Mr Nathan Bunt, Executive Officer
Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee
Parliament of Victoria,
Parliament House Spring St,
East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002

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SUBMISSION TO VICTORIAN PLANNING SYSTEM MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Is the present planning system right for Victoria

- I don’t believe that there is enough consultation with the residents, the Government talks to Council and we get the result of one or two employees, who are not elected, so technically, they hold no representative rights to comment.

- We have a Government and Council that is short of funds but is blindly allowing this Green Wedge to persist regardless of it’s ethical validity. The area I am talking about is only a few kilometres from Greensborough Central, Diamond Creek Central and about the same from Mernda development, ready access to the Greensborough Bypass and the Western Ring Road, not to forget the upgrade of Yan Yean Road. There are multiple opportunities of employment in the local Industrial and Commercial Precincts, all required services within the local area including buses and trains, medical, retail, educational etc..

- One should be able to subdivide acreage into house blocks to support the infrastructure in the surrounding the area.

- With the possibility of disaster in fire prone areas, we should not need to get permission to remove vegetation or trees from around our dwelling unless these trees have been heritage listed with full consultation of the landowner and this must be done prior to any building being erected. This does not mean removing ancient trees for firewood, but there should be guidelines to allow trees and vegetation to be removed around a house and outbuildings – within a given clearance zone without council intervention.

- Planning schemes should be for Governments in consultation with Councils and their residents. Not just a few supportive residents, all residents should have the opportunity to give feedback. A few local, radical councillors and their sympathisers should not be given the opportunity to behave counter to the wishes of the majority of residents.

Are the respective roles of the State and Local Government in the planning system still appropriate?
There are too many politically, ethically and ideologically motivated individuals within the Local Council community with too much to say, resulting in the misuse of power and the squandering of money and resources on ‘white elephants’.

Those who should be asked for their opinions are the only ones not even consulted – the residents.

**What are the ways to fix the problems and improve the system?**

- Remove Green Wedge status from all private land
- Legislate to allow this land to be subdivided into suitable house block sizes to ensure that the local infrastructure is not wasted.
- Remove the power of Council Officers to override the requirements of the CFA – they should not enforce residents to plant trees around houses – this is a fire hazard.
- Have an interim Zoning of these areas to allow Rural holdings time to be able to maximise their ability to sell at market prices without impacting their ability to operate until that sale is complete.
- Simplify planning and building permits – have standard requirements, distances etc. and if within these guidelines and if the structure meets all engineering and aesthetic and open space requirements – why let a Clerk enforce their personal opinion on that resident.
- Each layer of Government should have its responsibilities clearly defined and only in Consultation with rather than independent of – do what they are paid to do by the residents of this state. Too many decisions are made by those who are least equipped to do so.
- Please allow common sense to prevail, we have lost too much to the power of a few. Yes it is lovely to have the trees and plants in the area, but without proper management this will be taken by fire in the future and possibly life will go too – this is too great a price to pay for a minority belief.

I believe strongly in what I have written above, there has been too much power given to too few people and it has not been of any advantage to Victoria.


Noel Huit