

PLANNING BACKLASH INC

SUBMISSION TO THE OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Re the proposed change to the Urban Growth Boundary

INTRODUCTION

It was a shock that the Government announced it was extending the Urban Growth Boundary. It has been stated and understood since the introduction of Melbourne 2030 that the boundary of Melbourne was set and any development out would be along the development corridors.

THE SPREAD OF MELBOURNE

Melbourne is already a widely spread area, especially to the east and south as they are the most sought after areas. However it is wrong to extend any further and alternatives should be considered rather than continually increasing the population of Melbourne.

Historically Melbourne grew as the trains were pushed out and the houses followed. The government seems to have forgotten that and allows houses to be built and then does nothing about infrastructure.

THE DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION

This is the most undemocratic idea yet announced by this government. It is the buyer who wants to develop and so it is the developer who should pay for infrastructure, not the seller of the land. The developers are the ones who will make the profit out of development. Of course the existing owners will make capital gain when selling, but that is fair and normal. The seller should certainly not have to pay.

Then what guarantee is there that the money would be used for infrastructure, or will it simply disappear into revenue and still no public transport to those areas..

The cost proposed is so large that it could end up ruining many of the sellers. Altogether grossly unfair.

I understand that because of the very vocal opposition to this proposal the government has announced some modifications in the form of delay of payment, but the tax should be cancelled altogether.

IMPACT ON THE HOUSING INDUSTRY

The Housing development industry must be delighted by this prospect. Endless houses to build and no doubt continue to advertise the houses overseas for sale. For example – certain housing companies have regular exhibitions in India selling their houses and offering visas and bank loans. I am in possession of a copy of such an advertisement from a New Delhi newspaper. No doubt also that the agents who have been announced as setting up sales offices in Hong Kong and China will be selling these houses also.

THE HOUSING MYTH

When these sales go on overseas, it is nothing to do with solving the housing shortage in Melbourne and it certainly pushes up the price for people already living here. So in actual fact this is an artificial shortage. I believe this shortage is a myth and these developers should be controlled and be building for people already here and not bringing in people from overseas to fill their houses and so keeping prices artificially high and disadvantaging especially our own young people. .

IMPACT ON LANDOWNERS

Naturally there will be some landowners who will be glad to sell their land, but others will be devastated at the prospect of development around them, and then being forced to pay a huge tax if they do sell. No wonder they are angry.

IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Allowing subdivision of land into miniature housing blocks is will not be good for the environment. First there are grass lands that should be protected and never subdivided. Then subdividing into these small blocks means that the land will be all house leaving no room for trees, adding to the carbon footprint. Terrible to live way out of town and have no room for trees or for children to play in the garden.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Stop overcrowding Melbourne.

We don't want to become an LA

We don't want to become a Hong Kong.

We don't want to go up and we don't want to go out.

Instead we should be looking at alternatives.

Ireland found a solution when faced with increase of population. They declared 9 cities as gateways and saved Dublin from overcrowding.

Or build a new city elsewhere eg develop Portland.

Slow the population increase by telling the Federal Government we are full and will take in only very specific skills we might be short of.

Of course solutions are not part of your terms of reference, but it is time that you started looking outside the box and finding a real solution and not just applying band aids to the problem of increasing cost of houses.

IN CONCLUSION

This extension of the Urban Growth Boundary is not good for the future of Melbourne. The larger a city gets the more difficult it is to manage. A United Nations report states that the mega cities are beyond human management. We all see this in Melbourne as it gets bigger. This applies also to densification of existing areas. But this study is on the extension not the densification of established areas.

In addition, this tax on owners selling their land is grossly unfair. No doubt they will be forced to sell as their rates will go so high with rezoning they will not be able to pay them.

This whole plan is not a good one and should be sent back to the drawing boards and the whole future of Melbourne should be put into the public arena for frank and open discussion. It seems that the Government listens too much to developers, get it all out into the open for the people to decide where we are going. Have a Population Summit.

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Convener

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