

Inquiry into the protections within the Victorian Planning Framework

Organisation Name:
Your position or role:

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

I wish to make a submission in relation to vegetation protection, especially in relation to the protection and expansion of canopy cover in the city of Melbourne. The State government must ensure that there are tighter controls to protect and enhance the tree canopy of Melbourne. The State Government needs to be proactive in doing all it can to prevent removal of canopy trees in particular on both private and public land and in new suburbs and to actively promote (with incentives) the planting of new canopy trees. Vegetation especially mature canopy trees are vital to reduction of temperatures in our cities, with research also showing the health benefits of green spaces. Councils throughout the city of Melbourne are voting to have targets for canopy cover within their municipalities. For example, the City of Whitehorse has voted to have a target of 27% canopy cover by 2031 and 30% by 2050. However the current figure for Whitehorse is just 18% and falling fast, dropping by over 2% in the last 4 years. The targets will remain totally out of reach without the support of State Government and implementation of special clauses in the Environment Act to do with urban canopy cover protection.

What should the State government do?

1. Disallow the use of Vicsmart for trees lopping and removal. I have personal experience of watching the removal of a very large very healthy tree under a Vicsmart application. There was absolutely no need for its removal. It Was right at the front of the property, not near the building envelope. It had never dropped limbs.
2. Strengthen supports for Councils seeking to bring in special planning overlays to protect areas with good vegetation cover. Disallow VCAT from overruling planning overlays.
3. Allow local councils to implement much stronger penalties for illegal removal of trees. Mature tall canopy trees should have a proportionally greater fine.
4. Consider bringing in a system of putting a monetary value on trees.
3. in areas where densification of housing is being encouraged, acknowledge the need by humans for green spaces and increase areas set aside for new parks. Make it a requirement for developers to plant up roadside verges with canopy trees capable of shading the roadways and footpaths. It is horrific to look at aerial views of new suburbs to see no green at all.
4. Provide incentives and funding for Urban councils to improve connectivity of green spaces, to allow increased opportunities for biodiversity of plants and animals in urban areas.
5. Bring in special clauses in the Environment Act providing Urban canopy cover protection.

The last 2 years have shown how important green treed spaces are to those of us living in Melbourne and elsewhere. As more and more of the population live without a garden around them there will be an increased need for more land to be converted to/set aside for parkland.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:
File2:
File3:

Signature: