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### **Preliminary Statement**

I have already lodged a submission prepared on behalf of MEG (Malvern East Group). This is my personal submission as a member of the **General Public**.

### **NEW RESIDENTIAL ZONES...DISCUSSION PAPER**

There is a number of issues in the Discussion Paper which must be considered.

#### **Community Consultation**

The importance of community consultation in managing change cannot be understated. Planning change in a community is a balancing act. It is vital for the people to be given ample opportunity to have their say.

**This has not occurred with this proposed change.** It was only by chance that a comparatively few residents heard about it and even fewer learned about the 'information' sessions. These sessions were so limited in number and content that they could hardly be deemed information sessions.

We were told at these sessions that it was up to councils to inform their communities but councils were not aware that this task had been allotted to them and they, too, were not given sufficient notice.

These are the same tactics that were used to foist M2030 on an unsuspecting community and as far as the Government was concerned they were successful. Having succeeded once in introducing draconian planning changes it was obvious that the same methods could be used to bring in the next outrageous proposal from this Government and its advisers.

The whole process flies in the face of the Labor Government's stated policy in 1999...

"In particular our planning policy seeks to give Victorians back their voice and influence over decisions which affect their lifestyles."

#### **Discussion Paper**

The Discussion Paper contains so many vague terms that it is difficult to analyse it carefully. Some examples of the vagaries:

'significant increase'....'under-development must not occur'..

'suitable areas'...'enable substantial change'...'moderate increase'

As there is absolutely no way of knowing exactly what is meant by terms such as significant, moderate, under-development, one can only comment on the general thrust of this poorly ( and it would seem hastily) prepared document.

#### **General Comments**

Initially, I refer mainly to Stonnington and in doing so I recognise that other municipalities have the same or similar situations. In Stonnington, all of the residential areas are designated Res.1 and there is only a small portion of Toorak that does not fall within the parameters of the arbitrarily designated Activity Centres.

Therefore, the whole of Stonnington with the exception of the Heritage Overlays and one Neighborhood Character Overlay has been targeted for development since Feb.2003. This has been happening and continues unabated. The proposal for new zones wants more. Apparently we haven't done our bit. More effort must be made by the citizens of Stonnington to engage in the systematic destruction of suburbs which contribute greatly to the liveability of Melbourne. Apparently we must destroy yet more trees and shrubs to make way for the built environment, the very trees and shrubs which absorb the pollution that we create and provide the shade needed in a climate such as ours.

### **Substantial Change Zone**

Part (or parts) of our Res.1 zone is to be the focus of large scale new development. This is already done on our arterial roads. This zone also includes residential areas which abut the ubiquitous Activity Centres. The height requirement (nothing less than 4 storeys) can only be deemed disastrous. This follows the European model of jamming as many people as possible into confined spaces when the really appealing characteristic of Australia is space.

### **Incremental Change Zone**

This is where there is to be a moderate increase (undefined) in dwellings. There is to be a minimum maximum building height of 3 storeys. We must prepare a statement expressing the preferred or existing character of the area. **We have already done this.** Our Housing Strategy and Neighborhood Character Study have been developed through hours of work by Council in partnership with the community. It is not our choice to do it again.

### **Limited Change Zone**

These are our existing and proposed Heritage Overlays. These areas are to provide limited opportunity for increased housing. These areas should provide **no opportunity for an increase housing.** They are to be protected. They make invaluable contributions to the environment, to the municipality and to Melbourne as a whole and must not be tampered with. It is an unfortunate fact that they are already being infiltrated by the 'opportunistic infill' that is destroying the very fabric of our built environment. This must be stopped rather than exacerbated.

### **Fast Tracking**

A removal or reduction in the current advertising and appeal rights is the main strategy to be used to reduce the planning permit processing time (streamlining) and this is to be achieved by removal of democratic rights. This is the real purpose of the whole paper. (Let's get rid of the objectors!) I strongly oppose the proposal to remove existing rights of notice and appeal.

While VCAT remains a de facto planning authority and not, as the name suggests, an administrative body which monitors process, the right of appeal must not be removed. The reduction in advertising is to happen in all zones and this disregards the effect new development may have on the neighborhood in general, let alone the effect it may have on the resident in the block behind the subject site. It is proposed to remove entirely any semblance of fairness in the planning process which now is heavily weighted against those who object to inappropriate development. .

The removal of appeal rights and notice is to occur in all zones if the application complies with ResCode. As ResCode is a discretionary code and assessment of a proposal relies largely on the subjective judgment of the reader, any application can be deemed to comply. Unless you propose to develop a prescriptive code, the condition of compliance with Rescode is a nonsense and must be treated as such.

### **Permit Trigger**

This is a reversion to the Kennett era. Because of the damage being done to municipalities such as ours by the 300sq.m trigger in the 1990's, the Labor Party agreed to remove this and make it 500sq.m. They did this...and now they propose a reversion. I oppose the proposal to have a city-wide 300sq.m permit trigger.

### **Respect for Neighborhood Character and Continual Protection of Valued Areas**

(These were Peter Allen's words at an Information Session.) M2030 and Rescode both purport to protect Neighborhood Character and "valued suburban streetscapes." Neither has been able to do this effectively. This document proposes to "respect" and have "continual protection" for these two vital components of any municipality. If there is to be an increase in housing and "under-development" is not to be permitted what means are proposed to achieve what M2030 and ResCode have failed to do? It is a nonsense to consider that we can have a dramatic increase in housing quickly as is clearly desired by the Government **and** protect what we have already got.

### **Conclusion**

My response to the "New Residential Zones for Victoria a discussion paper" (Feb./08) is.... I advise DPCD that I do not support the introduction of 3 new zones as proposed and I am particularly concerned with the proposal to remove or reduce current advertising and appeal provisions.

Further to this I want Council in partnership with the community to determine the location and form of residential development as identified in our Housing Strategy and Neighborhood Character Study.

Ann Reid