8 December 2011

Mrs Jan Kronberg MLC
Chair
Parliament of Victoria
Outer Suburban Interface Services & Development Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Mrs Kronberg

Re: Inquiry into Growing the Suburbs: Infrastructure and Business Development in Outer Suburban Melbourne

I refer to your letter dated 31 October 2011 inviting Council to make a submission in relation to this inquiry.

Please find attached Council’s submission in relation to this matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to address these important issues. If you have any further queries, please contact the undersigned on 9747 7113.

Yours sincerely

Luke Shannon
General Manager
Planning & Development

Encl.
INQUIRY INTO GROWING THE SUBURBS:
INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN OUTER SUBURBAN MELBOURNE

Introduction
With a current population of 118,000 and an anticipated forecast of 200,000 by 2026, the Shire of Melton is experiencing rapid growth at a rate of 7.1 per cent. When combined with neighbouring Wyndham City Council, the Shire of Melton jointly forms Australia’s fastest growth region.

As an identified growth area located on the interface of urban Melbourne, the Shire of Melton continues to experience unprecedented growth challenges. The particular fast growth nature of the municipality is such that it considers it should be dealt with through specifically focussed and funded State and Federal policies and programs.

The community need for the early provision of key infrastructure including public transport, education, health care and balanced economic growth are pivotal to creating a truly sustainable region. In order to achieve this vision, Council requires considerable ongoing support from both Federal and State Government.

Response to Terms of Reference
Council provides its comments to the proposed Terms of Reference as outlined below:

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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Council’s Response</th>
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<td>a) identify existing public and private infrastructure provision, including schools, hospitals, commercial and shopping precincts, transport and roads, telecommunications, water and power.</td>
<td>Council considers the analysis of existing public and private infrastructure and its overall capacity to deal with current pressures and predicted growth essential. Continued and further enhanced support from Federal and State Government is crucial in ensuring that the Shire of Melton’s unprecedented growth equation is balanced with the delivery of funding for essential infrastructure. In the absence of the required funding, an analysis of existing infrastructure and its ability to cope with current demand must be addressed as a means of understanding its implications for the community and future private investment. The issue of provision of public infrastructure is particularly critical in the outer growth areas of Melbourne, given their ongoing accelerated growth rates relative to Metropolitan Melbourne. Given the significant growth rates historically there has been a significant lag in the provision of public infrastructure.</td>
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| b) | **assess the capacity of existing infrastructure to accommodate increased population growth;** | Council fully supports the Parliamentary Committee’s assessment of the capacity of existing infrastructure, particularly where State funded infrastructure can assist in delivering sustainable growth targets.  
The move toward Precinct Structure Plans facilitated by the Growth Areas Authority has greatly assisted the Shire of Melton in better understanding the local infrastructure needs of the community.  
Council believes that it is critical to understand the deficiencies of existing infrastructure, to ensure future growth does not further exacerbate the current insufficiency.  
Whilst Government has generally improved its grasp of the issues in an integrated sense, more needs to be achieved in terms of State provided infrastructure. |
| c) | **investigate options, based on intrastate, interstate and international evidence, which reduce pressures on infrastructure and essential services;** | The Shire of Melton continues to experience several investment barriers. These barriers include; land availability, a diverse skilled labour force coupled with significant infrastructure deficiencies.  
The Shire of Melton considers the underlying preconditions for supporting economic development being; infrastructure provision and maintenance, local workforce development, governance and leadership, and sustainability. Whilst the Shire of Melton offers high quality accessibility advantages its internal connectivity could be improved, together with the provision of greater sustainable transport options which are severely lacking.  
Support from the Federal and State Government is necessary to fully evaluate, address and action these issues. |
| d) | **catalogue skills mix of outer suburban residents to identify those areas with a skills shortage and provide options for skill training and retention, especially as it relates to both younger and** | Council fully supports the Committee’s proposed cataloguing exercise.  
The Shire of Melton is well represented with a workforce that is predominantly well represented in vocational skills. Henceforth, the diversification of |
| semi retired people; | the local economy is somewhat constrained by way of influencing investment from firms that are more knowledge intensive. Destinations of 2010 year 12 or equivalent (VCAL) completers (2011 On Track Survey, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development) revealed:  
- Below average students entered bachelor degrees, 43.6% compared to the State 49.5%  
- Above average entered Certificate IV or above (TAFE or RTO) 23.3%, State 14.2%  
- 14% left for the desirable pathways of apprenticeships, traineeships or full time employment compared to the State average of 15.8%.  
- 13.5% had an undesirable pathway into part-time work or unemployment, State 13.2%  
Destinations of 2010 early school leavers (2011 On Track Survey, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development) showed:  
- 65.1% left for Certificate I-IV courses, apprenticeships, traineeships or full-time employment  
- 33.8% left for part-time work or unemployment compared to the State average 28.8%  
Vocational Education has played a critical role to get more Melton students into desirable vocational pathways. These improvements can be tracked over time on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development On Track Survey. The larger numbers taking desirable vocational pathways compensates to some degree for the lower number of students going into higher education. Significant work still needs to be done, however, to encourage vocationally oriented young people into growing industries with skill shortages in the Shire of Melton, for instance, building and construction. |
| e) examine the role of small businesses, local Councils and community groups (such as Rotary and Lions clubs) in developing local expertise; | Council supports the Parliamentary committee’s endeavour to examine the specific role of commerce in self-servicing sectoral expertise and development.  
In conjunction with the State Government, the Shire of Melton presently facilitates a diverse range of training, development and networking opportunities for small business operators.
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<th>It is recommended that the role and function of chambers of commerce and retail traders associations also be examined, so as to determine their particular capacity in developing local expertise and furthering the strategic work of all tiers of government.</th>
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<td><strong>investigate the value of sister city relationships with key trade and innovation markets;</strong></td>
<td>No submission is made in relation to this issue.</td>
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| g) | **identify local manufacturing capacity and highlight export development opportunities available for businesses operating in the outer suburbs.** | In the context of the Shire of Melton, the availability of suitable employment land has until now stalled manufacturing related investment. Furthermore, the high Australian dollar coupled with global market uncertainty and high levels of volatility has diminished exporting opportunities for the majority of local export-based businesses.  

In the opinion of Council, an evaluation of outer suburban manufacturing capacity should be married with inner metropolitan based creative and knowledge intensive sectors as a means of sustainable industry growth and export development. |