The Chairman,
Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works,
G.P.O. Box 4342,
MELBOURNE.

Dear Mr. Trickey,

FUTURE GROWTH OF MELBOURNE

I am forwarding herewith a copy of my letter to the Town and Country Planning Board concerning the future growth of Melbourne.

Although I have asked the Town and Country Planning Board for its views on this vital matter, in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, making that Board the general adviser to the Government on planning matters, it goes without saying that I should like to have the benefit of the views of your Board on the same subject.

I know that a good deal of work has already been done by the Highways and Town Planning Committee and that it is in possession of a good amount of important data, which would help towards the making of sound decisions.

I would, therefore, very much appreciate it if it were possible for the Board to consider this matter and furnish its considered views. The enclosed letter sets out the problem as I see it, but there may well be aspects which have escaped me and which the Board and its officers will be able to cover.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) R. J. HAMER,
Minister for Local Government.

FUTURE GROWTH OF MELBOURNE

The growth of the Melbourne and Metropolitan area has reached a stage when the pattern of development established by the Master Plan since 1954 must be reviewed and planning policy reshaped to meet the needs of the future.

I have in mind a comprehensive review as distinct from that which has been necessary from time to time during the Interim Development period of the Scheme to keep the Plan flexible and to provide for changes as they occurred.

The necessity for such an overall revision is indicated by:
(a) the tendency for metropolitan growth in some areas to overspill beyond that covered by the Board of Works' present scheme,
(b) the increase in metropolitan population to a figure which leaves only a fairly narrow margin for further growth up to the planned capacity of the scheme of 2½ million,
(c) the work now being done to arrive at a firm Transportation Plan based on the recent Metropolitan Transportation Study, and the need to relate it to an approved land use plan.

In addition to these urgent considerations, there is the ever-present need to relate metropolitan population growth to that of provincial cities and towns to ensure that no opportunity is lost to promote better distribution of the State's population.

The purpose of the review is to project the pattern of metropolitan growth for a further period into the future, so that the Government can

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make appropriate decisions in good time and resultant planning can proceed well ahead of actual development.

I intend that the review should take the form of a Statement of Urban Planning Policy, based on consideration of the major social, economic and environmental factors involved, and of the views of the public authorities and representatives of private enterprise who would have to be consulted.

The Statement of Urban Planning Policy should comprise basically an outline of the expected shape and nature of metropolitan growth over, say, the next twenty years, which is the planning period chosen for the Transportation Study. It should also indicate the powers and measures which would need to be introduced to achieve its purposes, both in the inner areas through urban renewal, and on the growing fringes, particularly where departures from traditional forms of urban development are envisaged.

Up to date, Melbourne has tended to grow primarily by extension along the main railway and road approaches to the central area as the main place of employment, and along the eastern bayside, with wedges of open space, principally along the river valleys. This growth was inevitable because of the manner in which these natural and artificial features radiate from the centre, but even this pattern is now changing.

Natural streams such as the Dandenong Creek in the east and the Werribee River in the west flow generally from north to south, and hence transversely across the previous line of expansion. The Dandenongs, which it is vital to preserve, also lie generally in a north-south direction, and as the Westernport area develops as a port in due course, it will automatically provide a new hub for future growth.

Such a widely dispersed metropolis unless carefully planned at once raises a threat to the surrounding countryside. This will require special attention. In addition, nobody could happily contemplate a future metropolis of seemingly endless suburbia spreading outwards indefinitely. It must be strongly emphasised that future planning should take full account of the surrounding countryside as a vital part of the metropolitan environment.

Accordingly, I would urge the Board to give particular attention to the possibility of urban decentralization with provision for "satellite" towns of, say, 100,000 or even greater population each based on a sizeable industrial and commercial area and separated from the existing metropolis, and from each other, by broad tracts of open country, natural parkland and recreation space.

The concept of an expanded Melbourne metropolis either in the satellite form, or in some other form which investigation may prove to be acceptable, envisages what may be termed a metropolitan complex within a broadly defined metropolitan region. Such a region would necessarily require to be a good deal larger than the present planning area of the Board of Works, and possibly large enough to embrace neighbouring towns which might be included in the metropolitan complex as satisfactory outlets for population growth from the parent urban area.

I would appreciate the Board's consideration of the whole question, and should like to have its opinion as to the nature of the Urban Planning Policy to meet the needs of the future, and the method of formulation, and in particular its views on:

1. The most desirable shape and nature of the urban community of Melbourne in the future.
2. The most suitable method of planning and regulating the future growth of the metropolis.
3. The most suitable authority or authorities to carry out such planning and supervision.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) R. J. HAMER,
Minister for Local Government.