

Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Act 2018

In May 2018 landmark legislation *Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Act 2018* was passed to recognise Victoria's most distinctive natural and cultural landscapes.

Background

The *Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Act 2018* establishes a new benchmark to guard against inappropriate development in sensitive areas across Victoria and safeguards their unique features for future generations.

The legislation enables better management of the peri-urban areas around metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria's regional cities, strengthening the process for protecting social, environmental and economic values in these key areas.

The Act aims to:

- recognise the importance of distinctive areas and landscapes to the people of Victoria and to protect and conserve the environmental, social and economic value of these areas
- enhance conservation of the environment including unique habitats, ecosystems and biodiversity

- promote cross-government coordination by enabling the integration of policy development, implementation and decision-making
- recognise the connection and stewardship of Victoria's Traditional Owner communities.

This pioneering legislation represents the first step in implementing the Victorian Government's commitment in *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* to strengthen planning protection for our distinctive landscapes and valued non-urban areas.

Settlement Boundaries

A Statement of Planning Policy will secure the long-term sustainability of townships in declared areas by designating long-term settlement boundaries to ensure growth does not encroach into valued natural and rural landscapes.

Once designated, any future amendment to long-term settlement boundaries must be ratified by Parliament – similar to the process in place for Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

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