

# A NEW PLAN FOR VICTORIA

## Preliminary submission by the City of Melbourne

MAY 2024



CITY OF MELBOURNE

## **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we govern, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong / Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge and honour the unbroken spiritual, cultural and political connection they have maintained to this unique place for more than 2000 generations.

We accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and are committed to walking together to build a better future.

# Executive Summary

Today, the scale and pace of demographic change in Melbourne is unprecedented. With the state population predicted to reach 10 million by mid-century, Melbourne is likely to be home to 7.7 million people and Australia's largest metropolis.

The City of Melbourne welcomes the development of the Plan for Victoria as it provides an opportunity to establish a long-term vision for development across the state, addressing the relationship between the City of Melbourne as the principal urban centre for Victoria, greater metropolitan Melbourne, and regional centres and rural areas.

Melbourne is consistently recognised as one of the world's most liveable cities, rating high on measures of wellbeing and inclusion, ability to attract skills and talent, with a strong experience economy and a global appeal for visitors, trade and investment (Benchmarking Melbourne, 2024).

In planning for the future of the capital city, greater Melbourne and the state, the decisions we make today will impact whether Melbourne remains a place that is affordable, sustainable, inclusive and liveable.

We know that more compact cities are better for people's quality of life, have better economic and job outcomes and support a more sustainable way of living (Infrastructure Victoria, 2023). The City of Melbourne has the highest rate of housing growth of developed suburbs in metropolitan Melbourne and is well positioned to play a central role in accommodating significant population growth.

In the face of our current housing crisis, the City of Melbourne welcomes the opportunity to work with the Victorian Government on future housing plans and targets. The delivery of new housing needs to balance a range of priorities to build liveable and thriving neighbourhoods, including the delivery of appropriate community infrastructure (including public open space) alongside increased density to maintain liveability and support community health and wellbeing.

The City of Melbourne is the heart of the metropolis and the engine room of the state economy. The central city performs a pivotal role in job creation and is perfectly positioned to continue to grow as a global hub of innovation, knowledge and creativity. As the cultural capital of Australia, Melbourne's iconic food scene, dynamic arts and culture offering and world class sporting events provide a diversity of experiences for residents, workers and visitors, building a sense of belonging, attracting investment and talent and driving tourism.

The completion of the Melbourne Metro Rail Project, transformation of the Melbourne Arts Precinct and partnerships to deliver on urban renewal and innovation precincts such as Arden and Fishermans Bend, provide the foundation to build new thriving, mixed use communities where people can live, work, study and play.

The preparation of the Plan for Victoria offers an opportunity to leverage existing strengths, investments and partnerships to deliver an integrated future vision for the city and the broader state. Alongside the Plan for Victoria, a continued focus on the significant role central Melbourne plays in supporting metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria more broadly is required. The City of Melbourne stands ready to partner with the Victorian Government to progress this.

We welcome this opportunity to work with the government to progress this agenda for the benefit of Melbourne, the metropolitan region and the state of Victoria.

# Introduction

The City of Melbourne stands on the land of its Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and the Bunurong Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin. It has always been an important meeting place, for thousands of years before European settlement.

Today, this multicultural, modern city boasts a diversified economy and a passion for sporting and cultural events. It is one of the most liveable cities in the world, renowned for its culture, universities and connected neighbourhoods.

With a \$114 billion economy, which is almost a quarter of Victoria's output (23%), the City of Melbourne is Victoria's capital city and an economic driver for Victoria and Australia. It is home to a diverse range of industry sectors with a high concentration of knowledge-intensive jobs. The City of Melbourne plays an important role as a capital city, and is the state's heart for jobs, education and opportunity. As such, the City is well-placed to partner with the Victorian Government to drive and deliver positive outcomes for the metropolitan region and Victoria more broadly.

The City of Melbourne also contains Victoria's premier cultural infrastructure, with a diversity of 24/7 uses including the State's major events, attracting visitors from not only across the state, but nationally and globally.

Over the past decade, the City of Melbourne's economy grew at twice the rate of the state (42% v 21%). As the centre of Victoria's knowledge economy, the City of Melbourne contributed 34% of the state's economic growth, including almost all the growth in the financial and insurance services sector as well as half of the growth in the professional, scientific and technical services sectors. An economically strong City of Melbourne benefits the whole state.

Globalisation continues to disrupt our economy and society, while climate change is increasing the risk of extreme events and undermining many of the assumptions used in planning. This submission incorporates Council's goal to increase affordable housing and supporting city infrastructure in the municipality, to be a city that is globally connected, at the forefront of innovation and recognised as a leader on climate change, and that honours and promotes Aboriginal culture and governs with our Traditional Owners - all essential components of a resilient city. The submission emphasises the role of the City of Melbourne in delivering on government's aspirations for metropolitan Melbourne and the state of Victoria. Our resilience as a metropolis and a state depends on a strong, adaptive, accessible, central city.

While we applaud the preparation of a plan for the whole state, our submission highlights urban issues and emphasises the need for a comprehensive Plan for the Melbourne metropolis to be developed alongside the Plan for Victoria. We need these plans to recognise and leverage the important role played by the central city in context of the greater Melbourne and Victoria.

This submission is informed by Council's endorsed *City Spatial Plan*, which seeks to realise the City of Melbourne's vision through a range of thematic and place-based strategies. It does so by:

- Considering current and emerging trends at both global and local scales to identify opportunities and challenges
- Understanding the challenges facing the City of Melbourne and how areas, buildings and land uses will change in response
- Providing strategies for future development.

For each of the four pillars, the submission provides an overview of how the pillar relates to the City of Melbourne, and outlines challenges and opportunities for the City of Melbourne. Many of the identified opportunities for the city can be translated to greater Melbourne, if not the state of Victoria. The submission therefore emphasises how the experience and expertise of the City of Melbourne can contribute to the aspirations and targets identified by the Victorian Government.

In addition to addressing the four pillars, the submission recommends that *Transport* and *Water* are issues that warrant being pillars in their own right. The submission also identifies the need for the *Equity and Jobs* pillar to encompass a whole of economy perspective.

## City of Melbourne Vision

Our vision is to be a **city of possibility**. To achieve the vision the City has six strategic objectives

1. Economy of the future: Create a strong, adaptive, sustainable and thriving city economy supported by a diverse mix of industries and jobs that provide dignity and opportunity
2. Melbourne's unique identity and place: Recognise and protect the places, people and cultures that make Melbourne a unique, vibrant and creative city with world-leading liveability
3. Aboriginal Melbourne: Ensure that First Peoples' culture, lore, knowledge, and heritage enrich the city's growth and development
4. Climate and biodiversity emergency: Reduce emissions and waste in order to protect public health, strengthen the economy and create a city that mitigates and adapts to climate change
5. Access and affordability: Reduce economic and social inequality by ensuring universal access to housing, core services and information
6. Safety and wellbeing: Enhance the safety and wellbeing of all who live, visit, work and do business in Melbourne



# Planning for Metropolitan Melbourne

The City of Melbourne welcomes the development of the Plan for Victoria as it provides an opportunity to establish a long-term vision for development across the state, addressing the relationship between metropolitan Melbourne as the dominant urban centre, peri-urban areas that are dependent on their relationship to Melbourne, and regional centres and rural areas.

However, we urge government not to lose sight of the importance of integrated planning for metropolitan Melbourne and the significant role the central city. There is a risk that a single Plan for Victoria may not adequately address the complexity of, or sufficiently distinguish the needs of, the central city and metropolitan area which differ greatly from the unique spatial characteristics and needs of regional and rural communities. The significant matters affecting planning in Melbourne, such as major employment precincts and activity centres, renewal areas transitioning to new housing, and city-shaping state infrastructure investment mean that a metropolitan perspective is necessary.

The complexity of metropolitan Melbourne as an integrated labour market, requiring inter-connected thinking about housing, employment centres and clusters, transport, and the environmental context, warrants its own comprehensive plan. The challenges encountered with implementing Plan Melbourne demonstrate that, even within metropolitan Melbourne, there is a need to distinguish and address the unique role of the central city, the middle ring suburbs and growth areas, in delivering on the needs of the metropolis.

Over many decades, planning for metropolitan Melbourne has identified the benefits of the polycentric city. Yet central Melbourne remains the heart of the metropolis and the engine room of the metropolitan and state economy. Investment in the capital city has benefits for the whole state which depends on the central city for employment, recreation and the movement of people and goods.

The Melbourne Metro Rail Project will generate significant benefits for the central city and metropolitan Melbourne. Commitment to such central city infrastructure must continue in order to maximise the benefits of the significant urban renewal taking place within the City of Melbourne. A comprehensive plan for metropolitan Melbourne is needed to identify the infrastructure investment that will have the greatest benefit to enhancing our integrated metropolis. The following sections of this submission include such projects identified by the City of Melbourne and how they align with the government's aspirations for the Plan for Victoria.

The success of integrated planning for both greater Melbourne and the state relies on governance and implementation arrangements that are clear, collaborative and transparent. It is important that the Plan for Victoria (and Melbourne) includes an implementation plan which includes governance arrangements based on a strong partnership between levels of government that share responsibility for planning in Victoria. Local government's critical role needs to be strongly and clearly acknowledged.

# Self-determination and caring for Country

**The Plan for Victoria presents an opportunity to enable greater self-determination, embed Caring for Country principles and establish the future of treaty in the planning for Melbourne and Victoria. The recognition and celebration of Melbourne and Victoria as an Aboriginal place should be reflected in our design and built form and working with Traditional Owners to embed Aboriginal values, knowledge and practices in our work.**

The City of Melbourne notes that the government is working with Traditional Owners to embed their voices, rights and aspirations into the Plan for Victoria planning process. Council looks forward to hearing the views of Traditional Owners and building our understanding of the role of local government in enabling greater Self-determination, reflecting Treaty, and protecting Country.

The Victorian Government's approach aligns with the City of Melbourne's commitment, established in our Council Plan, to *govern with Sovereign First Nations to enable true self-determination, where deliberative engagement is proactive, responsive and consistent.*

The City of Melbourne has a long history of working to embed reconciliation across the organisation and within our community. We formally recognised the unique place Aboriginal peoples and their communities have within the City of Melbourne with the adoption in 1999 of our Statement of commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

The City of Melbourne then became the first local government authority to adopt a Reconciliation Action Plan when it was adopted in 2006. In 2019, the City of Melbourne launched a new Aboriginal Melbourne branch to help build organisational capability around all issues affecting Aboriginal communities in the city, and enable the changes needed for the city to be an Aboriginal city.

## Challenges facing the city

- Need to strengthen the role of Traditional Owners in planning for our future.
- Need for greater understanding and celebration of Traditional Owner culture.

## Opportunities for the future

- Respond to any outcomes of Treaty negotiations.
- Enable Traditional Owners to represent Aboriginal culture in a way that is fully integrated across the state.
- Increase opportunities for meaningful Aboriginal cultural expression through the design and planning of significant and public buildings and places.
- First Peoples experts are consulted and lead sustainable land management practices.
- Conduct research in consultation with local Traditional Owner groups into 'Caring for Country' knowledge, principles and practices, and how they may be applied in the management, planning and development of city land.

# Plan for Victoria Pillars

The following section addresses, from a City of Melbourne perspective, the four pillars that have been identified on the Plan Victoria website, plus a recommended two additional pillars of *Transport* and *Water*.

## Housing affordability and choice

**The delivery of housing needs to balance a range of priorities to build liveable and thriving neighbourhoods, including the delivery of new public open space alongside increased density to support wellbeing. Planning settings need to facilitate mixed use precincts to support the ongoing balance of the residential and economic function of the city. Affordable housing needs to be considered essential infrastructure that should be delivered through a mandatory and consistent.**

### Affordable housing in the City of Melbourne

In the City of Melbourne, we are facing a housing and homelessness crisis; a situation mirrored across Australia. Visible homelessness, people sleeping rough on the streets, is just the tip of the iceberg in our homelessness crisis. Many more women, children and families are part of the hidden problem – sleeping in their cars, on other people’s couches and in severely overcrowded or temporary accommodation. We have a shortage of 6000 affordable homes in the City of Melbourne, and 21 per cent of households are in housing stress (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019).

Housing is recognised as a fundamental human right and affordable housing is vital for an inclusive, diverse and prosperous city. A range of housing types and tenures are needed to support our diverse community, and particularly Aboriginal people.

City of Melbourne has more key workers than any local government area in Victoria. Key workers are critical to the functioning of the city, but with rental prices increasing faster than wages, many of these workers earning very low to moderate incomes commonly face housing stress and long commutes.

Affordable housing<sup>1</sup> is essential infrastructure for the community. There is an opportunity through Plan Victoria to identify this and ensure affordable housing is delivered through the planning system.

We need all levels of government to support the delivery of new affordable housing by raising and investing more money to deliver this essential infrastructure. A coordinated response across governments, the private sector, the community housing sector, industry groups and the community is critical.

The City of Melbourne will continue to collaborate with state and federal governments, statutory agencies, the private and community housing sectors to enable well-designed, appropriate, accessible and sustainable social and affordable housing across the municipality. New affordable housing that is delivered must reflect the sizes, design, and quality of the broader housing market and community need.

### Challenges facing the city

- Decades of under-investment in social and affordable housing combined with a growing population, rising housing costs, and the COVID-19 pandemic means there are not enough affordable homes.
- Over the past three decades, house prices have grown at a much faster rate than household incomes.
- It is important that social housing, affordable housing and key worker housing are defined in order to ensure housing assistance is delivered in a consistent way and targeted to those in need. Despite continued general housing supply, there is growing demand for housing for very low, low and moderate income earners.
- A lack of diversity of housing types including housing to meet the needs of Aboriginal people.
- Absence of a mandatory and consistent framework for the delivery of affordable housing through the planning system.

### Opportunities for the future

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this submission, the term ‘affordable housing’ is used as per the definition in the Planning and Environment Act 1987, which includes social housing. ‘Social housing’ is used to refer to that specific kind of affordable housing.

- Introduce mandatory inclusionary zoning to facilitate contributions to affordable housing from private development.
- Ensure affordable housing is treated as essential infrastructure.
- Maximise the delivery of social housing on government-owned land, particularly through the renewal of public housing sites.
- Ensure 1% of all surplus State Government land is made available for Aboriginal housing, in line with the Victorian Aboriginal Housing Framework.
- Facilitate more affordable rental housing including key worker housing.
- Partner with governments, industry, peak bodies and the community to increase affordable rental housing, including on City of Melbourne-owned land.

## Population growth and housing supply

Today, the scale and pace of demographic change in metropolitan Melbourne are unprecedented. Projections suggest that by 2051 greater Melbourne will be home to approximately 7.7 million people and Melbourne is likely to be Australia's largest metropolis. In responding to this challenge, the City of Melbourne has the highest rate of housing growth of developed suburbs in greater Melbourne.

The City of Melbourne today is a truly mixed use place. As high density residential development dilutes the diversity of uses in the City of Melbourne, there is an increasing need to proactively balance the use of land to ensure it delivers the greatest possible economic, social, and environmental benefit and promotes our role and advantages as a capital city.

Because of its unique characteristics, in the City of Melbourne most housing provision does not occur in the residential zones. It occurs in the other zones - Capital City, Docklands and Special Use Zones - where capacity is far greater than in the residential zones. In planning for the future, the municipality of the City of Melbourne has been divided into areas based on their existing character and function, local conditions and their expected role in accommodating future growth. Growth and development will be guided by the capacity for growth of each local area. Each of the City of Melbourne's distinct areas have a different role to play in the supply of new housing which is set out in the Growth Area Framework which forms part of the City Spatial Plan (see Figure 1).

The City of Melbourne welcomes the opportunity to work with the Victorian Government on future housing plans and determining appropriate municipal housing targets.

In providing housing and meeting any housing targets, the City of Melbourne urges the government to consider that:

1. Housing targets should be linked to actual capacity and not set arbitrarily, or linked to the delivery of constructed housing, for which councils have no control.
2. The quality of housing and apartments must come first. It is important to ensure that apartment dwellers have a quality lifestyle. This includes making provision for:
  - outlook, privacy and daylight
  - safe and sufficient playing areas for children
  - nearby public open space
  - a choice of a mix of apartment types/sizes
  - accessible design
  - a visual connection to the street
  - natural ventilation.

## Challenges facing the city

- The impact of residential development on economic use of land, given the ability for residential development to out-compete other uses.
- High volume residential development impacting the overall mix of uses within the municipality.

- Very high density places which do not have appropriate social infrastructure to service the population.

### **Opportunities for the future**

- In areas outside the Capital City Zone, implement land use zones which allow a true mix of uses which deliver both a diversity of jobs and living opportunities.
- Opportunities for transformation in the City of Melbourne include the existing renewal precincts of Fishermans Bend, Arden and Macaulay. These areas offer the greatest potential for delivering a diversity of affordable housing.

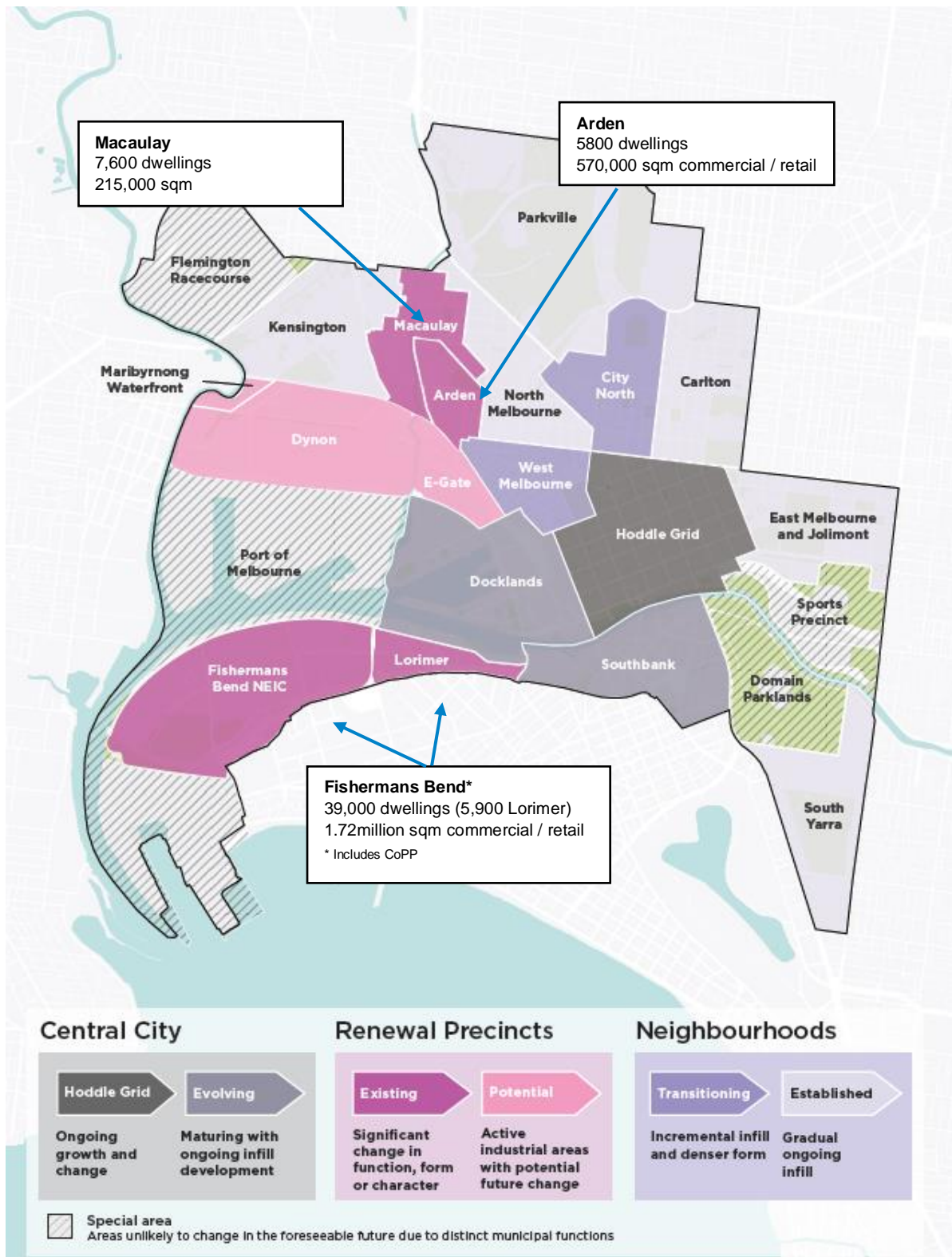


Figure 1 Growth Area Framework

## Economy, equity and jobs

**As Victoria's most accessible location with existing infrastructure to drive scale and interoperability across industry, the central city performs an essential role in the state economy. Melbourne's central city should continue to be positioned as the best place to do business and supported to grow as a global hub of innovation, knowledge and creativity.**

The central city is home to activities that are unmatched in Victoria and Australia in terms of scale, diversity and interoperability. This area is a dense, integrated mix of commercial offices, hotels and residential accommodation, making it easy to walk, ride a bike, or catch public transport.

The central city is Victoria's most-accessible location, giving employers access to the largest labour market, and employees access to the largest range of high-value jobs.

Central city employment and activities seamlessly combine to create 'the city experience.' The strength of the city experience is fundamental to attracting people and investment to the City of Melbourne. This means that our liveability is an essential economic asset. Our challenge for the future is how to capitalise on the opportunities our liveability presents.

Victoria's economy grew by 22% over the decade to 2021-22, with the population increasing by 17% over the same period. As the centre of Victoria's knowledge economy, the City of Melbourne contributed 34% of the state's economic growth, including almost all the growth in the financial and insurance services sector. It is therefore essential that the Plan for Victoria and Plan for Melbourne support a state economy that has a focus on the role of the central city.

Any diminution of agglomeration in the central city will have a negative effect on the Victorian economy. Agglomeration is one of the key drivers of economic success - particularly in the knowledge services sector, which is the dominant sector in the City of Melbourne's economy. Most of the city's economic output is generated by businesses that occupy commercial office buildings such as financial services, professional services and government services. These industries collectively account for 70% of the city's economic output.

The popularity of hybrid work makes agglomeration more important. If people only commute 3 days per week, then a central office location makes sense for a dispersed workforce. The challenge is to ensure that as many people as possible can live within an easy commute to the central city - this has implications for both housing and transport.

The City of Melbourne is perfectly positioned to continue to grow as a global hub of innovation, knowledge and creativity. Technology-based industry sub-sectors in the City of Melbourne have seen phenomenal growth between 2005-06 and 2021-22. For example, Internet Publishing and Broadcasting has seen a 405% increase in City of Melbourne, which now generates 58% of Victoria's value added in this sector. Computer System Design and Related Services saw a 342% increase and now generates 63% of Victoria's value added in this sector.

Growing a diversity of established and new economic and innovation hubs to complement the central city will be key to a resilient future economy. Advances in digital technology will continue to change the ways we interact with the city. While offering opportunity this also poses challenges around equity of access to high speed internet and other technology.

The identification of suburban employment precincts by the Department of Transport and Planning needs to be based on robust economic analysis. Businesses will choose to locate where the business case is strongest, which for knowledge businesses, is invariably the central city.

One of the City of Melbourne's great comparative advantages is the enormous extent of brownfields development sites such as Arden and Fishermans Bend, currently being developed, and E-Gate and Dynon for which planning has not commenced, but which needs to balance housing delivery with employment and economic development.

Innovation precincts drive economic growth and create high-value jobs. Melbourne Innovation Districts are focused in Parkville, Arden and Fishermans Bend. Importantly, these future-focused precincts will be connected to our original innovation precinct, the Hoddle Grid, by new transport infrastructure in Melbourne Metro and the proposed Fishermans Bend tram route.

Growing emphasis on online retail and employment, including remote working, means that the City of Melbourne will need to continue to adapt and be flexible to rapid digital disruptions. The impact of this significant social change will be felt differently in locations across greater Melbourne and the state.

City of Melbourne will also need to adapt to increased pressures on the central city as a result of the continued expansion of greater Melbourne. This presents challenges in improving access and opportunities for everyone.

### Challenges facing the city

- Attracting international students, and worker and visitor populations back to the City of Melbourne.
- Rapid housing growth can crowd out innovation uses.
- Transport connections to Fishermans Bend and between employment clusters.
- Ensuring that infrastructure in Renewal Precincts is delivered early.
- Maintaining affordable and suitable workspaces.

### Opportunities for the future

- Early delivery of infrastructure, including Melbourne Metro 2 and trams to Fishermans Bend and Arden to support existing renewal precincts to realise their vision.
- Leverage the positive 'new rhythm' of the city now and into the future.
- Continue to position the City of Melbourne's central city as the best place to do business. This involves:
  - a. attracting talented people by enhancing liveability and keeping the City of Melbourne active and vibrant
  - b. ensuring that the City of Melbourne is inclusive, and that barriers to participation in the economy are eliminated; and
  - c. making the City of Melbourne an easy place to start and grow a productive business, and ensuring that it continues to be the centre of innovative activity in Victoria.
- Maintain the central city as the cultural and economic centre of the municipality, greater Melbourne and Victoria.
- Deliver diverse global innovation precincts and local employment hubs.
- Curate and coordinate the growth and development of existing, emerging and new globally competitive innovation districts in City North, Arden and Fishermans Bend.
- Support the growth of a range of precincts and industry specialisations that complement the central city are key to economic growth and local job creation.
- Balance housing development with uses that are key to economic growth.
- Support local activity centres that provide local services and employment.
- Boost economic participation by facilitating affordable housing and workspaces and creating diverse job opportunities.
- Foster the economic contribution of Traditional Owners.

- Investment and support in our creative industries and the visitor economy will demonstrate its value as a place for ideas and experiences. This includes:
  - Protecting spaces for start-ups, innovative and creative industries and artists.
  - Designating precincts for co-working and incubator spaces for creative industry practitioners, including in Fishermans Bend NEIC, City North and the Melbourne Arts Precinct.
- Grow a diversity of established and new economic and innovation hubs to complement the central city. This will be key to a resilient future economy. Growth in these areas will be enabled by creating high amenity places that are connected by excellent transport choices and offering affordable workspaces and homes, providing access to a wide range of people, including suppliers, customers, and collaborators.

## Liveable and thriving neighbourhoods

**In planning for the future of the city, greater Melbourne and the state, the decisions we make today will impact whether Melbourne remains a place that is affordable, sustainable, inclusive and liveable.**

**The completion of the Melbourne Metro Rail Project, transformation of the Melbourne Arts Precinct and partnerships to deliver on urban renewal and innovation precincts such as Arden and Fishermans Bend, provide the foundation to build new thriving, mixed use communities where people can live, work, study and play.**

Melbourne is consistently recognised as one of the world's most liveable cities, rating highly on measures of wellbeing and inclusion, ability to attract skills and talent, with a strong experience economy and a global appeal for visitors, trade and investment (Benchmarking Melbourne, 2024).

The City of Melbourne is committed to creating a city which is accessible, affordable, inclusive, safe, and that promotes the health and wellbeing of its community. As the city grows and changes, there is a need to ensure that growth is inclusive of all and has a particular focus on promoting community wellbeing.

Providing community and social infrastructure and services is key to improving quality of life and strengthening social cohesion. Refreshed, expanded and new facilities are needed including social, family and early childhood services, open/green spaces, multi-purpose facilities that support a variety of sport and recreation needs across their lifespan, play areas for children, affordable housing, active transport and food production infrastructure. These must be accessible, inclusive facilities that support life skills and promote benefits to individuals and the community.

The City of Melbourne's built form heritage is one of its greatest assets, which contributes to the vibrancy and character of our neighbourhoods and the central city. Melbourne is one of the world's great Victorian-era cities, featuring many intact streetscapes, parks and buildings recognised as important heritage places.

The City of Melbourne is an excellent example of how a city can conserve its valued heritage while supporting growth and change. We conserve our heritage in the context of both growth and sustainable development. At the City of Melbourne heritage protection does not mean development is stifled; it means that heritage is a factor to be considered and celebrated when a heritage property is developed.

The significance of open space for community wellbeing in a dense urban environment was highlighted during COVID-19. With higher density living comes less private open space and additional pressure and importance on both the quality and quantity of public open space as safe and accessible for sanctuary and recreation.

The City of Melbourne has an extensive network of large public parks and well managed waterways and catchments. However, the city's parks, gardens and waterways will face increasing pressure from a growing population and a changing climate.

The City of Melbourne is therefore taking an innovative approach to how we create new open spaces within our constrained urban environment, including through creative use of road space and waterways to deliver high amenity environments and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Such projects include the Trial Floating Wetlands on the Yarra - Birrarung, Southbank Boulevard open space and play space and 1.8 hectares of new public open space as part of the Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal. The Greenline Project is one of the biggest city-shaping projects in Melbourne's history and will see the development across five precincts covering 4km between Birrarung Marr and the Bolte Bridge.

The City of Melbourne's approach to developing urban open spaces has much to offer greater Melbourne, particularly in areas that are delivering major urban renewal and transforming urban waterways.

## Challenges facing the city

- Poorly designed buildings which individually and collectively negatively impact the public realm and erode the character and distinctiveness of our places.
- Overshadowing of public space by development.
- Ensuring our city is safe day and night.
- Lack of open space in renewal precincts and in the west of the municipality to support population growth.
- Rapid population growth and the finite space within the City of Melbourne.
- Insufficient space for community sport and recreation facilities.
- Providing spaces for creative uses.
- An erosion of character and heritage.
- Increasing pressure on existing public open space to accommodate non-park related infrastructure and services.

## Opportunities for the future

- The delivery of sustainable and resilient infrastructure. There is a need to better align growth and density with infrastructure planning to ensure there is an early commitment to infrastructure and it is delivered to enable liveable communities.
- Rapid population growth will place significant daily demand on infrastructure. Funding and financing the scale of committed infrastructure is needed to keep pace with our municipality's population and visitation growth, reinforcing the need to partner with other levels of government and the private and community sectors.
- Continue to protect heritage while at the same time supporting population growth or sustainable outcomes.
- Ensure the planning process achieves high quality buildings that enhance the public realm and reinforce the distinct built form character of each place.
- Maintaining our status as a leading creative city, including:
  - Supporting and facilitating appropriate locations for live music
  - Supporting emerging artists and midscale arts in the public realm
  - Provision of local community arts spaces
- Invite design excellence outcomes on significant sites to support the City of Melbourne's reputation as a centre for architectural excellence.
- Protect winter sun access to public spaces. Access to winter sun is important for health and wellbeing, and biodiversity outcomes across the municipality.
- Continue to expand and enhance the quantity, size, quality and diversity of public open space within easy walking distance for everyone.
- Deliver large new open spaces, including new municipal open spaces to support community sport and recreation, in renewal precincts.

## Sustainable environment and climate action

**Responding and adapting to the climate crisis is a pervasive challenge that will influence decision-making at all levels of government over the next 30 years. Ensuring urban growth is sustainable and climate resilient is essential. The development and retrofitting of buildings and infrastructure needs to be to the highest environmental standards, with a focus on green infrastructure to enrich biodiversity, improve storm water management and contribute to city cooling.**

In 2019 the City of Melbourne declared a climate and biodiversity emergency.

The City of Melbourne is committed to prioritising our environment and taking urgent action to reduce emissions and waste and plan for climate hazards in order to protect our community, strengthen our economy and create a city that mitigates and adapts to climate change.

Melbourne and Victoria will need to adapt to more extreme weather, including hotter summers and a greater number of heatwaves, a drier climate resulting in more frequent periods of drought, heavier rainfall and severe storm events that increase the risk of flooding. Further increases in global temperatures will impact the health of Melburnians by exacerbating the urban heat island effect, increasing hospitalisations from asthma and other illnesses and contributing to thermal stress for vulnerable communities.

The design, construction and management of buildings, infrastructure and spaces need to be more adaptive and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

In striving to achieve a better and more sustainable future, the City of Melbourne has identified the opportunity to measure city performance against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to embed the SDGs into our strategies and activities.

Importantly, grounding our work at the City of Melbourne in the SDGs will allow us to compare our progress with other cities, set measures and targets, and to learn from other global cities as to how we can better collaborate to address the challenges of our time.

Integrated water management in an urban environment is complex and delivers a multitude of environmental, amenity and health benefits. Rural and regional communities face different but equally important water challenges. For this reason, the City of Melbourne recommends that the Plan for Victoria and the Plan for Melbourne address water as a separate pillar (see below).

### Challenges facing our environment

- Loss of tree canopy, biodiversity and impact on natural water flows.
- Increasing exposure to extreme weather events, including impacts of increased temperatures and heatwaves and the urban heat island effect.
- Large number of older, inefficient commercial buildings needing retrofits.
- Infrastructure that is not resilient to climate extremes.

### Opportunities for the future

- Reaching zero net emissions by 2040 and 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030, including through the use of minimum standards within the planning system.
- Delivering new buildings to the highest environmental standards with a focus on green infrastructure which will enrich the urban biodiversity, treat stormwater and assist in cooling the city. Council is taking a proactive approach through progressing Amendment C376 which identifies opportunities for the planning system and building design to take a positive approach to managing the impacts of climate change.
- Heritage places can play a role in climate change mitigation. Retrofitting existing buildings, rather than demolishing them, improves their efficiency, reduces building waste and conserves their embodied energy.

- Strengthening biodiversity corridors and significant habitat areas. An expanded network of biodiversity corridors along streets, waterways and throughout the city will allow native fauna to move between habitat areas.
- The continued expansion of the urban forest, understorey, and green infrastructure with a diversity of species will act to reduce the urban heat island effect, increase biodiversity functions, enhance resilience and allow people to benefit from a deeper connection with nature.
- Renewal precincts offer the opportunity to embed resilience and adaptation in the design of all new buildings and public places. Integrating precinct based renewable energy, water, and circular waste systems will promote more efficient resource use, minimise waste and help to reach zero net greenhouse gas emissions.
- Opportunities and spaces for local energy infrastructure, including installation of neighbourhood batteries should be considered across all places within the state, following the lead of the City of Melbourne.
- Developing a circular economy. The waste and resource recovery system is facing serious challenges. These threats present an opportunity to accelerate the move towards a circular economy where we maximise reuse, recycling and recovery, and minimise waste to landfill.
- Preparing the city for extreme weather. Make the city a cool refuge in days of extreme heat. Every community member should have access a cool public place within walking distance of their home.

## Transport

**High-quality public transport is essential to the economy, access to housing and jobs, thriving neighbourhoods and the delivery of urban renewal precincts. Ongoing investment is needed to expand the existing network and to optimise the existing system to deliver an integrated transport system across metropolitan Melbourne and the state.**

High quality transport is essential to the economy, housing opportunities, equity and jobs, and living and thriving neighbourhoods. It is central to the liveability of the central city, Melbourne's suburbs and the state's rural and regional areas. Therefore, we believe that it warrants status of an additional pillar in its own right as a central part of the Plan for Victoria.

People throughout greater Melbourne and Victoria commute to the City of Melbourne for work, entertainment, medical care and other activities. The transport network provides access to, and movement within the central city, connecting people to activity. This also drives central city activation and economic growth.

Our ongoing prosperity depends on the quick and efficient movement and exchange of people, knowledge and goods across the State and interstate.

As the City of Melbourne realises its projected growth, an enhanced and expanded integrated public transport service will support the liveability and economic development of all areas. Public transport services must align with the density of development to optimise access and enhance the amenity of places.

Public transport must be guided by a comprehensive, integrated transport plan for Victoria.

### Challenges for the city:

- A world-leading public and active transport system is key to providing access to jobs and housing and supporting economic growth.
- The funding of major infrastructure requires government commitment.

### Opportunities for the future:

- Continue to enhance and expand public transport services.
- Commitment to high capacity public transport for Fishermans Bend is essential to gain maximum benefits from this major regeneration area.
- An integrated, safe, comfortable, accessible and convenient walking and cycling network is essential to the City of Melbourne and greater Melbourne's growth and amenity.
- Efficient car parking management which supports the delivery of a high-quality public realm and sustainable transport is required.
- Get the most out of Melbourne's existing transport network by supporting trams with signal priority at intersections and separation from traffic and providing dedicated lanes and traffic signal priority for the bus network.
- Support highly efficient solutions to freight, delivery and waste systems. Low-impact delivery models, such as cargo bikes and small vans will allow deliveries to be made faster, at a lower cost and with greater efficiency.
- Decisions on infrastructure and projects that facilitate the long-term function of the Port of Melbourne will be informed by strategic consideration of the Port's position and role within the national context.
- Use new technologies to deliver a range of transport benefits including improved access to transport choices, new transport modes, lower emissions, more efficient use of existing assets and new forms of movement. Appropriate regulation will ensure that new technologies are well integrated into the municipality and not undermining amenity, efficiency and safety.

## Water

**High quality integrated water management can deliver environmental, health and amenity benefits for communities, meaning ‘water’ should be a planning pillar in its own right. Integrating water into planning for existing and future neighbourhoods contributes to climate resilient communities, the projection of life and property, climate resilient communities, greater biodiversity and high quality public spaces.**

Climate change will bring more prolonged and frequent periods of drought, creating water security issues – particularly in regional areas, but also in the city. At the same time, when it does rain, the City of Melbourne will experience heavy rainfall, resulting in flash flooding. Sea level rise will affect coastal areas across Victoria and Melbourne to different extents.

Integrated water management provides solutions that prioritise and optimise water use that is fit-for-purpose whilst minimising exposure to flood risk.

Increasing community awareness of whole of water cycle management and efficient use of our water resources, including intercepting stormwater before it goes down the drain and using it to keep places green and cool and improve the health of our water system, will ensure we evolve as a climate change adaptable municipality, metropolis and state more broadly.

Managing flooding and sea level rise, particularly in areas that were once wetlands and swamps such as Arden, Macaulay and Fishermans Bend, will create opportunities to integrate water sensitive elements in the design of streets and open spaces and to rediscover our rivers and creeks.

Across the state, the protection of life and property must be prioritised in areas subject to flood and sea level rise, reflecting the planning approach to bushfire prone areas. Up to date information from relevant authorities and streamlined planning scheme amendment processes are needed across the state to minimise risk and ensure consistency of approaches.

A greater focus on waterways across metropolitan Melbourne will enable opportunities to improve biodiversity corridors, enhance amenity and reveal the cultural stories of these important places.

### Challenges facing the future of our waterways

- Managing the impacts of urban inundation from storm surge, sea level rise and flash flooding, particularly in renewal precincts.
- Managing water resources to mitigate urban heat island, building resilience to flood and droughts while optimising water quality for fit-for-purpose water use.
- Funding of infrastructure to manage flooding and droughts.

### Opportunities for the future

- Build resilience to climate change through a whole of water cycle approach.
- Manage the impacts of inundation by creating a water sensitive city across the state.
- Renewal precincts will embrace water and manage the impacts of inundation by celebrating water in the landscape, particularly in Fishermans Bend: Lorimer and Fishermans Bend NEIC, Dynon, E-Gate, Arden and Macaulay.
- A nature-based climate adaptation and integrated water management strategy will increase resilience to flooding and sea level rise, improve water quality and biodiversity and provide a distinctive asset and point of difference for the municipality.
- Implement integrated water management practices for all urban rivers, particularly at the Yarra - Birrarung and harbour, Maribyrnong River and Moonee Ponds Creek catchments to enhance flood management, improve water quality and increase biodiversity.
- Celebrate the waterways as thriving social places that provide essential cultural, ecological and hydrological services to their location. Waterways will provide opportunities for people to engage with

the water and connect with the cultural history of place. Waterways will also provide continuous, high amenity pedestrian and cycle connections in the wider network.

- Improve stormwater quality and ensure the health of waterways.
- Increase alternative water use so we have less reliance on potable (drinking) water.

# Next steps

The City of Melbourne welcomes advice on the next steps in the development of Plan for Victoria, and emphasises our desire to be actively involved. As Victoria's capital city council, the City of Melbourne is well-placed to take a leading role collaborating with Victorian Government and our local government colleagues to co-operatively develop the plan.

We recommend that technical working groups be established including local government experts, and sector organisations such as the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Planning Institute of Australia, to guide and review the plan's content. In light of the need for a plan for metropolitan Melbourne alongside a Plan for Victoria, working groups should have regard for metropolitan and regional alignment to make the most of local expertise.

We consider that an opportunity will be lost if the Plan for Victoria does not address governance, institutional, planning system, and funding and investment matters and opportunities for reform. We therefore recommend that the next steps include a comprehensive and transparent evaluation of the successes and lessons learned through the implementation of Plan Melbourne and the Regional Growth Plans.

It is important that the Plan for Victoria and Melbourne includes an implementation plan which includes governance arrangements based on a strong partnership between levels of government that share responsibility for planning in Victoria. Local government's critical role needs to be strongly and clearly acknowledged.

To date, limited information has been made available regarding consultation on the Plan that is anticipated to be produced by the end of 2024. It is essential that local government, industry stakeholders and the community are given an opportunity to comment on the Plan for Victoria and Plan for Melbourne before they are finalised.

The City of Melbourne looks forward to actively working with the government on both the development of the plan and its successful implementation.

## How to contact us

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