

Subject: Planning and Environment amendments (numbers of objectors) 2015

I submit the following to the Committee as follows:

As a participant in the VCAT process concerning the proposed development of the Port Phillip Woollen Mills site in Williamstown, I recognise the problems residents face in dealing with the VCAT system i.e. Planning Laws and legal arguments. Although the Responsible Authority and the Community oppose a proposed development the VCAT system is weighted on the side of the Developer

I think the concerns of the community and their valid objections should be taken into account. It is very hard to present arguments in legal terms when members of the public have no background to argue against a Senior Counsel from the opposing side. I think there should be a thorough overhaul of the Planning and Environment section of VCAT to allow its decisions to reflect the community objections.

Also it is unfair that the same VCAT Member Panel is appointed to sit on a different Application involving the same Developer but a separate part of the proposed development. The Member could be biased in his or her decision concerning the new Application hearing.

The VCAT system was originally set up to help citizens, the outcomes do not seem to reflect these intentions.

Recent decisions by VCAT to allow the applications in the following two cases despite strong community objection.

Yarraville - 39 apartments near Yarraville Village - 80 community objections (Star Weekly 1 July 2015)

Maribyrnong - Western Bulldogs Edgewater Club development - opposed by more than 2,500 residents (Star Weekly 1 July 2015)

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth McKeag