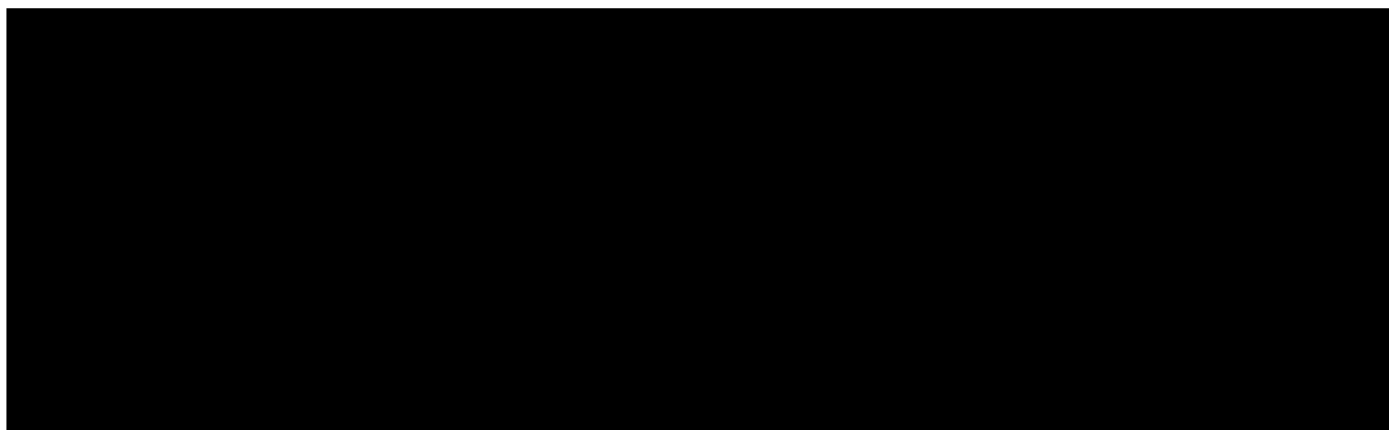


Submission form: Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy



About you

Please tell us which best describes you:

- ☒ Victorian resident
- ☐ Victorian business owner/operator
- ☐ Industry professional
- ☐ Community organisation representative
- ☐ Local government representative
- ☐ State government representative
- ☐ Researcher
- ☐ Other (please specify): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Your focus areas

Select the topics or regions you are providing feedback on (select all that apply):

Topics	Regions
☐ Across sectors	☐ Regional Victoria
☐ Circular economy	☐ Urban growth areas
☐ Cities	X Melbourne
☐ Climate change	
☐ Community infrastructure	
☐ Education	
☐ Energy	
☐ Freight	
☐ Health	
X Housing	
☐ Infrastructure for Victoria’s First Peoples	
☐ Transport	
☐ Water	

Your feedback

Add as many sections as you need to provide all your feedback in this submission.

Topic/area:	Housing
Recommendation name:	Build more social housing
Recommendation number:	1
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes
2. Tell us why	State Governments have irresponsibly and cynically reduced the amount of social housing over several decades, without consideration of the consequence of the entire Victorian community. Housing is ridiculously unaffordable for first home buyers and for those with modest incomes, who perform so very many of the tasks needed to keep the economy and society functioning, for example, teachers, nurses, police, cleaners, drivers, shop assistants. Social housing is desperately important to increase, massively. The Infrastructure plan states that “the Victorian Government can fund \$18 billion to \$29 billion, around 95% of overall costs” of 60,000 new social homes over 15 years. That is almost all of the funding, which is encouraging. However, this reference to “new social homes” fails to indicate whether that includes the replacement of existing accommodation in public housing towers slated for destruction. If so, that is a cop-out, and a misuse of the term ‘new’.
3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	The latest outrage is to demolish public housing towers, thereby evicting residents, and offering no serious guarantee that they will be rehoused adequately within a reasonable period or even geological time. Delays in building promised housing are extensive and point to the absurdity of promises made by today’s government, which next year’s can bypass.
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	Undertake proper consultation with existing residents. Build alternative accommodation before evicting residents. Increase by a realistic and achievable percentage the quantity and proportion of social housing compared to entire housing stock. Maintain public ownership of all social housing. Avoid selling public assets to private developers, companies and individuals, in order to retain public ownership and control of irreplaceable assets. Make all large residential development approvals conditional upon including a substantial proportion of affordable housing suitable for a range of residents, including families.
Topic/area:	Housing
Recommendation name:	Rezone locations near existing infrastructure for more home choices
Recommendation number:	7
5. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ In part

Topic/area:**6. Tell us why****Housing**

This recommendation is *extremely* poorly thought through. It is a simplistic attempt to address a very complex problem, and in its current form is destined to be a disaster. This sentence in the report is a gross oversimplification and misrepresentation of the real situation: ‘Heritage controls also make it hard to build new homes in these areas’, attempting to politicise and blame heritage controls for a wide range of aspects of the housing problem. [REDACTED] here we see the demolition every day of existing houses in perfectly livable condition, capable of accommodating 4 – 6 people adequately, only to be replaced with enormous, environmentally destructive houses, with all trees and most vegetation destroyed, occupying almost the entire block, that then accommodate 4 – 6 people. These monstrosities thus add nothing to housing stock, although governments might claim them as part of the ‘new houses’ built on their watch. Some of the homes thereby demolished have high heritage value, and in losing them Melbourne as a city and an environment is significantly diminished, made less pleasant to inhabit, in the loss of trees, loss of open space, loss of aesthetically pleasing buildings, loss of heritage values and character. Many of these new houses are of poor construction, and will last very much shorter times than the buildings they replace. This recommendation refers to ‘more home choices’, without reference to any realistic sense of what kind of homes suited to the 21st century should be considered and that are achievable. Melbourne is not served by adding lots of blocks of high-rise or medium-rise apartments lacking shared community spaces, any more than it is served by adding large single-occupancy houses on large blocks of land of the type that we see now being built in many middle and inner suburbs. There are many European models that could be applied here, if planners can take the trouble to work out how, and if this is really a 30-year project, that should be possible. Simply rezoning areas of high heritage value in the pious hope (‘Rezoning these places will allow developers to build more homes near existing infrastructure’) that developers will act in the community’s interests rather than their own commercial interests is staggeringly short-sighted as well as hopelessly unrealistic. Apartments of the kind developers will build in suburbs where land is already very expensive are very expensive, not only because of the land cost, but also because of the extremely high cost of building and equipping them to a decent standard. High- and mid-rise apartment blocks are generally not suitable for families – children need space to run, to play, to be outside, as do adults who need to socialise, to exercise and maintain their health, and to enjoy where they live. The current proposals for some of the activity centres aim to ruin, permanently, some of the areas that make Melbourne a pleasant city. There are certainly many individual streets and clusters of buildings (including, as the report correctly mentions, air space above train stations and car parks) near centres with plentiful infrastructure which

Topic/area:**Housing**

could have major development, but this does not justify proposing to destroy great swathes of beautiful streets, heritage houses, trees and gardens, replacing them with either the developers' existing preferred model, of enormous, hideous, shoddily constructed luxury homes occupying almost the entire block, but making little or no net contribution to housing stock; or with enormous, hideous, shoddily constructed mid- or high-rise apartment blocks that are hugely damaging to the environment in every aspect of their existence, and that offer no decent environment for families. No serious thought is given in current rezoning proposals to guaranteeing: substantial green open space for leisure; tree cover, including mature trees and other shade trees; drainage of surface water so as not to overwhelm drainage infrastructure, and to maximise use of rainfall in an era when it is destined to decline with climate change; credible active transport options in the vicinity; pedestrian-friendly areas; community areas and spaces where residents can gather or simply be.

7. Share any supporting evidence or examples

The proposed rezoning in the area around Camberwell station and junction is catastrophic if the government's aims are to be realised: basically nothing but high-rise apartments accompanied by no plan for how this might happen, no plan to avoid infinite road congestion, and riding slipshod over real local concerns.

8. Include proposed changes and improvements

'The government has not typically monitored the effects of zone changes on home building.' Without relevant information of this kind, we are simply guessing, and we find ourselves reduced to the simplistic headlines such as currently put out in support of the activity centres.

What is needed:

- The report states, 'The Victorian Government should consult with local governments on the plans, zoning changes and any necessary infrastructure upgrades.' What we need is real consultation with local councils and other local representatives to identify more sensibly exactly where rezoning should take place, and its characteristics. The report states, '[The government] can exclude sites with high heritage or environmental value.' But this is an utterly ambiguous and currently meaningless statement – from what can it exclude such sites? One possible reading is that some such sites can be considered as not 'the best places for more homes', but this is not clear. Current proposals for the activity centres make it very clear that such possible exclusion is not on the table, and that is a terrible approach. Another reading is that such sites would be excluded from infrastructure like open space. Clarify what is meant here, and make it clear that the overriding approach will be real consultation with local governments, and incorporation of their

Topic/area:**Housing**

views into final decisions, rather than tokenistic surveys that convince no-one, but merely reinforce the intentions the State government has already settled on. That includes significant attention to the idea of excluding 'sites with high heritage or environmental value' from useless or over-intensive development.

- The report recognises that 'Changing planning zones does not guarantee that developers will build more homes'. This goes well beyond speed of planning approvals. What is needed is evidence from developers of the kind of housing they would undertake to build, to ensure that housing targets are met, along with an assessment of how development would contribute to a livable environment and ways to ensure building is consistent with sensible planning goals;
- planning that goes beyond piecemeal one-block-at-a-time construction to ensure environmentally sustainable construction on multiple contiguous land blocks, thus allowing shared spaces for residents;
- workable plans for dealing with or avoiding the problem of a massive influx of private cars if developers continue with their existing lazy business models, and government fails to provide effective, attractive transport alternatives. The report over-optimistically states, 'Compact cities use less land and make better use of infrastructure. ... People have more transport options to easily reach work, schools, shops and services. They can walk or cycle to more places, which encourages them to do so more often. This helps keep people healthy. It also reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from transport'.

Unfortunately, although this nirvana sounds highly desirable, and the ideas themselves ring heavily with truth, the paragraph is irrelevant to most of the activity centres, as it fails to take into consideration the realities we already face, even without additional massive housing increases in existing middle and inner suburbs. For example, no-one can presently cycle safely down Burke Rd in Camberwell, and adding 10,000 more cars will only exacerbate this hugely. The noise and pollution for pedestrians are awful. The 72 tram is already terribly slow (as often are also the 16, the 48, the 78, the 12, the 70, the 75, the 19), held up by an endless traffic jam for much of each day. Driving down the road is only for those unable to use a traffic app or with no alternative because of their destination. The only ways to change this are a) to demolish the shops and residences lining the road, and widen it hugely, to allow more parking or b) to prohibit parking the length of the road. Neither would be popular, but pretending the problem will solve itself with the expression of woolly statements about how

Topic/area:

Housing

wonderful it would be if everyone walked or cycled, together with additional references to extending tram routes, increasing bus frequency and a new bus rapid transit network – admirable though those recommendations probably are, they cannot apply to Chapel St, Burke Rd, Glenferrie Rd, Bridge Rd, Swan St, Kew High St, Glenhuntly Rd, etc. These roads are too congested, and too narrow, for massive increases in housing and hence population, without very dramatic changes in transport arrangements, beyond the ideals described in this report.

- plans for reducing the number of both dwellings and land blocks that sit vacant for long periods. Enforcement is also critical, if there is a serious intention to address the housing crisis, and this could include forced sale of houses or land.
- acceptance of the reality that parts of Melbourne need to retain their heritage, since converting the entire city into a concrete jungle is in no-one's interests. The report states, in a paragraph about activity centres, 'But growing suburbs ***might*** need other infrastructure like open space'. If a government report considers open space a merely a 'might', then it completely misses the mark – there is no known universe where humans do not need open space around them, and if this is a 30-year proposal, it needs to be utterly clear that open space is essential, not optional.

Topic/area:

Recommendation name:

Recommendation number:

9. Do you support this topic or recommendation?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ In part
10. Tell us why
11. Share any supporting evidence or examples
12. Include proposed changes and improvements

Topic/area:

Recommendation name:

Recommendation number:

13. Do you support this topic or recommendation?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ In part
14. Tell us why
15. Share any supporting evidence or examples
16. Include proposed changes and improvements

More feedback (optional)

Tell us about infrastructure challenges, gaps or opportunities not covered by the draft strategy. This can include things you think we should add to an existing recommendation, or suggestions for a new recommendation.

Please provide evidence for your suggestions. This can include data, specific examples, cost benefit analyses, surveys, or program evaluations. Also, explain how your suggestions align with the objectives of our draft strategy (see page 11 of the draft strategy).

Suggestions for new recommendations should point towards infrastructure opportunities that can deliver long-term benefits for Victorians. They should also be areas where the Victorian Government has a leading role.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

I will prepare further submissions, for other areas, as I have time.

