

Peter Allen
Executive Director
Statutory Planning Systems Reform
Department of Planning and Community Development
GPO Box 2392
Melbourne 3001

26 February 2009

Dear Peter

**New Residential Zones for Victoria
Submission**

I looked and read in vain for some evidence of real vision and change in the proposals. There isn't any. It is a repeat almost word for word of the existing regime - rebadged.

This is not a bad thing in itself. Despite the best efforts of some developers, builders and partisan councils to the contrary there are still vast swathes of Melbourne and Victoria where it is a pleasant and happy place for people to live. That is because, until challenged by smart & sharp people in the last few decades, the planning framework has been reasonably robust in withstanding the contorted onslaughts of these people to get their developments approved as an improvement or enhancement to the local neighbourhood.

So why do we need a review? The only reason, to my way of thinking, is artfully buried by the authors/proponents amongst all the drab perfunctory pages full of what is allowed or not allowed.

That simple change, artfully downplayed, is that proposed developments which currently require the full planning process but which also comply with current building regulations will no longer be required to go through the planning notification process.

The clear intention of this change is to ensure that, in future, developers of Incremental Change Zones (and the other new zones) may plunder at will existing stock of residential land based on precedents set in 2009 and earlier. In other words, the State Government, in consort with some or all of the Local Governments, are deliberately demolishing a planning protection available to the public under existing rules. There are many residential areas deep inside local neighbourhoods, which the Councils, rightly or wrongly, will no longer need to be bothered with the planning notification process if they so decide.

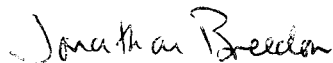
Although the Building Act and Regulations are in consort with the planning framework, they will now act as THE de facto main planning instrument. I don't think you have acknowledged this plainly in your proposals or in the prior discussion paper.

Developers will sit comfortably back in the smug knowledge that they can smooze the Council and ignore the residents in relation to continuing ambiguous planning scheme requirements because they simply comply with the building regulations!!

That would not be a planning outcome which treated all residents fairly in the planning process. Nor does it bode well for a great future for so much of Victoria's existing residential landscape.

If, as you and the Minister propose, you have "got the planning tools right" then you should not need to remove this basic review/protection process. You should be looking forward to noticing a marked reduction in the number of objections and challenges under the new regime which would truly prove the substance of your changes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Breedon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jonathan Breedon