



PUBLIC CONSULTATION FINAL REPORT ON SUBMISSIONS

NOVEMBER 2009



DELIVERING MELBOURNE'S NEWEST SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



The discussion of the Urban Growth Boundary, Regional Rail Link, Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor and Grassland Reserves within this report reflects the content of Amendment VC55 as approved by the Minister for Planning, which is still subject to ratification by Parliament before the Amendment comes into operation.

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This is the final report on submissions received throughout the consultation period for *Delivering Melbourne's newest sustainable communities*, which includes a review of the Urban Growth Boundary and the identification of alignments / reservations for the Regional Rail Link, Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor, and two grassland reserves. The report outlines the consultation process, including an explanation of how submissions were considered, where changes were made to the proposals and a summary of issues raised and the Government's response to those issues.

PROJECT CONTEXT

In December 2008, the Victorian Government released the following four documents for shaping Melbourne:

- > *Victoria in Future 2008*;
- > *Melbourne 2030: a planning update – Melbourne @ 5 million* ("Melbourne @ 5 million");
- > *The Victorian Transport Plan*; and
- > *Freight Futures: Victorian Freight Network Strategy* ("Freight Futures").

Victoria in Future 2008 provided an update to Victoria's population projections. It indicated that Melbourne will reach a population of five million people faster than anticipated. Over the 30 years from 2006 to 2036, Victoria will grow by 2.3 million people, with 1.8 million additional people in metropolitan Melbourne and about 477,000 in regional Victoria.

Melbourne @ 5 million outlined the implications of *Victoria in Future 2008* growth projections for Melbourne's future settlement pattern and provided essential land use and development context for *The Victorian Transport Plan*. It defined a refined settlement pattern needed to ensure that Melbourne remains liveable as the population approaches five million, which included the designation of six Central Activities Districts, employment corridors and the need to accommodate an additional 600,000 dwellings in metropolitan Melbourne over the next 20 years of which:

- > Almost 316,000 dwellings are anticipated to be in Melbourne's established areas, where access to trams and other public transport services will be important; and
- > Approximately 284,000 dwellings are anticipated to be in Melbourne's growth areas.

Melbourne @ 5 million signalled the Government's commitment to review Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary during 2009 and designated 'Investigation Areas' in Melbourne's north, west and south-east as potential areas for inclusion within the Urban Growth Boundary. It also identified the need to determine the boundaries of proposed grassland areas for protection in Melbourne's west. These grasslands are listed as critically endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and provide habitat for a range of endangered flora and fauna species.

The need to ensure new growth areas are adequately serviced with infrastructure and the implementation of the Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution were also outlined in *Melbourne @ 5 million*.

The Victorian Transport Plan and Freight Futures identified major transport initiatives to facilitate Melbourne's growth including the Regional Rail Link and the Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor.

The Regional Rail Link is a 50 kilometre railway connection that will link the Melbourne-Geelong railway from west of Werribee to Southern Cross Station via the Melbourne-Ballarat railway, connecting at Deer Park. It delivers improved regional network outcomes and provides an opportunity for enhanced local passenger services.

The Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor is a long term transport project which will accommodate the large increases expected in the volume of freight and people moving around outer metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria in the longer term. It is a 100 kilometre long corridor that is intended to link Avalon Airport, Werribee, Melton, Melbourne Airport and Donnybrook and then via the proposed E6 Transport Corridor, link Donnybrook to the Metropolitan Ring Road at Thomastown.

In March 2009, the Victorian Government entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth Government, under section 146 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, to conduct a strategic assessment of the potential impact of expanding the growth areas of Melbourne and related transport and infrastructure on matters of national environmental significance. Matters of national environmental significance include threatened species and ecological communities, migratory species, World and National Heritage properties and Ramsar wetlands. The undertaking of any action that could have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance requires approval from the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts.

In May 2009, the Victorian Government made a small modification to the boundary of the Investigation Areas designated in *Melbourne @ 5 million* in Melbourne's west in light of updated information regarding the Volcanic Plains Grasslands in the vicinity of Troups Road, Melton.

In June 2009, the Victorian Government released *Delivering Melbourne's newest sustainable communities* for public comment. It provided the rationale for the four integrated land use and transport proposals to:

- > Revise Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary and designate land for development;
- > Plan the alignment of the Regional Rail Link (west of Werribee to Deer Park) and the Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor; and
- > Define the boundaries and management of areas for grassland reserves in Melbourne's west.

The *Delivering Melbourne's newest sustainable communities* documentation included a range of background studies for each of the proposals, and the Strategic Impact Assessment report to meet the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

In August 2009, the Victorian Government submitted to the Commonwealth Government its draft final Program Report and updated Strategic Impact Assessment Report. These reports identified the Victorian Government's commitments to manage and mitigate the potential impacts of future development on matters of national environmental significance.

In August / September 2009 further targeted consultation occurred around variations for the Regional Rail Link, the Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor and the Grasslands reserves that responded to issues raised in earlier consultation.

Consultation on *Delivering Melbourne's newest sustainable communities* took place over three stages, the first starting in December 2008 and the third finishing in September 2009. The proposals have been refined at each stage of the consultation process following further evidence raised in the submissions or further detailed work. The final changes to the proposals are outlined in section 4.

CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

Public consultation has been an essential part of the process for determining the revisions to Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary; designating new areas for development; and for reserving land for the Regional Rail Link, Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor and grassland areas. Public feedback was formally sought at three stages. Figure 1 outlines the steps in the consultation process, which is also described in brief below.

STAGE 1 – SUBMISSIONS ON INVESTIGATION AREAS (22 DECEMBER 2008 TO 20 FEBRUARY 2009)

Undertaken from 22 December 2008 to 20 February 2009, and resulted in approximately 350 submissions being received. Notification included:

- > Advertisement in metropolitan papers and relevant local papers in mid December 2008;
- > Notification and information on websites of the Growth Areas Authority and Department of Planning and Community Development; and
- > All affected landholders were sent a letter regarding the review process and the proposed Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution in February 2009.

The objectives of the Stage 1 consultation process were:

- > To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the range of issues affecting the Growth Areas; and
- > To provide an opportunity for landowners seeking to be included in the Urban Growth Boundary to outline the development potential of their land within the investigation area and to advise their knowledge on the opportunities and constraints of land.

On 19 May 2009, the Minister for Planning announced an extension to the boundary for the western Investigation Area. All property owners within the Troops Road extension of the Investigation Area were notified by mail that the Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution may apply, should their land be included in the revised UGB.

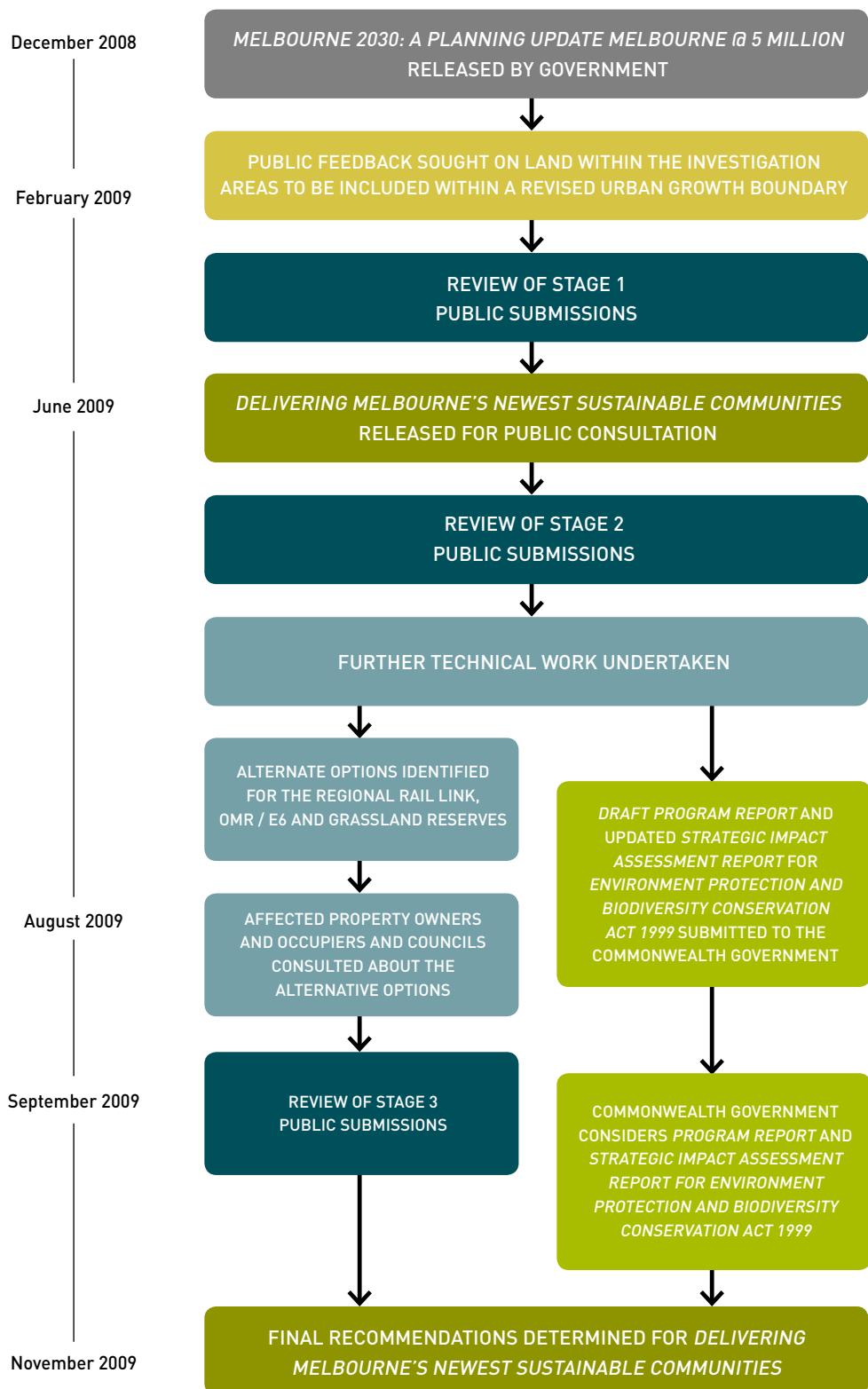
A *Summary and Response to Submissions Report* that documented public submissions received during Stage 1 was released with the *Delivering Melbourne's Newest Sustainable Communities* package in June 2009.

STAGE 2 – SUBMISSIONS ON DELIVERING MELBOURNE'S NEWEST SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROPOSALS (17 JUNE TO 17 JULY 2009)

Undertaken from 17 June 2009 to 17 July 2009, and approximately 1400 submissions were received. Notification included:

- > All landowners and occupiers affected by any of the four projects were notified by mail. Approximately 11,200 letters were sent on 17 June 2009; and
- > Advertisement in metropolitan papers and relevant local papers.

FIGURE 1: CONSULTATION PROCESS



Consultation for the program *Delivering Melbourne's newest sustainable communities* included:

- > A dedicated website with a Portal for online submissions;
- > A dedicated call centre providing support seven days per week;
- > Eight information sessions held across the areas affected by the proposals; and
- > Letters of acknowledgement of submissions were sent to all who made a submission.

The objective of the Stage 2 consultation process was to seek public feedback on:

- > Melbourne's revised Urban Growth Boundary and the land designated for development;
- > An alignment for the Regional Rail Link (west of Werribee to Deer Park);
- > An alignment for the Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor;
- > The boundaries and management of proposed grassland reserves in Melbourne's west; and
- > The findings of the strategic impact assessment of matters of national environmental significance.

STAGE 3 – SUBMISSIONS ON ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS (24 AUGUST TO 21 SEPTEMBER 2009)

Stage 3 was a targeted process directed to those affected by the proposed alternative alignments / boundaries. It was undertaken from 24 August 2009 to 21 September 2009, and approximately 280 submissions were received.

Notification included:

- > All landowners and occupiers affected by any of the four projects were notified by mail;
- > Notification and information was also available on the Department of Planning and Community Development website;
- > Information sessions in the areas affected by the alternative proposal, conducted in late August and early September; and
- > Letters of acknowledgement of submissions were sent to all who made a submission.

The objective of the Stage 3 consultation process was to seek feedback from affected property owners, occupiers and councils on alternative options for parts of the Regional Rail Link (west of Werribee to Deer Park), Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor and grassland reserves in Melbourne's west.

Submissions from stage 2 and 3 of the consultation process are now available to view on www.dpcd.vic.gov.au

SUBMISSION ASSESSMENT

This section outlines the approach the Government undertook to analyse and assess submissions. This section will help explain the methodology and decision making regarding the submissions process.

Submissions were considered in the context of the objectives for each project and the package as a whole. These objectives for the package and individual projects are outlined below.

DELIVERING MELBOURNE'S NEWEST SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The objectives are to:

- > Ensure Melbourne's outward growth occurs in a sustainable way by addressing the future settlement, employment and transport needs of Melbourne, having regard to the directions and policies of *Melbourne 2030, Melbourne @ 5 million, The Victorian Transport Plan and Freight Futures*;
- > Define a revised Urban Growth Boundary to manage the growth of Melbourne's metropolitan urban area;
- > Define alignments for the Regional Rail Link (west of Werribee to Deer Park) and the Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor;
- > Inform the planning of other long term transport infrastructure projects required to support future growth in population and the way goods are moved across the metropolitan area;
- > Identify opportunities for improving environmental outcomes within Melbourne's growth areas and protecting the values of adjoining green wedges including designating permanent grassland reserves in Melbourne's west; and
- > Provide certainty to local communities, developers and other investors about future development in the growth areas.

Implicit in these objectives is a need for an integrated resolution of the outcomes.

REVIEW OF MELBOURNE'S URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

The directions and principles that underpin *Melbourne 2030* and its update *Melbourne @ 5 million* were taken into account. In addition the following principles, as outlined in the consultation material of 17 June 2009, have also guided the Urban Growth Boundary Review:

- > The majority of new development is within approximately three kilometres of high capacity public transport (existing, planned or potential);
- > There is potential to develop contiguous extensions of urban areas, to allow efficient use of infrastructure and build on or add value to existing communities;
- > Improved biodiversity values and environmental outcomes may be achieved;
- > Communities can be created that are of sufficient size to support the provision of necessary regional and local infrastructure and services;

-
- > The pattern of development would allow for efficient public transport networks at a sub-regional level;
 - > New residential development can be planned with access to existing and/or future employment opportunities; and
 - > Land use conflict between industry and sensitive land uses can be avoided or minimised.

The assessment of submissions was also influenced by a **precautionary approach** to constraints assessments.

In particular:

- > A conservative approach was taken to identifying land as available for urban development within the Urban Growth Boundary. This approach has been followed to allow the future protection of areas that may require it and to respond to the implications of the Growth Area Infrastructure Contribution. Further refinement of the areas that have been assumed as not available for urban development will take place when more detailed work has taken place during the Growth Area Framework Plan or subsequent Precinct Structure Plan processes.
- > For matters of environmental significance such as areas with known or potential biodiversity values, landscape values, creeks, wetlands, flood ways, drainage areas and for areas requiring buffers the precautionary approach has been taken. This approach means that buffer sizes and areas of constrained land maybe larger than might be necessary in the longer term, however they leave the ability to protect the land (or release it for development if appropriate) as a result of further studies and more detailed planning.
- > This issue has been highlighted as a large number of submissions related to land identified as constrained and in particular that this land is suitable for development. Generally the approach has been to retain the constrained status of the land due to the reasons set out above so that further refinements can take place at the Growth Area Framework Plan and Precinct Structure Plan stages.

Some submissions were **beyond the scope** of the Urban Growth Boundary Review, which means:

- > The submission was about policy decisions already made by Government such as the direction to accommodate more housing in the growth areas or to implement a Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution; and
- > The submission referred to land outside of the Investigation Areas designated by Government. Land included in the Investigation Areas was based on a consideration of the land required to accommodate the development envisaged in *Melbourne @ 5 million* and a preliminary assessment of areas that might prove most suitable for creating sustainable new communities.

REGIONAL RAIL LINK (WEST OF WERRIBEE TO DEER PARK)

The overall objective is “to reserve land for a high-quality transit corridor serving Melbourne’s and Victoria’s west.”

It is envisaged that the project will achieve the following desired outcomes for transport in Victoria:

- > Separate Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo trains from suburban trains in Melbourne;
- > End the conflict between Geelong regional trains and Werribee suburban trains, thereby providing a substantial increase in capacity, reliability and frequency for both lines;
- > Provide a dedicated V/Line track on new alignment through the new growth areas of Tarneit and Derrimut giving residents and other key stakeholders a high quality rail link; and
- > Allow a major boost in services; particularly much needed peak hour services for regional commuters on the Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo lines.

The project has been planned to support sustainable development of growth areas in Wyndham. It will help shape these areas by ensuring forecast residential growth can be catered for and provides an opportunity for higher value land development around key activity nodes which currently exist or which could be readily developed around the alignment.

As the Regional Rail Link – West of Werribee to Deer Park is part of a broader suite of rail projects, it will also indirectly provide the following outcomes for transport in Melbourne:

- > Increased passenger carrying capacity into and out of Melbourne’s Central Business District;
- > Improved train service punctuality;
- > Greater choice of transport options to, from and across the city;
- > Reduced road congestion on the western and south-western metropolitan road corridors;
- > Changes in travel patterns and increased modal interchange; and
- > Relief for rail congestion in the inner rail network.

THE OUTER METROPOLITAN RING / E6 TRANSPORT CORRIDOR

The Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor is being planned to provide an ultimate high speed transport link for freight and people that would:

- > Enhance connectivity between key international transport hubs such as Melbourne Airport, Avalon Airport and Port of Geelong;
- > Improve access to the proposed Beveridge Interstate Rail Terminal;
- > Serve as an important route to interstate and major regional destinations;
- > Link residential and employment growth areas in the north and west of Melbourne; and
- > Improve access in this major employment corridor which includes Avalon Airport, Werribee, Melton, Melbourne Airport and Donnybrook

As with all infrastructure projects other key objectives based on compliance with government legislation or good planning practice are to:

- > Ensure that the project is capable of performing its function of providing safe and efficient movement;
- > Ensure that the project is technically feasible;
- > Avoid as far as possible, minimise where unavoidable and provide offsets for any biodiversity impacts;
- > Avoid as far as possible, minimise where unavoidable and prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan to mitigate any Cultural Heritage impacts; and
- > Minimise socio-economic impacts in relation to existing and future residential and industrial development and maximise opportunities for future urban development.

A set of assessment criteria was used to compare the alternative alignments for the Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor. The criteria used included: number of houses/buildings affected; route length; impact on urban development; environmental impacts; community impacts; commercial impacts; cultural heritage impacts; and construction feasibility.

GRASSLAND RESERVES

The objectives are to:

- > Permanently protect the two largest remaining areas of native grasslands on the Victorian Volcanic Plain;
- > Create a ready supply of native vegetation offsets sufficient to compensate for the likely clearing of native grasslands within the expanded urban area; and
- > Establish a consolidated conservation reserve that will be managed to improve the quality of native vegetation and maximise opportunities for the long-term viability of threatened flora and fauna species through a dedicated program of adaptive management.

STRATEGIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The objectives are to:

- > Undertake a strategic assessment of matters of national environmental significance within the Program in the context of s146 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*;
- > Ensure the impacts of the Program on matters of national environmental significance are considered;
- > Identify appropriate mitigation measures for any impacts on matters of national environmental significance considered; and
- > Ensure the Urban Growth Boundary Review Program incorporates mitigation measures.

FUTURE STEPS

The process undertaken to-date has focussed on delineating an Urban Growth Boundary and land suitable for development within that boundary, and the designation of reservations for the Regional Rail Link, Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor and grassland reserves. Further planning is required for each of these initiatives as they are progressively delivered. Tasks will include:

- > Biodiversity Conservation Strategies ;
- > Growth Area Framework Plans;
- > Sub-Regional Species Strategies;
- > Precinct Structure Plans;
- > Native Vegetation Precinct Plans;
- > Green Wedge Management Plans;
- > Regional Rail Link: undertaking of actions required by Minister for Planning in response to a decision on a referral under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*; and
- > Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor: undertaking of actions required by Minister for Planning in response to a decision on a referral under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

CHANGES MADE SINCE CONSULTATION (JUNE 2009)

This section outlines the changes made compared to the documentation released in June 2009.

Regional Rail Link, alignment refinements include (refer Map 1):

- > In the vicinity of Davis Road (Mount Cottrell / Tarneit), the alignment has been moved approximately 200m north. An assessment of the potential property impacts indicated that the realignment option would have significantly less impact on six properties (houses not affected or property missed entirely).
- > A number of splays (required for embankments) for road crossing have been slightly widened.

Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor, alignment refinements include (refer Map 2):

- > Around Bulban Road in Mambourin, the reservation has been widened to the west to provide flexibility to respond to potential operations planned for the quarry in that area.
- > In Mount Cottrell the alignment has been straightened, which delivers an improved biodiversity outcome and impacts on fewer houses and buildings compared with the original alignment.
- > In Woodstock / Wollert the alignment has been moved east of Epping Road. The alignment shift results in a very significant reduction in the number of houses to be acquired – 12 in total, which is 35 fewer than the originally displayed alignment. The alignment has also been relocated to minimise impact on remnant areas of Plains Grassy Woodland habitat (which is classified as critically endangered).
- > North of Findon Road the alignment has been moved marginally westward to avoid operational equipment of the quarry in that area.
- > There have been minor modifications to access restorations in a number of locations.
- > For the length of the alignment, the reservation has been narrowed marginally, in numerous places, in light of improved information on the terrain.

Grassland Reserves, boundary refinements include (refer Map 3):

- > In the vicinity of Troops Road Middle Road, Faulkners Road, Dohertys Road, Ballan Road and Ripley Road a number of small exclusions have been made to exclude highly degraded areas or existing residences, based on more detailed advice
- > South of Boundary Road an additional approximately 100 ha was included resulting from the change in the alignment of the Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor.
- > An expansion south of Bulban Road of approximately 600 ha, based on new information about the extent and condition of Natural Temperate Grasslands.

Constrained Land, refinements include:

- > Changes to the status of quarries / buffers. Including the change in status of a quarry (250 ha) in Mambourin where the lessee has indicated an intention to utilise a works approval which results in a significant reduction of developable land including the need for buffer areas, and the expansion of the constrained area to a quarry in Sunbury. In the latter case, the quarry operator intends to confine their operations to an area to along Emu

Creek which will potentially allow a substantial reduction in buffer areas, the details of which will be resolved at the Precinct Structure Planning stage. A similar circumstance is also known in Clyde North.

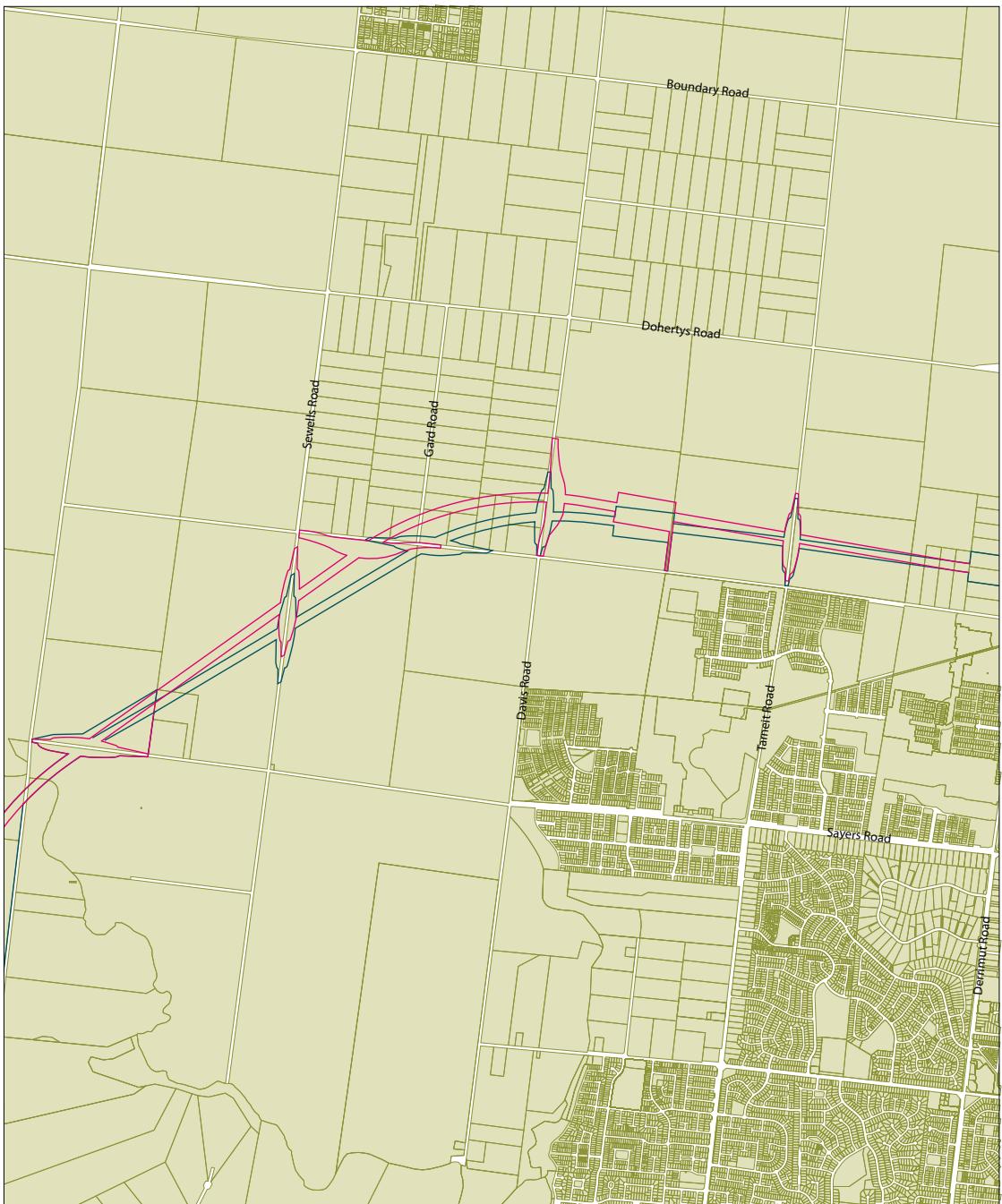
- > Adjustment to the boundaries of buffers along escarpments, areas of landscape values, floodways and native vegetation to better align with new information, contours and existing controls.
- > Retention of three areas of volcanic plains grasslands inside the expanded Urban Growth Boundary as protected habitats of the Golden Sun Moth. These sites are of sufficient size and quality to meet the thresholds for protection proposed in the Strategic Impact Assessment. These thresholds were developed in conjunction with the Commonwealth to meet *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* requirements. In the medium to long term, there may be potential to change the status of these conservation areas, once the full extent of Golden Sun Moth populations in Victoria is understood and 80% of Victoria's highest priority habitats for this species are protected.

Urban Growth Boundary, refinements include (refer Map 4-7):

- > In the vicinity of Craigieburn Road, and in response to agreement by the Commonwealth to allow the development (subject to native vegetation offsets and biodiversity surveys) of land inside the existing Urban Growth Boundary in the Precinct Structure Plan area known as 'R2', it is proposed to move the boundary west to align with Mickleham Road. This change will provide for additional housing within the core catchment of the proposed Craigieburn Town Centre subject to final decisions based on the results of biodiversity surveys.
- > It is not proposed to include the low density area north of Mt Ridley Road, where the remaining undeveloped area is remote from potential future centres.
- > In Casey an expansion is proposed in response to more detailed advice on drainage, information on ownerships, recognition that the area is part of a much larger agricultural area with opportunities for affected farmers to relocate and, most importantly, the benefits from maximising the potential catchment for any potential extension of the rail network from Cranbourne East to Clyde.
- > Two changes resulting from the final alignment of the Outer Metropolitan Ring/ E6 Transport Corridor as follows:
 - i. A change which keeps the alignment of the Urban Growth Boundary along the centre line of the Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor at Mount Cottrell, which results in a reduction of developable land.
 - ii. As a result of an eastward shift of the proposed E6 Transport Corridor near Donnybrook Road in Woodstock the Urban Growth Boundary will be aligned with Merriang Road.
 - iii. As a result of an eastward shift of the proposed E6 Transport Corridor between Summerhill Road and Lehmanns Road the Urban Growth Boundary has generally been aligned to the centre line of the E6 Transport Corridor from Masons Road south to Bindts Road where it then follows Bindts Road south to Lehmanns Road.

- > Aligning the Urban Growth Boundary with Mount Cottrell Road, in Melton South, to retain the integrity of the low density residential development in that area, and to support the long term role of Mount Cottrell Road as an arterial linking Werribee and Melton.
- > Support for the proposal to allow further development at ‘Quarry Hills’, in South Morang / Mernda. The proposal focuses on the delivery of wider community benefits, specifically a regional park. In some cases further work is required to better resolve the delineation between constrained and developable land. As the total area is small it is considered appropriate that all this land be classified as constrained until such time that the Growth Areas Authority and Department of Sustainability and Environment together with the Council have resolved these detailed development issues and can advise the Government as to where developable zones should be applied.
- > In a number of locations very slight changes have been made to better align the Urban Growth Boundary to linear features, dependent on the circumstances (e.g. centre line of a road).

MAP 1: PROPOSED AND RECOMMENDED REGIONAL RAIL LINK ALIGNMENT



- RRL alignment released June 2009
- Recommended RRL realignment option



0 200 400 600
Meters

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This map represents the information contained in Amendment VC55 as approved by the Minister of Planning, which is still subject to ratification by Parliament before the Amendment comes into operation.

MAP 2: OUTER METROPOLITAN RING / E6 TRANSPORT CORRIDOR ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED DURING TARGETED CONSULTATION AUG-SEPT 2009

