

**Submission  
No 92**

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

**Name:** Ms Valerie Polley

**Date Received:** 30 January 2022

## Inquiry into the protections within the Victorian Planning Framework

Ms Valerie Polley

**Organisation Name:**

**Your position or role:**

### YOUR SUBMISSION

**Submission:**

I have only recently been made aware of this enquiry and have been away on holidays during January, This has restricted my ability to compile a comprehensive response to all of the items of interest to me. Specifically it is items 2, 3 and 4 that that are of concern.

(2) environmental sustainability and vegetation protection;

(3) delivering certainty and fairness in planning decisions for communities,

(4) protecting heritage in Victoria

I am an urban geographer and planner (now retired). I have worked in the Public Service (National Parks and Office of the Environment), have been a councillor and mayor, served on planning panels and been involved over decades with a wide range of community groups dealing with sustainability, Green Wedge, historical matters and planning issues.

Striking the right balance between the need for growth and development and the needs of individuals and local communities has never been easy. Often the overall outcome is lost or ignored between the demands of owners/developers, councils, and communities or individuals.

Council planners' tenures tend to be of short duration. Local knowledge is often restricted or lost or non-existent. The words and maps of a planning scheme need local knowledge and understanding to supplement them and ensure they are not co-opted by legal minds to serve only those who wish to force change.

The cost in both time and money to fight a planning application in VCAT is well documented. The time needed to respond to updates, enquiries and reviews can be difficult to find and justify if nothing ever changes. Over the decades there have been so many requests for participation. State plans, Council plans, planning applications - the list is endless.

As part of responding to this inquiry I looked back at a submission to Melbourne 2030 written in 2007 (see attached). It covered urban growth boundary and Green Wedge concerns, transport and housing affordability and climate change. It all looks depressingly familiar.

To help illustrate process and resulting outcomes I submit the following case study.

In 2006 on behalf of the Warrandyte Community Association I and the President attended an Amendment and Planning Permit hearing for the Donvale Christian College. Despite what we considered was a well-researched and cogent case we found ourselves summarily dismissed by a QC as a generic group with generic submission. The site is now a Special Use Zone

Together with the On Luck Nursing Home development (which resulted I think from a ministerial call in) in the same small area of what is considered green wedge (Rural Conservation Zone) much development, including significant road works, has resulted. Does it look like Green Wedge land now in 2022? (see photo attached) I would argue not. Incremental development has seen both sites increasingly covered with buildings and hard standing. All allowable and agreed to under the planning scheme. The remaining lots remain neglected and isolated. Was this really the desired Green Wedge and sustainability outcome? Was a precinct view taken to ensure planning for the whole area would be handled sensitively and appropriately - particularly given the Mullum Mullum Creek Linear and Currawong Bush Parks are located adjacent? Again I would argue not. My fear is that the example set by these developments will see even more occur in the future citing precedent. This is just one example of incremental development. There are many more.

I have contributed to responses on heritage through the submission by Warrandyte Historical Society.

However in addition I am the owner of a heritage house in Warrandyte with a State level classification. I am always disappointed that so many people see a heritage listing as a problem not a benefit. The attitude towards preserving history and heritage needs to be transformed though government attitude and actions if

we are ever to reach the lofty standards of other countries overseas. Here history seems to be viewed as an impediment. So many times so many compromises are made to render the original heritage property meaningless. Facadism is one of the worst.

The National Trust could play a much greater role in helping preserve historic buildings such as Melbourne's oldest home in King Street. If they were funded to buy, maintain and manage this property (and other important buildings as they become available) it would make a wonderful addition both to the streetscape and the history of the place. Funding heritage is a neglected yet important issue.

Looking over past submissions it seems words, plans, enquiries etc are the easy part. It's the actions that ultimately count. Given the urban sprawl with resultant loss of Green Wedge and heritage I'm not sure we're winning!

### **FILE ATTACHMENTS**

**File1:** [61f61ae96940a-Melbourne 2030.pdf](#)

**File2:** [61f61ae96a364-Green Wedge - Doncaster Christian College & On Luck Nursing Home Google 2022.JPG](#)

**File3:**

**Signature:**

Valerie Polley OAM