

# INTRODUCTION *Presentation of the Report*

It is my privilege and responsibility to submit, on behalf of the planning staff, the accompanying report on the planning scheme which has been prepared for public exhibition in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Metropolitan Area) Act 1949.

The scope of this report is limited to an explanation of the planning scheme and the reasons for the various matters which have been embodied in it. The surveys and their analysis which form the factual basis on which it has been developed are reported in detail in a separate report under the title of "Surveys and Analysis."

The account of the work of the last three years has been separated into two parts because it was thought that this would better meet the needs of those who will be considering it. Those people who will want primarily to ascertain the proposals of the scheme and their effects and implications will obtain this knowledge in reasonably concise form in this report. Those who wish to go deeper and study the facts, data and conclusions on which the scheme has been based will need to read both reports.

That the scheme has been completed in less than three years of active planning is due entirely to the zeal, initiative and enthusiasm of all who have worked on the scheme, whether for brief or long periods, and I desire to place on record my appreciation of the loyal and unstinted co-operation of all members of the staff and for the willing and capable way in which they have responded to the demands on their time and their abilities. If this planning scheme is adopted, it will have been their labour and skill that has laid the foundation for a better Melbourne.

The Act made the Board responsible only for preparing the planning scheme and submitting it to the Governor-in-Council for approval. There the Board's duty ends, and the task of implementing the scheme is in other hands. The appointments to the planning staff could therefore be only temporary. It is most regrettable that, because of the limitations of the legislation, an efficient and capable team of workers has now to be disbanded.

The task could not have been completed without the assistance of many persons and organisations outside the Board's service. A most pleasing and encouraging aspect of the work has been the very real and willing co-operation which has been received from all those whose service has been sought, and from whom information has been requested. To all those officers of Government departments, both Commonwealth and State, to officers of State instrumentalities and public authorities, to the town clerks and engineers of municipal councils, to business men and officers of business and other organisations, to individual members of professional institutions, to the Board's solicitor, the consulting valuer, the advisers on public relations and publications, the printers of the reports and to many others I extend, on behalf of the staff, our appreciation and thanks.

It is particularly desired to pay tribute to the whole of the Melbourne press, whose public support of the need for planning has been both valuable and encouraging.

Through the good will of Government departments, subdividers of land, and other private individuals some of the objectives of the scheme have already been achieved. It has been stimulating to find that in the community were many individuals who, without gain to themselves, were prepared to further the community interest. These also we thank for their encouragement and co-operation.

The planning scheme as now presented is the work of a team. As far as has been within our power, it has been based on a sound factual survey, has been formulated with high ideals of community needs and civic development, and finally has been modified having regard to economic and practical difficulties to present what we firmly believe to be a sound and practicable basis for the guidance of the future civic development and improvement of Melbourne.

E. F. BORRIE, *Chief Planner*

*1st July, 1953*

# SUMMARY *The Essential Points of the Report*

## THE BOARD'S TASK

Although Melbourne grew originally in accordance with a well-conceived plan, its growth has been so rapid, and the changes which have occurred in power generation, transport and social outlook have been so great that the city does not now provide the convenience and amenities which its citizens have a right to expect.

The purpose of this planning scheme is to find out what is efficient and what is not, to show how faults can be remedied and the city made more pleasant, more convenient and more efficient, a better place in which to live, work and play.

The first step in the work was to carry out comprehensive surveys which are discussed in detail in a separate report. From the many problems disclosed by these surveys the following major ones emerged:

- (a) Sprawling low-density development.
- (b) Decline in the residential amenities of the inner suburban area.
- (c) Need for industrial expansion and the proper location of industrial areas.
- (d) Congestion within and adjoining the central business area.
- (e) Increasing difficulty in the movement of people and goods.
- (f) Lack of sites for schools and hospitals.
- (g) Lack of sufficient areas for recreation.
- (h) Protection of the population from the effects of aerial warfare.

Together, these form a problem of considerable complexity, detailed proposals for the solution of which are discussed in the report. These proposals have been based on six fundamental conceptions:

- (i) Limitation of the urban area.
- (ii) Zoning of specific areas for various community purposes.
- (iii) Decentralisation within the urban area of industry and commerce.
- (iv) Provision for an adequate road communication system.
- (v) Reservation of adequate areas for all community needs.
- (vi) Preservation of existing opportunities for civic improvement.

In developing the proposals it has been kept in mind that they must be practicable, both physically and financially, that change and improvement must necessarily be gradual, and that as well as providing for the needs of the present, provision must also be made for the longer term needs.

Because the legislation gives both the local municipal councils and the Board the power to plan for the one municipal area, this scheme does not attempt to do more than provide for the broad pattern of metropolitan needs.

The scheme only points the way and preserves existing opportunities for civic improvement. In this way it will ensure that future community needs can be fulfilled at the lowest practicable cost. But the scheme itself does not provide any of the requisites of the city. These can be achieved only by positive action in the form of a continuous and co-ordinated programme of public works.

## THE SIZE OF THE FUTURE CITY

Just as a home is planned with the knowledge of the size of the family and the space they will need for their comfort and convenience, so should a city be planned to accommodate all the activities of the people who will live in it.

It is necessary, therefore, to predict the probable population sufficiently far ahead for the economic planning of public and private works. Although the period will vary according to the problems, fifty years will cover all reasonable requirements.

In addition to deciding the number of people, it is also important to decide the area over which they should be permitted to spread themselves. This is particularly so in Melbourne, where the sprawling low-density development is creating many problems.

After careful study the planning scheme has been prepared on the basis of a population of 2,500,000 people contained in an urban area of about 265 square miles.

The method adopted for controlling the expansion of the city is by providing for a rural zone surrounding the urban area. In defining this zone, allowance has been made for the expansion of existing isolated communities.

Melbourne, with a population of nearly 1,400,000, is the only large city in Victoria, and contains 60 per cent. of the population of the State. The natural factors which might have led to the growth of other large cities are absent in Victoria, and in Melbourne are centred all those activities which have caused cities to grow.

No large city can afford to ignore the risks to the civilian population of modern warfare. In preparing this planning scheme, it has been borne in mind that town planning can aid civil defence by facilitating dispersal of population, by avoiding as far as possible the creation of worthwhile targets, and by establishing a system of communications which will facilitate movement throughout the area.

For reasons discussed in the report, no provision has been made for the decentralisation of activities to satellite towns.

A policy of dispersal of activities within the metropolitan area has been adopted. To encourage this, the scheme provides for:

- (i) Better distribution of industrial areas.
- (ii) Development of five district business centres which, with proper planning and systematic development, could in time provide amenities comparable with those of the central business area.
- (iii) Improvement and gradual redevelopment of the larger suburban shopping centres.

The Board's responsibility does not extend to the detailed planning of housing estates or of slum reclamation areas. Its duty is to reserve sufficient area to house the future population under proper conditions and, by the provisions of the scheme, to encourage the appropriate types of development.

The area necessary for housing purposes depends on the number of people to be provided for, the density of population, the conditions under which people wish to live, the type of home, and the manner in which the land is subdivided.

The types of dwelling which form the basis of residential areas are single family dwellings, semi-detached houses, row houses, walk-up flats and elevator flats.

With 90 per cent. of families now living in single family dwellings and with 50 per cent. of these dwellings owned by the occupants, the general pattern of housing has been set in Melbourne for many years.

Only 6 per cent. of the people now live in flats, a very low figure, and there is probably a greater shortage of this type of accommodation than any other. The scheme provides for 15 per cent. of future families living in flats of various types.

The inner suburbs are characterised by housing which has reached or is approaching the end of its useful life. Conditions generally are not up to present-day standards for good living. Industry and other non-residential uses have encroached, and the areas have become increasingly unattractive for living purposes. As a result, the resident population has tended to decline.

## DECENTRALISATION AND CIVIC DEFENCE

## HOUSING, REDEVELOPMENT AND LAND SUBDIVISION