

**Submission  
No 21**

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROTECTIONS WITHIN THE VICTORIAN  
PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

**Name:** Ilona Komesaroff

**Date Received:** 21 January 2022

## SUBMISSION

### **Re: Adequacy of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the Victorian planning framework in relation to planning and heritage protection.**

My name is Ilona Komesaroff. I have been a resident of Toorak for over 30 years. I am also the spokesperson for the Toorak Resident's Group.

The suburb of Toorak is widely recognised as having a nationally significant and valued cultural identity. This has been supported in the wider community by the Open Garden scheme and the NGV bus tours through our residential streets over a period of many years.

A large number of Toorak residents have shown that the current Planning Scheme is enabling inappropriate residential constructions that are irreversibly changing and diminishing the suburb.

In April 2020 residents commissioned urban planner and architect [REDACTED] to carry out an extensive Neighbourhood Character Research Project.

The Project found that over recent years there has been significant demolition of older dwellings and loss of private gardens and landscaping, as well as the construction of redevelopments and new buildings that are inappropriate and insensitive to the character of the suburb.

These changes are continuing despite the provisions of the local Stonnington Planning Scheme.

The Project flagged the approval by Council of planning applications which do not meet the relevant design guidelines set out in Council's Neighbourhood Character Policy (Clause 22.23 of the Planning Scheme).

Residents requested that as a matter of urgency Council:

1. Put into place a clear set of enforceable Planning Guidelines by amendment or other manner and ensures that the provisions of the Neighbourhood Character Policy in relation to applications for planning permits are rigorously assessed against the existing Design Guidelines; and
2. Where applications are found to be non-compliant with the Guidelines, they are refused.

This project was supported by a petition of over 1000 signatures.

The Project which cost residents tens of thousands of dollars, has proved to be of no use whatsoever and our suburb is rapidly being irreversibly degraded.

Despite Stonnington Council assessing and refusing some applications for developments that it deemed to be inappropriate in terms of the neighbourhood character, and contesting them in support of opposing residents in VCAT. VCAT enabled these developments to go ahead almost without exception.

One disturbing example is close to home for me. [REDACTED] where I live, has a garden designed by significant Australian landscape designer Gordon Ford. In 2021 Stonnington Council and residents opposed a 5-story development next door [REDACTED] which would

overshadow and compromise this garden, in a costly five day hearing at VCAT. The oversized development which has no precedent in the lower-rise, [REDACTED], was approved at VCAT.

It is urgent that changes must be made to the Victorian Planning Scheme that will effectively protect the Neighbourhood Character of unique areas in our city.

Yours sincerely,

Ilona Komesaroff

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]