28th October, 2011

Submission to the “Inquiry on Growing the Suburbs: Infrastructure and Business Development in Outer Suburban Melbourne”

I welcome this inquiry and submit to the committee the views of someone who:

- from 70’s – 90’s, grew up in the then outer suburb of Mitcham
- has lived and worked in Melbourne’s inner, middle and outer suburbs
- has lived and worked in Townsville (Australia) for four years
- has lived and worked in Austria (near Salzburg) for four years
- has lived and worked in Boston (USA) for two years, and
- is a tertiary-educated resident of the outer suburb of Mount Eliza, and who currently commutes each working day to Melbourne’s CBD by car – an each-way trip of between 70 and 120 minutes which I have endured for the last three years. The daily commute is tiring, road conditions are stressful and hazardous, and travel costs are significant and rising.

Insufficient headway was made by the previous Victorian Government in respect of infrastructure and employment issues accompanying the recent rapid growth occurring in outer Melbourne, and this is leading to a broad range of undesirable social outcomes¹, and was likely partly responsible for election of the Baillieu Government.

People locate in outer suburbs for a variety of reasons, including housing affordability and life-style factors. These days, many outer suburban residents are tertiary-educated and/or work in service or knowledge-based industries, yet employment opportunities for such people are restricted largely to middle and, particularly, inner Melbourne. Mass transiting is occurring in part because of a lack of suitable local white collar employment, with many people suffering significant daily transits in order to pursue a career (which in turn impacts one’s ability to participate in family and community life, and to maintain a healthy lifestyle).

I believe Melbourne's present growth and transit issues stem from three main factors:

- an inability of planning to keep pace with the rate of new arrivals\(^2\)
- chronic under-investment in public transport, particularly the train network, and
- over promotion of the CBD as a place of employment.

**General measures I would like the committee to investigate**

To help to address issues associated with Melbourne's rapid growth, I believe the committee should thoroughly explore the following policy and political options:

- strategies to pressure the Federal Government to reduce the annual intake quota for migrants. This is one of the main factors driving population growth, and Australia's population is currently growing at too high a rate (directly and indirectly, the high annual migrant intake puts pressure on outer suburbs\(^3\)).
- the use of location/relocation incentives (for example, tax breaks) to entice government departments and dynamic businesses to non-CBD growth centres, and
- significant and sustained investment in the train network that addresses the system's insufficient capacity, reliability, safety, parking and lengthy transit times.

**Specific measures I would like the committee to investigate**

- The potential to significantly increase car parking around Frankston train station.

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\(^3\) By contributing to housing demand and transport loads within Melbourne and across Australia; stresses in other major cities, such as Sydney, contribute to population redistributions within Australia.
The effective catchment for Frankston train station is large because, as a terminal station, it attracts patrons from Frankston, adjacent suburbs (including UGB growth areas) and from the Mornington Peninsula as a whole. Nonetheless, despite its importance, station car parking is typically saturated by 7.30 am, and often by 7.15 am. Considerably more people would use the train service if significantly more parking were made available.

- The potential to extend rail services to Mornington.
- The potential to run daily ferry services between Frankston and Docklands.