

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition Number: 636
Petition Sponsored by: Mr Evan Mulholland MP
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Tabled on: 4/3/2025
Petition Grievance:

We, the undersigned citizens of Victoria, respectfully urge the Legislative Council to note:

- the Allan Labor government has announced 10 high-rise high-density zones in the municipalities of Bayside, Boroondara, Brighton, Darebin, Frankston, Glen Eira, Hume, Kingston, Monash, Moonee Valley, Stonnington, Whitehorse and Whittlesea where planning rights will be stripped from councils and communities, high rise development will occur as of right and planning control will be exercised undemocratically by the state government;
- that, in addition to a central activity district with as of right 12 storey development, these zones contain enormous "catchment areas" where planning protections will be removed, where 3 and 6 storey development can occur as of right, where municipal heritage overlays and designations will be overridden resulting in the destruction of thousands of irreplaceable heritage properties and where canopy tree protections will be overridden resulting in the loss of neighbourhood amenity and the exacerbation of heat island effects; and
- these plans are not accompanied by proper health or education service plans or plans for additional open space despite proposed massively increased local populations.

Petition Action:

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council call on the state government to desist and recommence proper discussions and consultation with local communities and councils and heritage peak bodies in all ten affected zones prior to taking any further planning actions to implement the announced high-rise high-density zones.

Reply:

I thank the Member for Northern Metropolitan for sponsoring this petition on behalf of his constituents.

Through the 'train and tram zone' Activity Centres Program, the Allan Labor Government is delivering on our *Plan for Victoria*, unlocking supply for more than 300,000 new homes in well-located areas close to services and jobs, along Melbourne's train and tram lines.

Plans for the ten pilot centres have been updated following two rounds of extensive community consultation in 2024, engaging with more than 10,000 people, councils and other key groups – with key changes made.

Each Activity Centre contains a 'core' (the busy, commercial precinct where taller buildings are suitable) and a walkable 'catchment' in the streets surrounding (where gentler, low-rise development is preferred).

Proposals within the core are eligible for a streamlined assessment process if they meet strict objectives and standards for building height, street wall height and setbacks. Proposals will still need to gain a planning permit from the local council as the responsible authority.

Under the updated plans, the catchment areas will be split into two: an inner and outer area - creating a graduated heights approach as you move away from the centre. Inner catchments are within 400 metres to the core and will have a four-storey limit, or up to six storeys on blocks over 1000 square metres and with 20 metres frontage. The outer catchments are farther from the core up to 800 metres and will have a three-storey limit, or up to four storeys on those larger blocks.

Catchment boundaries have also been reduced in most centres, following local feedback and a closer, street-by-street and metre-by-metre analysis of what constitutes a 10-minute walk from the centre.

The updated plans respond to community feedback and strengthen protections for overshadowing to make sure important parks, streets and places remain sunny all year round and enhance tree canopy.

There are no changes to heritage protections or landscape overlays through this program. New buildings will still have to follow existing heritage controls, as well as relevant state and local policy.

As part of the program, a simplified infrastructure funding mechanism will be established, in line with the broader reform work underway, to fund the delivery of essential infrastructure like pedestrian crossings, community centres and local sporting facilities to support these vibrant communities.

Each centre's plans provide a long-term guide for development and facilitate more homes while responding to the local conditions of the activity centre. The updated plans seek to enhance the characteristics of the neighbourhood such as local heritage, tree canopy and streetscapes.

Consultation with the community, councils and stakeholders on the expansion centres will commence from early 2025. Residents will soon receive information on how they can have their say and help shape the draft plans.



Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP
Minister for Planning

6/3/2025