

Research Matters

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Welcome to Issue 73 of *Research Matters*, the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning's quarterly planning research bulletin, featuring DELWP research and analysis, news about recently released data, and research from other sources. If you have any questions or comments, you can contact us at:

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In this issue ...

This issue of *Research Matters* begins with the continued rise of transit oriented development. The article highlights the renewal of Melbourne's inner north along tram routes and the role of state policy and local planning in facilitating this.

The history of Melbourne's growth area suburbs is also explored in this issue by looking at lot sizes and housing diversity. The article also uses data from the Urban Development Program (UDP) to demonstrate the housing diversity patterns seen in current outer and middle ring suburbs.

Finally, the Forward Policy and Research team have suggested some useful websites that cover demographic, housing, transport, cities, public policy and economic issues.

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The Continuing Rise of Transit-Oriented Development in Melbourne

Since the release of the *Melbourne 2030* strategic plan in 2003, State and local government planning policy has generally supported increasing residential density along transport corridors. Figure 1 depicts how, since 2010, dwelling numbers in these locations have increased substantially.

Development along transport corridors is set to further increase over the next few years. Urban Development Program data indicate that the recent addition of approximately 4,000 dwellings per year near transport infrastructure may increase to over 10,000 dwellings in the coming years (Victorian State Government 2015).

The majority of this growth (16,000 dwellings) is set to occur in Melbourne’s northern suburbs. Suburbs in the south are expected to see 13,000 more dwellings, while transport corridors in the east

are expected to gain 6,000 new dwellings. The north-western suburbs, with a less extensive tram network, are predicted to have 4,000 new dwellings added in the near future.

Major roads in the inner northern suburbs have already experienced significant dwelling and population growth which is expected to continue. Sydney Road in Brunswick is expected to increase by 900 dwellings. The Pentridge site in Coburg is predicted to accommodate 3,000 more dwellings. High Street in Northcote, is anticipated to increase by 1,000 dwellings, while Smith Street in Collingwood and Fitzroy will see an extra 900 dwellings added to the suburb. Finally, the northern end of Nicholson Street in Brunswick East will gain 900 dwellings.

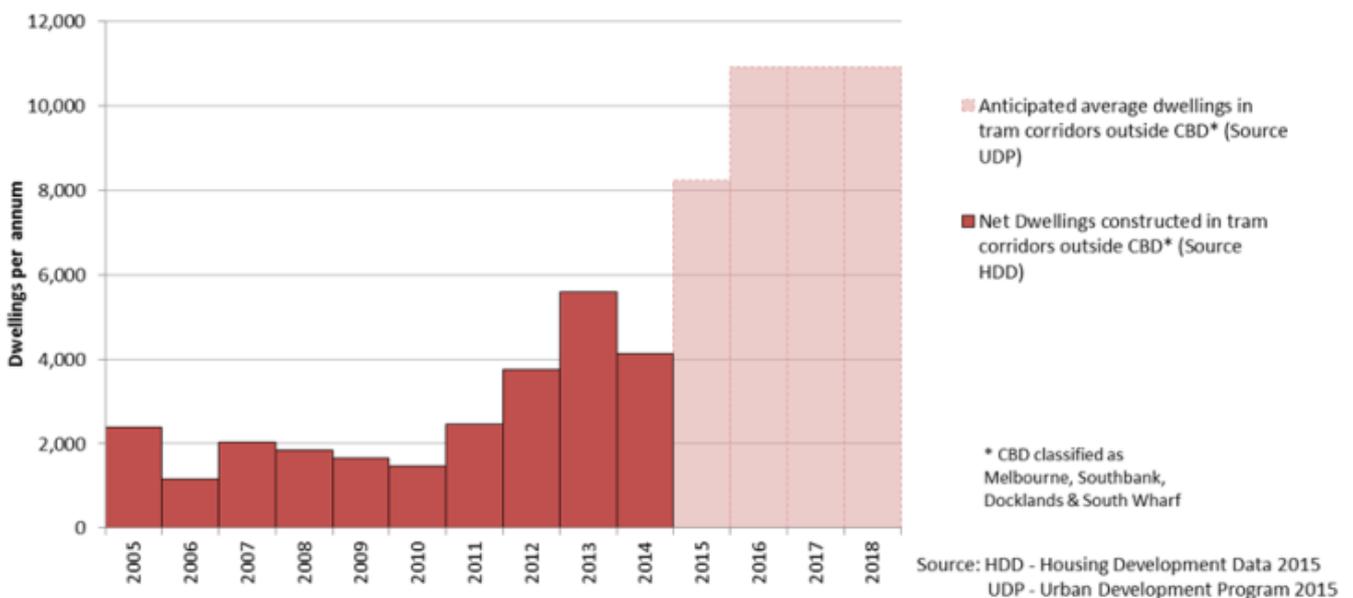


Figure 1: Dwellings constructed within 100m of tram lines outside Melbourne CBD

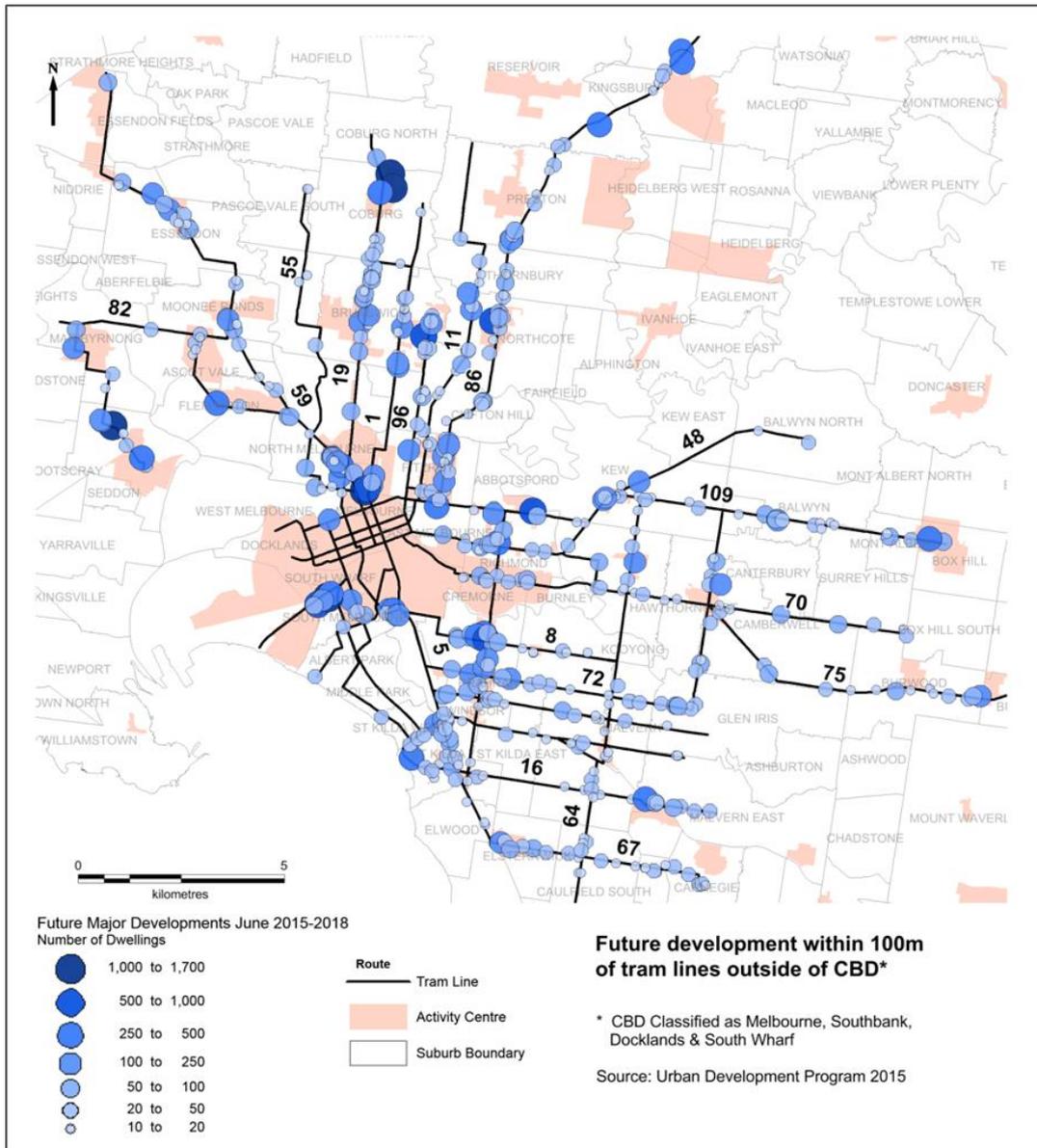


Figure 2: Future Development within 100m of tram lines outside of CBD

The councils of Maribyrnong, Moreland, Darebin and Yarra have embraced transit orientated development (Brunswick Structure Plan 2010, Northcote Structure Plan 2007, Smith Street Structure Plan 2008), often creating focus areas of development that combine with the activity centres outlined in *Melbourne 2030*. These municipalities have also taken advantage of their industrial past and rezoned large areas of former industrial land along transport corridors for residential development.

The success of such local policies in focusing development is clearly shown in the graph and map above. However, with unprecedented dwelling

growth expected over the next couple of years, the challenge will be maintaining the transport services that made them desirable for development in the first place.

The growth of Melbourne’s tram corridors emphasise the way in which state policy can successfully combine with local planning to achieve broader community objectives related to urban consolidation and transport oriented development.

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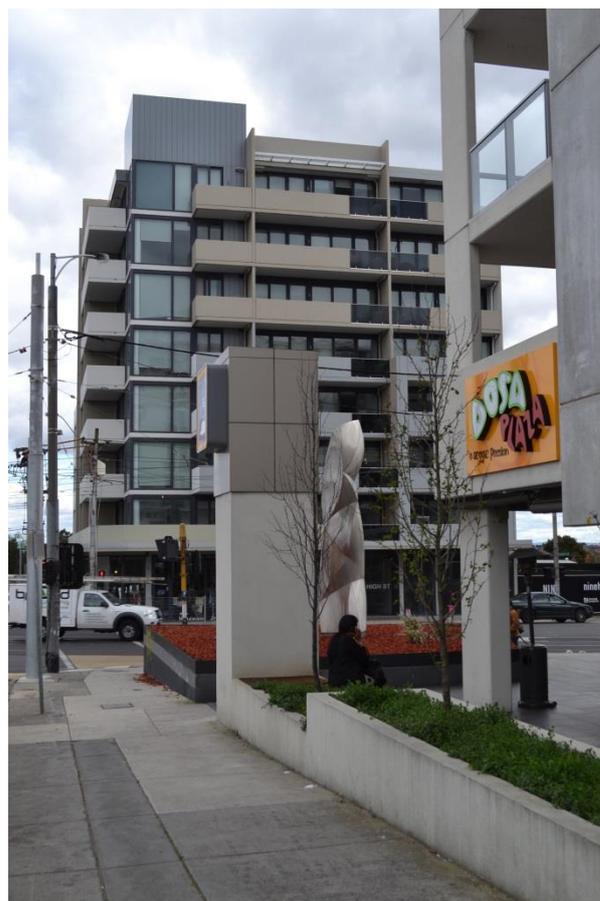
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Medium density development at the junction of Plenty Road, High Street and Dundas Street, Preston. The area is directly served by tram and bus and is a 10 minute walk from Thornbury railway station.

Photo: Fiona McKenzie, 2015.

The Changing Face of Melbourne's Outer Suburbs

Since 2003, the Victorian Government has produced an annual Urban Development Program. The program reports on the supply, demand and consumption of residential and industrial land across metropolitan Melbourne. Having more than 10 years' worth of data allows unique insights into the planning and development of Melbourne's newest suburbs. One of the most interesting aspects of change is the impact that the urban growth boundary, introduced in 2002, has had on development in these areas.

Historically, land development on the fringes of the metropolitan area provided Melburnians with their 'Great Australian Dream' – a brand new house on a quarter acre block. During the 1950s, 60s and 70s, these new suburbs provided space and large back yards to raise a family. Even though these

suburbs were further from Melbourne's CBD, they were preferred by many new households over the inner city.

Residential subdivisions were fairly uniform during these decades according to the codes and regulations that governed subdivision design and layout. In effect, these lots are more easily re-subdivided today because of their rectangular lot shapes and uniformity. Ongoing urban growth has made these once fringe suburbs of the 50s and 60s into highly sought after middle ring suburbs with established amenity. Additional houses are often built on the back of these larger lots, or existing houses demolished to make way for units or townhouses.



Figure 1: Household Sullage Water from Properties in Unsewered Areas, Melbourne, 1957

Source: Victorian Places

Current subdivision practices on Melbourne’s fringe are changing rapidly, particularly in relation to lot size. Each year the average lot size for new lot construction within Melbourne’s growth areas has decreased. Figure 2 depicts the fall in numbers of larger lot sizes and the increase in number of smaller lot sizes in Melbourne’s growth areas over the past 10 years.

With the introduction of the urban growth boundary in 2002, there was a perception from parts of the development industry that the restriction of land supply would limit developers capacity to innovate.

However, ten years on from the introduction of the urban growth boundary, Melbourne’s outer urban landscape has changed. During this period, medium density housing increased in Melbourne’s urban fringe areas on greenfield land. New and innovative ‘urban villages’ are also being constructed, such as Waratah Gardens and the Cotters in Epping (figure 3). These complexes reflect high density apartment style living, complete with cafés and gymnasiums.



Figure 2: Broad hectare lot construction for Melbourne’s growth areas, by lot size, 2005-06 to 2014-15

Source: UDP – Urban Development Program 2015



Figure 3: The Cotters: Apartments Epping – medium density housing on greenfield land in the urban fringe

Source: Style Craft Builder 2016

The demographic profile of Melburnians has changed in more recent years, with more single parent households and first homebuyers entering the market, as well as retirees requiring less space but wanting to locate close to their families. It appears that the industry has effectively 'listened' to

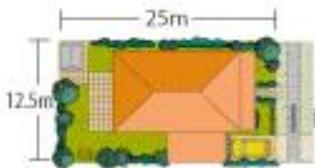
the market, and adapted accordingly (figure 4). The provision more diverse housing on our fringe areas not only provides choice of product according to the markets' requirements, but it has assisted in maintaining an affordable product to a broad range of Melbourne's residents.

Land Block Types



▪ Town Cottage

- Average lot dimensions 12.5m x 25m (313m²)



▪ Villa

- * Average lot dimensions 10m x 32m (320m²)

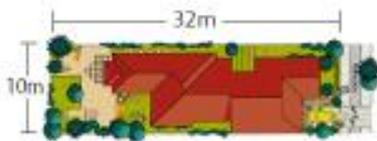


Figure 4: Example of home and land packages in relation to lot size in Caroline Springs (Delfin Lend Lease)
Source: Lendlease 2016

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Helpful Websites

The staff in the Forward Policy and Research team spend a lot of time using various Internet resources. Some of their favourite sites are listed below.

Demography

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics

<http://www.abs.gov.au/>

Australia's national statistical agency which provides official statistics on economic, social, population and environmental issues.

.id The Population Experts

<http://home.id.com.au/>

Provides demographic resources through in-depth profiles of local government areas and suburbs across Australia and New Zealand

Housing

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

<http://www.ahuri.edu.au/home>

A national independent research network which provides high quality research which influences policy development to improve housing and urban environments in Australia.

Urban Development Institute of Australia (Victoria)

<http://www.udiavic.com.au>

Represents the interests of the residential property development industry in Victoria and provides information for those associated with the property development industry.

Urban Melbourne

<https://urban.melbourne/about>

Independent source of medium and high density urban projects in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victorian cities through providing a public and open database of projects.

Property Values

<https://www.propertyvalue.com.au/>

A website that provides insight into Australian property. In particular, it presents information on development permits for individual properties.

Transport

Charting Transport

<http://chartingtransport.com/>

Transport data for Melbourne, Victoria and Australia which provides views on public domain transport data through charts and maps.

Cities

Crikey/The Urbanist

<http://blogs.crikey.com.au/theurbanist/>

A blog for discussion about cities, including transport, planning, development and social issues.

Suburb Profile

<http://house.ksou.cn/suburb.php>:

A Chinese website that generates profile data on Australian suburbs.

Public Policy

The Brookings Institution

<http://www.brookings.edu/about/programs/metro>

Public policy organisation that conducts in-depth research that leads to new ideas for solving problems facing society at the local, national and global level.

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

<http://www.lincolninst.edu/>

Independent organisation that informs public dialogue and decisions about land policy through planning and urban form, valuation and taxation and international studies both in the United States and internationally.

Economics

SGS Economics & Planning

<http://www.sgsep.com.au/>

Independent research into economics and planning related issues.