



The Victorian Government will immediately establish three expert bodies to support the implementation of the priority action plan.

The Victorian Government is making local policy clearer and more effective.

New Residential Zones Expert Group

- > This group will oversee the important task of preparing new draft residential zones and a discussion paper for public consultation.
- > The expert group and the Government will work in partnership with local government in particular during this process.

State Planning Policy Framework Expert Group

- > This group will make the State Planning Policy Framework easier to understand and apply.
- > The expert group will produce a discussion paper and revised State Planning Policy Framework structure for public consultation.

Planning Policy Technical Committee

- > This committee will provide support and advice to councils that will help them improve the performance of their local planning policies.
- > Councils can ask the committee for assistance when preparing or revising local policy.
- > The work of the existing *Cutting red tape in planning* expert policy teams will be integrated into the work of the committee.
- > The committee will also provide advice to the working groups developing the new residential zones and reviewing the State Planning Policy Framework and will contribute to the guidelines to be prepared as part of Priority Action 5.
- > The committee will also give advice on the outcomes of Priority Action 4, investigating the restructure of the Local Planning Policy Framework.

Future initiatives

- > Priority Action 4 will test possible simpler and more effective formats for the Local Planning Policy Framework. Improvements to the Local Planning Policy Framework will then be made, based on the experience of these pilots.
- > Recommendation 1.1 of the expert working group proposes a review of all the zones, overlays and particular provisions, with the residential zones as the priority. When the review of the residential zones is complete, other components of planning schemes will be identified for priority review.

The Victorian Government has delivered effective planning strategies that guide development, maintain the character of our neighbourhoods, support strong, active communities with good services and protect our natural assets.

In Melbourne, we have achieved growth and retained our reputation as one of the world's most liveable places. Our suburbs, provincial cities and regions are also enjoying urban renewal thanks to growing populations.

Good planning has played a critical role in guiding development and is vital in achieving the Government's objective of balanced growth in metropolitan Melbourne and provincial Victoria.

Communities, councils and investors are seeking clearer planning guidelines to direct growth to the right locations and protect areas not designated for significant change.

In early 2007, we set up an expert working group to review the operation of local planning policy and make recommendations for improvements.

The working group's task was to form a response to Action 10.2 of the *Cutting red tape in planning* report. They found that while Victoria's planning system is robust, policy in planning schemes has become complicated and unclear.

The working group's *Making local policy stronger* report includes five recommendations and 11 actions. The Victorian Government accepts the report's five recommendations and has set out a program of actions to deliver clearer, simpler policy in planning schemes.

We will work with local councils to make state and local policy stronger, more transparent and more effective.

We will simplify local planning policies, reducing time and costs for councils, communities and developers.

We will be more specific about how state policy is expected to be implemented at the local level.

Councils will be given better controls to protect valued residential areas from inappropriate development and areas suitable for more intensive development will be more clearly identified.

There will be a stronger focus on the development of more liveable new communities, on revitalising town centres in strategic locations and on respecting the character of our neighbourhoods.

The Victorian Government is committed to taking immediate action to make local policy stronger and will act quickly to establish working groups to implement the report's recommendations.

The immediate priorities will be to:

- > Review the residential zones to improve the delivery of local policy outcomes.
- > Revise the State Planning Policy Framework.
- > Establish a Planning Policy Technical Committee to provide support, resources and assistance to councils to make local policy stronger.
- > Simplify the way state and local policy is presented in planning schemes.
- > Prepare new guidelines and procedures that make it easier to write, implement and review local policy in planning schemes.

These initiatives are part of the Victorian Government's commitment to continuous improvement of the planning system.

I thank the expert group for their work in delivering their report and look forward to its implementation.

JUSTIN MADDEN MLC
Minister for Planning



More information

The *Making Local Policy Stronger* report can be downloaded from www.dcpd.vic.gov.au/planning

Published by the Department of Planning and Community Development
8 Nicholson Street East Melbourne Vic 3002.

October 2007

©Copyright State Government of Victoria 2007.

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Authorised by Justin Madden, Minister for Planning, East Melbourne.

Printed on 100% recycled paper

ISBN 978-1-74-208-145-8

The Expert Working Group's recommendations

The Government's five point priority action plan

			END 2007	EARLY 2008	MID 2008	END 2008
1. Provide more certainty by making it easier to implement policy through planning controls	1.1 Revise the zones, overlays and particular provisions to provide more opportunity to express state and local policy outcomes. As a priority, review the residential zones and associated provisions	1. Introduce new Residential Zones that better implement housing strategies (Delivers on Actions 1.1 & 3.1) Establish expert group to: > Prepare a revised suite of residential zones and discussion paper for public consultation. > Consider submissions and recommend the final form of the residential zones for the Minister for Planning's consideration.	Expert group established Draft residential zones prepared and released for consultation	Consultation and consideration of submissions	Recommend final form of residential zones to Minister for Planning	Revised residential zones announced
2. Make the State Planning Policy Framework clearer about how it should be implemented at the local level	2.1 Expedite the review of the State Planning Policy Framework recommended in Action 9 of <i>Cutting red tape in planning</i> . In particular, review the expression of state policy in the SPPF to give stronger guidance about how it is expected to be implemented.	2. Revise the State Planning Policy Framework to make it easier to apply (Delivers on Action 2.1) The Department of Planning and Community Development will coordinate an expert group to prepare a revised State Planning Policy Framework by the end of 2008. Their work will build upon Action 9 – <i>Cutting red tape in planning</i> and the survey of planning scheme users completed in 2007.	Expert group established	Discussion paper and revised structure released for consultation	Targeted workshops Recommended final form of State Planning Policy Framework to Minister for Planning	Revised State Planning Policy Framework structure announced
3. Progressively review planning schemes to clearly express state and local strategic intentions	3.1 Use zones, overlays and schedules rather than policy to control the use and development of land where appropriate. 3.2 Establish a Planning Policy Technical Committee with representation from local government, DSE, Planning Panels Victoria and VCAT to review quality and consistency in state and local policy implementation. The Committee would provide a joint approach to policy implementation and: - Provide advice on the implementation of new policy. - Oversight the review of existing local policy. - Provide advice on policy implementation and effectiveness as part of the four year review of planning schemes. 3.3 Make the requirement for the four year review of planning schemes more specific and structured to: - Focus on policy effectiveness and quality assurance. - Improve the implementation of state policy at the local level. - Improve the effectiveness of local policy implementation. 3.4 Establish, as a planning scheme review procedure, a pre-review meeting of DSE and local government officers to identify strategic planning priorities for the review. 3.5 Update the audit kit for the review of planning schemes to reflect the recommendations of the working group. 3.6 Integrate the review of existing local planning policy by expert teams already underway as a <i>Cutting red tape in planning</i> initiative.	3. Establish a Planning Policy Technical Committee (Delivers on Actions 3.2 & 3.6) Establish a Planning Policy Technical Committee by the end of 2007 to: > Provide advice to the working groups developing the new residential zones and reviewing the State Planning Policy Framework. > Oversee review of existing local policy. > Validate 'status quo' streamlining of existing local policy. > Provide advice on implementation of new policy. > Provide advice on policy implementation and effectiveness as part of the four year review of planning schemes.	Planning Policy Technical Committee established	Ongoing role	Ongoing role	Ongoing role
4. Increase the effectiveness of local policy by simplifying the way it is presented in planning schemes	4.1 Pilot a restructure of clauses 20, 21 and 22 of planning schemes to produce a single simplified section that provides the 'local policy' section of the planning scheme, with a range of Councils. 4.2 Where direction is required in the restructured provision to guide the exercise of discretion under a planning control, the direction should be termed a 'policy guideline'.	4. Pilot restructure of the Local Planning Policy Framework (Delivers on Actions 4.1 & 4.2) Establish a pilot project to test options for a simplified local policy section that provides a better local policy framework for decision makers.	Identify and commence review with pilot councils	Pilots completed	Evaluation of pilot outcomes and preferred way forward	
5. Clarify when prescriptive provisions can be used	5.1 Develop guidelines to clarify when prescriptive rather than performance based provisions are appropriate and how they should be expressed.	5. Prepare new guidelines and procedures that make it easier to write, implement and review local policy in planning schemes (Delivers on Actions 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 & 5.1) The Department of Planning and Community Development will: > Prepare a new planning scheme review procedure. > Update the audit kit for the review of planning schemes. > Develop guidelines to clarify when prescriptive rather than performance based provisions can be used. > As part of the continuous review of the Victoria Planning Provisions and planning schemes, develop further improvements to overlays and other provisions to give more opportunity to express policy outcomes. > Use the experience from Actions 1-4 to inform future work and processes.	Use information from Actions 1-4 to develop new guidelines, procedures, audit kit and other publications to assist planning scheme users. Draft guidelines and updated audit kit released by mid 2008.			