

# 8

## DISTRICT CENTRES

The Board will encourage and facilitate the development of designated major activity centres spread strategically throughout the metropolitan area. They will act as administrative, commercial, retail, cultural and entertainment centres and serve the people of their surrounding districts. They will be secondary to Central Melbourne.

In this way, the Board seeks to maximise the choice of goods and services available to Melbourne people and reduce their need to travel. Concentration of activity in the designated centres will also lead to better use of public utilities such as water supply, sewerage, drainage, electricity, gas and telephones, as well as public transport.

All the district centres will be based on retailing, but they will be more than a collection of shops. They will also have commercial and community offices, general commercial services, light and service industrial activities, and leisure and entertainment facilities. Opportunity will be provided for residential development. The Board will seek to encourage the multi-use of buildings in district centres.

### 8.1 Encourage and Facilitate

A new zone, the District Centre Zone, is applied to existing non-residential zones at the selected centres.

This approach does not mean any reduction of support for Central Melbourne. It does mean that development which would otherwise have occurred in scattered suburban locations will be encouraged to locate at selected centres.




The achievement of this objective will depend on commitment by the councils involved, and co-operation between all public sector agencies and private enterprise.

Most of these centres will be within the existing urban area. In time, other centres





Legend

-  Central Melbourne
-  District Centres
-  Potential District Centres

# District Centres

will need to be provided in fringe growth areas where a commitment to commercial development has been made through planning consent.

The district centres are Box Hill, Camberwell Junction, Cheltenham/Southland, Dandenong, Footscray, Frankston, Glen Waverley, Greensborough, Moonee Ponds, Oakleigh, Prahran (Chapel Street), Preston, Ringwood and Sunshine. Centres for possible future designation are at Berwick Civic Centre, Sydenham, Mill Park, Broadmeadows, Werribee and Knox City. Notes on each centre are included in Appendix 1.

The new zone will hasten the development approvals process. It will allow a range of uses such as offices, shops, flats and support services without land use permits subject to the plans being satisfactory to the Board.

Other actions which should be taken to provide a competitive advantage for district centres include:

- relaxing controls so as to promote re-use of existing buildings, mixed use occupancy and new development which could accommodate a variety of occupancy and use
- allowing development bonuses for larger sites to promote site amalgamation
- relating parking requirements to land use/building density and proximity to public transport services
- providing help for land assembly for development, including community/municipal purposes
- reducing information requirements of Ministerial Guidelines for developments which will support the district centre objectives.

Steps which would help promote district centres include:

- locating new government branch offices in district centres
- locating major office developments (floor area exceeding 4 000 square metres) and major shopping complexes (floor area exceeding 4 000 square metres) in district centres
- encouraging a residential component by using density and floor space bonuses
- allowing multi-unit housing on selected residential land within 1 km of public transport nodes and district centres.

At this stage administration of the District Centre Zone will not be delegated to councils by the Board.

It is intended the Board delegate the Zone when satisfied that local development schemes prepared by councils are likely to achieve the objective: 'to encourage and facilitate the function of district centres as secondary administrative, commercial, cultural and entertainment centres within the metropolitan area to serve the needs of the population of the surrounding districts'.

In particular, local development schemes should provide for:

- a wide variety of uses in the District Centre Zone, subject to specified requirements set at a level that encourages development, creates a distinctive environment and enhances local amenity
- development of suitable multi-unit housing in selected areas within 1 km of district centres
- a variety of dwelling types within centres
- environmental improvement of centres by such measures as pedestrian precincts and landscaping
- short-term shopper parking and commuter and other long term parking to resolve potential problems and deficiencies of particular centres.

As part of an ongoing programme to assist councils prepare and administer local development schemes which reflect the strategic intent for district centres, the Board will prepare performance standards and design guidelines. Standards would include physical, environmental, parking, access and general amenity criteria, particularly for mixed-use and higher density developments. Guidelines would reflect the need to take account of the identity of the particular centre and would deal with such issues as site layout, pedestrian precincts, access, landscaping, mixed-use buildings and refurbishing of buildings.

The Board will rezone land to extend district centres where this will encourage commercial, industrial, residential and community facility developments. Rezoning will only occur, however, where there are specific development proposals.

The rezoning process will protect the interests of people who live in the area and people who have business there, as well as those of developers and councils.

Many advantages of the district centre concept would be lost if centres were allowed to extend their physical size through piecemeal development, along arterial roads for example. The compactness and ease of access between the various parts of a centre would be threatened. The opportunities and constraints of each centre and an indication