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Dingley Village
VIC 3172

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
Inquiry into Protections within the Victorian Planning Framework

My submission focuses on the following Terms of Reference of the inquiry.

I hope that my voice will be heard by the committee on behalf of myself, the residents and the native animals in my area of Dingley Village, Melbourne VIC3172

(2) environmental sustainability and vegetation protection;

I submit to the committee that there is pressure in Melbourne to build more housing as stipulated by the existing planning schemes, this combined with scarce availability of Melbourne land in my opinion seems to be increasing the desire to build on any green space where possible. An existing single house plot with enough back garden will be knocked down and redeveloped into smaller units, which do not necessarily fall into the affordable housing category, it is simply more profitable for the developer. In Dingley we have the situation with Australian Super purchasing the former Kingswood Golf course which is zoned as a golf course. Australian Super desire to dig up this green site that is full of trees, and fill it with as many dwellings and roads as the current planning systems allow. This planning application is still pending and the outcome is yet to be decided. However, the Kingswood Golf course re-zoning application is a classic example of a big developer using their financial and legal resources to initiate removal of a 100 year old green space. Residents believed that the Kingswood site would be zoned golf course forever. There is a lack of certainty now amongst residents that any green space can be protected. It seems that money and profit taking are more important than protecting the environment we live in. I would personally like to see the focus of development away from Melbourne and to have new towns in the Victorian region setup with local employment opportunities created by relocating large business outside of central Melbourne area. Australia is a huge country with plenty of land... why does the development need to be in the existing metropolitan areas?

The terms of reference cover sustainability and vegetation protection but what about animal habitat protection? Again I would use the example of Kingswood Golf course which provides a huge natural habitat for animals. There are animals that can be seen for example birds, bats and frogs but also the smaller animals which are harder to see like lizards and insects. In the current planning processes

there seems very little advocacy for protecting animals which concerns me greatly. Animals have no voice of their own and their habitat conservation is not high on the priority list of a developer, so we need protection for them.

(3) delivering certainty and fairness in planning decisions for communities;

(a) mandatory height limits and minimum apartment sizes;

As developers have less land to develop with smaller plots they want the government to allow an increase in height limits. I don't believe this is the correct approach. It simply squeezes more people into an area placing more pressure on infrastructure including utilities, transport ,schools and health support.

(b) protecting Green Wedges and the urban growth boundary;

The green wedges should stay protected.

(c) community concerns about VCAT appeal processes;

In my opinion VCAT favours the organisation which wants a planning decision overturned. It costs money to go to VCAT and organisations who have a lot of money are more likely to win at VCAT. When looking at the statistics the ratio of cases won by the VCAT applicant seems very high.

(5) ensuring residential zones are delivering the type of housing that communities want;

In the example of the Kingswood Golf course Dingley, the initial application to rezone this land was rejected by Kingston Council reflecting the views of local residents. The Government has since changed this process and taken away decision making from Council. Now the local community in this area do not get to decide via their elected officials what type of housing they want. Instead the decision making is being passed to a golf course committee comprised of planners put together by the Government.



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