

planning for sustainable growth



Implementation Plan 4

# Activity Centres

October 2002

# Draft

Department of Infrastructure

# Contents

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The implementation plans explained	Page 1
Melbourne 2030 in summary	Page 2
The urban growth boundary	Page 3
What is it?	Page 3
Why do we need it?	Page 4
What does it change?	Page 4
What are its implications for local government?	Page 4
Actions	Page 5
How does this plan relate to <i>Melbourne 2030</i> ?	Page 5
What are the recommended actions?	Page 5
Action 1. Applying the UGB	Page 7
Action 2. Modifying the UGB in growth areas	Page 8
Action 3. Applying the UGB to other areas	Page 9
Action 4. Legislative support	Page 9
Next steps – what do we need to do?	Page 10



# The implementation plans explained

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Six draft Implementation Plans support *Melbourne 2030 – planning for sustainable growth*.

The plans cover these topics:

- urban growth boundary
- growth areas
- housing
- activity centres
- green wedges
- integrated transport

An advisory note on implementation of *Melbourne 2030* in the planning system from the date of release will be separately available.

The draft Implementation Plans have been developed to build on sections of *Melbourne 2030* where new or different actions are proposed and to provide further detail on some – but not all – of its initiatives. Despite the 30-year time frame for *Melbourne 2030*, many of its most important initiatives will need to be introduced in the next five years.

The draft Implementation Plans aim to provide local government, the planning profession, the development industry and interested members of the community with guidance and additional information. Presently draft documents, they will serve as a basis for dialogue over the consultation period. When finalised, they will be a springboard for action.

Each plan brings together the policies and initiatives from *Melbourne 2030* relevant to its particular topic, and outlines a preferred approach to implementing them.

Each plan also reinforces the new approach proposed by *Melbourne 2030*. This far-reaching document examines urban management issues in metropolitan Melbourne and its surrounding region, and explores the ways in which the new urban fabric will be laid down for future generations.

You are urged to refer to *Melbourne 2030* as the context for the draft Implementation Plans. Issues in it that have general relevance to the topic of the urban growth boundary include:

- managing or limiting outward growth
- directing growth to areas best able to be supplied with infrastructure and services
- safeguarding valuable features in rural areas.

These draft Implementation Plans do not cover all actions proposed in *Melbourne 2030*. Additional implementation plans will be developed as the need arises.

# Melbourne 2030 in summary

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*Melbourne 2030* is a strategic plan prepared to manage growth and change across metropolitan Melbourne and its surrounding region.

Its prime focus is the area covered by the 31 Melbourne metropolitan municipal councils (including the nine 'interface councils' which cover both urban and rural areas at the fringes of metropolitan Melbourne). It also raises important issues that affect local councils outside the metropolitan area, particularly those astride the regional transport corridors between metropolitan Melbourne and the closest regional cities within current and potential commuting range.

In establishing and articulating a long-term vision for metropolitan Melbourne, built up from many contributions across the community, *Melbourne 2030* provides a framework for governments at all levels to respond to the diverse needs of those who live and work in and near Melbourne, and who visit it.

The substance of *Melbourne 2030* is contained in nine 'directions' that embody the Government's aims of sustainability and of providing a better future for all. They are:

- a more compact city
- better management of metropolitan growth
- networks with the regional cities
- a more prosperous city
- a great place to be
- a fairer city
- a greener city
- better transport links
- better planning decisions, careful management.

Each of these directions is supported by specific policies that will be incorporated into the planning system.

The policies will be implemented through a range of initiatives undertaken through joint action by local government, the Government and the wider community.

As *Melbourne 2030* is a statement of government policy intent only, some of the initiatives will be subject to the availability of budget funding. That is, such initiatives will need to await assessment and prioritisation through normal State budget processes in future periods. It is not intended that all initiatives should begin at once, nor that all should be completed within the five-year time frame. Many will lead to follow-on work. Others may change or be reviewed over the 30-year life of *Melbourne 2030*.

## Vision

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In the next 30 years Melbourne will grow by up to one million people and will consolidate its reputation as one of the most liveable, attractive and prosperous areas in the world for residents, business and visitors.

# The urban growth boundary

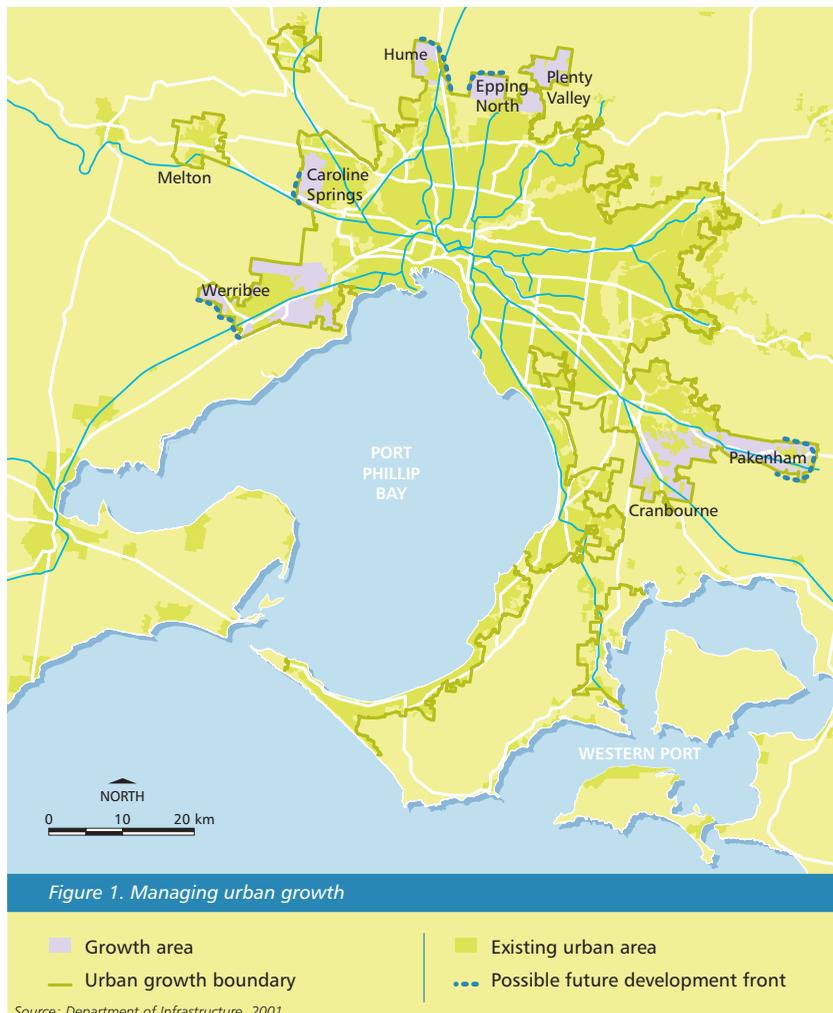
## What is it?

The urban growth boundary (UGB) indicates the long-term limits of urban development and where non-urban values and land uses should prevail in metropolitan Melbourne, including the Mornington Peninsula (see Figure 1). It appears on the maps forming part of planning schemes affected by *Melbourne 2030*.

Essentially, it follows the existing boundary defined by urban zones and growth strategies for the majority of the urban areas in metropolitan Melbourne, including the Mornington Peninsula. There will be some potential for it to be altered in designated growth areas (see 'What does it change?'). It may also be applied to other towns and settlements in non-urban areas.

The UGB comes into effect in conjunction with the release of *Melbourne 2030* on an interim basis. During the consultation period on *Melbourne 2030*, submissions on configuration of the UGB may be made to government. Following this consultation period, the Minister for Planning will determine its final location.

Once the UGB has been settled by the Minister, it will be permanent. Modifications will only be considered in designated growth areas following an assessment of housing needs and a review of growth area plans or, if applied to smaller towns and settlements.



Source: Department of Infrastructure, 2001

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## Why do we need it?

*Melbourne 2030* introduces a range of policy directions to provide for a more compact city, minimise speculation on the fringe, and retain open land close to most development areas. This gives rise to the need for a clear policy mechanism to separate urban and rural areas.

Currently, there is no consistent approach for deciding where urban growth can occur and where non-urban values should prevail. To date in metropolitan Melbourne, the boundary separating urban and non-urban areas has been determined by referring to an *ad hoc* mix of State, regional or local strategy and policy documents, zoning decisions and legislation, all prepared at different times by different authorities and for different purposes. This has led to uncertainty in the minds of decision-makers. It has affected the investment choices of landowners and developers, and raised concerns in the wider community about the long-term direction of urban growth and the erosion of Melbourne's green wedges.

Earlier planning systems for metropolitan Melbourne included a strategic framework plan that defined the metropolitan urban boundary. In the Dandenong and Yarra Ranges, the Yarra Valley, Westernport and the Mornington Peninsula, government policy statements, strategy plans and legislation restricted urban development to prescribed locations. However, the concept of a metropolitan strategic boundary and a regional approach to urban growth has been eroded over time through the devolution of planning responsibilities to local government and a lack of strategic direction at metropolitan level.

Clear, consistent direction is needed to give greater certainty for decision-makers, investors and the community, and to reduce speculation. This need has been underlined in recent years by recommendations by government advisory groups for a more formal approach to defining an urban/non-urban boundary. In addition, the two rounds of public consultation for *Melbourne 2030*, All Ears Listening and Moving Forward Together, supported the concept of a more defined edge to metropolitan growth and retaining rural values on the fringe of urban development.

Adoption of the UGB will provide greater predictability in planning at local and regional levels, for governments and infrastructure providers and for investment by the private sector. The UGB supports the more orderly development of land, discourages the unnecessary extension of community infrastructure and helps preserve the important qualities of rural areas.

## What does it change?

The delineation of the UGB for metropolitan Melbourne, including the Mornington Peninsula, provides a new and easily understood way of defining where urban growth will be encouraged or not permitted.

It clearly distinguishes land that is designated urban, to be used for housing, industry and commerce, from that which is non-urban. Non-urban land is to be used for activities such as conservation, agriculture, resource development and suitable community infrastructure like airports, water supply and sewage treatment facilities that require large areas of open land.

Once settled by the Minister for Planning after the consultation period, the UGB will be able to be modified only in designated growth areas following a full assessment of housing needs, the implications of providing urban services and the conservation or other values of the land affected (see 'What is it?'). Proposed planning scheme modifications will be subject to a Ministerial Direction that provides that the opinion of the Minister must first be obtained by a planning authority. Legislation will be developed to underpin this requirement.

The UGB concept can be applied to other settlements that are within metropolitan Melbourne but outside the UGB, and it can be applied in other parts of the State.

## What are its implications for local government?

Councils will need to assess the location of the interim UGB and identify any anomalies or transitional cases such as the effect of proposed planning scheme amendments on the UGB (see Action 1 below). Responses will need to be made within the consultation period.

Councils in metropolitan Melbourne should also assess whether other urban areas within their jurisdiction should be subject to the UGB. If so, they should propose appropriate growth boundaries.

Local councils in individual growth areas will need to assess whether the UGB should be modified following a review or preparation of growth area development plans.

Regional councils also have the opportunity to consider whether there is a benefit in defining an UGB for settlements in their municipality.

# Actions

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## How does this plan relate to *Melbourne 2030*?

The UGB reinforces Direction 2 of *Melbourne 2030*.

This direction establishes a UGB to set clear limits to metropolitan Melbourne's development (Policy 2.1) and it seeks to concentrate urban expansion into growth areas that are served by high-capacity public transport (Policy 2.2).

It also ensures protection for the green wedges that surround metropolitan Melbourne (Policy 2.4).

## What are the recommended actions?

Actions designed to address the key issues outlined above and to achieve the directions of *Melbourne 2030* are grouped as follows:

- applying the UGB
- modifying the UGB in growth areas
- applying the UGB to other areas
- legislative support.

These are summarised for easy reference in the accompanying table.

## UGB actions

Action area	Task (in sequence)	Time frame (short, medium, long)*	Lead agency	Involved	Relevant initiatives in Melbourne 2030
<b>Applying the UGB</b>	application of UGB to affected planning schemes	in place	DOI		2.1.1
	Interim UGB	release of <i>Minister's Direction No.10 – Urban Growth Boundary</i>	in place	DOI	
Submissions on interim UGB	submissions to Minister for Planning on interim UGB – relating to anomalies and transitional cases	consultation period	local government and other stakeholders	DOI	2.1.1
	submissions considered by Minister for Planning	short	DOI	local government	2.1.1
Final form of UGB	Minister makes decisions about final location of UGB	short	DOI	local government	2.1.1
<b>Modifying the UGB in growth areas</b>	prepare new or revised growth area plans identifying the need and extent of changes proposed to the UGB	short – medium	local government	DOI	2.2.1
<b>Applying the UGB in other areas</b>	Minister to consider submissions for UGB to be applied to urban areas in green wedges	short – medium	DOI	local government	2.1.2
	councils to consider applying UGB to regional settlements outside metropolitan Melbourne	short – medium	local government	DOI	2.1.2
<b>Legislative support</b>	legislation to reinforce UGB	short	DOI		2.1.1

\* Short – start within 12 months  
 Medium – start in 1–2 years  
 Long – start in 2–5 years

# Action 1

## Applying the UGB

**Lead agent: Department of Infrastructure (DOI)**

The interim UGB, with some exceptions, reflects the existing edge of urban development together with a number of known commitments that are consistent with *Melbourne 2030*. An open and transparent process has been developed to deal with any anomalies and transitional cases.

During the life of *Melbourne 2030*, generally the UGB will be permanent. Once it has been settled, only the designated growth areas will undergo periodic changes. In these locations, the UGB may be revised occasionally after regular assessments are made of land supply, and the availability of infrastructure and service provision at metropolitan and regional level. This may lead to the revision of development plans for these areas.

Land within the UGB will be available for a range of urban uses, including open space. Rural activities will be encouraged to continue until land is required for urban purposes.

Land outside the UGB will remain predominantly rural in use and character. Metropolitan green wedges will be planned and managed to protect their individual resources, values and characteristics (see draft Implementation Plan 5. Green wedges).

### Stages in the implementation process

#### Stage 1. Application of the interim UGB

The application of the interim UGB is concurrent with the release of *Melbourne 2030*.

The Minister for Planning has applied the UGB in each planning scheme affected by the concept. Minor amendments can be made to the UGB to address any anomalies and deal with transitional cases (see Stages 2 and 3 below).

The principles applied in delineating the UGB are outlined in 'Implementation principles'.

### Implementation principles

#### General

Land within the UGB includes land zoned for business, industry, residential (including most areas zoned for low-density residential) and public use where that land forms part of an adjacent community. It also includes some land zoned rural that may be contained within a broader urban area.

The UGB is identified at a scale that is tied to property boundaries or other clearly definable features such as watercourses, ridge lines, zone boundaries or built forms such as roads.

The UGB is continuous – exceptions are the townships and urban areas geographically separated from the metropolitan area, such as Sunbury, Melton and Hastings and parts of the Port Phillip Bay coastline on the Mornington Peninsula.

#### Specific – in designated growth areas

For designated growth areas, the UGB has been based on areas currently zoned or committed for urban development (with some exceptions as outlined in *Melbourne 2030*). Several areas previously included in Growth Area Plans in Werribee, Hume and Cranbourne are not included and will be subject to further detailed investigation as part of the review of each Growth Area Plan.

#### Specific – in areas not designated for growth

For areas not designated for growth, the UGB has been based primarily on the boundary formed by the extent of existing urban zoning.

The main variation to this general approach has been where there is a commitment for future urban use in a local strategy and the changes are consistent with the intent of *Melbourne 2030*.

At Melbourne and Moorabbin airports, the UGB follows the boundary of areas set aside in airport master plans for business and industrial purposes. Near Point Cook airport, the UGB omits land parcels where further investigation into future aircraft noise is required.

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## Stage 2. Submissions about the UGB

While the interim UGB has been applied following a diligent assessment of existing information, it is recognised that there may be instances of error or oversight, unresolved amendments to planning schemes or cases where there are sound strategic reasons for the UGB to be varied.

Accordingly, the Minister for Planning will consider submissions (see below) to vary the interim UGB subject to criteria that support the intent of *Melbourne 2030* and that address the principles referred to above.

Submissions to vary the interim UGB must be made to the Minister for Planning during the consultation period.

## Stage 3. Final form of the UGB

There are two basic circumstances where the Minister will consider variations to the interim UGB.

### a Anomalies

- Any evidence of error in the application of the principles described in Stage 1 above.

### b Transitional cases

- Planning scheme amendments commenced prior to the introduction of the UGB that are consistent with a planning authority's Municipal Strategic Statement
- Proposals for urban development that:
  - are consistent with recent strategic planning carried out by a planning authority
  - have been subject to public consultation
  - have broad community support.

In each circumstance it must be demonstrated that the variation

- is consistent with *Melbourne 2030*
- is consistent with the State Planning Policy Framework
- maintains the integrity of any non-urban area affected by the change.

Prior to deciding on any variations, the Minister will consult with the affected planning authority.

# Action 2 Modifying the UGB in growth areas

**Lead agent: DOI in partnership with local government**

The UGB is likely to change to implement periodic reviews of the Growth Area Plans. As noted, this will occur after a strategic assessment of land supply, housing affordability, and environmental and infrastructure/service impacts at the metropolitan and regional level. Changes will be subject to a Ministerial Direction applicable to the UGB (see below).

The first changes may be required following revision or creation of new Growth Area Plans for the designated growth areas in Wyndham (Werribee), Hume, Whittlesea (Epping North, Plenty Valley), South East (Casey, Cardinia) (see draft Implementation Plan 2, Growth areas).

Changes to the UGB will be introduced by an amendment to a planning scheme. An amendment will include the revised UGB and the revised growth area plan.

### Minister's Direction No. 10

The Minister has released guidelines and processes to modify the UGB in a Ministerial Direction issued under Section 7(5) and 12 (2)(a) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The Direction includes the processes, tests and criteria to be used for modifying the UGB in designated growth areas. The Direction includes a requirement that a planning authority must seek the views of the Minister for Planning before preparing an amendment.

A copy of the Direction can be obtained from DOI.

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## Action 3 Applying the UGB to other areas

**Lead agent: Local government in partnership with DOI**

Councils have the opportunity to consider whether there is a need or benefit in defining a UGB for other urban areas, such as smaller settlements contained in the green wedges or in those municipalities surrounding metropolitan Melbourne.

The need may arise through circumstances such as:

- controlling the 'leapfrogging' of development demands
- safeguarding environmentally sensitive locations
- preserving agriculturally productive areas
- retaining the separate identity of towns close to other urban areas.

The actions proposed in draft Implementation Plan 5, Green wedges, will provide guidance where there is a need for an UGB in these areas.

The application of a UGB to other urban areas in metropolitan Melbourne will be subject to the Minister's Direction referred to above.

## Action 4 Legislative support

**Lead agent: DOI**

To reinforce the UGB, the Government will legislate to provide the Minister for Planning with additional powers to manage where the UGB will be applied in metropolitan Melbourne.

This new legislative process will help ensure that the principles underpinning the UGB are being fully applied.

# Next steps – what do we need to do?

The Government is releasing *Melbourne 2030* and the draft Implementation Plans for a period of public review and comment. The initial comment period, up to 14 February 2003, is to give all interested parties the chance to comment on how *Melbourne 2030* works overall, whether the draft implementation plans are workable, and whether there are any unforeseen issues that need further consideration.

Public information sessions will be held at various venues around the metropolitan area following the release. Public displays will be held at the Melbourne Museum in Carlton and at other venues. Workshops will be held with key stakeholder groups about particular topics. They will focus on what needs to be done, and when.

General comments on *Melbourne 2030* and specific feedback on its implementation should be submitted by 14 February 2003 to:

Metropolitan Strategy Project  
Department of Infrastructure  
GPO Box 2797Y  
Melbourne VIC 3001

or

[melbourne2030@doi.vic.gov.au](mailto:melbourne2030@doi.vic.gov.au)

Information is available by calling 1300 366 356

Details of our consultation process will be advertised widely and will be available on DOI's web site. We value your comments and involvement.

For further information on the Melbourne Metropolitan Strategy process and *Melbourne 2030*, go to [www.melbourne2030.vic.gov.au](http://www.melbourne2030.vic.gov.au)

## Submissions

In order to ensure the integrity of the consultation process, you are asked to provide your name and address with your submission. Unfortunately we will not be able to accept submissions which do not include this information. However, all personal identifying information could be removed after it is received if that is your request. If this is the case, or there are any other parts of your submission that you wish treated confidentially, please make this clear in your submission.

