

4 July 2011

Kier Delaney
The Secretary, Environment and Planning Committee
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3002

Victorian
Division

G-05, 60 Leicester Street
Carlton VIC 3053
PO Box 675
Carlton South VIC 3053

Telephone: (03) 9347 1900
Facsimile: (03) 9347 2900
Email: vic@planning.org.au
Web: www.planning.org.au/vic

A.B.N. 11 802 663 785

Dear Mr. Delaney,

**PIA Victoria Division Submission into the
Inquiry into Environmental Design and Public Health in Victoria**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Department of Planning and Community Development regarding the review of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

I am very pleased to enclose general feedback and recommendations from the Planning Institute Australia (PIA), Victorian Division, for consideration. Please note that PIA will also be making a more detailed submission in partnership with several other organisations, on 11 July 2011.

For all enquiries relating to this submission, please contact me on 03 9347 1900 or email sworn@planning.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



Stuart Worn
Executive Officer

Planning Institute Australia, Victorian Division

Parliamentary Inquiry into Environmental Design and Public Health in Victoria

**Submission by the Planning Institute of Australia
*Victorian Division***

June 2011

Prepared for: Environment and Planning Committee

Planning Institute Australia
Victorian Division



Contact Information

Stuart Worn
Executive Officer, PIA Victorian Division

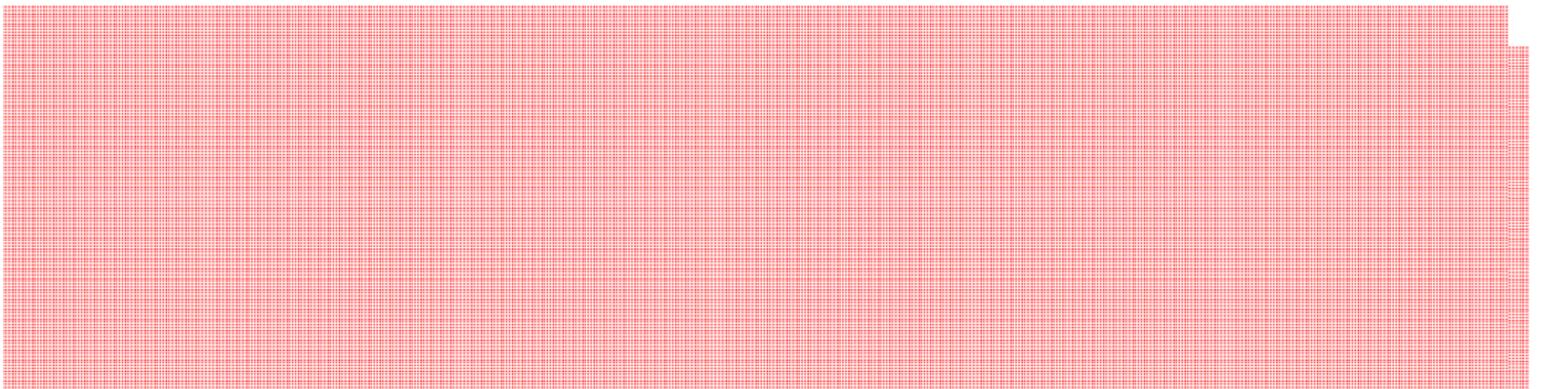
Signed

.....
Dated: 04 07 2011

PIA VICTORIAN DIVISION

G-05, 60 Leicester Street
Carlton VIC 3053
PO Box 675
Carlton South 3053
Telephone: (03) 9347 1900
Facsimile: (03) 9347 2900
Email: vic@planning.org.au
Web: www.planning.org.au/vic

ABN 11 802 663 785



The Planning Institute of Australia's (PIA) Victorian Division welcomes the opportunity to make a submission into to the Environment and Planning Committee's *Inquiry into Environmental Design and Public Health*. Please note that the Planning Institute is also co-ordinating a more extensive joint submission with other interested stakeholders, which addresses each term of reference in detail. The purpose of this submission is to outline PIA's experience in this field, and highlight some key opportunities this Inquiry has to affect change.

Firstly, PIA recommends that the phrases 'environmental design' and 'environmental planning' be replaced with the terms 'land-use planning and design', as this is the common terminology used within the planning industry. The term 'environmental planning' creates the misconception that you are referring to the natural physical environment rather than all aspects of planning.

PIA has a strong history of advocacy and policy work dedicated specifically to using land-use planning to improve the health and wellbeing of communities. The work began to gain some momentum in 2002, when PIA Victoria worked with VicHealth and the Department of Human Services organising seminars for planning and health professionals and other interested people in Melbourne and regional areas on the theme "Planning and Health: Building Sustainable Links".

In August 2002, a closer working relationship between PIA (Vic) and VicHealth was established, with the objective of building a clear link between planning and health promotion. As a result of this initiative PIA Victoria was the recipient of a number of grants over the ensuing years which enabled this project to continue under the title of 'Planning for Health and Wellbeing' (PH&WB). This project has since been responsible for promoting healthy built environments to the planning and built environment professions and enhancing their capacity to work towards better health and wellbeing outcomes. The project has also been working to enhance health professionals' understanding of the planning system in Victoria so they can proactively utilise this as a further means of promoting good health outcomes. The key projects objectives were:

- Increase the number of planners aware of and advocating for the integration of planning and health.
- Increase the capacity of planners to influence local urban design so that health is "planned in" rather than "planned out".
- Gather evidence of good planning for health and wellbeing, including literature and case studies, collated and disseminated to planners.
- Identify key planning and design elements that will lead to greater health and social benefits for the community.

The Planning for Health and Wellbeing project then led to the ‘Putting Health at the Centre of Planning’ advocacy campaign. In researching and developing this campaign, 6 key priorities for planners to impact on health outcomes were identified; Social inclusion, physical activity, food, childhood health, safety and mental health (see Figure 1). These elements are addressed in more detail in the joint submission PIA has submitted to the committee.

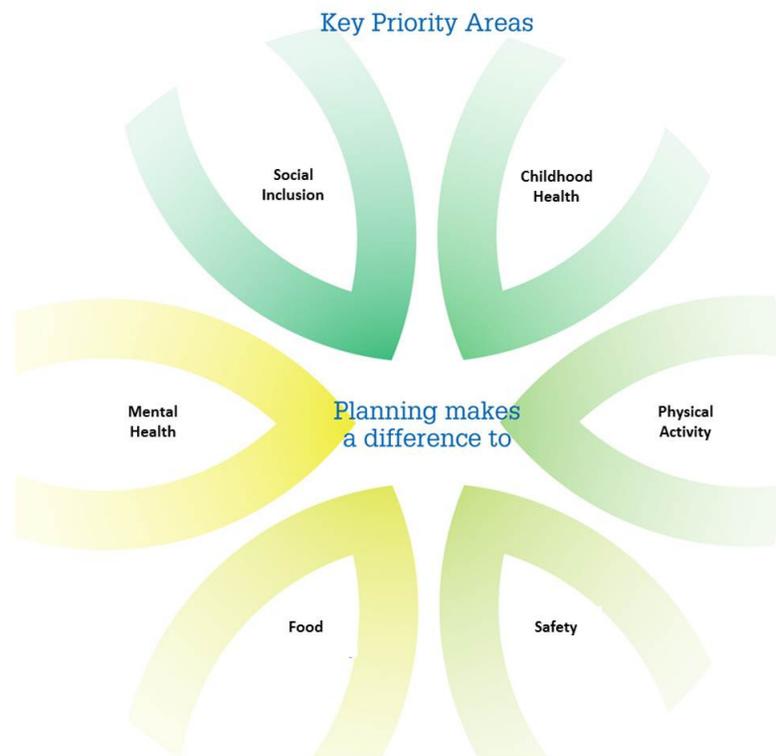


Figure 1: Putting Health at the Centre of Planning Key Priority Areas

As an important part of these projects and campaigns, PIA saw that it was important to lead by example, and partnered with the Growth Areas Authority and Stockland to create a demonstration project. The project is a greenfield development which has been specifically planned to enhance the health and wellbeing of its residents. PIA would like to present on Selandra Rise to the Environment and Planning Committee in person as a part of the Institute’s response to this Inquiry.

The result of consolidating all of these activities as the diagram (highlighted in Figure 2, below) which describes the three main avenues by which this project sought to effect change; Leadership, Education and Advocacy. Each of these three approaches will only be effective, however, when they arise from a solid base of evidence.



Figure 2: Approach to affecting change

During the process of researching these campaigns and developing Selandra Rise, PIA had the opportunity to review a wide range of policy and practice relating to the link between land-use planning and public health. This review revealed a distinct gap in the existing measures currently being employed to incorporate health outcomes into the planning process – none of them are statutory requirements. This means that at this point in time, prioritising the health and wellbeing of the community in planning decisions is an optional extra. Therefore, while Selandra Rise is an important opportunity to lead by example and create non-regulatory incentives, this Inquiry provides an opportunity to address the statutory gaps in Victoria’s planning system addressing health. Again, this issue is outlined in more detail in the joint submission.

Land-use planning for public health has come a long way since PIA began the Planning for Health and Wellbeing project in 2002. Planning has even moved around State Government departments – it originally sat within the Department of Sustainability and Environment as an environmental issue. It was then moved to the Department of Infrastructure (now called the Department of Transport) as it was considered an infrastructure issue. It has now moved closer to the true heart of the issue – planning is essentially a people issue, and as such lies within the Department of Planning and Community Development. Whilst this is a move in the right direction, in order to achieve a holistic approach to preventative health, local and state government, and the planning and development industry all need to adopt the notion that ‘health is everybody’s business’.

PIA Victoria would like to commend the initiative of this Inquiry into taking an important step towards improving the health and wellbeing of all Victorians. PIA would welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission in greater detail. To arrange a meeting, or for more information, please contact the PIA Victorian Executive Officer, Stuart Worn, on (03) 9347 1900 or at sworn@planning.org.au.