

I submit the following to the Committee:

1. As a frequent submitter and party to VCAT in the matter of the proposed development of the Port Phillip Woollen Mills site at Williamstown, I am acutely aware of the hurdles which residents face in their dealings with the VCAT system. By this I mean that, no matter how much support there is from the community and the Responsible Authority against a particular proposal, the VCAT system is skewed towards the developers who have the financial resources to employ Senior Councils and legal teams to promote their case.

2. In spite of an enormous community campaign, VCAT has made no concessions to the needs of local residents of Williamstown, some of whom have spent many weeks attending and appearing at VCAT hearings: to no avail.

The only positive result for residents was the Code decisions regarding demolition of the Woollen Mills buildings but this was overturned on appeal by the developer.

3. I am of the opinion that there needs to be thorough overhaul of the Planning and Environment section of VCAT to allow its decisions to reflect the community objections.

4. This could also include a formula whereby numbers of objectors must actively be weighed against developers' appeals and evidence.

5. There should also be an inquiry into the relationships between influential and powerful developers and VCAT members and the Planning Department. The role of VPELA in these relationships should also be examined.

I am willing to appear at the hearing and would like to be kept informed of the details.

Regards

Val Green