

Legislative Council Committee Inquiry Submission

The past years have highlighted two major concerns for our society: The Impact of Climate Change Emergency and the Importance of liveability. The Victorian Government needs to be proactive in its approach to these issues. The well-being of future generations is at stake. We can destroy houses that provided shade (verandahs, eaves) cross ventilation (double hung windows, louvres). Most of our new housing is designed to make the most profit for the developer, rather than design accommodation to provide liveability for the future residents.

- **Social Housing.**
 - Minimum building requirements are needed: No dog boxes; Ensure cross Ventilation; access to solar panels, provision for electric outlets for cars etc. People in social housing are not second class citizens.

- **Environmental Sustainability & Vegetation Protection:**
 - We need to address **the Loss of tree cover canopy** in suburbs throughout Melbourne. How else can we endure the rising temperatures in the coming years. Why are developers allowed to cut down trees prior to applying for a building permit?
 - **The Loss of permeable** land may well impact on our ground water. Why is no one researching the impact of basements (often 2- 3 storeys deep) across the suburbs? Many towns are built on marshes and heaths with water tables quite close to the ground surface. Local Council says the ground water is not their responsibility. Melbourne Water says it's not their responsibility (they only look after the drains). Is our ground water impacted by boundary to boundary basements along many streets? Is our ground water becoming more saline? Some residents with bores suggest there is a problem.
 - **Loss of Open Space.** Melbourne was once a 'garden city'. Parks and gardens catered for the population. The large developments should have requirements to include open space for children to play, for residents to enjoy and relax, for community gatherings. Why are Councils not required to purchase the equivalent acreage of Open Space that has been lost through development?

- **Delivering Certainty and Fairness in Planning Decisions for Communities:**
 - Political donations by property developers should be banned at all levels of government. This is necessary for transparency.
 - **VCAT:** Concerns regarding equity and transparency. Appears to be a club for developers, their lawyers and their expert witnesses- all on first names with tribunal members.
Why are there concessions only for Health Care Card holders? Why are there no concessions for pensioners? Do developers claim their expenses from the ATO? The resident who goes to VCAT has many many barriers to overcome.

- **Protecting Heritage in Victoria:**
 - Without clear direction from the State Government, Melbourne will continue to lose its history and its liveability. Some suburbs have already lost their character. It's been replaced by the anonymity of low cost high rise buildings shadowing neighbouring properties.

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