

CORRECTED VERSION

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Subcommittee

Inquiry into environmental design and public health

Melbourne — 6 September 2011

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Mr S. McPherson, director, SJB Urban.

Ms TIERNEY — This is the subcommittee of the committee. Other members will be joining us very shortly. I would like to welcome you, Simon, to this morning's hearing. As I mentioned to you prior to the formal commencement, this hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege, so you are covered. Issues that you raise outside of this forum will not necessarily be covered by parliamentary privilege. There will be a transcript available to you. It will be sent to you in the next week or so. If you could check that for any typos or inconsistencies, that would be appreciated. You can liaise with Keir Delaney from our secretariat in terms of any changes or modifications that are sought.

I ask you to give your full name, the organisation you represent and its full address for Hansard's purposes, and I then ask you to give a short presentation, keeping in mind that we would like a fair bit of time for some genuine interaction and questions. Over to you, Simon.

Mr McPHERSON — My name is Simon Joseph McPherson. I am a director of SJB Urban Pty Ltd, which is an urban design consultancy with offices at 25 Coventry Street, Southbank, here in Victoria.

Overheads shown.

Mr McPHERSON — 'Shall We Dense?' is the title of an ongoing research and development project that we are carrying out within our offices. It is not part of any project commission or client engagement. It is just an in-house initiative. It has been going on for a couple of years now, and it is continuing. This particular component that I will very briefly talk about today looks at policy in particular and Victorian planning policy specifically.

Nine years ago or so Melbourne 2030 talked about a compact city, better management of growth, a greener city and so on in its principles, but it set a recommended density aim of 15 dwellings per hectare for new urban growth, particularly in Melbourne's growth corridors. That is a significant leap up from the 10 dwellings per hectare which was seen as the current outcome at the time. Six years later the review and update to Melbourne 2030 called Melbourne @ 5 Million had similar principles about a more compact city and better management of growth, but also new communities of sufficient size within service catchments to support and sustain levels of infrastructure, services and jobs. Melbourne @ 5 Million also recommended that density aim of 15 dwellings per hectare. Again, a year later, the Precinct Structure Planning guidelines prepared by the Growth Areas Authority in Victoria also suggested 15 dwellings per hectare as the aim for the net developable area. By contrast, in Sydney the new metropolitan plan there from last year recommended these numbers in terms of density: 25 to 60 dwellings per hectare everywhere around all centres; more than 60 dwellings around larger centres; and low-density, or less than 25 dwellings, only in heritage or constrained areas.

Melbourne 2030 contains these two diagrams. The one on the right is the aim — the strategy objective. That diagram communicates a clustered network of neighbourhoods around individual centres. If I use the pointer here, each of these blue areas is an activity centre, a local centre or a neighbourhood centre, and the circle around it represents its walkable catchment. The 400 to 500 metres is the radius from the centre to the outside of the circle, and that represents around about a 5-minute walk. For convenient shopping and getting to your local centre, about 5 minutes is seen as a convenient threshold beyond which residents may tend to opt for the car. If you have more than a 5-minute walk, it becomes less convenient and therefore it really needs this type of tight, connected, walkable structure to encourage walkability in the urban environment. Similarly some of the principles in Melbourne 2030 also include: a walkable distance between housing and centre; interconnected, pedestrian-friendly layout, higher density development within the centre fostering interaction and safety, public transport et cetera; and environmentally friendly development. These things do tie together very well.

In part of our research we looked at existing areas in Melbourne, in this case an inner, a middle and an outer suburban area. This is existing conditions. You can see the density of networks of activity centres — the red is 'principal', the blue is 'major' and grey is 'neighbourhood', under the Melbourne 2030 categories, and also in middle Melbourne around Oakleigh, but in outer Melbourne those networks and that tightness really breaks down.

There are lots of suburban areas which are really without those activity centres — without that corner store, that milk bar, the shops, the kindergarten and so on. Just to zoom in on one of those areas in Brunswick, the density is 34.5 dwellings per hectare. The principle of that was to understand: what density drives that network structure and that clustering? What do we need to achieve to make that happen in our new suburban areas?

In terms of the policy potential and in terms of achieving this we need to have enough dwellings in each of these circles to support the centre within it, because if there are not enough people there, then they are spread out more widely and the so circles are much more dispersed. The principle of this is that every dwelling is within walkable distance of at least a small centre and then upwards from there.

To do that we looked at: what are the thresholds in terms of numbers of dwellings to viably support economically those centres? This is a range from the corner store, which requires between 800 and 1000 dwellings to support itself, right through to a train station and civic centre, which is right up there in terms of the numbers. We used those numbers and then extracted some residential mixes and densities to determine what we would need to achieve. In terms of 1 hectare we automatically take out 32 per cent the non-residential uses — employment, education and so on. Then we divide that area up over four different housing types in this model — detached houses, semi-detached, terraces and apartments. These are the areas of land that we allocate to each type. In terms of general market provision currently, they are all quite generous. It is a very conservative model. Then we allow extra space on top of that for streets and local parks which are within the residential zone.

Based on those mixes we then set up the hierarchy of activity centre types and the numbers of dwellings within the walking catchment of either 5 or 10 minutes to support that centre. We are tying together the yield, the number of dwellings and therefore the density which is driven by those dwellings within a certain area with the activity centre type, ranging through a scale from the corner store right through to a secondary school to a kind of large centre with offices, employment et cetera.

All the numbers here on the slide show how all of that is worked out — there are categories A through to E and all the densities of the walking catchments and so on. I will not dwell on that, but needless to say this starts at the point of category E, which is the smallest centre, and reaches 850 dwellings within 5 minutes walk of that centre. It meets that threshold for the corner store — the lowest order centre.

If we developed at 15 dwellings per hectare, as our policy suggests — that is, category X, as we call it — within that 5-minute walk we would deliver 558 dwellings, which is just over half of what you need even for the lowest order centre — the smallest centre. That walkable structure will not work — it just does not work out at 15 dwellings per hectare. There is a gap between the policy objectives and the policy requirements in terms of the density. We put forward that 15 dwellings per hectare would deliver something like this, which the policy is trying to move away from.

In terms of the varying density ranges, the bars at the top of the slide show the ranges of our model of categories A through to E and the density spans they cover. From 15 dwellings per hectare right through to about 75 dwellings per hectare can be covered. This model assumes nothing more than three-storey developments. It is lightweight construction, there are no basements required and no lifts required. It is very domestic and very suburban appropriate. The densities range from there. This also shows that if you develop at around 14 to 15 dwellings per hectare, it is really all detached houses, which is shown in yellow. At the other end if you develop all apartments, which are just three storeys again, you would deliver 83 dwellings per hectare. Around the middle is where you get that equal number of the four different housing types around the mid to high 20s in terms of dwellings per hectare.

In terms of some of the implications, financially this study that I am sure many in the room are familiar with, Transforming Australian Cities, looked at the cost differential between providing 1000 dwellings — that is, the cost to society overall — in an infill situation or in a fringe or new growth situation, and the differences are there. Also there is an interesting study that says if a household could have one less car over the period of its mortgage of 25 years, then it could save an additional \$1 million plus in superannuation, buy a home worth \$110 000 more at the beginning or pay off a \$300 000 loan in 12 years instead of 25, saving \$245 000 in interest. That is the cost savings that can be leveraged by having one less car in the household.

Some of the challenges, as we see, are about the communication and what the implications and outcomes of this approach might be. This is a graphic that shows in a real calculated sense a notional urban area with the five centres. The key message here is that the vast majority is still yellow, it is still detached houses because apartments and terraces take up much less space than detached houses, so the physical change in the appearance of urban areas is very subtle, very modest, but the performance change is potentially very significant.

We need to understand these principles and connections in more detail; the costs and the benefits for commercial implications, and how they might be delivered, and also the important thing is to deliver the public realm outcomes as well, so realising the benefits and delivering those into the public realm with streets that are more focused on people, safe cycling, real transport options at the outset, not car dependence. And guiding development which supports the public realm through active edges, business opportunities, design quality and so on.

We think there are opportunities for precinct structure plans which are more comprehensive and rigorous. Also, the new Melbourne metropolitan strategy, which I understand is currently in progress through the Department of Planning and Community Development — this is from their website — is a good opportunity to boost these types of outcomes through communication benchmarks, better standards and limits to growth.

Just to wrap up, we think that the aim should be around 16 to 80 dwellings per hectare, which will deliver this type of walkable urban structure. That will deliver an overall average across larger urban areas of 25 to 30 dwellings per hectare. And of course we need to deal with perceptions and reactions, and the issue of density always does attract strong reactions, one way or another. That is something that is related to communication and so on.

That completes my presentation, I probably went a bit over 10 minutes — it is hard to tell — but the key message is that we see a really strong and essential relationship between development patterns and outcomes which support health and wellbeing, and that is why we saw this as relevant to today's hearing.

Mr ELSBURY — I think most of the questions I had for your submission have been answered in the presentation you have just given, but one of the questions was: you have done all this analysis on what population density is required for certain activity centres to exist, and I wonder whether or not you have taken into account the factors that come in when you have dormitory suburbs such as the ones on the outer fringe of Melbourne like Craigieburn, Greenvale and such where you can have a corner store well within walking distance of your home but the chances of you actually going there are very minimal considering you would stop off at Coles or Safeway on the way home. The local milk bar tends not to survive all that well, meanwhile Coles or Safeway is doing exceptionally well just up the road. I wonder whether you have factored in that particular issue.

Mr McPHERSON — It is a very valid point, and there are a lot of assumptions facing this work because cities are so complex and, if you look at them, behaviours are so varied and so on, but I think there are a number of points related to that. One is that for a corner store or a small centre to survive, it has to have enough people within its walking catchment, because once you get in the car, then it does not matter if you drive an extra few kilometres or you drive on the way home or you drive to a bigger centre where there is more parking and so on. It has to be really convenient, and also it has to be good, it has to be an attractive offer.

Those suburbs, as you say, probably lack that quality in that sort of localised, fine green-type centre, but there are inner urban areas which have fantastic independent, stand-on-their-own shops and facilities, cafes, delis and corner stores that have good operators and work really well. I think that is related to the operation of the business, but also it is certainly related to the intensity of the people around it. When you combine all the things about good quality streets, good public environment, places that feel good to be on your feet or on your bike and you feel safe and comfortable, then that local centre which has that sense of place, sense of ownership and sense of belonging for the people that live around it really comes into its own.

I certainly concede that these are difficult issues, that the people do tend to move into the larger supermarket and so on on the way home, because they are in the car already and these are commuter-driving suburbs. But really times are changing, and people are choosing other transport options, certainly we are all aware of that, and looking for more affordable options and so on. The cost of driving and car ownership, as the numbers suggest, is only going to go upwards.

Mr TEE — Thank you for that presentation which, for us, goes a long way to filling in some of the gaps in the sense that we have had a large number of witnesses now who have talked about increased density, and the evidence has been around 30 per hectare, and even the department of planning talked about 25 per hectare. So I think there is common ground around the increased density, and what you have added is a model for how you actually get there and what you need — I suppose, underpinned what we have heard with a degree of science.

Coming to the point that Mr Elsbury made, which is right, and when you look at that, it is a pity that we do not start with a greenfield site every time. Partly it is about, as Mr Elsbury said, giving people a choice so that increasingly if they want to walk to the shops, they can walk to the shops, rather than stopping off at the supermarket. That is the upside of your model, that it just gives people a choice so that they can freely decide what they want to do rather than being forced to stop in the supermarket on the way home because there is nothing anywhere else.

What I want to tease out a little bit is about the translation and how we implement it. There is a degree of resistance. I am wondering are you aware of any models where this has worked, either in Melbourne or Victoria or indeed Australia or anywhere else, so that what we are looking at is something which is not particularly radical but is something that is already happening. Is that the case? Where is the best practice around what you are suggesting?

Mr McPHERSON — There are models around. Firstly, I would say that what we have tried to achieve with this model is a system that is locally appropriate to Melbourne suburbs or Australian suburbs, and it is a model that incorporates all housing types, so it does not mean that everyone has to change or everyone has to be in a smaller house or anything like that. If people want a detached house with four bedrooms and a double garage and so on on a block, that is fine; the model incorporates that. There are plenty of those, and that is what the map tried to show. There is room for everything, but certainly not everyone wants that, and that point you raise about choice is the key principle of all of this work — it is choice of housing type, it is choice of housing location, it is choice of the environment and ambience of where you want to live and how you want to live. I think choice is something that varies over time as well. As urban areas or communities mature and develop, as I have mentioned in my submission, families split up or they grow up and the kids grow up and move out and the parents downsize and the grandparents move and so on. You get all these kinds of changes and dynamics, and that calls for a variety of different housing types.

I think that is really the key principle that we need to communicate, that it is not necessarily about change. If you like the way you live, that is fine. The city will not change that much; the visible changes will not be that dramatic. It is really just about mixing in a bit of variety. That is what our policy really calls for about housing diversity and so on. But in terms of models, I think there are a number of models around in Australia — developments such as in Subiaco in Perth which incorporates a lot of more medium density but certainly low-scale development. I live in Port Melbourne, and I think the Beacon Cove precinct there, which is quite recent, with one and two-storey buildings, except for the towers on the waterfront, but everything else is one and two storeys, generally two, but quite compact and certainly very much a walkable neighbourhood. I think that is a good case because the front yards are quite minimal. The houses are close to the street. You get that sense of interaction between the house and the public space, so that embeds safety and a sense of activity and the presence of people and so on.

I think it is important to note that newer developments on the fringes, such as Caroline Springs and Lynbrook to some extent, Aurora to some extent as well, are starting to bring in those other housing types, some townhouses and terraces and more sort of urban models of housing. As I understand it, there is proving to be a market for that type of thing as well, so things are certainly changing in the right direction — in my view perhaps not enough. I think the planning needs to be more rigorous in terms of how these things are distributed and located so we get the structure we want, but I think there are certainly examples around.

I would also mention there was a study done quite recently by the Grattan Institute, which was published around about three or four weeks ago and which is available online, and there is a talk on about it next week. It is called *The Housing We'd Choose*. That study looked at people's housing choices if they were given a more holistic view of the various pros and cons of different choices, and it identified there was a significant shortage of higher density housing types, or smaller, more compact dwelling types in our middle and outer suburbs based on what people would choose when they factored in income and accessibility and proximity and lifestyle and all those sorts of things as well, so I think that would certainly be one to look at.

Just while I am talking, there was an interesting opinion piece in the *Age* on Saturday called 'Welcome to the world's most liveable delusion', which was written by Robert Nelson. That talks about the lack of consideration of density in liveability rankings that the Economist Intelligence Unit puts out and where Melbourne topped the list last week, so that is an interesting case in point as well.

Mr TEE — I think the point about choice is right in the sense that the young couple might not want to have the house with the backyard, but they might want to move into that when they have kids or back into the unit, so it is about trying to make sure there is choice in each of those communities.

Mr McPHERSON — Yes.

Mr TEE — I want to tease out the other aspect of it. On a greenfield site you are starting from scratch, whereas in our existing suburbs it is a lot harder to transpose that model. What sort of advice have you got in terms of is it around starting with those activity centres that are existing at the moment and imposing on them standards in terms of density and height limits and so on, or how do we transpose that to existing suburbia?

Mr McPHERSON — I think starting with what we have and understanding how that works and the dynamics around it is certainly a good starting point. This model is in some ways very simplistic. It is not very complex at all. It is a simple numbers game, but of course activity centres function in a much more dynamic way in that some large centres attract people from all over town, like Chapel Street or Bridge Road and those types of centres, whereas others are much more localised. This study looks at the importance of that local immediate walkable centre, and in some ways that is the most important kind of centre because that is the one that is the 'glue' that holds everything else together in that sort of clustered network structure, starting with understanding what we have and how economically that is performing and how that local level of provision might better perform. It is also about not just business economics but also the provision of community infrastructure as well and what are the dynamics around that, and if there is a school already in place, for example, a primary school, where is its catchment coming from and could that over time be made more compact to allow its catchment to get to school more easily by foot or by bike or a local minibus or something, and then another school might slot in somewhere else to fill in the gap.

I think there is a strong case for a kind of scientific and calculated view of established suburbs. But of course our urban areas are so varied, and in our experience in our practice higher density contemporary developments that are happening at the moment in Richmond, Docklands, Southbank and so on are skewed in the opposite direction towards studio and one-bedroom apartments overwhelmingly, and maybe some two-bedroom apartments. They do not really provide for the family unit. I think we are missing the boat a bit the other way in that regard. We have got these two extremes.

Then of course there are the greyfield suburbs in between, which are established suburbs and in many ways difficult to change because there are community values around them and so on. There has been some interesting research around that in recent times as well. I think there are numerous challenges, and it is very much a place-based, locally specific task to understand specific places.

Mr ELSBURY — Going back to your discussion about the inner suburban areas, I know that in my electorate out in the western suburbs we have had a lot of resistance with regard to proposed high-density developments inside what would generally be considered your classic quarter-acre block environment. I think it would be a major challenge for any government to argue that there needs to be such a significant change, even though we are talking about areas that are near major activity centres. There is one that is near a set of quite substantial shopping strips, and then you have got another one that is actually quite close to public transport and a number of major retail outlets. How are we going to be able to balance that? There are the people that are already in the area who have what they see as their lifestyle, and then you have got an infill project that can occur which will provide the density that you need to be able to provide better services, but the community is not willing to back down from its vision of its neighbourhood.

Mr MCPHERSON — That is the key challenge.

Mr ELSBURY — And that comes down to being our job, doesn't it?

Mr MCPHERSON — I am no politician. The study that I mentioned before called *The Housing We'd Choose* is quite enlightening in some ways, because when people are presented with a real and informed choice, some of them — not all of them — may make a different choice; they may choose other things. For outer suburbs which are car-dependent, sooner or later problems arise from that type of planning because we commit people living in those areas to car dependency forever. It is very difficult to change once it is in place. When teenagers are looking for more independent mobility and wanting to get around and when older people that may not like to drive as much any more are looking for other options, it is very difficult to provide those other

options. Community consultation needs to be more of a two-way dialogue and discussion about the pros and cons, the costs and benefits, the implications, the outcomes and so on. Discussions about density, higher density and higher rise often quickly lead to extreme perceptions about —

Mr ELSBURY — You have seen the emails I have been getting then.

Mr MCPHERSON — There was mention in the *Age* a few months ago of our research work, and that attracted a lot of response on the *Age* website in the blog listing after the article. I do not have that with me, but I am happy to provide it if that is appropriate. There was certainly a large number of responses from both extremes, and not much in between. There was talk about ‘concrete jungle’ and ‘high rise’ and ‘Hong Kong’ and all these sorts of things. I certainly understand that concern on the part of community members about losing the values of their neighbourhoods and losing their understanding of their lifestyle and the qualities of it. But I really think there is an appropriate balance to be struck that still allows that lifestyle to be maintained, protected and conserved. However, around our centres I think we do need to have a bit more of a mix to provide that longer term resilience and to bring things more within reach of our communities. I think it is important that the tennis club is nearby or that you can walk to the kindergarten. There are lifestyle concerns about outer suburban, low-density living that we really should not be planning for, in my view.

Mr SCHEFFER — You are probably right, but I just pass the gratuitous comment that planning is so close to politics that you cannot really separate them out. We have seen over the last period the planning system being used as a proxy for a whole lot of political debates and attacks, particularly over affordable housing in Bentleigh, for example, and some other areas. It is very difficult for administrations to disengage from the politics around planning. It is very complex. You talked earlier about perceptions and reactions, and that is really the heart of it that some of us are driving at.

I have two questions. One is: based on what you said, what are the differences between the propositions you are putting and what was the Melbourne 2030 plan? They seem very similar to me.

Mr MCPHERSON — In my view the suggested density number in Melbourne 2030, as I understand it, was never tested in terms of what it would deliver. The understanding was that the new growth areas in Melbourne were delivering around 10 dwellings per hectare, maybe a bit less, so a 50 per cent increase up to 15 was seen as potentially palatable and appropriate and it was expected it would achieve a more compact urban environment — which it would, of course. That was the basis of commencing this work. The objective in terms of the neighbourhood principles that are set out in Melbourne 2030, the walkable urban structure and so on, are not supported by 15 dwellings per hectare. That is the gap. I think in principle this work is absolutely consistent with Melbourne 2030 and Melbourne @ 5 Million, but I think the numbers are not getting us there.

Mr SCHEFFER — Yes, and that comes back to my first point. Maybe it is a stepping through — that is, you start with 15 but you have to build up to the 35, and maybe —

Mr MCPHERSON — Yes, absolutely. But I think plans — for example, precinct structure plans — need to incorporate the ultimate end goal from the beginning, because if the land is subdivided out at 15 or 14, the centres will not be there, and it will never change. I think we need to allow those extra pockets of land for higher-density development in 10 years time and in the meantime put surface parking on it, or a shed or a park on it — maybe not a park but some temporary use. Then when times change, when demand and perhaps market requirements change, the other development types can come in.

Mr SCHEFFER — The other part of my question relates to the section in your submission on business viability of facilities. You throw up a number of figurings there. You talk about small centres being essential. How small can they be before they are not viable? For example, the small corner shop really is not a destination for people in the community, so how small is small — where you still get diversity? What do you know about the business models that are needed to create some sense of dynamism?

Mr MCPHERSON — Yes, I understand. I should say that urban economics is not my area of expertise, so I do not know a lot about these things. The numbers that I threw up there have come from economic studies about the thresholds or the triggers to support those types of centres. As I said before, there are centres around that consist of just a single corner store on its own that are certainly viable and doing good business.

I think an interesting case in point is here in the CBD, where as the level of residential development has shot up in recent years we have suddenly got convenience stores, such as 7 Eleven and so on, on almost every street corner through the city. They are not destinations, but they provide that localised convenience, such as the ability to quickly pop in and buy a pint of milk or whatever it is. The CBD is a different economic animal, but in a suburban context and with sufficient intensity and a good-quality public realm I really believe these things can work, because they work in St Kilda, Elwood, Brunswick and numerous other middle to inner suburbs. I think they must be able to work elsewhere, and I think our outer suburbs should demand and be provided with the same level of amenity and accessibility as anywhere else in the city. I think that relates to the dormitory suburb question raised earlier on as well. The principle should be the same.

I would just add in terms of your comment before about affordability that I think that is a really key message — with the numbers I put up before as well. When a more holistic view of affordability and living costs is taken into account, ongoing affordability is not just about the up-front costs of dwellings. That is an area we are really looking at more closely in our current research, which builds on the work I have just shown. Fringe or dormitory suburb dwellings are not necessarily the most affordable over time, and that is an important principle.

Mr SCHEFFER — Could I ask you one last thing. You talked about three storeys as probably being about right. I know Melbourne is not a European city in that sense, but when you look at European cities the average, I would say, is about five to six storeys. That means they have lifts, and it means buildings have a certain sort of strength, quality and endurance. What is wrong with that here? Why have three storeys?

Mr McPHERSON — There is nothing wrong with that here. I think five to six storeys is a great model, and it is certainly within a human-scale range. You can still recognise someone at the top floor visually and so on. It is certainly something to aim for, but what we were trying to achieve here was a model that was appropriate in any location in Melbourne. There is often the argument that when you go beyond three storeys you may need a basement, and you need lifts. You are talking heavyweight construction and therefore maybe unionised construction sites. You are talking about all those extra add-on costs that affect the viability or potential of that type of development in a suburban location. We tried to make it at a low level so that it could be a lightweight, timber-frame stick construction with no lifts or basement needed, so domestic builders could do it. It is really very simple. There is no question that it is only viable in Elwood or St Kilda and not in Craigieburn; this type of model could be applicable anywhere.

Mr SCHEFFER — Even there, increasingly three-storey apartments have underground basements for car parking.

Mr McPHERSON — Yes, they do.

Mr SCHEFFER — So that does not solve that problem.

Mr McPHERSON — Not necessarily, but it could. It depends on the development model, the size of the block and all sorts of other factors. The economics in those suburbs are different, but we tried to make sure that it was conservative and applicable anywhere. But certainly in some places — even in, say, Fountain Gate in Narre Warren, which is a principal activity centre, higher scale development would be appropriate, but this model is really just a model.

The CHAIR — Simon, we are just about out of time, but can I ask a question. You say in your presentation, as well as in the submission, that the current planning framework is too flexible. What can we do to have greater focus on public health in our legislation or guidelines?

Mr McPHERSON — The public health component of this work is related to the ability to move around and get to destinations by modes other than the car. That is about having destinations that are accessible and within a reasonable, walkable distance, and also having streets and spaces that are friendly to pedestrians and feel safe. Places that feel safe are generally active, so they have lots of people around. These are all the sorts of principles I have set out in my submission.

The CHAIR — What would that look like in legislation, though?

Mr McPHERSON — It is important in legislation that our density aims are not for their own sake but are tied into all of these principles. In terms of a legislative policy framework it could certainly be a minimum

number which we understand will generate the outcomes that we are looking for in terms of achieving those things. That will then feed down into structure plans which set out the framework for development and are more specific and say, 'The centres will be in these locations — here, here and here — and in this pocket of land that is coloured orange we have to achieve', say, '600 dwellings of any type, and in this other area there needs to be a further 700 dwellings across a larger area'. It would be a more specific, spatially deterministic framework for getting the numbers in there. I think that would be a good outcome in terms of moving towards these types of physical outcomes on the ground.

Mr TEE — Can I just pick up on the point about the community resistance to that? I wonder if a lot of that resistance is to a current model which is a bit ad hoc, so you do not know where the development is going to go and all of a sudden someone is building three storeys in your backyard. You are saying, 'Let's change that dynamic. Let's have a degree of certainty, where 90 per cent of the community are going to know exactly where the development will occur, and it will not occur in their area because it will be in particular designated pockets'. I suppose it is a different approach to the more ad hoc one we have at the moment.

Mr McPHERSON — Yes, and I think that principle applies in growth areas as well as in inner urban areas. I know a number of inner urban councils are grappling with the strategic work structure plans and so on to ensure that a level of certainty is achieved for their residents in terms of where increased development is going to go and where it is not. I certainly agree with that principle that it can be mapped out quite carefully, and I think that would be a good outcome.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Simon. That was very enjoyable, and I am sure it will give this committee a lot of food for thought.

Witness withdrew.

