

**Submission
No 51**

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

Organisation: Sustainable Australia Party

Date Received: 27 January 2022



Sustainable Australia Inc ARBN 630 631 999 (Limited Liability) Australia
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Sustainable Australia Party submission

Inquiry into the protections within the Victorian Planning
Framework

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The Secretary
Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

By email to: planninginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Sir or Madam,

Submission – Inquiry into the protections within the Victorian Planning Framework

The Legislative Council requires the Environment and Planning Committee to inquire into, consider and report, by June 2022, on the adequacy of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the Victorian planning framework in relation to planning and heritage protection. The Environment and Planning Committee has invited written submissions from individuals and organisations addressing one or more of the issues identified in the terms of reference.

Sustainable Australia Party (SAP) is an independent community movement from the political centre, with a positive plan for an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable Australia. Further details about Sustainable Australia Party can be found at our website:
www.sustainableaustralia.org.au

SAP's responses to the terms of reference

The inflated cost of housing

Housing is a fundamental need and human right. Perversely, homes are now treated as an investment asset by governments rather than a shelter in which to live and/or raise a family. Our policy is to achieve greater housing affordability for home buyers and renters, while striving for relatively stable house prices. To do this, we need to:

- Ensure a minimum 10% public or affordable housing is integrated into new significant residential developments through a process of inclusionary zoning
- Increase investment in public housing
- Reform tenancy laws to offer greater renters' rights including:
 - Longer standard rental tenure
 - Longer notice for eviction
 - Greater ability to keep pets
 - Greater ability to make minor renovations including picture hangers
 - Removal of 'no-fault' termination from residential leases so that tenants have more security and stability.
- Support a 'Right to Rent' plan allowing homeowners whose homes have been foreclosed due to major market corrections to stay in their homes at a fair market rent for up to five years



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- Give owners corporations more right to impose restrictions on short stay leasing (less than 30 days)
- Where the federal government does not at once ban further foreign ownership, increase state taxes on future foreign purchases of residential and commercial land/property as follows:
 - 10% stamp duty surcharge (above standard rate)
 - 10% annual land tax
 - 10% annual vacancy tax (on property's full capital improved value)
- Offer residential property buyers the possibility of paying current stamp duties or an annual land tax
- Extend existing anti-money laundering laws (*Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing Act 2006*) to accountants, lawyers, and real estate agents to help prevent foreign and local crime-related money from entering the real estate market

"Australia's hot property market is an attractive haven for criminals, with estimates that billions of dollars of dirty money is being laundered through residential property."
(MacroBusiness)

"AUSTRAC has warned that laundering the proceeds of crime through property purchases can drive up prices and keep legitimate buyers out of the market..." (MacroBusiness)

- When the above Federal and State policies are implemented
 - Abolish first home buyer grants
 - Allow Australians to access a part of their superannuation to put a deposit on their first home
- Where environmentally proper, create a 'Natural and Sustainable Housing' permit framework to allow for tiny houses, off-grid houses, and houses built from natural methods

Environmental sustainability and vegetation protection

A healthy natural environment is the foundation upon which all human wellbeing and prosperity is built, and so we need to prioritise environmental sustainability to better protect, manage and restore Australia's fragile and unique natural environment. To do this, we need to:

- Strengthen the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) to properly protect Australia's environment and biodiversity, including:
 - A properly enforced national biodiversity and native species program
 - Widespread urban, rural, and marine animal habitat protection
 - Stronger laws to prevent inappropriate land and tree-clearing,
 - Stronger laws to prevent the depopulation and eventual extinction of threatened, vulnerable and endangered native species
 - Improved and better-connected wildlife corridors
 - Properly protect our marine national parks and sanctuaries
 - Sustainably harvest and manage Australia's fish stocks and ocean wildlife populations to prevent overfishing
- End old growth forest logging



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- Subject all state Regional Forest Agreements and state-owned forestry businesses and authorities (e.g., VicForests) to the authority of the EPBC Act to ensure all forestry is subject to proper national environmental and planning approval requirements
- Implement humane reduction and eradication programs for high-risk feral species
- Implement mandatory and independently regulated best practice animal welfare management in farming, agriculture, sporting, and domestic environments, including by:
 - Minimising the use of factory farming
 - Encouraging smaller-scale farms with on-farm abattoirs as a credible alternative to factory farming
 - Increasing penalties for animal cruelty and neglect
 - An end to live animal exports
- Stabilise Australia's population as soon as practical
- Recognise that industries such as renewable energy and electric motor vehicles also have major environmental impacts and do not provide 'techno-fix' to promote business-as-usual economic (consumption) growth
- Properly include the traditional knowledge of First Nations people in environmental research and decision-making

Delivering certainty and fairness in planning decisions for communities, delivering the type of housing that communities want, and protecting Victoria's heritage

SAP advocates for a transparent, democratic and environmentally sustainable town and urban planning system that will stop overdevelopment of both high-rise density and sprawl, while properly protecting our built heritage, backyards and urban amenity. To do this, we need to:

- Return real planning powers to local communities through proper engagement. This would include:
 - Empowering local citizen juries / panels by local council area to:
 - Determine a local area plan setting out the level of overall development (including total dwelling number, density, height limits, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and green and recreational space) on a 10-year basis
 - Deliver new community infrastructure **before** more housing is approved (including new schools, hospitals, public transport, roads, recreational and sporting facilities, green space, etc)
 - Determine projects proposed outside of the scope of the local plan, including state-significant projects, to ensure any trade-offs are reflective of community desires
 - Ensure that planning and zoning changes adhere to relevant environmental and heritage regulations
- Legislate to ensure that local planning policies and decisions **cannot** be overturned by State Government ministers, government departments, or 'independent' panels, tribunals, and boards
- Stabilise Australia's population size as soon as practical
- Capture for the public the land value gains (unearned profits) from planning and rezoning, rather than gifting them to private sector developers



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- Ensure that any 'urban renewal' and infill is not at the expense of our built heritage, backyards, and urban amenity
- Reject the myth that high-rise density is either environmentally sustainable, has little or no sprawling ecological footprint, or is preferable to ending Australia's rapid growth in population
- Accurately assess the risks associated with high density living in relation to the spread of infectious diseases like COVID-19
- Preserve, rehabilitate, or plant corridors of biodiversity in new developments, following fire regulations, to both preserve wildlife habitat and supply recreational opportunities for residents
- Ensure that new and existing homes and associated landscapes adapt to latest innovations in thermal and water efficiency and ecological design, including north facing, effective insulation, solar panels, and water tanks
- Empower council-employed building inspectors instead of private sector building surveyors
- Impose a moratorium on planning rezoning for higher intensity uses, such as from rural conservation to farming zone
- Properly account for and report on the increasing per unit costs of supplying infrastructure to communities in already built areas
- Remove caps on developer infrastructure charges and give councils and state governments the flexibility to charge developers the full cost of infrastructure delivery
- Ban development in flood prone areas
- Penalise developers who submit development applications outside of local planning guidelines, including height limits
- Ban all foreign political donations
- Ban all political donations from property developers
- Ban unsolicited secret tenders for government contracts

In summary, Sustainable Australia Party is passionate about planning and heritage issues in Victoria. We strongly advocate for significant reforms to protect our environment, stop overdevelopment, and save our precious natural and built heritage.

I thank the Committee and Clifford Hayes MLC for the opportunity to lodge a submission of behalf of Sustainable Australia Party in relation to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Tighe
State Administrator - Victoria
Sustainable Australia Party

sustainableaustralia.org.au