

**IN PLANNING PANELS VICTORIA  
SOCIAL HOUSING RENEWAL STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE:  
Walker Street and High Street, Northcote**

**Amendment C158 to the Darebin Planning Scheme**

BETWEEN:

**Department of Health and Human Services**

Proponent

and

**Darebin City Council**

Submitter

and

**OTHERS**

Submitters

**Land: Walker Street and High Street, Northcote**

**PART A**

**Submissions on behalf of Department of Health and Human Services**

**Introduction**

- 1 This Part A Submission is made on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**).

*The Amendment*

- 2 Amendment C158 to the Darebin Planning Scheme (**Amendment**) proposes to make changes to the planning scheme controls applicable to Walker Street Public Housing Estate, Northcote.
- 3 The Amendment is needed to facilitate the redevelopment of Walker Street Estate with a mix of new social and private dwellings.
- 4 The proposed changes to the Darebin Planning Scheme (**Planning Scheme**) are explained in detail in Section 1 of this submission. In summary, the Amendment proposes to:
- (1) rezone the Walker Street Estate from a Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Schedule 1 (Minimal Change Area) to Mixed Use Zone – Schedule 3 to reflect higher (existing and proposed) residential density and building heights on the land;
  - (2) apply the Development Plan Overlay, Schedule 13 to Walker Street Estate to set land use, built form, landscape, open space, vehicle

and pedestrian circulation objectives and requirements for the redevelopment of the Estate, whilst allowing more detailed planning to be established through approval of a development plan and at planning permit stage;

- (3) apply a Parking Overlay, Schedule 1 to the Walker Street Estate to set onsite parking rates appropriate for the particular transport characteristics of the area;
- (4) make the following changes to local policy applicable to the Walker Street Estate to reflect the strategic planning changes intended to be made as part of this amendment:
  - (a) apply the 'Areas of Urban Intensification' designation in the Strategic Framework Plan at clause 21.01-6;
  - (b) change the designation on the Strategic Housing Framework Plan in clause 21.03-1 from 'Minimal Housing Change Area' to 'Substantial Housing Change Area' to encourage increased density;
  - (c) add reference to the redevelopment of the Walker Street site in clause 22.05 (High Street Corridor land use and Urban Design);
- (5) add the Minister for Planning as responsible authority in the Schedule to clause 61.01 in recognition of the state significance of the project and the need for the project to be delivered factoring in town planning matters, social housing policies and financing issues.

### *Overview of the Walker Street Estate Public Housing Renewal Project*

- 5 Victoria's public housing stock is ageing and there is a need for renewal of housing in several public housing estates across Victoria.
- 6 Alongside Victoria's general population growth trends, Victoria's need for social housing is also increasing. There is also a forecasted need for an increase in the number of smaller 1 and 2 bedroom social housing units.
- 7 The 3, 4 and 5 storey 'walk up' flats on Walker Street Estate were constructed in the 1960s and are nearing their end life. They are inaccessible to people with mobility issues and difficult for families with small children and older Victorians. They also have poor thermal performance and are more costly to maintain compared with new housing stock.
- 8 The proposal for Walker Street Estate is part of the Government's Public Housing Renewal Program which involves the renewal of up to 9 (inclusive of the Walker Street Estate) public housing estates across Metropolitan Melbourne,<sup>1</sup> via partnerships with the private sector to deliver a mix of

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<sup>1</sup> Those estates are: Bills Street, Hawthorn, Gronn Place, Brunswick West, BellBardia and Tarakan estates, Flemington Estate, Flemington, Heidelberg West, Ascot Vale estate, Ascot Vale, Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne, Noone Street, Clifton Hill, New Street, Brighton

social and private dwellings. The Government has committed \$185 million in funding to that project. A related project is the renewal of the Flemington Estate in Debnays Precinct, Flemington. The Government has separately committed \$30 million in funding for that project and public hearings were conducted before this Panel in September 2017.

9 At a broader policy level, the Government's Social Housing Renewal Project sits within a framework of government policy aimed at addressing housing affordability and access issues in Victoria, as reflected in *Homes for Victorians (2017)*<sup>2</sup>, the Government's overarching strategy relating to those issues.

10 *Homes for Victorians* directs a \$2.6 billion program of investment into the following 5 action areas:

- (1) Supporting people to buy their own home;
- (2) Increasing the supply of housing through faster planning;
- (3) Promoting stability and affordability for renters;
- (4) Increasing and renewing social housing stock; and
- (5) Improving housing services for Victorians in need.

11 In relation to social housing initiatives, *Homes for Victorians* explains a new approach being pursued by the Government of partnering with the private sector. The Strategy explains (at p. 32):

*"The Social Housing Growth Fund's key aim is to underpin new approaches to deliver social housing – either by funding new partnership developments on non-government land or providing rental subsidies for properties in the private market.*

*By unlocking private investment, with the right incentives and support for community housing agencies, we will deliver new social housing and major new construction activity and jobs for Victorians."*

12 The Amendment responds to the above policies by providing the opportunity for increased social and private dwellings on well located land in Northcote.

13 In summary, within Walker Street Estate, the Amendment is intended to facilitate:

- (1) demolition and replacement of the 7 walk-up flats (containing 87 dwellings);
- (2) construction of new buildings and above ground multi-level car parking with building heights in the range of 2-8 storeys;
- (3) a mix of new social and private housing;

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<sup>2</sup> Available at: <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/homes-for-victorians/>

- (4) potential to provide in the order of 220 new dwellings, with a minimum 10% increase in the existing provision of social housing dwellings within the Estate;
- (5) predominantly residential land use, but with some retail, commercial and community uses in appropriate locations to meet local needs and stimulate local activity and participation;
- (6) approximately 128 total car parking spaces including 22 visitor spaces (compared with 42 car spaces within the site and 21 spaces outside the site boundary), in accordance with the proposed Parking Overlay and the assumptions relating to dwelling mix contained in the *Traffic Engineering Assessment by Traffix*<sup>3</sup> (refer to Figure 4 ).

### Submission structure

14 This submission is organised as follows:

- (1) **Section 1 – what is proposed?** This section explains the land affected by the proposed amendment, what changes are proposed to the planning scheme, what outcomes the proposed amendment is intended to facilitate and the anticipated process for delivery of the project.
- (2) **Section 2 – what is the need for the project?** This section provides background concerning the need for housing renewal on Walker Street Estate and the Government policies and initiatives that underpin the project. It also outlines a chronology of key events and consultation that has occurred.
- (3) **Section 3 – planning policy framework.** This section summarises the relevant planning policy framework applicable to the proposed amendment and explains how the proposed amendment responds to those policies.

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<sup>3</sup> *Traffic Assessment Report* by Traffix, 19 July 2017 available at: [https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0025/76138/SHRP-SH4-16.-Northcote-Traffic-Assessment-FINAL.PDF](https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/76138/SHRP-SH4-16.-Northcote-Traffic-Assessment-FINAL.PDF)

## Availability of documents

- 15 The following webpages contain key information concerning the Amendment and the Committee's Terms of Reference referred to in this submission:
- (1) Committee webpage:  
<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/panels-and-committees/current-panels/social-housing-renewal-standing-advisory-committee>
  - (2) Walker Street Estate Renewal public consultation webpage:  
<https://engage.vic.gov.au/social-housing-renewal-standing-advisory-committee/northcote>
  - (3) Proposed Amendment documentation including details of current and proposed planning scheme provisions, explanatory documents and supporting reports:  
<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/housing-strategy/social-housing-renewal-program/walker-street-estate,-northcote>

## **SECTION 1 - WHAT IS PROPOSED?**

### **The Proposed Amendment**

- 16 The Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**) has requested the Minister for Planning to change the planning scheme provisions applicable to Walker Street Estate, being the land enclosed in yellow in Figure 1.
- 17 In response, the Minister for Planning has referred the Amendment to the Social Housing Renewal Standing Advisory Committee (**Committee**) to conduct public hearings and to provide advice concerning the suitability of the proposed Amendment.



**Figure 1 Walker Street Estate map (bounded yellow)**

- 18 The Committee’s Terms of Reference, dated 30 May 2017, explain that the purpose of the Committee, amongst other things, is to:

*“advise on the suitability of new planning proposals prepared by the DHHS to facilitate renewal and redevelopment of existing public housing estates to increase the supply of social I housing; and*

*provide a timely, transparent and consultative process to facilitate the renewal of Victoria’s social housing stock.”*

### **Urban context**

- 19 The key features of the urban context for the Walker Street Estate are illustrated in Figure 2, below, and include the following:

- (1) Merri Creek Linear Reserve (immediately to south and west);
- (2) Merri Creek Trail (to the south);
- (3) Rushall Railway Station (180m west);
- (4) Westgarth Railway Station (360m northeast);
- (5) Westgarth Neighbourhood Activity Centre (260m north);
- (6) Queens Parade Neighbourhood Activity Centre (180m south); and
- (7) Northcote Major Activity Centre (2km north).

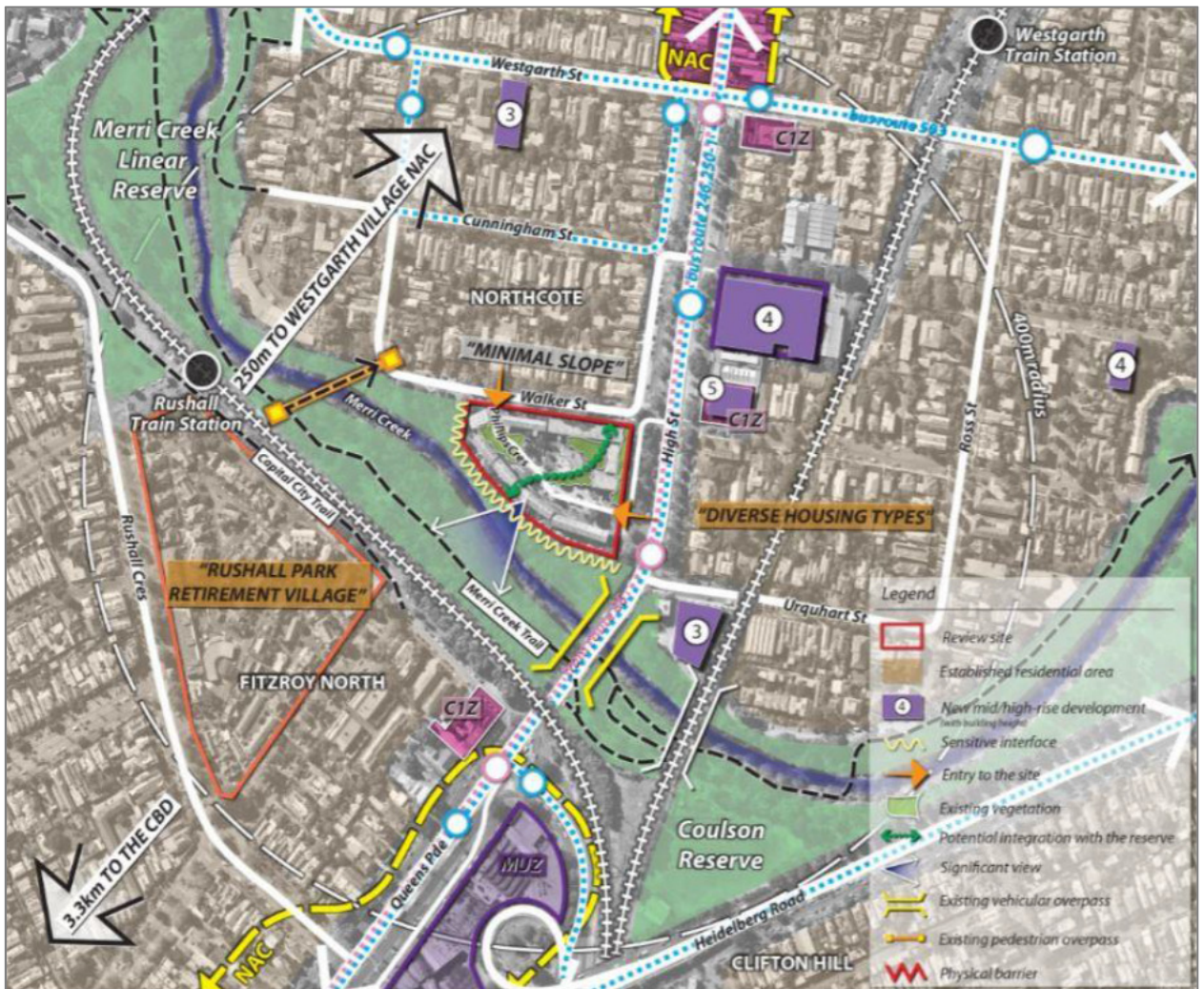


Figure 2 Location context (source: *Town Planning Report*, Message Consultants, p. 10)

20 The land in Walker Street Estate is owned by the Director of Housing of DHHS.

**What changes to the planning scheme are proposed?**

21 In summary, the Amendment seeks to makes the following changes to the Darebin Planning Scheme (**Planning Scheme**):

- (1) *Rezone from a Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Schedule 1 (Minimal Change Area) (NRZ1) to Mixed Use Zone – Schedule 3 (Walker Street, Northcote) (MUZ3);*

- **Reasons for change**

- (a) The existing NRZ1 does not reflect the existing medium density use of the land and limits the potential for increased housing density, in part because it sets a default mandatory building height limit of 9 metres and 2 storeys. This is not consistent with the existing built form context on the site which currently contains 3-5 storey apartment buildings.



- (b) The MUZ is one of the available state standard residential zones that supports higher density housing and the provision of a broader range of land uses, such as retail, commercial and community facilities.
- (2) *Apply a Development Plan Overlay – Schedule 13 to Walker Street Estate;*
- **Reasons for change**
- (a) The proposed DPO13 is considered to be the most appropriate planning tool to guide the future development of Walker Street Estate in an integrated manner having regard to the proposed project delivery model which will involve a partnership between the public and private sector. That model requires the broad parameters for development and land use to be established up front, whilst allowing more detailed design and ultimate planning approvals to be determined following the appointment of a private development partner to deliver the project with the Government.
- (3) *Apply Parking Overlay – Schedule 1 to Walker Street Estate to set the benchmark for parking provision on the site;*
- **Reasons for change**
- (a) The Planning Scheme sets default rates for parking spaces that should be provided before a new use commences. The default rates apply to all land in Victoria, unless alternative rates are set by a Parking Overlay.
  - (b) A Parking Overlay allows alternative parking rates to be provided based on a site or precinct's particular parking needs.
  - (c) Traffic and parking studies carried out in relation to the Amendment indicate that modifications to the standard parking rates in the Planning Scheme are appropriate for this area.
  - (d) In particular, the *Traffic Engineering Assessment* prepared by Traffix found that the accessibility of alternate transport modes, such as train, tram, cycling and walking, close proximity to retail, commercial and recreational uses, as well as local car ownership rates, indicate a reduction from the State standard parking rates is appropriate for the Walker Street Estate. The proposed Parking Overlay gives effect to that finding.
- (4) Make the following changes to local policy provisions to reflect the intended intensity of development for the Walker Street Estate, as reflected in the DPO:

- (a) apply the ‘Areas of Urban Intensification’ designation to the Walker Street Estate on the Strategic Framework Plan in Clause 21.01-6;
  - (b) change the designation for the Walker Street Estate on the Strategic Housing Framework Plan in Clause 21.03-1 from ‘Minimal Housing Change Area’ to ‘Substantial Housing Change Area’;
  - (c) add reference to the redevelopment of the Walker Street site in Clause 22.05 (High Street Corridor Land Use and Urban Design);
- (5) *Add the Minister for Planning as responsible authority for the Walker Street Estate in the Schedule to Clause 61.01.*

- **Reasons for change**

- (a) DHHS has requested that the Minister for Planning become the ‘responsible authority’ for Walker Street Estate.
- (b) The renewal of Walker Street Estate will require decisions about social housing provision, interim tenant relocation and town planning matters to be assessed holistically. Accordingly, the Minister is uniquely placed to perform the role of the responsible authority for the precinct.

### **The Walker Street Estate, Housing Renewal Project**

- 22 The Amendment establishes the planning framework to support the intended renewal of Walker Street Estate (the “**Housing Renewal Project**”).
- 23 What the Housing Renewal Project might ultimately deliver is illustrated in schematic form in the Design Framework that was exhibited with the Amendment.
- 24 However, it is noted that the Design Framework is only one way that development could proceed within the parameters set by the proposed DPO.
- 25 The ultimate form of the Housing Renewal Project will be developed based on more detailed design work undertaken by the DHHS and the appointed private developer following approval of the Amendment.
- 26 In concise terms, however, the Housing Renewal Project is intended to deliver:
- (1) demolition and replacement of the existing walk-up flats within the Walker Street Estate (87 existing dwellings);
  - (2) construction of new buildings and above ground multi-level car parking, which, based on the schematic designs reflected in the

Section 1 – What is proposed?

Design Framework prepared by Hayball Architects and Message Consultants (which was exhibited as a supporting document to the Amendment) could result in building heights and footprints as shown in Figure 3;

- (3) predominantly residential land use, but with some retail, commercial and community uses in appropriate locations to service local needs and stimulate local activity and participation;
- (4) in the order of 220 new dwellings;
- (5) approximately 128 total car parking spaces including 22 visitor spaces (compared with 42 car spaces within the site and 21 spaces outside the site boundary) based on provision in accordance with the proposed Parking Overlay and the assumptions relating to dwelling mix contained in the *Traffic Engineering Assessment by Traffix* (refer to Figure 4).



**Figure 3 Indicative building footprints and heights (source: Design Framework, p. 18)**

Description	Type	No.	Suggested Parking Rate	Suggested Parking Provision
<b>Public</b>	1-bedroom	57 no.	0.6 spaces per apartment	34 spaces
	2- bedroom	33 no.	0.6 spaces per apartment	20 spaces
	3- bedroom	5 no.	0.6 spaces per apartment	3 spaces
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95 no.</b>		<b>57 spaces</b>
<b>Private</b>	1- bedroom	70 no.	0.7 spaces per apartment	49 spaces
	2- bedroom	57 no.	1 spaces per apartment	57 spaces
	3- bedroom	0 no.	1.6 spaces per apartment	0 spaces
	Total 127 no.	127 no.		<b>106 spaces</b>
<b>Visitors</b>		222 no.	0.1 spaces per apartment	22 spaces

**Figure 4 Indicative quantum of car parking (source: *Traffic Engineering Assessment, Traffix*, 19 July 2017)**

### Indicative project delivery

- 27 Delivery of the project will involve a partnership between the DHHS (with the Director of Housing being the relevant contracting entity) and a private development partner.
- 28 The exact delivery arrangements for the project are subject to confirmation and may change. However, the anticipated procurement and delivery arrangements are generally as follows:
- (1) Upon the approval of the Amendment, the Director of Housing will enter into an agreement with a private developer who will construct the new buildings.
  - (2) DHHS proposes to undertake the required demolition and any site remediation works itself.
  - (3) Once the development agreement is entered into, DHHS and the appointed developer will jointly prepare a development plan for approval by the responsible authority, in consultation with Council, DELWP and other key stakeholders.
  - (4) The deliverables for the project in terms of dwelling mix and the number of social and private housing units will be agreed between DHHS and the appointed developer and are subject to the procurement process and the final form of the development plan.
  - (5) The Developer will be responsible for obtaining planning permits and carrying out the required subdivisions to obtain titles for the redevelopments after a development plan is approved.

Section 1 – What is proposed?

- (6) DHHS will pay the costs of the design and construction for the social housing dwellings to the appointed developer. The Director of Housing will retain title to the land associated with social housing units at all times.
- (7) For private housing, it is anticipated that the Director of Housing will retain ownership of land during construction and title will be transferred directly to purchasers of private houses and commercial developments upon settlement.
- (8) In exchange for constructing the private building components (housing and retail and commercial uses), the developer will receive a return on sale proceeds from the private component.

## **SECTION 2 – WHAT IS THE NEED FOR THE PROJECT?**

### **The need for social housing renewal**

29 Victoria’s need for increased supply and upgrades to social housing stock is explained in the Committee’s Terms of Reference<sup>4</sup> and the *Town Planning Report*<sup>5</sup> that supports the Amendment.

30 As explained in the *Town Planning Report* (p. 3):

*“The demand for public housing has grown significantly in recent years, with the largest increase being for high needs single persons. In Victoria, as of March 2016, there were almost 40,000 applicants for public housing, with 10,000 being the most vulnerable people. Potential waiting times are two years.*

*There are currently 74,000 dwellings in the current public housing stock, which comprises a range of dwelling types and sizes. The current housing supply, however, does not match the increasing demand for smaller (one and two bedroom) dwellings. This mismatch is contributing to the underutilisation of stock. This issue is expected to continue as the population grows and household composition changes.*

*Ongoing replacement and renewal of public housing stock is critical, particularly as the existing stock has an average age of 35 years and it is estimated that 60% of public housing stock is over 30 years old [citation in original - Managing Victoria’s Public Housing’ [Victorian Auditor-General’s Office; June 2017)].”*

31 The ‘walk up’ flats at Walker Street Estate are in poor condition and in need of replacement.

32 The flats were constructed in the 1960s without lifts, making them inaccessible to people with mobility issues and difficult for families with small children and older Victorians.

33 In addition, compared with newer stock, the ‘walk up’ flats have poor thermal performance, high running costs and are costly to maintain.

### **Government policies and commitments to increase the supply of and standard of Victorian social housing**

34 The proposal for Walker Street Estate sits within a suite of related Government housing initiatives and is part of the ‘Public Housing Renewal Program’ which was announced in 2017.

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<sup>4</sup> *Social Housing Renewal Standing Advisory Committee*, 30 May 2017, paragraphs [6]-[14], available at the following webpage: <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/panels-and-committees/current-panels/social-housing-renewal-standing-advisory-committee>

<sup>5</sup> *Town Planning Report*, Message Consultants, June 2017, section 2, available at: [https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0025/76084/SHRP-SH4-02.-Northcote-Planning-Report-FINAL.PDF](https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/76084/SHRP-SH4-02.-Northcote-Planning-Report-FINAL.PDF)

- 35 The Government has committed \$185 million in funding to the Public Housing Renewal Program which involves the renewal of the following 9 public housing estates via partnerships with the private sector to deliver a mix of social and private dwellings:
- (1) Bills Street, Hawthorn;
  - (2) Gronn Place, Brunswick West;
  - (3) BellBardia, Heidelberg West;
  - (4) Tarakan, Heidelberg West;
  - (5) Walker Street, Northcote
  - (6) Ascot Vale estate, Ascot Vale;
  - (7) Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne;
  - (8) Noone Street, Clifton Hill; and
  - (9) New Street, Brighton.
- 36 A related project is the renewal of the Flemington Estate located at Debneys Precinct in Flemington. That project was considered by this Committee at Public Hearings conducted in September 2017. The Government has separately committed \$30 million in funding towards the Flemington project.

### ***Homes for Victorians, 2017***

- 37 The Government's social housing renewal projects sit within a broader framework of government policy aimed at addressing housing affordability and access issues in Victoria.
- 38 *Homes for Victorians* (2017)<sup>6</sup> is the Government's overarching strategy relating to those issues.
- 39 *Homes for Victorians* directs a \$2.6 billion program of investment into the following 5 action areas:
- (1) Supporting people to buy their own home
  - (2) Increasing the supply of housing through faster planning
  - (3) Promoting stability and affordability for renters
  - (4) Increasing and renewing social housing stock
  - (5) Improving housing services for Victorians in need.

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<sup>6</sup> Available at: <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/homes-for-victorians/>

## Section 2 – What is the need for the project?

40 Actions 2 and 4 provide background to the approach being taken at Walker Street Estate and demonstrate a new approach being taken to deliver social and private housing objectives via partnerships with the private sector.

41 Action 2 relates to the use of ‘inclusionary’ housing and includes the following initiatives:

- (1) *Inclusionary Housing Pilot Program* – aimed at providing up to 100 new social housing units on surplus government land, delivered by the private sector, in exchange for a discount on land purchase price;
- (2) *Inclusionary Housing in Major Developments* - \$4.7 million funding to develop legal tools to support voluntary inclusion of affordable and social housing in major development projects; and
- (3) *Fast Tracking of Social Housing Redevelopments* – \$500,000 funding to streamline planning approvals processes for redevelopment of housing estates - the appointment of the Committee is part of the implementation of that program.

42 Initiatives in response to Action 4 include the Social Housing Growth Fund. This program involves \$1 billion in funding to increase the supply of social and affordable housing by investing in new housing developments on non-Victorian Government land and through a rental subsidy program of leasing properties from the private market. This is anticipated to support around 2,200 households.

43 In relation to the Social Housing Growth Fund, *Homes for Victorians* explains (at p. 32):

*“The Social Housing Growth Fund’s key aim is to underpin new approaches to deliver social housing – either by funding new partnership developments on non-government land or providing rental subsidies for properties in the private market.*

*By unlocking private investment, with the right incentives and support for community housing agencies, we will deliver new social housing and major new construction activity and jobs for Victorians.”*

### **Chronology of key events**

44 The following provides a chronology of the key events that led to the proposal and the current public hearing:

- (1) December 2016 – Minister for Housing announced the Public Housing Renewal program;
- (2) February 2017 – Phase one community engagement was undertaken involving workshops with existing residents within the Estate and other stakeholders;
- (3) February 2017 – March 2017 – the Minister for Planning established the Committee;



Section 2 – What is the need for the project?

- (4) April – May 2017 - DHHS conducted project overview briefings with the Committee outlining the design framework proposal and hearing arrangements;
  - (5) May 2017 – Phase two community engagement was conducted;
  - (6) May 2017 – Registration of Capability process (procurement) was released;
  - (7) August 2017 - DHHS Project Overview briefings with the Committee outlining design framework proposal and hearing arrangements;
  - (8) 2 - 30 August 2017 - Formal exhibition of Amendment;
  - (9) 7 September 2017 – Committee Directions Hearing; and
  - (10) September 2017 – the period within which submissions to the Committee may be received was extended until 2 October 2017, as a result of the DHHS notifying the Committee and interested parties of inconsistencies between the Design Framework and the exhibited DPO13 building setbacks.
- 45 A summary of the phase one and phase two engagement activities is contained in the reports prepared by KJA Engaging Solutions that were exhibited as supporting documents for the Amendment.
- 46 A summary of the community consultation undertaken in relation to the project will be provided as part of DHHS's Part B Submissions to be presented at the hearing in accordance with the Advisory Committee's Directions.

## **SECTION 3 – PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **Planning policy**

- 47 The strategic planning context for the Amendment is explained in detail in the *Town Planning Report*.<sup>7</sup>
- 48 The key policy considerations are considered below.

### ***Plan Melbourne 2017-2050***

- 49 *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*<sup>8</sup> is the Government's overarching planning strategy for managing Victoria's growth to 2050.
- 50 Plan Melbourne sets 7 outcomes sought to be achieved. Underneath each outcome are directions and associated polices.
- 51 The Amendment aligns with several outcomes, directions and policies of Plan Melbourne, as summarised in Table 1 below.

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<sup>7</sup> *Town Planning Report*, Message Consultants, June 2017, section 2, available at: [https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0025/76084/SHRP-SH4-02.-Northcote-Planning-Report-FINAL.PDF](https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/76084/SHRP-SH4-02.-Northcote-Planning-Report-FINAL.PDF)

<sup>8</sup> Available at: <http://www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/>

**Table 1 Plan Melbourne**

Direction	Policy	How does the proposal support this?
<b>Outcome 2: “Melbourne provides housing choice in locations close to jobs and services”</b>		
Direction 2.1: “Manage the supply of new housing in the right locations to meet population growth and create a sustainable city”	Policy 2.1.2: “Facilitate an increased percentage of new housing in established areas to create a city of 20-minute neighbourhoods close to existing services, jobs and public transport”.	Walker Street Estate is well located with respect to services, jobs and public transport with trams on High Street and two train stations and Neighbourhood Activity Centres in close proximity.
Direction 2.2: “Deliver more housing closer to jobs and public transport”	Policy 2.2.3: “Support new housing in activity centres and other places that offer good access to jobs, services and public transport”	Walker Street Estate is located within 300m of the Westgarth and Queen’s Parade Neighbourhood Activity Centres. It is also approximately 2km from Northcote Major Activity Centre and 3.3km from the CBD, accordingly new housing is encouraged on the site by this policy.

Direction	Policy	How does the proposal support this?
<p>Direction 2.3: “Increase the supply of social and affordable housing”</p>	<p>Policy 2.3.1: “Utilise government land to deliver additional social housing”.</p> <p>Plan Melbourne explains further (p. 55):</p> <p><i>“The Victorian Government holds valuable land assets that can contribute to the delivery of additional social and affordable housing.</i></p> <p><i>The Victorian Government will increase the supply of social and affordable housing through identifying surplus government land suitable for housing. Sites identified as being surplus to government requirements need to be re-used in ways that deliver broad community benefits—such as boosting the supply and spread of social and affordable housing. Opportunities to increase overall supply through the regeneration of existing public housing also need to be identified.”</i></p>	<p>The proposal provides a direct response to this direction and policy. The proposal aims to provide a 10% increase in renewed social housing dwellings within Walker Street Estate. The proposal will also contribute to the provision of affordable housing by delivering a number of new private dwellings, anticipated to be smaller 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings.</p>
<p>Direction 2.5: “Provide greater choice and diversity of housing”</p>	<p>Policy 2.5.1: “Facilitate housing that offers choice and meets changing household needs”</p>	<p>The proposal is intended to support housing choice and changing demographic profile by providing medium and high density housing in an area where larger detached and semi-detached homes predominate.</p>

Direction	Policy	How does the proposal support this?
<b>Outcome 5: “Melbourne is a city of inclusive, vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods”</b>		
Direction 5.1: “Create a city of 20-minute neighbourhoods”	Policy 5.1.1: “Create mixed-use neighbourhoods at varying densities”	<p>Rezoning the land to a Mixed Use Zone will support this policy to achieve a higher density, mixed used neighbourhood meeting local needs and stimulating local activity and participation.</p> <p>The proposed DPO13 requires an approved development plan to provide retail, commercial or community uses to meet the needs of the local community, in appropriate locations such as fronting High Street.</p>

### **State Planning Policy Framework**

52 Many of *Plan Melbourne*'s outcomes, directions and policies are reflected in the State Planning Policy Framework. Policies that are relevant to the Amendment include the following:

- (1) **Clause 11 Settlement:** requires that planning contributes to “diversity of choice”, “a high standard of urban design and amenity” and “accessibility”, as well as encouraging opportunities for consolidation, redevelopment and intensification.
- (2) **Clause 15 Built Environment and Heritage:** seeks to create safe, functional, good quality urban environments.
- (3) **Clause 16 Housing:** supports increasing development density and diversity in well serviced locations such as around activity centres, close to public transport and employment opportunities.

53 State level policies that are of particular relevance to the redevelopment of Walker Street Estate include the following:

#### ***“11.02-1 Supply of urban land***

##### ***Objective***

*To ensure a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional and other community uses.*

##### ***Strategies***

...

*Planning for urban growth should consider:*

- *Opportunities for the consolidation, redevelopment and intensification of existing urban areas.”*

54 The Amendment seeks to facilitate an intensive redevelopment of well serviced and currently underutilised land.

#### ***“16.01-1 Integrated housing***

##### ***Objective***

*To promote a housing market that meets community needs.*

##### ***Strategies***

*Increase the supply of housing in existing urban areas by facilitating increased housing yield in appropriate locations, including under-utilised urban land.*

*Ensure that the planning system supports the appropriate quantity, quality and type of housing, including the provision of aged care facilities, supported accommodation for people with disability, rooming houses, student accommodation and social housing.*

...

*Facilitate the delivery of high quality social housing to meet the needs of Victorians.”*

- 55 The Amendment provides a unique opportunity to meet several aspects of the above strategies by providing additional private and public housing units on currently underutilised land.

**“16.01-2 Location of residential development**

**Objective**

*To locate new housing in or close to activity centres and in urban renewal precincts and sites that offer good access to jobs, services and transport.*

**Strategies**

*Increase the proportion of new housing in designated locations within established urban areas and reduce the share of new dwellings in greenfield and dispersed development areas.*

*Encourage higher density housing development on sites that are well located in relation to jobs, services and public transport.*

*Ensure an adequate supply of redevelopment opportunities within established urban areas to reduce the pressure for fringe development.*

*Facilitate residential development that is cost-effective in infrastructure provision and use, energy efficient, incorporates water efficient design principles and encourages public transport use.*

*Identify opportunities for increased residential densities to help consolidate urban areas.”*

- 56 The Amendment strongly supports the above objectives and strategies. The site is within 260 metres of two Neighbourhood Activity Centres, 2 km of Northcote Major Activity Centre and 3.3 km from the CBD. The site has excellent access to jobs, services and sustainable transport. The

Amendment would support an increase in dwelling numbers on the land which will contribute to reducing development pressure on the urban fringe.

**“16.01-5 Housing affordability**

**Objective**

*To deliver more affordable housing closer to jobs, transport and services.*

**Strategies**

*Improve housing affordability by:*

- *Ensuring land supply continues to be sufficient to meet demand.*
- *Increasing choice in housing type, tenure and cost to meet the needs of households as they move through life cycle changes and to support diverse communities.*
- *Promoting good housing and urban design to minimise negative environmental impacts and keep down costs for residents and the wider community.*
- *Encouraging a significant proportion of new development to be affordable for households on low to moderate incomes. Increase the supply of well-located affordable housing by:*
- *Facilitating a mix of private, affordable and social housing in activity centres and urban renewal precincts.*
- *Ensuring the redevelopment and renewal of public housing stock better meets community needs.”*

- 57 The Amendment supports the above objective and strategies by seeking to facilitate a minimum 10% increase in renewed social housing dwellings within Walker Street Estate to replace poor quality, aging, inaccessible and thermally inefficient housing stock. The proposal will contribute to provision of affordable housing by delivering new private dwellings, anticipated generally to be smaller 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings to meet the demand and within a well serviced location, with the potential to reduce commuting costs for residents.



### **Local Planning Policy Framework**

58 There is a need for a significant increase in dwelling numbers in Darebin over the coming decades.

59 As noted in the *Town Planning Report*:<sup>9</sup>

*“Victoria in Future 2016 (VIF) forecasts that the population of the municipality will increase by 49,000 residents from an estimated 112,200 in 2011 to around 146,400 by 2031.”*

60 Clause 21.01 of the Planning Scheme recognises that *“Infill redevelopment of existing lots and brownfield redevelopment are likely to be the primary area for accommodating future housing growth in Darebin”*.

61 Clause 21.03-3 includes the policy to “increase the supply of affordable and social housing”.

62 Clause 21.03 (‘Housing’), establishes the following hierarchy for growth to meet Darebin’s future housing needs:

- (1) *Minimal Housing Change;*
- (2) *Incremental Housing Change; and*
- (3) *Substantial Housing Change.*

63 Whilst the Walker Street Estate is currently designated as being with a ‘Minimal Housing Change’ area at clause 21.03 of the Scheme, the site has a number of characteristics of ‘Substantial Change Areas’ referred to in that policy. Clause 21.03-1 states:

*“Substantial Change Areas generally display one or more of the following characteristics:*

- *Have an evolving character where there is an eclectic mix of new and old forms of architectural style and housing typologies. This includes more recent apartment developments at higher densities and in mixed-use formats.*
- *Are identified locations for increased residential densities to support economic investment and growth in the La Trobe National Employment Cluster.*

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<sup>9</sup> Town Planning Report, Message Consultants, June 2017, p. 14, available at: [https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0025/76084/SHRP-SH4-02.-Northcote-Planning-Report-FINAL.PDF](https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/76084/SHRP-SH4-02.-Northcote-Planning-Report-FINAL.PDF)

- *Are within or immediately adjacent to activity centres that possess superior access to the Principal Public Transport Network.*
- *Have a frontage to a strategic corridor.*
- *Are generally within 400 metres of a train station or tram route.”*

64 The site has clear potential for intensified development and to positively contribute to urban consolidation in and around activity centres where there is access to public transport and services, as well as the ongoing renewal and activation of this section of the High Street corridor.

65 The proposed changes to local policy provisions to change these designations reflect the intended intensity of development for the Walker Street Estate which is entirely appropriate, given the locational attributes of the area.

## **SECTION 4 – OTHER MATTERS**

### **Recommended changes to the exhibited amendment documents**

66 Expert witnesses for DHHS have made a number of recommended changes to DPO13 in response to matters of opinion and having regard to issues raised in submissions. Ms Jordan has annexed to her evidence a marked-up version of the DPO13 incorporating her recommended changes. Recommendations of all of DHHS's experts will be consolidated and included in a revised version of each DPO Schedule to be circulated for consideration prior to the commencement of the hearing.

### **Conclusion**

67 DHHS will expand further on these matters in its Part B Submission and looks forward to assisting the Advisory Committee in the hearing of the matter commencing on 6 October 2017.

**Norton Rose Fulbright**

**Solicitors for the Department of Health and Human Services**

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