



Photographer: Craig Abraham / Courtesy of The Age

New Zone to Boost Housing In The Growth Areas

Melbourne's newest suburbs will be better planned and delivered sooner, as a result of the major planning overhaul outlined by Premier John Brumby.

The reforms introduce a new planning regime in the outer growth suburbs to speed up land for 90,000 new homes across the six growth area councils.

"Melbourne is now growing at a rate of around 1200 people a week – and demographer Bernard Salt has projected we will regain our title as Australia's largest city within 20 years," Mr Brumby said.

"To maintain our standard of living as a city and a State, we need to grow. But we need to grow in a managed, sustainable way," the Premier said.

Outlining "first instalment" measures to deal with growth, the Premier said the Government would rezone all remaining developable greenfield land inside the Urban Growth Boundary in the growth areas – creating a new Urban Growth Zone.

The key elements of the package are:

- An improved approval process for land development that will shave more than 12 months off the time it takes to rezone land for new communities to meet strong demand for new housing
- A new "Urban Growth Zone" for all broadacre areas inside the Urban Growth Boundary within the growth areas that will significantly simplify the planning process
- The UGZ will merge the strategic planning (Precinct Structure Plan) and land rezoning approval processes into one step

- The blanket UGZ will be the tool that puts this into the planning scheme. It will not require a subsequent rezoning amendment process
- The zone will help bring forward basic community services so families have access to key services a lot earlier than currently the case

Growth Areas Authority CEO Peter Seamer said the reforms would mean less holding costs for developers helping to keep downward pressure on house prices and a significant reduction in red tape for councils and developers.

Under what the Premier dubbed the current "Byzantine" planning system with multiple stages of approval and referrals, it can take more than five years to bring land to market.

The new Urban Growth Zone in the five growth areas – Casey-Cardinia, Hume, Melton, Whittlesea, Wyndham – will cut at least 12 months in the time it takes to go from an unzoned piece of land to handing over the keys of a new house to a family.

"Every month we can cut out of the planning process means savings and this will cut about 12 months from the time it takes to rezone land for housing," Mr Seamer said.

"This package will allow developers to bring more projects to market sooner, with the extra supply easing demand pressures that drive up new housing prices," he said.

"It also introduces a fairer, more consistent and transparent system of developing land, with greater support for councils to do the strategic planning that is needed to plan for the next 20 years."

Stop Press

In an Australian first, one of the country's largest residential developers will work with the State Government and planning experts to raise the quality of development in one of Melbourne's newest suburbs. *For more details, see page 3*

From the GAA Chairman Chris Banks

The Premier's sweeping changes to planning are a direct response to what our growth area stakeholders have been telling us for a long time: we need to get more land to market far sooner.

We at the Growth Areas Authority are pleased to step into a role that will enable us to make more of a material contribution towards driving this aim.

Working with our council partners, these reforms will enable us to take out more than a year from the time it takes to get land ready for development.

This in turn will help boost land supply, putting downward pressure on housing affordability while making sure the resulting communities are well designed with the services people need as they move in.

I'm also pleased to welcome a new board member to the GAA.

Di Fleming is a former Victorian Telstra Businesswoman of the Year, associate professor in Digital Design at RMIT University and director of lab.3000. She steered lab.3000's evolution to become the state's first Centre of Excellence in Digital Design.



Chris Banks AM



Di Fleming

I'd also like to thank Rob Spence who's leaving the board after being a most valued, inaugural member from 2006 and deputy chair.

Rob has supported the GAA to grow from a policy idea to achieving real results for communities on the ground.

The reforms announced by the Premier are part of a series of changes planned by the GAA to make more sustainable and more 'liveable' suburbs for Melbourne.

The New Urban Growth Zone: How It Works

The creation of a new zone across all broadacre areas inside the Urban Growth Boundary will be a crucial tool to achieve better developments up to a year faster in the growth areas.

The new Urban Growth Zone merges the strategic planning and land rezoning approval processes into one step, significantly simplifying the entire process. This allows the Growth Areas Authority (GAA) and local councils to focus on the development of Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs).

This will help bring forward the development of more than 90,000 new homes in the five growth areas as well as basic community services, so families have access to key services a lot earlier.

Under the new zone – PSPs -- the 'master plans' for new communities will now be the primary planning requirement for the development of an area. New urban developments can proceed if they are consistent with a ministerially approved PSP that has been incorporated into a local planning scheme.

The blanket UGZ will be the tool that puts this into the planning scheme. This will save stakeholders time and money, cutting more than a year from the planning process and providing more certainty with one clear approach to all new development across the six growth area Councils.

Under the new system, the emphasis is on getting the strategic planning right the first time, giving landowners and the community earlier opportunities to comment on proposed developments.

All PSPs will be publicly exhibited and any member of the public will be entitled to make a submission. If a submission is not accepted, then it must be referred to an independent panel appointed by the Planning Minister. The panel will conduct a public hearing and make its independent recommendations to the Minister.

Once a PSP is approved by the Planning Minister, planning permits consistent with the broad strategic intent will be able to be issued by Council, without further advertising.

The UGZ will be implemented across the growth areas in coming months. The GAA is currently working with the Department of Planning and Community Development and the six growth area Councils to finalise the provisions and spatial application of the UGZ.

New Planning Appointment

A new high-level appointment will support the GAA team managing planning and infrastructure provision across the five growth areas.

Steve Dunn, former Executive Director of Metropolitan Planning in the Department of Planning and Community Development, has joined the GAA to head up a new planning group.

GAA CEO Peter Seamer says the Authority is splitting its planning group in two: the first to concentrate on developing new planning processes and facilitating development and the other working with councils and developers on detailed precinct structure planning.

Current Director of Planning Greg Bursill will build up and run a new team to manage precinct structure planning, while Steve Dunn will head up the other group to streamline planning processes and fast-track development.

Steve Dunn is a well-known planner who has been Director of Planning at Knox, Yarra, Port Phillip and Melton city councils.

"This role will be critical in tackling the range of issues facing the growth areas and will have a strong role in managing the reform of growth area planning," Mr Seamer said.

"With Greg and Steve I believe we have the best planners in the State for the heavy work schedule we have ahead of us and Steve's decision to join us reflects the importance of this work," he said.



Steve Dunn

Raising the bar on designing new suburbs

Planning Minister Justin Madden announced that Stockland is the winner of an expression of interest from major developers to demonstrate how to build more affordable and liveable communities in the growth areas.

The Growth Area of the Future demonstration project The Growth Areas Authority and the Planning Institute of Australia called for expressions of interest from major developers to demonstrate how to build more affordable and liveable communities in the growth areas of Melbourne.

"I'm very pleased to announce that Stockland is the winner of this important project which is about showing on the ground how we can plan and construct new communities that are affordable, sustainable and of higher design standards," Planning Minister Justin Madden said.

The Minister also launched the latest research into what makes a new community 'liveable', which will inform the Stockland development in Cranbourne East.

The research by Melbourne and Griffith Universities found four vital components to creating liveable communities on greenfield sites:

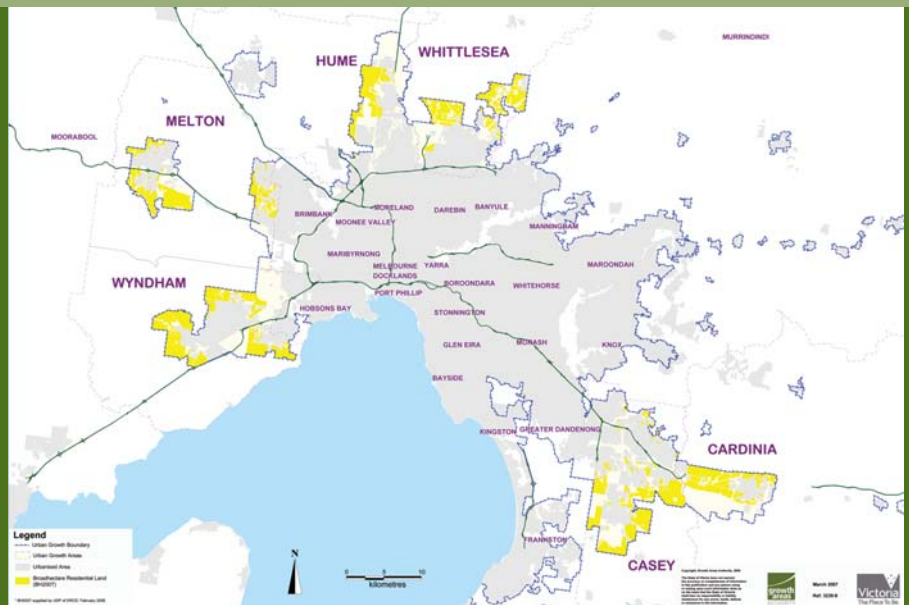
- job opportunities;
- healthy, safe, connected communities;
- affordable housing; and
- sustainable environments – both built and natural.

Mr Madden said liveability planning in growth areas was different to established suburbs, because it involved 'making spaces into places' – places that are growing faster than anywhere else in Victoria – and most parts of Australia.

"The Stockland project is the first of its kind involving the government, planners and a commercial developer who will master plan a new community beyond individual homes to increase our understanding of what is involved in designing healthy communities," he said.

The project will be informed by the latest research into the key elements for making new communities 'liveable'.

With Melbourne growing at more than 1,200 new residents a week, Mr Madden said the Growth Area of the Future demonstration project would lift the benchmark for new residential developments.



A map of available broadhectare land in the growth areas. Source: Growth Areas Authority.

"As well as fast-tracking 90,000 new homes in our growth areas to meet our growing population, we want to build communities that are less car-dependent, less power and water hungry and more liveable," he said.

"The Government's focus is on putting 'liveability' at the front and centre of new developments, by getting the strategic planning right the first time."

Planning for Melbourne's future growth and lifting the quality of living in Melbourne's newest suburbs is at the heart of the Growth Areas Authority's work.

"That's why the State Government, through the GAA, will be playing a more significant role in shaping our future suburbs," Mr Madden said.

Stockland will showcase its best urban design principles on a 115ha site in Cranbourne East, south-east of Melbourne, and the Growth Areas Authority and Planning Institute of Australia will be part of the project team.

Mr Kingsley Andrew, Victorian General Manager of Stockland said the project at Cranbourne East would incorporate water sensitive urban design, pedestrian pathways and linked open spaces, a Catholic secondary college, a primary school, and a range of residential home densities to deliver a healthy community.

"We are very pleased to be involved in this exciting initiative, because it provides a vehicle for a broader understanding of the interaction between the planning and development processes and how one affects the other on the ground," he said.

"We look forward to working closely with these two peak bodies and the City of Casey to produce a community we can all be proud of."

It's official: Melbourne is growing fast

Melbourne is experiencing growth not seen since the post-War-boom between 1947 and 1966 when the city virtually doubled in size.

The latest Census data and new population forecasts show Victoria's population is set to hit 6.2 million and Melbourne 4.5 million - by 2020 - rather than 2030.

This means there will be one million new Melburnians coming a decade earlier than the last forecast.

The reasons are unprecedented growth underpinned by high overseas migration.

Melbourne is growing by upwards of 1200 people a week.

To house these new residents, Melbourne and Victoria will need more than 380,000 new homes or apartments.

Based on current projections, the 2007 Urban Development Program report forecasts that Melbourne has 7 to 8 years of zoned land supply - compared to 9 to 10 years 12 months ago.

The supply of zoned land falls to between five and six years in Cardinia and Casey – which is why the State Government recently announced a significant move to rezone all remaining developable greenfield land inside the urban growth boundary in the growth areas to fast-track 90,000 new housing lots.

The 2007 UDP report also found an estimated 12 years zoned supply and over 25 years total (zoned and unzoned land) of industrial land in Melbourne's six industrial nodes.

Rapid Rezone To Create 17,000 Northern Jobs



An artist's impression of the Merrifield site.

“This development will set a new benchmark for a highly landscaped and attractive environment that will be a new gateway to Melbourne.”

Employment prospects for residents in Melbourne's north will be significantly boosted with the State Government approving a major land rezoning allowing for up to 17,000 new jobs.

“This will be the biggest boost to jobs in the north since Ford opened its assembly plant in 1959,” the Planning Minister Justin Madden said, after approving 420 hectares of prime employment land for a visionary employment zone.

The \$5 billion development along the Hume Highway – a joint venture between MAB Corporation and the Gibson Property Corporation – is designed to employ up to 17,000 people in a mix of major manufacturers, corporations and businesses and create a new gateway to Melbourne's north.

“This whole project has seen us take land to market in a just a little over two years. That's the time it took from the State Government designating this land for employment to actual on ground works starting,” said MAB's Major Projects General Manager, David Hall.

“That's a great result and it's been achieved because of an efficient and effective collaboration involving the Growth Areas Authority, MAB, the City of Hume and other agencies,” Mr Hall said.

Minister Madden says the development will give Melbourne a much-needed new gateway to the north, and northern suburbs residents much better access to a range of jobs.

“Unlike many developments along major highways where all you see is the back of industrial buildings, this development will set a new benchmark for a highly landscaped and attractive environment that will be a new gateway to Melbourne.”

Mr Madden said the Growth Areas Authority had played a significant role in securing the development to meet a shortfall of zoned employment land in Melbourne's north.

“By working with the City of Hume and the developers, the Growth Areas Authority is helping deliver jobs closer to where people live.

“This area is one of strategic importance and has been a key focus of the Growth Areas Authority's work to boost the supply of employment land in the north and improve this important gateway for transport, manufacturing, freight and logistics,” he said.

Situated at the corner of the Hume Highway and Donnybrook Road, Mickleham, construction of the employment zone is expected to start later this year with the first tenant to be operating by late 2009.

Snapshot of Industrial Land

- There is a total of 5461 ha zoned industrial land across Melbourne.
- A total of 281 ha of industrial land were developed across metropolitan Melbourne in 2006/07.
- The value of warehouse approvals has increased greatly from 2003 to 2006, from \$346 million to \$818 million.
- Warehouses now account for 71% of the total value of industrial building approvals, up from 64% in 2003.
- Factory construction was dominant in the South Region with \$189 million in factory approvals (58% of all factory approvals).
- The West Industrial node (covering Melton, Wyndham and Brimbank) has an estimated 12 years of zoned land supply and 22 years total supply.
- The North Industrial node (Hume and Whittlesea) has 13 years of zoned land supply remaining, up from 8 years due to rezoning in Whittlesea.
- The South Industrial node (Dandenong and Casey) has 7 years of zoned land supply remaining, the least of any of the Industrial nodes. With the inclusion of the future unzoned land stocks, supply is estimated at 19 years.
- The Pakenham and Melton Industrial nodes have in excess of 25 years of supply; and
- The Airport Industrial node (covering Hume and Brimbank) has 13 years of zoned supply.

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The Growth Areas Authority is always interested in your views about our programs and initiatives, and the issues covered in this newsletter.

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