



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Select Committee on Public Land Development

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Legislative Council Select Committee on
Public Land Development,
Parliament of Victoria,
Spring Street,
MELBOURNE, VIC. 3002

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Attn: Mr Richard Willis

Dear Sir,

INQUIRY INTO THE SALE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LAND AND OPEN SPACE IN VICTORIA

I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide a submission to the Select Committee of the Legislative Council for its inquiry into the sale and development of public land and open space in Victoria.

It is my understanding that the Committee will inquire into:

- the sale or alienation of public land for development;
- the sale or alienation of public open space for purposes of private development; and
- the sale or alienation of public land for development and the relationship to the Victorian Government's Melbourne 2030 policy and Green Wedges.

MY UNDERSTANDING OF PUBLIC LAND AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

It is my understanding that public land and public open space under consideration of this inquiry could be as follows:

- land owned and managed by a Council;
- land owned by other Government Agencies and managed by a Council;
- land owned and managed by other State Government Agencies which is currently zoned as public open space; and
- land owned and managed by Melbourne Water which is set aside for water and sewerage supply, drainage and flood management purposes.

Accordingly, the land is either owned by the State Government and its varied departments or agencies and local government for the Victorian community.

MELBOURNE 2030 & GREEN WEDGES

The State Government's Melbourne 2030 strategy in respect of public open space is clear in Direction 5, Policy 5.6 - "Improve the quality and distribution of local open space and ensure long-term protection of public open space" and Direction 5, Policy 5.7 - "Rectify gaps in the network of metropolitan open space by creating new parks and ensure major open-space corridors are protected and enhanced".

The State Government's Melbourne 2030 Green Wedge strategy is clear in Direction 2, Policy 2.4 - "Protect the green wedges of metropolitan Melbourne from inappropriate development".

OBJECTION

The sale or alienation of any such land should not be considered or permitted as it does not comply with the State Government's Melbourne 2030 and Green Wedge strategies. The land is not a commodity to sell or develop, but should be preserved and a revised strategy be developed with community consultation and which includes privately held land directly affected by the Melbourne 2030 and Green Wedge strategies. To encourage a population increase of one million within the Melbourne metropolitan area up to 2030, without appropriate provision for and protection of existing public open space does not accord with the policies noted above and surely one would think public open space must be preserved.

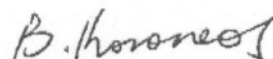
It should be considered that the State Government owned land holdings are minor in area to that of privately owned holdings and the establishment of a rigid urban growth boundary has had the affect of significantly increasing land prices. The State Government appears to have become a land speculator seeking to realize the highest value for financial gain at the expense of public and social considerations. If the sale or alienation of such land is permitted, it is then lost forever. The State Government's offset strategy is to burden the private land owner by dictating what can and can not be done with their land ie: urban growth boundary and green wedge doctrine. This should not be tolerated.

The State Government owned land has been funded by the taxpayer and this includes private land owners who have also been dictated to by the State Government's Melbourne 2030 and Green Wedge strategies. Therefore they have funded the policies of the State Government twice for the betterment of the community without adequate compensation.

Additionally, some of the land in question for sale or alienation will have been set aside in the past for provision of servicing and other infrastructure. If land were to be sold off, such servicing strategies may be compromised and it may cost the community more to develop and implement other servicing and infrastructure strategies.

In concluding, I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. Open space will become scarce if the sale or alienation of public land and open space is permitted. The State Government dictates to the public a policy of increased densities and creation of activity centres and private land owner compliance with Melbourne 2030 and Green Wedge strategies. It is only appropriate that the State Government also follows its own mantra or alters its Melbourne 2030 and Green Wedge policies.

Yours sincerely,



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