



## Public to have its say at inquiry into Victoria’s growing pains

Greater access to open space, parks, sporting fields, bushland, nature reserves and waterways will be at the centre of a parliamentary inquiry when it begins public hearings next week.

The Legislative Assembly’s Environment and Planning Committee is set to examine the current and future arrangements to secure environmental infrastructure for a growing population in Melbourne and across regional Victoria.

Committee Chair Sarah Connolly says the first public hearing will be held on Tuesday 9 March with a roundtable of outer suburban councils including Wyndham, Casey, Whittlesea, Hume and Melton.

“We’re going to hear from a lot of people during the public hearings - councils that are experiencing extreme growth, we’re also going to hear from our interface councils and peri-urban councils,” she said.

“Quite often the families living in these growth corridors are young couples with a couple of kids.”

The Committee will also take evidence from several planning and development organisations, including the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and Master Builders Victoria.

Ms Connolly says the Committee received 261 submissions from a wide range of stakeholders in the lead-up to the public hearings.

“One of the key points that has come out of the submissions and research is that 300,000 to 400,000 Melburnians don’t live within walking distance of adequate open space,” she said.

“This is a really interesting, but also a very important inquiry that we’re about to undertake.”

In April the Committee will turn its attention to regional Victoria with a focus on the state’s fastest growing centres.

“We’ll be speaking with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and their related agencies, but we’re also going to hear from environment and conservation groups and key academics, leisure and recreational stakeholders.”

The public hearings will be live broadcast and the schedule, along with other information in relation to the inquiry, can be found on the Committee’s [website](#).

The Committee is due to hand down a final report by the end of June.

*Issued: 4 March 2021*