Victorian Government Response

to the

Outer Suburban/Interface Services and
Development Committee

Inquiry into Sustainable
Urban Design for New
Communities in Outer
Suburban Areas

April 2005
Introduction

On 3 June 2003 the Victorian Legislative Assembly requested that the Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee undertake an Inquiry into Sustainable Urban Design for New Communities in Outer Suburban Areas.

The terms of reference were: to identify current practice and best practice in urban design for new communities; to investigate the Pride of Place program; and to investigate the contribution of urban design to the achievement of the Victorian Greenhouse Strategy 2002 and Melbourne 2030 objectives.

The Committee commenced the Inquiry on 4 August 2003 with the release of a discussion paper in December 2003. The final report of the Inquiry was presented to the Victorian Parliament in October 2004. The report contains 39 recommendations based on findings to the terms of reference referred to the Committee by the Legislative Assembly.

Sustainable urban design incorporates principles that address efficiencies in the use of land, water, energy and transport, while fostering integration and liveability through better design. Such design emphasises accessibility, reduced car-dependency, road safety, community safety, and an appropriate mix of affordable housing, renewable energy and public open space.

The Committee has applied sustainability principles to urban design, recognising the particular challenges for new communities in outer suburban areas. The Committee's report acknowledges the complexity of sustainability issues and suggests that there is no single method to ensure sustainable urban design is adopted. The Committee's final report reflects the need to evaluate and manage the impacts that outer-suburban growth may have on the environment, the community and the economy.

The Victorian Government welcomes the work of the Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee in producing the report. The Committee's recommendations complement the Government's policies and programs that promote sustainable urban design, with particular reference to the challenges and opportunities for new communities in outer suburban areas.

The Government is pleased to support or support in principle all of the Committee's recommendations. The term 'support in principle' is used where the Government agrees with the intent of a recommendation but does not necessarily agree with the method proposed by the Committee, particularly where new funding is proposed or where the Government has already taken action. The term 'support' is used where the Government has already implemented a recommendation or where the Government has already made a commitment to do so in the future.

The Victorian Government has advanced sustainable urban design principles in its blueprint for Melbourne's future - Melbourne 2030 - planning for sustainable growth, to manage growth and change across metropolitan Melbourne and the surrounding region.
By the year 2030, Melbourne is expected to grow by up to one million people and accommodate up to 620,000 new households. Much of this growth will occur in designated growth areas in Melbourne's outer suburbs. Melbourne 2030 sets clear limits to outer-suburban development while promoting better housing design, public transport links, services and public open space in these areas.

The Victorian Government has successfully developed and implemented many initiatives to address issues of sustainable urban design. The initiatives include: the Victorian Greenhouse Strategy and related programs, Our Water Our Future 2004, the Sustainability in the Built Environment project, the Smart Water Fund and the TravelSmart program.

Victoria is considered a leader in delivering sustainability outcomes through the development approvals process. It is the first State to introduce a 5 Star energy efficiency requirement plus water efficiency measures through the Building Code of Australia and Plumbing Regulations.

Victoria is also a leader in developing Neighbourhood Principles to drive liveability and sustainability. The Principles, which are contained in Melbourne 2030, have been incorporated into a draft amendment to clause 56 of the Victoria Planning Provisions. The proposed Sustainable Neighbourhood Provisions cover densities, lot orientation, access, good pedestrian networks, safety, well-located shopping, services, and community facilities. The draft Principles are an important part of the Government’s strategy to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The Committee’s report examines housing affordability and the need to locate affordable and 'visitable' housing close to employment areas, public transport and community services. The Government has a number of programs to facilitate economic development in outer suburban areas through the Melbourne 2030 Growth Area Review process. The Office of Housing has strategies to increase housing stock close to employment and community services in strategic locations across the city.

Expanding the provision of affordable housing across the city is a priority for the Victorian Government. Affordable housing for low income families and people with a disability will be integrated with new private housing developments, rather than segregated.

The Victorian Government thanks the Committee for its efforts in undertaking the Inquiry and is grateful for the Committee’s work.
Recommendation 1
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government review the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to ensure that consideration of economic, social and environmental issues are mandatory requirements in the development of amendments to planning schemes.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE

The Government supports the consideration of economic, social and environmental issues in the development of amendments to planning schemes, but does not support an amendment to the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (P&E Act).

The P&E Act provides a clear head of power for environmental, social and economic issues to be taken into account in planning scheme amendments. The objectives of the State Planning Policy Framework within the Victoria Planning Provisions ensure that the effects on the environment are considered, and provide explicitly for consideration of social and economic effects when decisions are made about the use and development of land. The Committee has not demonstrated that the current provisions have resulted in inadequate consideration of social and economic issues such as to justify an amendment to the P&E Act.

The Minister’s Direction No. 11, made under section 12(2)(a) of the P&E Act has the effect of requiring planning authorities to document their consideration of social and economic effects. The Strategic Assessment Guidelines for Planning Scheme Amendments assists planning authorities with implementing the Direction. It clearly sets out the requirement that relevant environmental, social and economic effects be considered in the preparation and assessment of planning scheme amendments.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment will explore legislative and non-legislative mechanisms and opportunities for an enhanced approach to considering economic, social and environmental issues in planning scheme amendments.

Recommendation 2
The Committee recommends the Department of Sustainability and Environment promote public discussion and consultation with councils, the public and community and industry groups, to better determine the urban design/form and infrastructure provision requirements for people living in Melbourne’s outer suburbs.

SUPPORT

The Department of Sustainability and Environment, through Melbourne 2030 Committees for Smart Growth is actively engaging councils, industry groups and members of the public in the development of future strategic land use and development plans in the five designated growth areas (Wyndham, Casey, Melton-Caroline Springs, Whittlesea and Hume). Strong urban design and urban forms that support the identified needs of local communities feature strongly in the Melbourne 2030 planning processes.
Recommendation 3
The Committee recommends that a Victorian Government funded study be undertaken to examine the barriers to the implementation and take-up rate of renewable energy technologies.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE - ALREADY ACTIONED
The Government has identified barriers to the implementation and take up of renewable energy technologies as part of the Victorian Greenhouse Strategy and associated programs to promote renewable energy technologies.

The Victorian Greenhouse Strategy 2002 identifies constraints on the development of renewable energy resources, and outlines actions to address those constraints and promote increased take up of renewable energy technologies. The Government has set a target that by 2010, ten per cent of Victoria's electricity consumption will be from renewable energy sources. Actions taken under the Strategy include the marketing of Green Power schemes by energy retailers, establishes an $8 million Renewable Energy Support Fund and the Solar Hot Water Rebate Scheme.

The Government has established other programs to facilitate the expansion of the renewable energy industry. For example:

- Facilitating the development of up to 1000 Mega Watts of wind energy in appropriate locations by 2006.
- Working with other States and Territories to drive the growth of renewable energy through cooperative action, including the consideration of a State and Territory-based mandatory renewable energy target.

As part of the Government's Renewable Energy Strategy for Victoria, barriers to renewable energy investment are being investigated and measures to facilitate further growth of the industry are being identified. Future studies will consult with developers and builders who are currently considering renewable energy technologies in new developments.

Recommendation 4
In order to minimise overlap and duplication, the Committee recommends national coordination of an energy efficiency rating tool for residential buildings.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE
The Victorian Government is a national leader in adopting five star energy efficiency requirements for residential buildings. The Victorian Government is committed to developing an energy efficiency strategy during 2005, which will inform its position in the national process.

The Government is playing a leadership role in the development of a national energy efficiency rating tool through the National Framework for Energy Efficiency (NFEE). National coordination provides the parameters and the protocols to ensure that the rating tools support comparable results in every climate zone or State they are used.
Energy efficiency rating tools for residential buildings are coordinated nationally under the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS), which is administered by the Ministerial Council for Energy. Building administrations work closely with NatHERS through the Australian Building Codes Board.

Recommendation 5
Further to Recommendation 4, the Committee recommends that the potential of BASIX be further investigated by the Victorian Government, with a view for its adoption as a uniform rating tool incorporating the stormwater, site ecology, transport and recyclables as indices, in addition to the current water and energy ratings.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE
The Victorian Government supports in principle a uniform sustainability rating tool. However, BASIX is a New South Wales Government sustainability assessment tool, designed for a different regulatory approvals framework from Victoria.

Victoria is considered a leader in delivering sustainability outcomes through the development approvals process. It is the first state to introduce a five Star energy efficiency standard plus water measures through the Building Code of Australia and Plumbing Regulations.

The DSE and key stakeholders have developed a framework to provide a consistent and performance based approach to achieving sustainability in the built environment through the Sustainability in the Built Environment project.

As part of the project a draft computer-based assessment tool has been developed. It reflects the Victorian planning and building approvals framework and includes the Victoria Government's performance based targets for energy and water saving (including stormwater). The tool is partly based on the Port Phillip City Council's 'Scorecard' approach.

DSE undertook a preliminary analysis of BASIX, particularly in terms of stakeholder views, its useability, cost and maintenance. The draft Victorian assessment tool is informed by the BASIX approach.

The proposed Victorian assessment tool has been developed in concert with the Building Commission, the Sustainable Energy Authority, and key stakeholders such as the Housing Industry Association. Implementation of the draft assessment tool is being trialled with input from key development industry and local government stakeholders.

The Government does not support incorporating site ecology, transport and recyclables into the assessment tool at this time due to the lack of accepted performance measures.
Recommendation 6
The Committee recommends that inclusive and accessible design be given serious consideration by the Victorian Government to bring Victorian standards in line with UK standards, in relation to visitability.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE
The Government supports the achievement of high visitability standards through building design. Melbourne 2030 outlines principles of urban design that include accessibility.

The Government supports the work being done at a national level by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) to introduce accessibility into the Building Code of Australia. The ABCB will refer to the UK standards in the development of the proposed standards.

The Government has taken a national leadership role on housing accessibility by funding and managing the national research project on housing accessibility. The Building Commission and the ABCB have jointly funded research that will provide a significant resource for government and industry to plan the future supply of accessible housing. The research will evaluate the need for accessible forms of housing and detail options available to stimulate appropriate supply.

Recommendation 7
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government investigate the economic and social viability of incorporating Australian Standard 4299 - Adaptable Housing (1995) into the Victorian Building Regulations as a requirement for all new housing in Victoria.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE - PENDING THE RESULTS OF CURRENT NATIONAL RESEARCH INTO HOUSING ACCESSIBILITY
The Government will consider investigating the economic and social costs and benefits of providing for adaptable housing in building regulations in conjunction with its consideration of the national research on housing accessibility.

The recent Productivity Commission Inquiry into Housing Affordability emphasises the importance of maintaining nationally consistent regulations in the housing sector. The current national research project on housing accessibility will establish information about the current and future need for accessible housing. It will identify a range of government interventions and the probable costs and benefits. A key component of the research is the identification of building standards that could be applied in these interventions.

The completion of the national research on housing accessibility will inform government decisions in respect to appropriate strategies and standards of access for the future.

In particular, the standards of access identified in the housing research will provide a solid foundation to undertake a more detailed investigation of the economic and social costs and benefits of providing for accessible housing in building regulations. The research is due to be completed in October 2005.
Recommendation 8
Following from Recommendation 7, in order to enhance current housing stock and provide an example for industry, the Committee recommends that all levels of Government determine the economic and social viability of making future public housing stock accessible and adaptable (according to Australian Standard 4299: 1995).

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE


The Office of Housing concluded that the prescriptive nature of the Standard could reduce its ability to provide further opportunities in developing affordable accessible housing through innovative design.

The Office of Housing has implemented key elements of AS 4299: 1995 that are intended to provide best value and practical application of significant elements to meet the general needs of public tenants. Any proposed wholesale introduction of AS 4299 into building regulations would be subject to a rigorous impact study to determine potential impact on the housing industry and on public housing in particular.

Recommendation 9
The Committee recommends that accessibility be considered a key element of urban design by all levels of government when developing urban design frameworks and community development plans. Further to this, the Committee recommends that it be a requirement of industry to incorporate accessibility into their site overlay when master-planning a new development estate.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE

Accessibility principles in the design of new suburbs are being supported through the DSE Sustainable Neighbourhoods project.


The Government will continue to work with the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) to pursue uniform implementation of accessibility standards through the Building Code of Australia, which is implemented under the Victorian Building Regulations.
Recommendation 10
The Committee recommends that accessibility be added to the rating indices of all national rating tools currently in operation. Following from the Committee's Recommendation 5, that the potential of BASIX be investigated for adoption as a nationwide rating tool, the Committee especially recommends that accessibility be incorporated into BASIX.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE - THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF ACHIEVING ACCESSIBILITY IS BEING INVESTIGATED BY THE NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT INTO HOUSING ACCESSIBILITY.

The sustainability rating tools currently in operation have not yet been established to achieve their initial purpose, and adding issues such as accessibility at this stage may unnecessarily complicate them.

The Building Regulations and the Building Code of Australia as adopted in Victoria, provide an effective way of achieving the right technical outcomes in a consistent manner throughout the State. Proposed changes to the Building Code of Australia to align it with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 will be a positive step to improving accessibility requirements in building regulations.

As indicated in the response to recommendation 6, the Government has provided leadership in promoting housing accessibility standards by jointly funding related research through the Building Commission with the Australian Building Codes Board. The research will provide an important basis for government and industry to plan for the future supply of accessible housing.

Recommendation 11
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government establish and consider funding further pilot projects to advance the use of third pipe systems.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE

The Government supports funding projects to advance the use of third pipe systems, but it does not support further funding for pilot projects. The Government is working with local government, water authorities and developers to support the introduction of third pipe systems as part of implementing the Victorian Government's Our Water Our Future 2004.

The cost of a third pipe system can be significant, particularly where a new development is a long distance from treatment plants. Energy considerations and resource demand also need to be considered to provide a complete picture of the long term sustainability of third pipe systems.

Victorian urban water authorities are required to assess opportunities for use of alternative water supplies (recycled water, stormwater, rainwater and greywater) as part of developing their Water Supply-Demand Strategies.
Third pipe systems are being incorporated into greenfield developments at:

- 'Aurora', Epping North (served by a new local treatment plant) by VicUrban;
- 'Sandhurst Estate' (served by a new water reclamation plant adjacent to the Eastern Treatment Plant) at Skye; and
- 'Eynesbury Township' near Melton which will also feature a sustainable water management system that incorporates a cogeneration plant (to reduce greenhouse gas emissions) and will lead to a 50 per cent reduction in the amount of potable water required for the township compared to traditional servicing methods.

**Recommendation 12**
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government undertake a study into the long term savings and broader social gains of water recycling technologies, particularly third pipe systems.

**SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE**

The Victorian Government has already undertaken substantial research into Melbourne's water systems and the current status of water recycling, with information about the economic, social and environmental benefits and costs (Green Paper Technical Paper No. 1 - Water Recycling Scenarios for Melbourne, September 2003).

Opportunities for water recycling are continuously being assessed by water authorities on a project by project basis, and under a range of regulatory mechanisms which facilitate authorities to consider the entire water cycle and water demand and supply balance for particular regions. These include the Water Supply-Demand Strategies, Statement of Obligations and EPA discharge licence requirements. In 2004, metropolitan water authorities prepared a joint Water Conservation and Recycling Plan, which provided input to their Water Plans.

Water Authorities and the Victorian Government are encouraging research and development of recycling technology through the Smart Water Fund. The fund seeks to encourage and facilitate the adoption of improved resource management.

**Recommendation 13**
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government undertake research into the feasibility of aquifer storage as an alternative to traditional water storage facilities for urban developments in Victoria.

**SUPPORT**

The Victorian Government already has a program in place to fund research into aquifer storage as an alternative to traditional water storage facilities. The investigation is being carried out by the CSIRO through the Victorian Government's Smart Water Fund.

Initially a field trial will focus on metropolitan Melbourne. The project is aiming to develop a draft code of practice suitable for using aquifers for storage and recovery across the State.
Melbourne Water is also working with a residential land developer in the Mernda area to assess the viability of aquifer storage of storm-water for later retrieval for irrigation purposes.

The Victorian Government Stormwater and Urban Water Conservation Fund also provides funding for local-scale stormwater reuse projects, which could include aquifer storage and recovery proposals.

**Recommendation 14**
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government undertake a review of s.18 of the Subdivisions Act 1988 with a view to increasing the minimum percentage of subdividable land contributed to public open space to 10 per cent from the current maximum of 5 per cent.

**SUPPORT THE PRINCIPLE OF IMPROVED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND NOTE THE CAPACITY EXISTS FOR INCREASED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES VIA DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS UNDER THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987.**

The Victorian Government supports local councils specifying open space requirements that are appropriate to local circumstances through planning schemes.

There are three separate methods available to councils for public open space contributions in Victoria:

- A percentage contribution under the Subdivision Act 1988 (not exceeding 5 per cent)
- A percentage contribution under Clause 52.01 in all Victorian Planning Schemes (can be greater than 5 per cent)
- A percentage contribution under a Development Contributions Plan approved under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (can be greater than 5 per cent)

The 5 per cent requirement in the Subdivisions Act 1988 only applies where there is no requirement specified in a planning scheme. If a particular situation warrants contributing a higher percentage of land, a planning scheme can set an appropriate percentage. This approach allows local councils to specify an alternative open space requirement to respond to local circumstances, through a public contestable process.

It is incumbent on all councils, as planning authorities under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, to provide sound, strategic and coordinated planning of the use and development of land in their area.

Where this involves providing more than 5 per cent public open space to meet the needs of the community, the council is required to exhibit such a proposal so that all relevant social, economic and environmental matters can be publicly debated and considered, if necessary, by an independent panel appointed by the Minister for Planning.
The Government also acknowledges that there is current pressure on the availability of some forms of open space in established areas. DVC and DSE have commenced discussions to consider potential standards for the determination of the optimum provision of open space for active recreation and organised sport. Any additional funding required to implement this recommendation will be sought through the normal budget process and considered against competing government priorities.

One of the initiatives in *Melbourne 2030 - planning for sustainable growth* is to provide long-term planning protection to meet demand for future open space, until land can be acquired and developed for public uses in key areas that include: Plenty Gorge Parklands; Yarra Valley Parklands; Cardinia Creek Parklands; Heatherton/Dingley ‘Sandbelt’ Parklands and Dandenong Valley Parklands.

*Melbourne 2030 Committees for Smart Growth* are considering adequate provision of public open space.

**Recommendation 15**

The Committee recommends that the planning and development of public space, particularly public open space by local municipalities requires broad community consultation. This consultation should be carried out with a range of groups including young people, disabled and the elderly to ensure facilities and activities within public open space are accessible to all community members.

**SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE**

Planning decisions and associated consultation processes are generally matters for local councils. Nevertheless, the Victorian Government recognises the need for broad community consultation in the planning and development of public open space.

During 2004 and 2005 the *Committees for Smart Growth*, which are currently leading the strategic studies to underpin the development of growth area plans, have undertaken community consultations. Public open space has been a key issue for discussion.

The draft Sustainable Neighbourhood Provisions prepared as part of the review of the Victoria Planning Provisions requires footpaths and shared paths, including those in public open spaces, to meet the requirements of the Federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The public open space standard also requires provision of seating and shaded areas, and promotes a safe and secure environment for users.
Recommendation 16
The Committee recommends the development of new open spaces, as outlined in initiative 5.7.1 and 5.7.2 of Melbourne 2030, involve a comprehensive consultation process with the Victorian community, to ascertain and incorporate their views for facilities to be contained and developed within the metropolitan park network.

SUPPORT
In undertaking planning for new regional parks, as outlined in initiative 5.7.1 and 5.7.2 in Melbourne 2030, Parks Victoria will consult with a diverse cross section of the community. Parks Victoria recognises that public land managers need to better understand recreation and leisure trends in order to plan effectively for a changing community.

Parks Victoria recognises the need to consult with a range of interested people, including indigenous people and people of non-English speaking background to ensure their particular needs and connections to public open spaces are considered.

Comprehensive consultation processes will be undertaken with the Victorian community, recognising the particular interest in these decisions of communities in the vicinity of the new public open spaces.

Recommendation 17
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of car use reduction strategies operating overseas and identify the program(s) that are best suited to Melbourne's Interface council areas.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE - A RANGE OF PROGRAMS ARE ALREADY IN PLACE
The Government has made significant commitments to pursue car use reduction strategies. An evaluation of car use reduction strategies operating overseas would be supported only if such a study did not duplicate work already undertaken in Victoria or nationally, which is not demonstrated in the Committee's report.

The Transport Connections Program, introduced jointly by the Department of Human Services, the Department of Infrastructure and the Department of Education and Training, focuses on improving access and mobility for transport-disadvantaged communities. The program aims to assist communities to use public transport, community transport and car pooling. The initiatives will improve access and mobility.

It is important to wait until these activities are concluded and the findings from them are known and can be considered for their application to outer suburban car use reduction strategies.
The draft Sustainable Neighbourhood Provisions, prepared as part of the review of the Victoria Planning Provisions, propose that greenhouse issues be considered more closely in the design of residential subdivisions, including reduced car use by designing more pedestrian friendly neighbourhoods - with public transport easier to use, and walking and cycling being more realistic options in daily life.

Other relevant initiatives in Melbourne 2030 include: requiring integrated transport plans for all new major residential, commercial and industrial developments; developing design criteria for public transport services in new development areas; and developing performance standards for pedestrian and cycling access to activity centres.

The Victorian Government has set a target that, by the year 2020, 20 per cent of motorised trips in Melbourne will take place on public transport. The programs contained in the Metropolitan Transport Plan will lay the foundation for future progress towards this target.

Recommendation 18
The Committee recommends the Federal Government take a leadership role in hydrogen fuel cell technology and for the Victorian Government to closely monitor developments in this area.

SUPPORT
The Government is monitoring the developments in hydrogen fuel cell technology, including its commercial potential, from the perspective of investment opportunities for industry and the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector.

Irrespective of whether the Federal Government pursues a policy on hydrogen fuel cells, the Victorian Government will consider the role it needs to play in promoting alternative transport fuels and technologies.

Recommendation 19
The Committee recommends the Department of Infrastructure extend the TravelSmart program in Victoria, in addition to investigating other measures that are recognised as bringing about driver behavioural changes and reducing 'car dependence'.

SUPPORT
TravelSmart seeks to achieve sustained change in personal travel behaviour from single car occupant modes to more sustainable modes of transport like public transport, walking and cycling, car pooling and travel substitution (e.g. teleworking).

In 2004, the TravelSmart communities program was rolled out to 30,000 households in Darebin and in 2005 will be extended to a further 50,000 households in Moonee Valley and Maribyrnong.

The Metropolitan Transport Plan - Linking Melbourne recognises the importance of TravelSmart and other travel demand management tools. Linking Melbourne aims to extend the TravelSmart communities program over the next 10 years.
Any additional funding required to extend this program will be sought through the normal budget process and considered against competing government priorities. In addition to the communities program, the Department of Infrastructure (Dol) is working with councils, schools, universities and workplaces to develop travel demand management tools targeted at trip destinations.

Guidelines for Integrated Transport Plans to be used by councils for use in regional, local and site specific planning as outlined in Direction 8.4 of Melbourne 2030, are being prepared by Dol in consultation with stakeholders. In its proposed role as a referral authority, Dol will consider integrated transport plans that are prepared by developers.

Recommendation 20
The Committee recommends that provisions of the Liveable Neighbourhoods Community Design Guide should be reviewed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Infrastructure for possible inclusion in the Victorian Planning Framework.

SUPPORT
The Government is addressing this recommendation as part of the review of the residential subdivision provisions of the Victoria Planning Provisions. The draft Sustainable Neighbourhoods Provisions propose technical performance standards promoting compact and pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods that provide access to public transport and community services.

The Liveable Neighbourhoods guidelines have been thoroughly reviewed in the development of draft provisions for the Victorian Sustainable Neighbourhoods Code.

Recommendation 21
The Committee recommends the Department of Infrastructure undertake research to investigate best practice examples in other Australian jurisdictions, relating to accessible electronic passenger timetables, route maps and seals and shelters located in key transit locations. The Committee further recommends the Department of Infrastructure report on how these features can best be introduced into new and expanding communities serviced by public transport.

SUPPORT
The Department of Infrastructure (Dol) monitors developments in service delivery and technology in other jurisdictions, both in Australia and internationally. In conjunction with Metlink and public transport operators, Dol monitors best practice in customer services, including information services and passenger facilities.

Dol has commenced a program to improve its partnership with local government on a range of local transport issues, including the sharing of best practice in public transport passenger information, signs and facilities (such as shelters).
Recommendation 22
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government work with the Federal Government to provide additional funding for public transport within outer suburban and interface areas.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE

The Victorian Government, along with other States and Territories through the Australian Transport Council, continues to argue that the Federal Government needs to directly incorporate the critical interaction between freight and passenger transport, including public transport corridors, in the overall transport task considered under AusLink.

Any additional funding required to implement this recommendation will be sought through the normal budget process and considered against competing government priorities.

Recommendation 23
The Committee recommends a feasibility study be undertaken into the coordination between different public transport modes and should include specific reference to services, availability, frequency and route and timetable extensions in interface areas.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE

The Metropolitan Transport Plan - Linking Melbourne recognises the need for coordination of different public transport modes in Strategy 2.3 - Improve service coordination, integration and customer interface. Priority actions under the initiative include the progressive improvement of timetable coordination, better facilities for real-time passenger information and delivery of a further five year modal interchange program, following the Connecting Transport Services program.

The first five years of the program saw upgrades to facilities at 40 Victorian country locations and 43 metropolitan locations. The program will be supported by increased opportunities for 'Park and Ride' at a number of train stations.

The Department of Infrastructure is currently working with the interface councils to involve them in a series of detailed 'local area' reviews of bus services in relevant areas. The reviews take into account the availability and level of services in interface areas that include geographic spread, frequency and hours of operation.
**Recommendation 24**
The Committee recommends the Department of Infrastructure and the Department of Human Services, in conjunction with the Municipal Association of Victoria interface group of councils, undertake an assessment to determine the availability of, and demand for, local buses that could be used during off peak times as cross suburban passenger or community services buses.

**SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE**

The transport needs of the growing areas of Melbourne are a major theme of the Metropolitan Transport Plan - Linking Melbourne. This part of the Plan includes a number of strategies to improve public transport access in outer Melbourne (especially Strategies 3.2 and 3.3) with a particular focus on the need to expand bus services in the interface areas.

The Department of Infrastructure has been working with the interface councils, the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Government Association on a series of detailed 'local area' reviews of bus services in outer Melbourne suburbs. The reviews will focus on ensuring that bus services are tailored to meet local needs.

The three-year Transport Connections Program, jointly sponsored by DOI, DHS and the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Victorian Communities has nine projects that are looking at local needs and working with public and community transport providers to coordinate services and make better use of existing vehicles.

A Multi-Agency Policy Team is addressing access and mobility in rural areas. It aims to consider ways to overcome barriers to the provision of improved transport access for people living in rural and remote communities, and in Melbourne's interface areas.

**Recommendation 25**
The Committee recommends the integration of public transport services be a mandatory requirement for the development of new communities in outer suburban areas.

**SUPPORT**

The integration of transport and land use planning is a major theme of Melbourne 2030, especially for the growing areas of Melbourne. The Government's policy will require integrated transport plans to be prepared by developers for all major developments in the metropolitan area. Integrated transport should address the needs of both motorised and non-motorised modes of transport.

Further, Linking Melbourne: Metropolitan Transport Plan details priority actions for increasing access via public transport in middle and outer suburban areas.
One of these priorities is ensuring that local developments support local bus services by:

- Developing and implementing design guidelines to ensure that the design of new residential developments supports the delivery of public transport and that developments are configured to allow for efficient bus operations;
- Defining requirements for integrated transport plans prepared by developers for all major developments in accordance with State government policies. Integrated transport plans for Greenfield developments will be expected to assess and document public transport requirements; and
- Increasing the extent to which public transport capital works and services are provided under Development Contribution Plans.

Outer metropolitan growth has been focussed into five designated growth areas for which planning is underway (see response to Recommendation 2). The designated growth areas are located around existing rail corridors and the urban form will be designed in such a way as to encourage public transport use. This will include activity centres with high levels of access for public transport and residential street layouts that support bus services.

The Department of Infrastructure will become a referral authority under the Victoria Planning Provisions, to enable the Director of Public Transport to ensure better integration of public transport and land use planning outcomes.

**Recommendation 26**

The Committee recommends VicRoads, in conjunction with the Department of Infrastructure, undertake an evaluation of the Urban Safety Management approach to determine its applicability in the development of new communities in outer suburban Melbourne.

**SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE**

VicRoads and the Department of Infrastructure will evaluate the role of an urban safety management approach in the context of existing road safety strategies and programs.

Programs that currently exist include:

- *arrive alive!* 2002-07, Victoria’s road safety strategy;
- the Safe System approach; and
- partnership activities with local governments and community road safety councils.
Recommendation 27
The Committee recommends the SafeRoads' Safer Urban Environments - Road Safety and Land Use Planning Guide be used by all groups associated with the planning and development of new communities. The Committee also recommends VicRoads, in conjunction with its road safety partners involved in the guide’s development, review and update the guide on an annual basis.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE
The Victorian Government supports the use of the SafeRoads' Safer Urban Environments - Road Safety and Land Use Planning Guide by groups associated with the planning and development of new communities. VicRoads, in conjunction with its road safety partners, has undertaken to review and update the Guide every three years or sooner if required.

Recommendation 28
The Committee further recommends the Safer Urban Environments - Road Safety and Land Use Planning Guide is used by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal as a reference document when ruling on applications for review referred to the Tribunal.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE
The Victorian Government supports in principle the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) using the Safer Urban Environments - Road Safety and Land Use Planning Guide as a reference document. However, the decision to refer to the Guide is a matter for VCAT.

The current practice of VCAT is to allow parties to present any evidence that is relevant. It would be more appropriate for a responsible authority or road traffic authority with an understanding of the Guide to introduce relevant matters to a hearing. In this way, VCAT will have any information that was considered by the responsible or road traffic authority. However, if a party does not bring the Guide to VCAT's attention, VCAT can refer to the Guide on its own initiative.

Recommendation 29
The Committee recommends the Minister for Planning give serious consideration to incorporating the Safer Design Guidelines into the Victorian Planning Provisions to provide consistency and guidance to the development and building industry.

SUPPORT
The Safety Design Guidelines will be finalised by mid-2005. Once approved by Government they are to be included in the Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes for consideration by planning and responsible authorities in assessing the design and built form of projects.
Recommendation 30
The Committee recommends that local municipalities develop a Community Safety Strategy that incorporates crime prevention strategies such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in addition to social prevention strategies and programs.

SUPPORT
Each Victorian municipality currently has a Local Safety Plan, developed and implemented by the Victoria Police in partnership with local government and other agencies and organisations. The plans should integrate both social and situational crime prevention strategies, as well as address identified local issues such as road safety, emergency management, perceptions of safety and health and well-being. Local Councils may have complementary community safety plans that underpin the municipal-wide Local Safety Plans.

Recommendation 31
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government through Crime Prevention Victoria, trial a crime mapping program using Space Syntax technology at an appropriate locality in Melbourne’s outer suburbs.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE
Crime Prevention Victoria (CPV) works with Victoria Police, Local Safety Committees and other agencies to support local solutions to local problems.

The Government supports in principle the CPV investigating new technologies for crime prevention, including options for evaluating the effectiveness of safer design, using a place-based approach. The Space Syntax technology is known to be relevant to crime mapping and could be considered as part of this work.

Recommendation 32
The Committee recommends the Pride of Place program be amended to incorporate a specific criteria focused on the sustainability of a proposal. Proposals that meet the sustainability criteria should be given priority for funding.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE
The Pride of Place grants program is set to finish at the end of the 04/05 financial year. This program was designed for the improvement of existing activity centres. However, the intent of the recommendation is being achieved more comprehensively through the proposals in the draft Sustainable Neighbourhood Provisions for the Victoria Planning Provisions. The draft provisions cover densities, lot orientation, access, good pedestrian networks, safety, well-located shopping, services, and community facilities.

If any similar program is contemplated in the future, the Government will consider the merits of the recommendation.
Recommendation 33.
The Committee recommends the Pride of Place program be extended to greenfield sites, to allow for grants in new developments and subdivisions to enhance community infrastructure and promote sustainable urban design.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE
See response to Recommendation 32.

Recommendation 34.
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government, through the Department of Human Services in conjunction with a selection of local councils representing the major growth corridors, conduct a survey examining the issues facing women in Melbourne's outer suburbs. In particular, attention should be paid to the provision of infrastructure, support services and health needs.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE
The Public Health Group of the Department of Human Services will undertake the Victorian Population Health Survey during 2005, which is conducted on adult Victorians aged 18-years and over. Although this survey does not specifically focus on women's issues in outer suburban areas, it may shed some light on the matter.

Growth-corridor areas identified in Melbourne 2030 (Melton, Hume, Whittlesea, Cardia-Casey and Wyndham) are serviced by Regional Women's Health Services, which provide health services for women in those areas.

Within the Department of Victorian Communities, the Office of Women's Policy (OWP) provides strategic policy advice to the Victorian Government, with the aim of creating better outcomes for all women.

By working across government, the OWP coordinates and monitors government policies and programs that impact on women and their families.

Recommendation 35.
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government review the provision of public housing stock in outer suburban areas of Melbourne in order to determine the amount of new housing stock required to meet the needs of low income people and families and the means by which new public housing can be incorporated into new developments.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE
Expanding the provision of affordable housing across the city is a priority for the Victorian Government. Affordable housing for low income families and people with a disability will be integrated with new private housing developments, not segregated from private housing stock.

The Government acknowledges the importance of locating affordable housing in the vicinity of employment opportunities and adequate transport links.
The Office of Housing Asset Management Strategy aims to re-profile the existing stock portfolio through redevelopment and acquisitions to meet identified housing needs. This will be achieved by increasing stock levels in strategic locations across the city, including outer suburbs.

**Recommendation 36.**
The Committee recommends the Municipal Association of Victoria interface group of councils undertake a trial to determine the effectiveness of the City of Wanneroo's Employment Policy and, if successful, a similar policy be implemented in Victoria.

**SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE**

The Government supports in principle the Municipal Association of Victoria interface group of councils undertaking a trial to determine the effectiveness of the City of Wanneroo's Employment Policy.

The support is subject to further investigation between the Victorian Government, the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Interface Councils Group to determine the feasibility of conducting the trial.

**Recommendation 37.**
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government set up a working group with Interface Councils to:
1. Develop a coordinated approach to the placement of industries and businesses in outer suburban areas;
2. Support the development of small businesses in growing communities; and
3. Enhance the skills and capacity of Municipal Economic Development Units.

**SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE**

All three elements of the recommendation are key outcomes of the Victorian Government's Melbourne 2030 - Growth Area Review process. As part of the review process, DSE has established Committees for Smart Growth to develop and design area plans for Melbourne's five designated growth areas (Melton, Cardinia-Casey, Wyndham, Whittlesea and Hume). The plans are due for completion in 2005.

The Interface Council Group aims to encourage co-operation and co-ordination between interface councils. The Group also provides an unified approach for dealing with other levels of government.

The Victorian Business Centres currently offer small business development support in outer suburban areas and the Economic Development Association of Victoria currently offers skill development to Municipal Economic Units.
Recommendation 38
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government undertake a review of developments involving government land agencies or councils and private developers around Australia, to determine what opportunities exist for enhanced partnership arrangements.

SUPPORT
The Government supports exploring opportunities for developments involving partnerships between government land agencies, local councils and private developers. VicUrban, the Victorian Government's land development agency, continuously reviews and acts on opportunities for partnerships.

An example is the redevelopment of Werribee Field and Dandenong Treatment Plant by Melbourne Water in conjunction with VicUrban and the land development industry.

Recommendation 39
The Committee recommends the Victorian Government work closely with building and developer representatives, such as the HIA, to encourage developers to exceed the minimum Five Star Standard.

SUPPORT
The Victorian Government is already working closely with builder and developer representatives to encourage developers to exceed the minimum 5 Star Standard. Implementation of the 5 Star Standard has been accompanied by an extensive communications strategy targeting industry groups such as the Housing Industry Association and the Master Builders Association of Victoria, as well as consumers.

The campaign has emphasised the benefits of going beyond the minimum 5 Star regulatory standard. By showcasing 6 Star homes, new developments such as the Aurora project in Epping North will further encourage developments beyond the regulatory minimum of 5 Stars. Under a Sustainability Covenant for the Aurora development, the Environment Protection Authority of Victoria and VicUrban are using the 'ecological footprint' to measure the benefits of 6 star housing and other sustainability innovations. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Victoria is doing further work to achieve a 6 Star standard more widely.