

# INTRODUCTION TO VICTORIA'S PLANNING SYSTEM



## Objectives of planning

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PEA s. 4

The objectives of planning in Victoria are set out in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act). They are:

- a) to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land;
- b) to provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity;
- c) to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria;
- d) to conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value;
- e) to protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and coordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community;
- f) to facilitate development in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraphs a), b), c), d) and e);
- g) to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

The purpose of the Act is to establish a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria in the present and long-term interests of all Victorians.

## The *Victoria Planning Provisions* and planning schemes

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PEA s. 4(2)(b)

The Act provides for a single instrument of planning control for each municipality, the planning scheme, which sets out the way land may be used or developed. The planning scheme is a legal document, prepared and approved under the Act. It contains state and local planning policies, zones and overlays and other provisions that affect how land can be used and developed.

The Act also provides for the *Victoria Planning Provisions* (VPP) - a template document of standard state provisions for all planning schemes to be derived from. It is not a planning scheme and does not apply to any land.

The Act sets out procedures for preparing and amending the VPP and planning schemes, obtaining a permit under a planning scheme, settling disputes, enforcing compliance with planning schemes, and other administrative procedures.

## Principles of planning schemes

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Underpinning the focus and structure of planning schemes are a set of principles based on a strategic and policy foundation. The principles are:

### Planning schemes have a policy focus

- Planning schemes clearly and concisely express a strategic vision and policy basis.
- There is a logical progression from policy basis and requirements to the exercise of discretion in decision making.

### Planning schemes facilitate appropriate development

- Local provisions assist in exercising discretion.
- Discretion must be wide rather than narrow.
- The use of provisions which promote performance is encouraged.

### Planning schemes are useable

- The requirements of planning schemes must be clear to users and easily identified from the planning scheme map.
- Statewide provisions apply across Victoria.
- Planning schemes should minimise site-specific provisions.
- Overlays should identify specific local issues and associated requirements.

### Provisions are consistent across the state

- A standard set of provisions apply across the state.
- The permit is the principal instrument of development approval.
- Local variations cannot be made to the state-standard provisions.
- Local provisions must not conflict with the state provisions.
- Local requirements are expressed in a schedule following the relevant state-standard provision.

These principles are achieved through the VPP under the *Planning and Environment (Planning Schemes) Act 1996*.

All Victorian planning schemes include a Municipal Strategic Statement, local planning policies and a strategically allocated selection of zones and overlays, including maps.

The planning scheme maps show how land is zoned and whether it is affected by an overlay. The ordinance sets out the zone and overlay requirements. Each planning scheme also includes other state-standard provisions and definitions.

A planning scheme is not a static document and will change over time. An amendment to a planning scheme must be formally approved and gazetted.

## Accessing the VPP and planning schemes

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The VPP and all planning schemes, including the associated maps are available via Planning Schemes Online on the department's website at [planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au](http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au)

Each council must also keep a copy of the VPP and its planning scheme available for inspection during office hours, free of charge.

## Planning practice notes

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The department has developed a series of planning practice notes and advisory notes to assist users of the planning system. Some of these have been referred to in this document from time to time as a source of additional information about a specific aspect of the planning system.

These notes can be viewed on the department's website.