

REPORT ON MEETING WITH PLANNING MINISTER RICHARD WYNNE ON 2 JULY 2015

Present

Planning Minister Richard Wynne
Mitra Anderson-Oliver - Senior Advisor
Rachael Joiner - Director, Planning Services
Michael Butcher - Melbourne South Yarra Residents Group Inc
Kevin Chamberlin - North and West Melbourne Association Inc
Ewan Ogilvy - Carlton Residents Association Inc
Barbara Paterson - East Melbourne Group Inc

Heritage Protection

1. Little comment from the minister although it is known to be an area of interest for him and he has just announced a review of the Heritage Act.

Residential zoning

2. While the strategy for how the review will be undertaken has not yet been concluded the minister is presently inclined to start by seeking information from the councils about the way it has worked to date.
3. He made no comment about our preference for mandatory height limits subject only to specific exceptions but steps taken by him to date (e.g. Yarra Planning Scheme amendment and Woollen Mills Development in Williamstown) suggest it may have his support.
4. The panel to be appointed to review the zoning will be independent and resident representation will not be possible.
5. He gave no indication of his response to the proposition that the City of Melbourne is providing much more than its fair share of residential property and should not be burdened by the addition of further growth zones.
6. The difficulties created by multiple layers of regulation was explained with the suggestion that at least something must be given priority in the event of conflict. We said that a review was well overdue and the minister seemed aware of the issue.

Public open space

7. The discussion about the proposed increase of the developer contribution under amendment C209 met with the minister expressing great concern about the fact that many councils either hoard or do not use what they receive for the intended purpose. We suggested that this was not the case with the City of Melbourne and that if necessary the legislation could impose relevant conditions.
8. The minister commented that there is little or no precedent for government handing over government land to councils for open space. Some sort of imaginative proposition would perhaps be necessary to encourage any interest.

9. He noted but made no comment about retaining existing open space as sacrosanct.

Reform of the City of Melbourne

10. The importance of transparency and control of political donations as a means of reducing the opportunity for corruption was put to the minister as an important issue if planning decisions were to be made by the right people. He made no comment about that but it is not part of his portfolio.

Further consultation

11. The minister indicated he was happy for there to be further consultation with this group of inner city resident organisations.

Conclusion

12. While the minister held his cards close to his chest it was an amicable conversation that ran over time and a useful introduction of this combined resident group to the minister and his advisors.
13. The minister's experience in these areas was apparent, he clearly wants to change and improve things and we need to continue considering and putting suggestions that might enable him to deal with these issues.

Michael Butcher
13 July 2015