



# REFORMED ZONES FOR VICTORIA

A DISCUSSION PAPER ON REFORMING  
VICTORIA'S PLANNING ZONES

# Minister's foreword



The Baillieu Government is committed to creating Australia's most responsive planning system. Planning and development activity continues to boost Victoria's economy with a 2011 estimated value of \$24 billion.

With development activity of this scale, we need a responsive and contemporary planning system that is resilient to the constantly changing local and global economic conditions and is an incentive for those wanting to build or invest in Victoria.

As well as being an economic driver, our planning system must play a twin role of one that responds to community expectations and desires by also providing clarity and protection to our built form.

These reformed zones will enable the planning system to act as an economic lever and provide new ways for communities to achieve a balance between defined areas of future growth and neighbourhoods where character is important to protect.

How we plan our state now will shape the way our cities, towns and rural areas will look in to the future. Contemporising our planning zones is an important step to getting balance back to our planning system and ensuring that our state can grow and prosper.

I invite your comments on the zone proposals outlined in this discussion paper and associated fact sheets.

**The HON. MATTHEW GUY MP**

Minister for Planning

# Background work



Proposals for new planning zones respond to a Baillieu Government commitment to contemporise many aspects of Victoria's planning system.

The Victorian Planning System Ministerial Advisory Committee was commissioned in June 2011 to examine all aspects of the system, including possible zone reform. Recommendations around review of Victoria's zone structure were subsequently made.

Reform of planning zones has been an issue raised by many industry bodies, local government and members of the community. There is a genuine desire to achieve greater clarity in the planning system through our zone structure and to use the opportunity of zone reform to create the best planning zones in Australia for industry, councils and community.

As such, the Baillieu Government is considering:

- New and improved residential, commercial, industrial and rural zones
- Rationalising and removing unnecessary zones
- Associated processes that can support the new and improved zones

By stimulating business investment and economic growth while protecting valued neighbourhoods, Victoria's reformed zones can work well for all sections of the community.



## What has the community been saying?

As part of the Government's review of the planning system, an advisory committee was established to make recommendations on how it can be improved including the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) and its associated zones and overlays.

Community and industry stakeholders were asked to make submissions on ways to improve the system. Submissions identified the following issues of concern:

- Delays and uncertainty in the planning process
- Amending a planning permit is too complex
- Planning schemes have become more complex, especially at the local level
- There are unnecessary restrictions and requirements in the planning zones
- There is no straight forward process for simple applications.

# Why do we need to reform planning zones?



In 1997, the VPP reformed Victoria's planning system by introducing a consistent and standardised template for integrating state and local planning scheme content. Before the introduction of the VPP there were hundreds of inconsistent local planning zones.

This included over 150 residential zones and over 250 commercial and industrial zones in the Melbourne metropolitan area alone. One of the major reforms of the VPP was to reduce these zones down to 25 consistent zones. Currently there are 32 State standard zones.

Criticisms of the structure and format of the zones include:

- There are too many rules and some rules are not clear enough.
- There are unnecessary limitations on permit required uses.
- There should be more 'as of right' uses for low impact uses.
- The need for clear guidance about the development expectation for residential areas.
- There is no simple and faster process for simple proposals.

The themes for a better planning system that promote clarity and certainty are:

- Clearer rules
- Greater certainty
- Simple processes for simple proposals.



## Reformed Residential Zones

The Victoria in Future 2012 population estimates confirm that a number of areas within Melbourne and regional cities are expected to accommodate population growth. The proposed reformed residential zones have been developed taking into account that not all municipalities and not all suburbs will accommodate similar levels of growth.

Community aspirations, heritage values and alternative market realities mean that there will be different responses in regard to accommodating population growth across Victoria.

The proposed reformed residential zones will:

- Give more certainty about the type of development that can be expected in any residential area.
- Give councils better tools to identify areas where existing urban character will be protected and areas where appropriate urban densification can occur.

For more information see the Residential Zones fact sheet.

## Reformed Rural Zones

The Rural and Environmental Rural zones were introduced with the VPP in 1997. These zones were later replaced by the Farming, Rural Conservation and Rural Activity zones that had narrower purposes and more restrictive provisions.

The proposed reformed rural zones will:

- Support agriculture by making most agricultural uses 'as of right' instead of needing a planning permit.
- Respect the rights of farmers by removing permit requirements for farming related development.
- Provide flexibility for farmers by allowing the sale of farm produce without the need for a permit.



- Facilitate business by no longer prohibiting complementary retail uses.
- Facilitate tourism by reducing or removing permit requirements related to tourism uses.
- Make many prohibited uses discretionary in all rural zones.

For more information see the Rural Zones fact sheet.

## Reformed Commercial Zones

There are currently five business zones, each serving very similar purposes but with different requirements. This can create confusion, market barriers and unnecessary burden such as the need to rezone land. The proposed Commercial 1 Zone amalgamates the existing Business 1, Business 2, and Business 5 zones. The proposed Commercial 2 Zone amalgamates the existing Business 3 and Business 4 zones.

Reducing the number of zones and broadening the ranges of uses permitted in particular areas will reduce prescription, increase 'as of right' business investment opportunities and provide greater business flexibility.

The Priority Development Zone will be removed from the VPP. Any land within this zone will be rezoned to one of the new commercial zones or another suitable zone, such as the Activity Centre Zone, subject to council consultation.

For more information see the Commercial Zones fact sheet.



## Reformed Industrial Zones

The existing industrial zones have a floor space limit of 500 square metres on office space. This floor space was based on a traditional industrial building. New and emerging industry requires a larger scale and greater mixture of industry and office. These current floor space caps restrict the ability to develop modern and more innovative industry.

The proposed reforms to industrial zones will support business investment and industry by removing the floor space caps for an office and provide a greater incentive for business investment.

These reforms will be complemented by changes to the Industrial 3 Zone which will allow small supermarkets with supporting shops to facilitate commercial opportunities and enhance competition in the sector.

For more information see the Industrial Zones fact sheet.



# How are the zones changing?



The reformed zones outlined in the previous section are summarised in the table below.

Residential zones		
Existing	Replaced by	
	Improved	New
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential 1</li> <li>Residential 2</li> <li>Residential 3</li> <li>Low Density Residential</li> <li>Mixed Use</li> <li>Township</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low Density Residential</li> <li>Mixed Use</li> <li>Township</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neighbourhood Residential</li> <li>General Residential</li> <li>Residential Growth</li> </ul>

Rural zones		
Existing	Replaced by	
	Improved	New
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Living</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Green Wedge A</li> <li>Rural Conservation</li> <li>Rural Activity</li> <li>Farming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Living</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Green Wedge A</li> <li>Rural Conservation</li> <li>Rural Activity</li> <li>Farming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>

Commercial zones		
Existing	Replaced by	
	Improved	New
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business 1</li> <li>Business 2</li> <li>Business 5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial 1</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business 3</li> <li>Business 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial 2</li> </ul>

Industrial zones		
Existing	Replaced by	
	Improved	New
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industrial 1</li> <li>Industrial 2</li> <li>Industrial 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industrial 1</li> <li>Industrial 2</li> <li>Industrial 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>

# Your comments are sought



Comments are sought on the proposed residential, commercial, industrial and rural zones. Full details of the zones will be available on line from 17 July 2012.

To read the new zones and to make a comment go to [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/reformedzones](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/reformedzones) from 17 July 2012 and follow the online instructions.

If you require an interpreter or other help please call Information Victoria 1300 366 356 (local call cost) or TTY +61 3 9603 8806 (8.30am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday).

## Closing date

The closing date for making comment is 21 September 2012.

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