new housing as part of the building regulations since 2004, and the introduction of energy efficiency standards for new and refurbished commercial buildings from May 2006.

To kick-start the implementation of our next phase we will:

- Ensure new office buildings in Victoria meet a four star environmental rating (for buildings more than 5,000 metres)
- Further develop the 5 star approach to new houses, with a view to establishing sustainability performance standards for residential buildings, incorporating energy and water efficiency; (consistent with Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission recommendations)
- Implement a flexible tool as part of building and planning regimes to reduce energy, materials and water use in residential buildings. During the development of this tool the Government will examine the case for new homes and homes that are undergoing major renovations (inclusive of plumbing) to install a gas-boosted solar hot water system.

- Conduct a pilot program to provide consumers with information about the environmental performance of residential buildings at point of sale, lease or rental as agreed through the National Framework for Energy Efficiency. This will commence with the introduction of a national process for disclosure of house energy ratings.

14.5 Supporting new suburbs

We will support more than \$10 billion in new infrastructure and services to meet population growth and maintain housing affordability in Melbourne's growth corridors over the next 25 years.

The recently released *A Plan For Melbourne's Growth Areas* recognises that the character, amenity and economic value of neighbourhoods is improved by establishing green spaces and by preserving sites of significant environmental value for people to walk or cycle to shops, employment, recreation and services. Views to hills, ridges, and the countryside will be protected where practical.

Open space 'corridors' along creeks and streams will be created, and important trees and bushland retained. Preserving these features will provide protection for the waterways and related environmental features, as well as create the potential for walking and cycling paths. Residential development around public transport, shopping and commercial centres will minimise impacts on the natural environment and protect nearby agricultural, conservation and recreation areas.

All of Victoria's councils will be invited to develop a Local Environmental Sustainability Priority Statement to recognise the unique character and local priorities and build relationships with the State on environmental sustainability.

A Growth Areas Authority has also been established with \$21 million over five years to make sure Melbourne's rapidly growing new suburbs are great places to live, work and raise a family.

14.6 Victorian Local Sustainability Accord

We will allocate up to \$5 million from the Sustainability Fund to support local environmental priorities as part of agreements with local government.

The Victorian Local Sustainability Accord is a landmark partnership agreement between the Government and local government on environmental sustainability.

The Accord aims to increase the effectiveness of State and local environmental sustainability programs by resolving issues of responsibility and supporting each other.

All of Victoria's councils will be invited to develop a Local Environmental Sustainability Priority Statement to recognise the unique character and local priorities and build relationships with the State on environmental sustainability.

Local Environmental Sustainability Priority Statements formed under the Accord will be supported through the Sustainability Fund until 2008.

The first funding round under the Accord for 2006/07 will provide grants to the following councils:

- \$292,000 for Hobsons Bay City Council for the Kororoit Creek sustainable catchment management implementation program. Led by Hobsons Bay City Council in partnership with Melton, Brimbank, and Wyndham councils as well as the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria this project will develop an agreed management approach to coordinate and implement actions within the Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy 2005 – 2030.
- \$110,000 to Moyne Shire Council to carry out a land capability and biodiversity program. This project will enable the mapping of sustainable land use within Moyne Shire with findings aimed at being incorporated as planning scheme overlays within the council's planning scheme.
- \$121,000 to Moorabool Shire Council to complete a current landscape risk and biodiversity asset mapping program. This project will enable identification and mapping of natural areas of significance (including threatened species, high value habitat and erodible land) for the purpose of protecting these assets through the council's planning scheme.
- \$93,500 to City of Greater Bendigo to assess the feasibility of reclaiming mine despoiled crown land sites in Bendigo. This project will identify decontamination approaches and potential future uses for despoiled sites to realize maximum community benefit and will inform other gold-fields councils and inform some of the future issues that accompany the current resurgence in mining activities across Victoria.

- \$55,000 to Nillumbik Shire Council to develop a Masterplan for Edendale Farm Community Environment Centre. This project will provide a strategic Master Plan to guide the future management and development of Edendale Farm Community Environment Centre within the broader context of the state-wide 'Learning to Live Sustainably' program.
- \$143,000 for Darebin City Council and the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) to create a 2006-09 Public Lighting Action Program. Through the creation of Sustainable Public Lighting Action Plans for each NAGA member council: Banyule, Hume, Manningham, Melbourne, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Moreland, Darebin and Yarra – this project will build capacity within local government to deliver large scale public lighting improvements in Melbourne's north.
- \$88,000 Buloke Shire Council to lead the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance Councils (CVGA) with the CSIRO in the Reaching for Renewables project. This strategic work enlists the help of CSIRO to identify current and future renewable energy opportunities for four central Victorian councils – Buloke, Bendigo, Ballarat and Loddon councils – for community and institutions to utilise.
- \$88,000 for Moreland City Council in partnership with City of Port Phillip and Darebin City Council to evaluate approaches to sustainability assessment in the planning system. This project involves evaluation of council approaches to sustainability in the planning system and the development of council networks to encourage dialogue on sustainable built environment outcomes through planning approaches.

14.7 Regional sustainability

We will invest \$2.5 million over four years to develop Regional Sustainability Strategies.

Our regions can contribute enormously to putting Victoria on a sustainable path and it is vital that decision-making is at the right level. Our regional strategies will set out the contribution each region will make to the State's sustainability objectives, identify regional needs, challenges and priorities and set out actions for driving better outcomes.

In addition, the Government will support the development of integrated knowledge to underpin regional strategic land use planning and associated risk assessment to ensure the long-term sustainability of Provincial Victoria economically, socially and environmentally. A case study involving Warrnambool and Moyne Shires will develop appropriately-scaled land capability, biodiversity and land suitability data and will examine the fit between locally collected data and similar data available at landscape scale. It will also support the integration of this knowledge into planning schemes and regional sustainability strategies.

The regional strategies will bring together each local government priority statement under the Victorian Local Government Sustainability Accord and build on current natural management strategies.



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14.8 Werribee plains

We will invest \$654,000 to make Werribee Plains an international example of best practice urban sustainability.

A Regional Sustainability Framework for Werribee Plains will be developed in partnership with the Australian Conservation Foundation to identify specific opportunities within the region to pursue and market sustainable development practices and technologies and help make the Werribee region a unique sustainable location to live, work and invest. Regional targets will be developed as part of the comprehensive framework in collaboration with community, local government and industry.

Transport contributes 16.5 per cent of Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions – reducing these emissions is central to an effective greenhouse response in this state.

Transport plays a key role in the efficient functioning of the State's economy and in the daily lives of all Victorians. Victoria is also the mainstay of Australia's automotive industry. These facts highlight the challenges that must be addressed in moving the transport sector onto a sustainable, low emissions path – and doing so in a way that is consistent with the community's expectations of affordable accessibility and mobility.