5th December, 2011

SUBMISSION TO VICTORIAN PLANNING SYSTEM MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

What’s good about the system?

There is an ability to voice your opinion of the shortfalls which you perceive.

What works well and what doesn’t?

My reason for contacting you is in relation to the Green Wedge within the Greensborough/Diamond Creek area.

I fail to see why any area 3 kilometres from a major commercial and shopping precinct with buses and trains within a very short drive/walk, less than a kilometre from a major 6 lane arterial with and within a few hundred metres of a proposed major road upgrade should remain in a Green Wedge. Not to forget the close proximity to the Bypass and ready access to the Western Ring Road and the ready use of it’s arteries.

This Wedge is a total waste of, and at best an under-utilisation of infrastructure and local planning in the area. There are already schools, shops, medical, veterinary, dental facilities, commercial and professional offices, factories, nurseries etc. in the area and yet the Wedge allows rural living for a few who would be more likely to drive cars and not utilise the infrastructure provided. If this is their way of life, allow them the luxury of moving further out to enjoy this rural escape and allow the less fortunate to have the services that Local Councils and State Governments are elected to provide.

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

- Enact legislation to remove this Green Wedge from private land.
- Allow this area to develop naturally as the market would call for.
- Ensure that public monies are being used for the use of the people and not squandered on an elite few who wish to remain in the luxury of such services that they choose not to use. No Government can allow such squandering of public funds.
- Minimise the power of Councils to overturn the laws and recommendations of Government, Utilities, CFA and other emergency groups who often have to deal with situations caused by Councils bowing to noisy minority groups.
• Building regulations be realistic while remaining within reason; and not up to some Administration person using their own personal opinions and beliefs to impact the wants and needs of others.
• Why this area still needs to plant dozens/hundreds of trees around every dwelling, even after the debacle of Black Saturday, defies comprehension.
• One staff member stating that they have the veto over what the CFA says is nothing short of criminal.
• That residents still need to get permission to remove overhanging branches or unsafe trees from near houses is ludicrous in such an area.

How can the planning system be made easier to access and understand?

All requirements be provided in two forms, a basic form that states what is needed and why; and a second form that goes into more detail for those people that need the extra clarity for specific applications – this second form would be by recommendation for those that the first form was inadequate for the purpose of the query.
Permits appear to be stalled to give power to a few people wanting to appear important to those unfortunate enough to be asking for one.
If there are basic requirements and any structures etc. meet with these basic requirement, then why does it take a year or more to allow or disallow a structure.
The sooner the answer is given, the better placed the resident is to be able to look for alternatives.

Is the planning system right for Victoria.

With such waste of monies and resources, I can hardly say that the current system is working to potential.

Are the respective roles of the State and Local Government in the planning system still appropriate?

No, State Government should be responsible for the overall planning, although not without consultation and local input, but with the people, not the council.

Local government should do what they are elected and paid, via our not inconsiderable Rates to do – look after the local area by way of street cleaning, rubbish removal, care of local roads, provision of drop in centres etc. for the residents. We should not be held to ransom by a few politically motivated locals who will get their way and then move to another municipality and cause havoc there. They are dangerous power trippers.

I firmly believe that there has to be a better way of planning Victoria.

Noel and Rhonda Huit