

MAV RESPONSE

Victorian Government Action Plan to Strengthen Local Policy

What MAV thinks about the changes:

- These reforms will significantly reduce the level of contention, cost and community concern around medium density development in Victoria.
- With this announcement, Minister Madden clearly signals that planning in Victoria will take a much needed new direction under his leadership.
- Minister Madden has proposed potentially the most significant and positive reforms to the planning system in Victoria in a decade
- The MAV welcomes the announcement and will work with the local government sector, industry and the Department to make sure these recommendations are implemented.
- Local government has had wide representation on the Working Group and supports the recommendations and Minister's response.
 - We are pleased that he has adopted all the proposed recommendations
 - Momentum must be maintained – it is critical that the committees and actions happen as soon as possible.
- Despite the impetus being about local policy, the MAV is very pleased that the Minister's response recognises that there is room for improvement at both the state and local planning policy levels.
- The reforms should make local council planning policies stronger and planning more efficient and effective for all Victorians.
- We will see better planning outcomes in line with State, local and community aspirations by giving councils the 'tools' to implement policy.
- The principles and direction of Melbourne 2030 will only be achieved with a whole of government commitment, investment in public infrastructure and a contemporary suite of statutory planning tools.
- Revised residential zones will finally help councils to say clearly yes or clearly no to development.

What the reforms can achieve:

- A new cooperative, outcome focussed approach to planning in Victoria that will be welcomed by communities, developers, councils and other stakeholders.
- For residents and property owners:
 - More certainty and clarity about what they can and can't do when they are buying a house.
 - Residents will know what can and can't happen next door or round the corner
 - Residents who get involved in the policy development process with councils, who will no longer have to defend that policy on an application by application basis, often through to VCAT (if the new zones clearly articulate the policy upfront).

- For the development industry:
 - Certainty about how and where development can occur and where it is not encouraged
 - Reduced cost, time and uncertainty of the permit assessment process for most matters
 - Reduced risk of speculating on possible development rights.
- For councils:
 - Availability of better tools to give effect to state and local policy
 - Time and money savings on strategic planning work
 - Allow reallocation of resources from “planning” to those applications that deserve and need more time/expertise and free up resources for “doing”.

The MAV hopes that the new Residential Zones will:

- Give councils confidence to clearly identify “no go”, “slow go” and “go go” areas for development with their community and Government
- Provide zoning controls clearly aligned to these policy objectives
- Allow ‘as of right’, ‘prohibit’ or ‘allow by permit’ applications for more than one dwelling on a lot
- In a ‘no-go’ zone, make dual occupancy and multi unit development a permit required use
- Similarly, in a ‘go-go’ zone make a single dwelling a permit required use
- Vary Rescode provisions in line with the purpose of the new zones
- Allow councils to further refine, through schedules, ResCode to reflect the character or to determine the preferred character for their area, neighbourhood by neighbourhood
- Clarify and streamline the process for councils to apply the new zones
- Roll out the learning from this process across the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP).