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The Secret Valley Estate in Wallan is 258 acres of breathtaking, beautiful landscape and picturesque views of the Macedon Ranges.

This luxury estate gives inhabitants an opportunity for a rural, peaceful lifestyle with all the convenience of the nearby Wallan township and the ability to live on the edge of Melbourne with a country lifestyle but close enough to commute to the CBD by freeway or have a luxury country getaway close to Melbourne to escape to on weekends.

Wallan is a fast-expanding town placing modern shopping facilities, a new secondary school, a railway station, wineries and more on your doorstep.

A stunning destination in its own right, Secret Valley Estate places you within easy reach of the Melbourne CBD as it is just 45 minutes away from the estate. Access to the city is easily available via the Hume Freeway.

The Hidden Valley Golf Course and Country Club, a world-class sporting, recreation and social complex designed in consultation with championship golfer Craig Parry is located close by.

Expertly designed to work with the natural contours of the natural surroundings, the 6,581 metre course is a joy to play and will be appreciated by golfers of all skill levels.

The Country Club also has an inviting bar, dining room and a function/conference room, two tennis courts, gymnasium, sauna and 25m heated swimming pool for its guests.

Secret Valley Estate will also be adding a luxury country club and resort facilities with numerous walking trails through the Secret Valley.

Close by Hidden Valley boasts magnificent views, natural waterways and preserved bushland. Abundant bush walking trails make it easy to explore this magnificent region on foot.

Hidden Valley area also attracts golf, equestrian and nature lovers alike with its choice of sporting and recreation facilities as well as a stunning abundance of natural scenery and wildlife. This premium location is in the standard of weekend getaway yet some lucky ones get to call this amazing place home.
Wallan is now considered part of Greater Melbourne and a new growth corridor. It is much closer to the Melbourne CBD than suburbs such as Casey and Clyde and Frankston, much more picturesque and its popularity will only increase.
Distance from estate to various local amenities:

**CHILDREN**
- Quality Kids - 7.3km
- Dudley Street Childcare - 7.7km
- Eclipse Early Education - 8.2km

**PRIMARY EDUCATION**
- St Patrick's Primary School - 6.3km
- Kilmore Primary School - 6.7km
- Wallan Primary School - 7.4km
- Wandong Primary School - 11.8km

**SECONDARY EDUCATION**
- Assumption College - 6.1km
- Kilmore International School - 6.1km
- Wallan Secondary College - 7.8km

**TERTIARY EDUCATION**
- North Melbourne Institute of TAFE - 39.6km
- RMIT University Bundoora - 48.8km

**SHOPPING CENTRES**
- Stockland Shopping Centre Craigieburn - 31.4km
- Epping Shopping Centre - 39.3km

**SUPERMARKETS**
- Safeway - 6.7km
- Coles - 6.9km
- Foodworks - 7.4km
- IGA - 11.5km

**DINING**
- The Pancake Pan - 6.8km
- Wallder's Restaurant - 6.9km
- Thousand Spices - 7.1km
- Torng Bai Thai - 7.3km

**ENTERTAINMENT**
- Stadium - 6.6km
- Rattlers Hotel - 9.8km
- Cinema - 39.3km
- Ten Pin Bowing - 51.2km

**SERVICES**
- Post Office - 226m

**SPORT & RECREATION**
- Hidden Valley Golf and Country Club - 6.6km
- Roulston Reserve - 7.1km
- Leisure Centre - 29.4km
- Gym - 30.7km
- Swimming Centre - 46km

**HEALTH & WELLBEING**
- Kilmore Medical Practice - 5.4km
- Kilmore and District Hospital - 6.8km
- Kilmore Medical Centre - 7km

**TRANSPORTATION**
- Wallan Railway Station - 10km
- Melbourne Airport - 56.9km

Sources: Whereis.com, Image - Wikipedia
Wallan is in Victoria, 45 kilometres from Melbourne on the Northern Highway. The town sits at the southern end of the large and diverse Shire of Mitchell which extends from the northern fringes of Melbourne into the farming country of north-central Victoria and the lower Goulburn Valley.

The township flanks the Northern Highway and is set against the backdrop of the Great Dividing Range. At the 2011 census, Wallan had a population of 7,811. The fastest growing town and now largest town in the shire, Wallan is a link between the city and rural towns as Kilmore, Broadford and Seymour. 15 kilometres to the north is a turnoff to Strath Creek which leads through the Valley of a Thousand Hills.

Wallan offers both primary and secondary education. Wallan Primary School is known for the excellent standing and is highly regarded within the community. Private education can be sourced in the nearby town of Kilmore through Saint Patricks Primary and Assumption College. Childcare and Kindergarten programs in Wallan are offered by Eltham College Kids, Killara Child Care Centre and Dudley Street Child Care.

Wallan is well connected with the V/Line train network on the Seymour line. Mitchell Shire also operates a town to station connecting bus service for peak hour commuters. There is a bus service from Barmah that serves Wallan to Southern Cross Station.

Wallan has witnessed substantial growth in housing. Traditionally the growth was in the northern side of the town in the Hidden Valley area. The start of the Wallara Waters Estate in Wallan East is a new addition to the town.

Being just outside Melbourne’s metropolitan boundary, land in Wallan is fairly cheap which has allowed low-income families to make a living while commuting to the city for work. This has led to large growth in the town as it begins to take the form of an exurb. The railway station and nearby freeway access gives commuters quick access to the city. Public Transport Victoria has stated in their Metropolitan Rail Network Development Plan that Wallan should be connected to the electric Metro train network by 2033.

Sources: Wikipedia
MELBOURNE’S HOUSING REQUIREMENTS BY TYPE, TO 2051

SOURCE: VICTORIA IN FUTURE, 2014

- **1,570,000** Dwellings
  - **1,040,000** Other
  - **530,000** Detached
  - **480,000** Apartments
  - **560,000** Townhouses & Units

Note 1: These figures refer to net additions to dwellings and net gross additions and do not take into account demolitions or vacant dwellings.

MELBOURNE’S HOUSING REQUIREMENTS, BY AREA, TO 2051

SOURCE: VICTORIA IN FUTURE, 2014

- **1,570,000** Dwellings
  - **960,000** Established Areas
  - **610,000** Growth Areas
  - **310,000** Central City & Surrounds
  - **650,000** Balance of Established Suburbs

Note 1: Includes the cities of Melbourne, Parr, Phillip, Yarra, Stormington and Montbeynert.
POPULATION FORECAST

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION GROWTH WITHIN VICTORIA, 2001-2011
SOURCE: AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS, 2001 AND 2011
NOTE: PERCENTAGES DO NOT SUM TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING

HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED POPULATION, 1991-2051

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTED GROWTH

Sources: Plan-Melbourne-May-2014
INVESTMENT MERITS

Wallan has many of the factors savvy investors should seek, including a fast growing population, efficient transport links to the capital and affordable real estate.

- Wallan is well connected with the V/Line train network on the Seymour line. Mitchell Shire also operates a town to station connecting bus service for peak hour commuters
- VIC has seen average median house prices change by 6.07% which means that Wallan has done well for property investors by showing a capital gain of 3.03% over the last year
- Wallan has witnessed substantial growth in housing
- Wallan is 45km from Melbourne giving the country lifestyle to its inhabitants without being so far from the city
- Wallan is an affordable place to live
- Wallan has amenities servicing the locals such as a train station, hotel, stadium, health services centre, tennis courts, parks, childrens centre, community centre and more

Source: Your Investment Property Mag, Wikipedia
Victoria is a state in the south-east of Australia. It is Australia's most densely populated state and its second-most populous state overall. Most of its population is concentrated in the area surrounding Port Phillip Bay, which includes the metropolitan area of its capital and largest city, Melbourne, which is Australia's second-largest city.

The economy of Victoria is highly diversified: service sectors including financial and property services, health, education, wholesale, retail, hospitality and manufacturing constitute the majority of employment. Victoria's total gross state product (GSP) is ranked second in Australia, although Victoria is ranked fourth in terms of GSP per capita because of its limited mining activity.

Culturally, Melbourne is home to a number of museums, art galleries and theatres and is also described as the "sporting capital of Australia". The Melbourne Cricket Ground is the largest stadium in Australia. The ground is also considered the "spiritual home" of Australian cricket and Australian rules football, and hosts the grand final of the Australian Football League (AFL) each year, usually drawing crowds of over 95,000 people. Victoria includes eight public universities, with the oldest, the University of Melbourne, having been founded in 1853.

The 2011 Australian census reported that Victoria had 5,354,042 people resident at the time of the census. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that the population may well reach 7.2 million by 2050.

More than 75% of Victorians live in Melbourne, located in the state’s south. The greater Melbourne metropolitan area is home to an estimated 4.17 million people. Leading urban centres outside Melbourne include Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton, Mildura, Warrnambool, Wodonga and the Latrobe Valley.

Victoria has the highest population density in any state in Australia, with population centres spread out over most of the state; only the far northwest and the Victorian Alps lack permanent settlement.

The Victorian road network services the population centres, with highways generally radiating from Melbourne and other major cities and rural centres with secondary roads interconnecting the highways to each other. Many of the highways are built to freeway standard ("M" freeways), while most are generally sealed and of reasonable quality.

Melbourne has the world's largest tram network as well as being a popular form of public transport, over the last few decades trams have become one of Melbourne's major tourist attractions.
Victoria is Australia’s second largest economy, producing $317 billion in output in 2011 and accounting for 23% of Australia’s Gross Domestic Product. Metropolitan Melbourne accounts for approximately 80% of the Victorian economy and its largest employing sectors are health care, social assistance services, manufacturing and retail. At June 2009, around 96% of employing businesses in Victoria were small businesses, employing up to 19 people.

Around 30% of Melbourne’s jobs are located in inner Melbourne suburbs and the remaining majority of workers are spread across the broader suburbs (middle, outer and growth areas). In the decade prior to 2000, labour productivity in Victoria grew strongly, increasing faster than the Australian average.

- In 2011 Victoria’s goods and services exports were worth almost $34 billion.
- Victoria’s trade with other Australian states and territories was valued at approximately $99 billion in 2010-11.
- Victoria accounts for over 25% of Australia’s total expenditure on business research and development.
- In 2009 national online retail sales for all sectors of the economy were estimated to have totalled between $19 and $24 billion.

**Agriculture**

More than 26,000 km² of Victorian farmland are sown for grain, mostly in the state’s west. More than 50% of this area is sown for wheat, 33% for barley and 7% for oats. Victorian farms produce nearly 90% of Australian pears and third of apples. It is also a leader in stone fruit production.

More than 14 million sheep and 5 million lambs graze over 10% of Victorian farms, mostly in the state’s north and west.

Victoria is the centre of dairy farming in Australia. It is home to 60% of Australia’s 3 million dairy cattle and produces nearly two-thirds of the nation’s milk. The state also has 2.4 million beef cattle.

**Manufacturing**

Machinery and equipment manufacturing is the state’s most valuable manufacturing activity, followed by food and beverage products, petrochemicals and chemicals.

Prominent manufacturing plants in the state include the Portland and Point Henry aluminium smelters; oil refineries at Geelong and Altona; a major petrochemical facility at Laverton; and Victorian-based CSL, a global biotechnology company that produces vaccines and plasma products.

Victoria also plays an important role in providing goods for the defence industry.

**Mining**

Mining in Victoria contributes around $3 billion to the gross state product. The Victorian mining industry is concentrated on energy producing minerals, with brown coal, petroleum and gas accounting for nearly 90% of local production. The oil and gas industries are centred off the coast of Gippsland in the state’s east, while brown coal mining and power generation is based in the Latrobe Valley.

**Service Industry**

The service industries sector is the fastest growing component of the Victorian economy. It includes the wide range of activities generally classified as community, social and personal services; finances, insurance and property services, government services, transportation and communication, and wholesale and retail trade. Most service industries are located in Melbourne and the state’s larger regional centres.

**Tourism**

Some major tourist destinations in Victoria are:

- The metropolis of Melbourne and the attractions of the city centre such as Crown Casino, Melbourne Zoo, Melbourne Museum, the Melbourne Aquarium, ScienceWorks, and many many more.
- The 2,000 kilometres of Victorian coastline with hundreds of beaches.
- The Goldfields region featuring the historic cities of Ballarat, Beechworth, Bendigo and more.
- Natural attractions, such as The Twelve Apostles, Wilsons Promontory, The Grampians, the Buchan Caves and the Gippsland Lakes.
- The Dandenong Ranges (in particular the Puffing Billy Railway).
- The Bellarine Peninsula which features historic resort towns such as Queenscliff.
- The Surf Coast which features famous beaches such as Bells Beach, Torquay and Lorne.
- Mornington Peninsula, particularly for its wineries and secluded beaches, Arthur’s Seat and the coastal attractions of Portsea and Sorrento.
- Yarra Valley (in particular Healesville Sanctuary and wineries).
- Great Ocean Road, which features The Twelve Apostles, historic towns of Port Fairy and Portland, cliffs and whale watching and resort towns such as Lorne.
- The Victorian Alpine Region.
- The Central Victorian Highlands, ‘Highcountry’ are very well known for winter sports and bushwalking.
- Wine regions across the entire state. Other popular tourism activities are gliding, hang-gliding, hot air ballooning and scuba diving.

Major events also play a big part in tourism in Victoria, particularly cultural tourism and sports tourism. Some of which include the V8 Supercars and Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix at Phillip Island, the Grand Annual Steeplechase at Warrnambool and the Australian International Airshow at Geelong and numerous local festivals such as the popular Port Fairy Folk Festival, Queenscliff Music Festival, Bells Beach SurfClassic and the Bright Autumn Festival.
LOCAL PROJECTS

KILMORE-WALLAN BYPASS
$13.4 million
The primary objective of a Kilmore-Wallan bypass is to relieve traffic congestion and the number of heavy vehicles driving through the main streets of Kilmore and Wallan.

Kilmore is close to the metropolitan fringe and experiencing rapid growth. Wallan is now within Melbourne’s urban growth boundary and its population is forecast to grow from the 2011 figure of around 7,900 to approximately 29,000 by 2031.

VicRoads proposes to construct a Northern Highway Bypass of the Kilmore and Wallan townships. The proposed two-lane bypass would connect the Hume Freeway at Wandong with the Northern Highway at the intersection with the Broadford-Kilmore Road, a distance of approximately 13 kilometres.

VicRoads’ planning studies have considered three bypass options to be reviewed by the assessment and approval process: the Dry Creek, Quinns Road and Western options.

The main objective of the project is to reduce through traffic in the Kilmore and Wallan town centres and improve the road network’s safety and functionality.

WALLAN SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADE PROJECT

Yarra Valley Water is upgrading the existing Wallan Sewage Treatment Plant to service new developments to the north of Melbourne.

The Wallan Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) is located south east of Wallan, between the rail line and the Hume Freeway.

Upgrading the STP will involve replacing the existing lagoon treatment plant with a new four million litre capacity activated sludge treatment plant.

By adopting the activated sludge treatment process, the environmental performance of the plant will be improved, meaning the STP will have more effective odour management and an improved recycled water quality.

The STP currently services the townships of Wallan, Wallan East, Wandong and Heathcote Junction. The upgrade will ensure we are able to service the new development corridor extending from Craigieburn to Wallan (known as the Northern Growth Area), as well as the expanding Wallara Waters and Mandalay developments.

REDEVELOPMENT OF KILMORE AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL
$20 million
The redevelopment will significantly expand services to cater for increasing demand from Melbourne’s northern growth corridors into the future.

The project will deliver a new inpatient building with an additional 30 beds, an expanded theatre and day procedure suite and a new stand-alone Outpatients Centre.

The Outpatients Centre will provide a range of services including rehabilitation, district nursing, post-acute care, allied and community health, ante and post natal services, chronic disease management and community aged care services.

This will also enable Kilmore and District Hospital to co-locate pathology services, student accommodation and office administration and provide new consulting suites. As part of the project, the hospital’s helipad will also be moved to the rear of the new inpatient building.

The Outpatients Centre and the new inpatient building will be opening to patients in early 2015.

STOCKLAND HIGHLANDS SHOPPING CENTRE

Stockland Highlands is a convenient shopping centre located within the Stockland Highlands community in Craigieburn, approximately 27km north of Melbourne’s CBD.

The centre is located adjacent to the Mt Ridley School, Highgate recreation reserve and the soon to be constructed Highlands Hotel. The Malcolm Creek Regional Park is also located opposite the Centre, home to the future Golden Sun Moth Adventure Playground.

You’ll find a great choice of specialty stores now open at Highlands and a premium parents room and free Parking will make your visit even more comfortable.

Source: www.onlymelbourne.com.au
RMIT UNIVERSITY

RMIT is a global university of technology and design and Australia's largest tertiary institution.

The University enjoys an international reputation for excellence in professional and vocational education and outcome-oriented research.

RMIT is a leader in engineering, accounting and finance, computer science and information systems, communication and media studies, psychology, education, law and economics.

RMIT has three campuses in Melbourne, Australia, two campuses in Vietnam and a centre in Barcelona, Spain. The university also offers programs through partners in Singapore, Hong Kong, mainland China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Belgium, Spain and Germany, and enjoy research and industry partnerships on every continent.

The University’s student population of 82,000 includes 28,000 international students, of whom 17,600 are taught outside Australia (almost 7,000 at RMIT Vietnam).

RMIT was awarded the Premier's Award for International Education and the award for Excellence in International Education (University) in the inaugural Victorian International Education Awards.

BUNDOORA CAMPUS

Bundoora campus is a vibrant centre of learning set in a tranquil, tree-studded setting. Eighteen kilometres north-east of Melbourne’s city centre, the campus is divided into East and West by Plenty Road.

RMIT enjoys an international reputation for excellence in professional and vocational education and outcome-oriented research.

Source: www.rmit.edu.au
These example properties have similar comparable qualities and are located in Wallan. These properties give an indication as to what rental income could be achieved in the Wallan area.

These example properties have similar comparable qualities and are located in Wallan and nearby Hidden Valley. These properties give an indication as to what purchase price could be achieved in the Wallan area.
Melbourne has sprawled 50 per cent further than its official urban growth boundary and is overrunning small country towns, residents' groups and planning experts say.

Developers are building large suburban-style estates as close as three kilometres to the boundary, marketing to metropolitan commuters while avoiding the infrastructure levy.

Meanwhile, thousands of housing blocks in regional towns are being sold as an alternative to the city’s high land prices, from Drouin in Gippsland to Wallan on the Northern Highway and Bacchus Marsh in the west. It is a span of more than 150 kilometres from east to west, a distance further than that from the CBD to Bendigo.

The Bass Coast Shire Council this month approved a 1225-lot development called Waterford Rise in Warragul, which real estate agency Oliver Hume described as a “virtual growth area outside of Melbourne’s urban growth boundary”.

The agency expects at least half the lots will be sold to Melbourne buyers keen to “jump the boundary”, many of whom will commute back into suburbs such as Berwick and Dandenong for work.

There are currently 15 estates under way in the shire, with development in places such as Drouin and Trafalgar expected to double the size of the once-rural towns.

They include the 500-lot Jackson’s View estate in Drouin that is 40 kilometres outside the boundary and is being marketed as “a hassle-free commute to Melbourne”.

“It’s a trend that is definitely growing as the UGB [urban growth boundary] comes closer to regional centres,” project director Gerrard Croxford said.

About 21 per cent of Drouin’s current resident workers already travel to Melbourne for work, a recent Planning Department report found.

In Wallan, now just three kilometres outside the boundary that was extended in July, there are four new housing estates with plans for more than 5000 new homes in total. The developments are set to more than double the population of the town.

They include the 900-lot Spring Ridge and up to 3000-lot Wallara Waters, which are just “a 45-minute train trip from the Melbourne CBD”, according to the developers.

Buyers are also leapfrogging the boundary in Moorabool Shire, where developer Devine is building a 1500-lot estate near Bacchus Marsh. It is about 10 kilometres from the extended boundary at Melton.

The shire’s chief executive officer, Rob Croxford, said the council was approving 100 new housing lots on average at its fortnightly meetings.

“Bacchus Marsh is outside the urban growth corridor, but I think there is an increasing recognition that in time we need to consider the outskirts of Moorabool as part of the urban fringe,” he said.

Macedon Ranges Residents Association secretary Christine Pruneau said such estates represented an uncontrolled expansion of Melbourne that made a mockery of the boundary.

“Every small town near the boundary is really being hammered,” she said.

“These are little towns getting development that looks like it belongs in Essendon and it’s changing the character of the places into suburbs of Melbourne.”

The association has been campaigning against what it says will be the 1000-lot Braemar Estate development at Woodend, a town with a population of 3700.

Ms Pruneau said some shire councils were resisting unsuitable developments while others believed any growth was progress and were courting developers in order to collect more rates.

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council is seeking community feedback on its settlement strategy, which recommends dramatic increases in population for Gisborne and Riddells Creek, towns less than 10 kilometres beyond the extended boundary at Sunbury.

ABS data released in March showed the fastest-growing local government areas in Victoria were overwhelmingly located just inside or outside the boundary of metropolitan Melbourne.

A spokeswoman for Planning Minister Justin Madden said the government had designated four main regional growth corridors, including Warragul/Drouin and Kilmore/Wallan.

“We would expect to see regional centres like Warragul, Drouin and Wallan planning for growth in their regions while maintaining their distinctive characteristics,” she said.

“Clearly designated growth areas are essential to protect the character of smaller towns and prevent urban creep.”

She said the $631 million regional blueprint “Ready for Tomorrow” included $37 million to help regional councils plan for population and jobs growth.

RMIT associate professor of planning Michael Buxton said the state government’s stated aim of decentralising population growth into the regions was a good idea.

But it should be concentrated away from the boundary in bigger regional centres such as Wangaratta and Ballarat, where there were jobs and infrastructure to accommodate more people.

“Huge numbers of people travelling even bigger distances to the city to work isn’t going to solve anything,” he said.

Professor Buxton said housing was a threat to some of Victoria’s most productive agricultural land around Warragul and Drouin.

Baw Baw Shire mayor Adam Tyson said a house-and-land package in the shire was $30,000 cheaper than in Pakenham, a nearby suburb that is inside the boundary.

“We are not that far out, we are on the rail line,” he said. “We are resisting growth in the farming areas but not around the towns because we have infrastructure that can cope. It’s not a huge worry that we are becoming a commuter shire.”

He said many residents were concerned about losing the rural feel of the shire and the council had been consulting them about growth.

The chief of the Urban Development Institute of Australia, Tony De Domenico, said such growth benefited towns through improved services, infrastructure and economies.

“Perhaps this trend reflects that there shouldn’t be any boundary at all because you’ve got to allow people to live where they wish,” Mr De Domenico said. “If you try to limit the market it never works, there is always a way around.”

First home owners who build in a regional area receive $26,500 in government grants compared with $20,000 for a new home inside the boundary. Developers in regional areas do not pay the controversial growth areas infrastructure contribution of $95, a hectare.
Housing estate pushes urban sprawl limit

A HUGE housing estate to be built just outside Melbourne’s proposed new urban boundary shows the Government has abandoned its plans to contain urban sprawl, according to a planning expert.

Construction of the first of 1600 homes is expected to begin next month at developer Australand’s Wallara Waters estate, 50 kilometres north of Melbourne.

The estate, on the Hume Freeway near Wallan, is just beyond Melbourne’s proposed new urban growth boundary and, therefore, not subject to millions of dollars in infrastructure taxes.

RMIT University associate professor Michael Buxton, who advised the Victorian Government on its planning strategy Melbourne 2030 which aimed to limit Melbourne’s urban sprawl, said the development should have been stopped when it was being considered by the local Mitchell Shire Council in 2006.

“The Government should have stopped the approval of this sub-division in 2006, four years after Melbourne 2030 came out, aiming to prohibit this kind of development,” he said.

“It reinforces the fact the Government had no implementation plan for Melbourne 2030 and it took its eye off what developers were doing,” he said.

There are expected to be 5000 people living in the 186-hectare estate in 15 years.

The State Government has said it needs to extend Melbourne’s growth boundary by 41,000 hectares to accommodate population growth and has promised to introduce taxes of up to $95,000 a hectare to cover the costs of new schools, hospitals and transport.

Australand’s Victorian chief, Robert Pradolin, said the company supported the growth areas tax and the only reason the infrastructure charge did not apply to Wallara Waters was because it was in regional Victoria.

“Anything outside of the UGB is part of regional Victoria and that negotiation is direct with council, so it doesn’t actually form part of metropolitan Melbourne; it is just that one step outside of it and that is why the current legislation doesn’t actually apply to it,” he said. Planning Minister Justin Madden’s spokeswoman, Sofia Dedes, said the growth areas tax “isn’t payable outside the urban growth boundary because there isn’t the same infrastructure requirements”.

Michael Hocking from community group Taxed Out, said housing developments just outside the urban growth boundary could distort the Melbourne housing market.

“If those areas don’t have to pay the charge, every man and his dog is going to want to develop in those spots,” he said.
It’s not often someone gives you $7,000 for nothing. However, that’s what you’ll get as part of the first home Owner Grant (FHOG). Originally introduced in 2000, the grant was doubled to $14,000 during 2008 and 2009 to support new homebuyers through the global financial crisis. While the grant has returned to its original figure of $7,000, there are still a range of extra state-specific incentives available for first homebuyers which can significantly assist with the task of getting on the property ladder.

Indeed, it’s arguable that in the current market the lower $7,000 grant is just as, if not more, valuable than the enhanced grant. The boost to the grant was blamed for inflating the price of entry-level properties, with buyers rushing to take advantage of it which in turn pushed prices up due to the demand. In the current, less frantic market, first homebuyers could find themselves in a position to get a better deal than they would have a couple of years ago, while still benefiting from the FHOG.

How does it work?

The FHOG is a national scheme, funded by the states and territories and administered under their own legislation. While the basic $7,000 grant applies across all states, some states and territories also provide their own additional grants and stamp duty subsidies, including additional benefits for new construction and new homes in regional areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Maximum Benefits Available</th>
<th>FHOG</th>
<th>Other Concessions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>$29,490.00</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>The Home Builder Bonus (HBB) and First Home Plus (FHP) schemes provide exemptions on stamp duty. The HBB provides a full exemption on duty for off-the-plan homes up to $600,000, worth $22,490. FHP provides a full exemption for any property up to $500,000 and a partial exemption up to $600,000 (the maximum saving available under this scheme is $17,990).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>$19,750.00</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>The Queensland government also operates a range of stamp duty exemptions and concessions for home owners, first homebuyers and first home builders. First homebuyers receive a discount of up to $8,750 for properties up to $505,000; vacant land up to the value of $250,000 receives a full exemption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>$26,500.00</td>
<td>$7,000 – not available for properties worth more than $750,000.</td>
<td>Buyers may also be entitled to receive an additional payment of $13,000 (for new homes only), known as the First Home Bonus. To be eligible to receive the bonus the purchase price of the property must not exceed $600,000. For contracts entered into for the purchase or construction of a new home in a regional municipality in Victoria, an additional $6,500 regional bonus is also available (in addition to the above bonuses).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>$28,665.00</td>
<td>$7,000 – not available for properties worth more than $750,000.</td>
<td>Stamp duty concessions apply to first homebuyers. There is a full exemption for properties up to $500,000, and a concessional rate up to $600,000. The Home Buyer Assistance Account also provides first homebuyers with financial support. The scheme provides a grant of up to $2,000 for the incidental expenses of first homebuyers when they purchase an established or partially built home through a licensed real estate agent for a purchase price of $400,000 or less. The grant can be used for mortgage registration fees, solicitor and/or settlement agent fees, valuation fees, inspection fees, loan establishment fees, mortgage insurance premiums and lending institution fees associated with lodging the application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>$15,000.00</td>
<td>$7,000 up to a maximum property value of $575,000. A bonus grant of up to $8,000 is available to buyers who enter into a contract to purchase or build a new home.</td>
<td>There are no other concessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>$19,780.00</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>The Home Buyer Concession Scheme allows eligible homebuyers earning under a certain income threshold to pay a token duty of $20 on properties under $360,000 and a concessional rate up to $445,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>$33,750.00</td>
<td>$7,000 – not available for properties worth more than $750,000.</td>
<td>The Northern Territory government provides a stamp duty First Home Owner Concession (FHOC) of up to $26,730 to persons purchasing their first home or land on which to build their first home. The FHOC is not means-tested, but the purchase price must not exceed $750,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>$11,000.00</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>The Tasmanian government applies a concessional rate of stamp duty for first homebuyers of up to $4,000 for properties up to a value of $358,000.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Melbourne urban sprawl to extend into six new suburbs over next 20 years

Larry Schleisinger - 14 June 2012

Melbourne’s urban growth boundary will extend outwards over the next 20 years to incorporate six new fringe suburbs and provide new homes for up to 100,000 people.

The plans, unveiled by Victorian Planning Minister Matthew Guy, includes the development of six new metropolitan suburbs at Diggers Rest, Lockerbie, Lockerbie North, Manor Lakes, Merrifield West and Rockbank North and follow the completion of the Logical Inclusions Review of Melbourne’s Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

The new suburbs will expand Melbourne’s urban boundary to the North (Mitchell and Whittlesea), to the West (Hume, Melton and Wyndham) and South East (Cardinia and Casey) by 6,000 hectares.

The 6,000-hectare expansion is significantly less than the 43,000-hectare expansion planned under the previous Victorian government.

Plans for the new suburbs include the building of new train station, town centres, open space and other key infrastructure

Over the next 20 years there will be 3,800 homes developed for 10,700 residents in Diggers Rest in Melton as well as local town centre located, the extension of Houdini Drive, a multi-purpose community centre and additional sportgrounds.

10,500 new homes for 29,500 new residents in Lockerbie (incorporating parts of Hume, Mitchell and Whittlesea) as well as a new train station, a new north-south arterial road, three state primary schools and a secondary school, four new sports reserves and a new principal town centre next to the future train station.

4,600 new homes for 13,000 new residents in Lockerbie North (incorporating parts of Mitchell and Whittlesea) along with a new train station, a new north-south arterial road, two state primary schools and a secondary school, two new sports reserves, a transit oriented town centre next to the future train station.

4,850 new homes for 13,500 new residents in Manor Lakes (in Wyndham) along with two state primary schools, two large new recreation reserves, a local town centre and an important new north-south arterial road.

7,000 new homes for 20,000 in Merrifield West (in Hume) along with the development of two state primary schools, football and soccer grounds, two local town centres and a number of local parks.

6,650 new homes for 18,500 new resident in Rockbank (in Melton) over a longer 25 year time frame along with the development of two state primary schools, a secondary school, three active recreation reserves, two local community facilities, higher order civic uses, passive recreation and linear rail network, a major and local town centre and an important east-west arterial road.

Merrifield West residents travelling into the city will have to rely on the Donnybrook V/Line rail station or drive seven kilometres to the Craigieburn rail station, while Rockbank North and Lockerbie residents will need to use already busy V/Line rail stations until the new train station proposed for Beveridge is completed.

There will be an expansion of the Diggers Rest V/Line rail station.

Guy says the urban expansion plan will provide opportunities for Melbourne’s economic and social future.

“The completion of this review will lead to urban growth boundary modifications to ensure adequate long-term land supply and enable planning for population growth to be completed well ahead of time.”

Many of these new outer suburbs are already the focus of new housing developments, with the March quarter Oliver Hume residential communities report noting that 10 new communities comprising a total of 3,400 lots launched over the first three months of the year.

Four of the 10 projects were located in Wyndham, three in Melton, two in Whittlesea and one in Hume.

The report says it would take 6.8 months to sell the current level of supply represents 6.8, exceeding the industry benchmark of six months for the first time since the September quarter of 2006.

All municipalities experienced a rise in supply with 20 months’ worth of supply in Mitchell (Wallan-Beveridge) and also double-digit level of supply in Melton. The City of Hume is now the tightest market, with only 4.2 months of supply.
**Early works on Kilmore-Wallan Bypass to start later this year**

7 June 2014

- $4 Million early works package for the Kilmore-Wallan Bypass
- Early works to start in late-2014
- Victorian Coalition Government building better and safer roads

Minister for Roads Terry Mulder today joined Member for Seymour Cindy McLeish, Member for Northern Victoria Region Amanda Millar, Nationals Candidate for Euroa Stephanie Ryan and Liberal Candidate for Yan Yean Sam Ozturk to announce a $4 Million early works package for the Kilmore-Wallan Bypass.

“A new roundabout at the intersection of the Northern Highway and Broadford-Kilmore Road will eliminate dangerous cross traffic movements and will be large enough for all vehicles, including large trucks.” Mr. Mulder said.

“The northern section of the Northern Highway in Kilmore carries around 3,600 vehicles per day, while traffic on the Broadford-Kilmore Road now exceeds 5,000 vehicles per day.”

Mr. Mulder said the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) will be exhibited next week and outlines the benefits of a western route.

“The EES shows that the western route will affect fewer households than eastern alternatives, while also improving road connectivity and reducing traffic in Kilmore and Wallan.” Mr. Mulder said.

“It also demonstrates that a western route will have a low social impact because it avoids disturbance to the Monument Hill area, the Kilmore Golf Course and the equine and racecourse precinct, which are of significant value to the community.”

Ms. McLeish said this project will help the community move forward.

“Getting on with this project will allow trucks to bypass towns and enable Sydney Street to be converted into a pedestrian-friendly zone.” Ms. McLeish said.

Ms. Ryan said the commencement of early works is a great step forward in making Kilmore safer and more vibrant.

“The amount of traffic, in particular the number of trucks travelling through the main street, has severely curbed the town’s development.” Ms. Ryan said.

Mr. Ozturk also welcomed today’s announcement.

“It’s great to see the Victorian Coalition Government building better, safer roads.” Mr. Ozturk said.

Ms. Millar said this was great news for local residents.

“Today’s early works announcement will be greatly welcomed by locals, especially the new roundabout to improve safety.” Ms. Millar said.

The announcement of funding for the roundabout does not affect the outcome of the current EES process.

The Victorian Coalition Government has allocated $13.4 Million to planning and preconstruction for the Kilmore-Wallan Bypass.

This announcement is in addition to the $160 Million Country Roads and Bridges Program, the $130 Million boost for road maintenance in the 2014-15 Victorian Budget and the more than $127 Million recently announced for Safer Road Infrastructure Program initiatives.
Melbourne recorded the greatest quarterly lift in dwelling values of any Australian capital city, according to the August RP Data CoreLogic Hedonic Home Value Index. Dwelling values in Melbourne were up 6.4% for the quarter to August, ahead of the 5.0% increase recorded in Sydney. However, on a monthly basis, Sydney had the greatest dwelling value increase, with a 1.8% increase recorded last month. Melbourne saw an 0.8% increase in dwelling values over August.

According to RP Data, Melbourne’s median dwelling price for August was $523,750. The city’s dwelling values are now 6.9% above their previous peak, and 19.5% up from the most recent market trough. Over the past 12 months, Melbourne’s homes have increased in value by 11.7%.

The median price of a house in Melbourne now sits at $570,000, while the median unit price is $460,000. House prices increased by 6.6% in the three months to August, with a 12.4% increase recorded by RP Data over the past year.

Unit price growth has been slightly more modest, with a 5.2% quarterly increase in unit values and a 6.2% rise on an annual basis. Despite a 10.9% increase in dwelling values across the capitals on a yearly basis, only Melbourne and Sydney the only two capital cities to record double digit price growth.

According to RP Data Research director Tim Lawless, Melbourne and Sydney’s housing markets are responsible for the “two tier” market conditions.

"Over the latest growth cycle we have seen Sydney dwelling values increase by 27% and Melbourne values up by 19.5%," noted Lawless.

"Sydney and Melbourne were also the strongest performing cities during the 2009/10 growth cycle. Since the beginning of 2009, we have seen values rise by a cumulative 50.1% and 46.1% respectively in Sydney and Melbourne.

"Looking at the remaining state capitals over the same time frame, the next best performer was Perth where values are now 15% higher, followed by Adelaide at 9.9%, Brisbane with 5.3% and Hobart where dwelling values are actually 1.5% lower."

He predicts that home prices are likely to continue to increase in the next quarter.

"Considering the ongoing high rate of auction clearance rates, a generally rapid rate of sale and the ongoing low interest rate environment, it’s likely that dwelling values rise even further over the next three months," said Lawless.

Rental yields are lower in Melbourne than in any other capital city, with houses offering 3.2% yields and units offering 4.2%.

Lawless notes that Sydney’s gross rental yields have fallen to 3.6%.

"In Melbourne, where rental yields are even lower, we have seen gross yields fall by 32 basis points over the year to reach 3.2% gross," he said.
Plan Melbourne: Vic government's 2050 vision for the city

Geraldine Chua - 15 October 2013

The Victorian State Government has released Plan Melbourne, a draft containing 7 objectives, 41 directions and 115 initiatives that will shape Melbourne from early 2014 to 2050.

The 176-page plan has been hailed by Premier Denis Napthine as "the most significant document for the future of Melbourne and Victoria over the next 40-50 years", and a vision that would help Melbourne remain as one of the most liveable cities in the world.

However, the focus is not just on Melbourne, but also Regional Victoria.

"This is about producing a state of cities, not just a city state," said Napthine.

With Victoria’s population set to grow exponentially by 2050, regional towns will become population and employment hubs, while urban renewal projects will drive jobs in Melbourne, the blueprint says.

So far, the plan has received the backing of several key industry groups, including Victoria’s leading transport advocate RACV. However, the state opposition says the plan will change Melbourne, bringing gridlock and congestion.

"More high-rises, more people, more cars, but no public transport and no infrastructure," deputy opposition leader James Merlino said.

Merlino added that the appeal rights of neighbours objecting to high-rise development would be removed under the more controversial parts of the plan.

Certain initiatives that were expected but missing from the Plan include accommodating for low scale unit development, meaning that development, meaning that development in previously "low scale" areas (an established/growth areas split of 57/43%) will be determined.

Municipal Association of Victoria president Bill McArthur said a permanent growth boundary sent a strong message to the market and encouraged a greater share of future growth and development in regional cities and towns.

The RACV also called for bipartisan support for the plan.

"We believe it represents a chance to start getting transport infrastructure and planning right and to learn from the mistakes of the past," said RACV acting general manager of public policy, Thanuja Gunatillake.

"This strategy offers a chance to end the chronic under-investment in transport projects and services and RACV calls on both sides of politics to agree to the key proposals outlines in the report."

Brief outline of the plan, courtesy of Tract Consultants:

The expected initiatives of the Plan include:

- A heavy reliance on activity centres and renewal areas to accommodate more of Melbourne’s growth, with far less emphasis on established areas of detached housing
- Significant residential growth in previously announced urban renewal precincts, including Fishermans Bend, Arden-Macaulay and E-Gate
- A new Metropolitan Planning Authority with powers to plan state-significant sites and renewal areas to accommodate more of Melbourne’s growth, with far less emphasis on established areas of detached housing
- Significant residential growth in previously announced urban renewal precincts, including Fishermans Bend, Arden-Macaulay and E-Gate
- A new Metropolitan Planning Authority with powers to plan state-significant sites and renewal areas to accommodate more of Melbourne’s growth, with far less emphasis on established areas of detached housing

The surprising initiatives of the Plan include:

- A permanent metropolitan boundary to replace the existing Urban Growth Boundary, with a ‘locking in’ mechanism to be determined
- A serious push towards de-centralisation through the use of Regional Victoria as a ‘release valve’ when growth areas fill, especially in towns like Bacchus Marsh, Ballan, Broadford, Kilmore and Wothaggi.
- A massively expanded Central City - to be Australia’s largest commercial and residential centre by 2040 - at the hub of an ‘Integrated Economic Triangle’ of employment, ports and transport links
- The Metro 2 Project - rerouting the Epping and Hurstbridge lines though a new tunnel to Melbourne University and ultimately Fishermans Bend
- The identification of dozens of new urban renewal precincts like Cremorne, Collingwood, North Richmond to Victoria Park, and at Hampton, Jewell, Alphington and Essendon Stations
- A possible future airport in outer south-east, with potential locations between Koo Wee Rup and Lang Lang identified

More controversial initiatives include:

- A “code assessment approach” to multi-unit development, meaning that development which meets enhanced ResCode standards in certain areas - such as the new Residential Growth Zone - are exempt from notice and third-party appeals
- The majority of new dwellings - 600,000 of a total 1,046,000 - will be built in established areas (an established/growth areas split of 57/43%)
- Continued expansion of the freeway network, including the East-West Link (with sweeteners like new boulevards and tram upgrades added), and investigation of the North East Link (Greensborough to the Eastern Freeway)
Plan Melbourne

19 May 2014

Melbourne is set to become a powerhouse of jobs, investment and greater opportunity with the release of the Victorian Coalition Government’s new city shaping strategy to 2050, Plan Melbourne, Premier Denis Napthine announced today.

 Joined by Minister for Planning Matthew Guy, Dr Napthine said Plan Melbourne integrated game-changing transport projects with job-creating urban renewal and activity precincts, close to homes and services that people need.

‘I am delighted to release this final plan for our city that will deliver more jobs, more transport choices, more homes and more lifestyle opportunities across Melbourne,’ Dr Napthine said.

‘It is vital that Melbourne’s liveability is treasured and maintained. Plan Melbourne outlines the leadership and direction for Melbourne to remain a great place to live, and do business well into the future.

‘The plan creates a clear picture of Melbourne’s infrastructure-led growth to 2050 and a long term plan integrating Victoria’s regions with metropolitan Melbourne,’ Dr Napthine said.

Dr Napthine said Plan Melbourne would be the strategic framework behind the biggest infrastructure program in Victoria’s history.

“The Coalition Government committed a record $27 billion in the 2014-15 State Budget for state shaping economic infrastructure that will create jobs, boost productivity and a build a better Victoria,” Dr Napthine said.

The plan reflects newly committed transport projects such as the Melbourne Rail Link, including the Melbourne Airport Rail Link, and the full East-West Link road project, connecting the Western Ring Road at Sunshine West to the Eastern Freeway.

Mr Guy said Plan Melbourne defines a new blueprint for our city by unlocking land within existing urban areas, and a strong transport foundation upon which to attract investment and locate jobs, businesses, and services close to where people live.

“This is a comprehensive plan for Melbourne that caters for a projected population of 7.7 million people by 2051 and provides a solid foundation to meet these challenges,” Mr Guy said.

“For the first time there is a dedicated authority, the Metropolitan Planning Authority, to implement Plan Melbourne and together with local government we now have the roadmap needed to forge a productive way forward for our great city.”

Vital structural reforms to the Victorian planning system and a monitoring framework have been put in place to ensure Plan Melbourne can be delivered, while five new metropolitan subregions with representation from all metropolitan councils have begun work to coordinate infrastructure priorities across state and local government.

To implement the strategy, the Metropolitan Planning Authority will be given planning authority powers for metropolitan Melbourne, and will use these powers in precincts and locations identified in Plan Melbourne, including urban renewal precincts, national employment clusters, activity centres, and health and education precincts.

The Planning Authority will work closely with local councils as well as government departments, local residents and other interested parties.

Urban renewal of Fishermans Bend, E-Gate, Arden-Macaulay and along key rail corridors are a major part of the strategy.

National employment clusters in Monash, Latrobe, Sunshine, Dandenong South, East Werribee and Parkville, with concentrations of interconnected businesses and institutions, will make a major contribution to the national economy and Melbourne’s position as a global city.

Key activity and job centres will continue to be a focal point in areas such as Dandenong, Box Hill, Ringwood, Essendon Fields, Narre Warren, Broadmeadows, Epping and Footscray.

In addition, Plan Melbourne prioritises 25 health and education precincts in locations close to homes and transport connections to accommodate new highly skilled jobs and value adding industry.
Squeeze is on as Australia's populations boom

Tim Colebatch - 27 November 2013

Almost 10 million migrants over the next 50 years will swell Australia’s population to more than 40 million by 2060 and more than 50 million by 2100, under dramatically higher new projections by the Bureau of Statistics.

The projections, the first for five years, envisage tens of millions more people crowding into Australia's capital cities over the next 50 years, overwhelmingly due to migration.

By 2060, the bureau estimates, Melbourne will have 8.5 million people, twice as many as now. Even by 2050, it would have 1.2 million more people than the state government assumed in its core planning strategy, Plan Melbourne, released last month.

By then Sydney would have 8.4 million, an increase of 80 per cent from now. Perth would more than double to 5.5 million people, and Brisbane to 4.8 million. Both cities would be bigger than Sydney is now. Melbourne would overtake Sydney in 2053.

Those four cities, the migrant magnets of Australia, would add 14 million of the 18.4 million extra people envisaged by 2060.

The rest of Queensland would add 2 million, the ACT would double to almost 750,000, but in much of the rest of Australia - South Australia, Tasmania, and regional NSW and Victoria - population growth will either reverse or slow to minimal levels by 2050.

The bureau puts forward three sets of projections based on different assumptions about birth rates, death rates, migration levels and interstate movements, which provide a range around its central projection.

The high projections envisage an Australia of 42 million people by 2050 and 70 million by 2100. Even the low projections would see the population grow from 23 million now to 34 million in 2050 and 42 million by 2100.

Its central projections, which are those used in this article, would see Australia grow to 37.5 million in 2050, and 53 million by 2100.

Migration would become the driving source of Australia’s growth. The bureau’s central projection assumes a long-run average net gain of 240,000 migrants a year, roughly current levels.

That already generates 60 per cent of Australia’s population growth, but that would rise to two-thirds over the forecast period as the society ages.

The bureau produces new projections every five years after the census. After the population boom since 2006, it now envisages much faster growth ahead than it foresaw five years ago, especially in Melbourne and Perth.

Sydney, however, is tipped to hold on to its crown as Australia’s biggest city for longer than some have speculated.

On these figures, Melbourne would only gradually draw level before overtaking Sydney in 40 years’ time.

Long before then, Perth would have overtaken Brisbane to become Australia’s third-biggest city by 2028, with the ACT overtaking Tasmania in 2038.
Melbourne will see the highest price growth of any capital city next year, HSBC has forecast.

In the latest HSBC Australia Downunder Digest report, HSBC Australia chief economist Paul Bloxham forecasts 4% to 8% price growth in Melbourne for 2016, after 7% to 8% growth in 2015.

Bloxham expects that in 2015, Melbourne and Sydney will "continue to outpace the rest of the nation", noting that from its mid-2012 trough, Melbourne's housing prices have increased by 20%.

However, Bloxham does not raise the prospect of a housing bubble in Melbourne as he did for Sydney, where HSBC predicts prices could fall by 2% in 2016 when they expect interest rates to increase.

He also noted the impact of foreign buyers on demand for Australian property, explaining that Foreign Investment Review Board figures "suggest a strong rise in foreign investment in Australian housing in 2014, with particular strength in investment in new dwellings." (see chart below).

While Bloxham notes that foreign investment "is only a relatively small proportion of overall housing turnover", it is "likely to be having some effect on housing prices". Victoria, which has seen the highest dwelling approvals of any state since 2009, is likely to see continued strength in the construction sector, according to Bloxham.

"As Australia's growth rebalances away from the mining states towards the south-eastern states – of New South Wales and Victoria – the strongest ramp-up in construction should be expected in these states," states the report.

"Much of the interest from foreign buyers is in the Sydney and Melbourne new apartment markets," writes Bloxham.
The house always wins, or in the case of Victoria’s planning tribunal – big housing developments nearly always win, new research indicates.

Councils have almost become redundant in the decision-making process for controversial residential developments in Melbourne’s suburbs, according to a RMIT University analysis of permit applications.

When councillors refused a permit, almost nine out of 10 permit applicants went to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal and in 73 per cent of cases the council’s decision was set aside and the permit granted.

When councillors supported a development and residents appealed to the tribunal, the tribunal upheld the council’s approval in 85 per cent of cases, the report by RMIT planning researchers Joe Hurley and Brendan McRae showed.

Once councils and the state government set strategic planning rules for an area, the power of a council to influence contentious individual planning applications diminishes considerably, an extract of the draft report indicates.

Although councils and third-party objectors, such as residents, may be able to slow or modify a development – often at a cost of millions of dollars to the project – they are rarely successful in stopping it.

The researchers looked at 759 development applications across the 31 metropolitan Melbourne councils in 2011 using minutes from council meetings, with the full report expected to be published later this year.

The research focused on new residential development applications considered by councillors to highlight decisions in the context of urban consolidation policy.

The report, Competing objectives, interests and politics in development assessment, said in contentious planning cases the tribunal has become an entrenched part of the application process and the tribunal offered developers "another spin of the wheel" at attractive odds.

It said given the number of cases where council planning officer recommendations were overturned, "[the tribunal] is going beyond providing oversight on the political influence of councillors".

Dr Hurley said planning law was often not black and white and included a level of discretion that assisted both developers and councils to deliver planning outcomes tailored to individual sites and the character of an area.

The research indicated a "protectionist impulse of local-level elected representatives and the role of the tribunal in making decisions that significantly diminish this protectionist influence".

"The system at the moment is doing a pretty good job of papering over the fact that local representative decision-making is really being circumvented," Dr Hurley said.

"For contentious issues, they are effectively withdrawing that delegation from the local level of government," he said.

Going to Victoria’s planning tribunal is not cheap.

Another report by Dr Hurley showed a tribunal case can cost developers several millions dollars and residents more than $100,000.

Asher Judah from the Property Council said the report indicated the planning tribunal was doing its job and councils were not.

"[The tribunal’s] job is to determine points of law, in these cases, planning law," he said.

A spokesman for Planning Minister Richard Wynne said the government was preparing legal changes so that the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal must, where appropriate, take into account the extent of community opposition to permit applications.

Municipal Association of Victoria president Bill McArthur said councillors had "the complex task of considering an application in the context of the planning scheme and local planning policy, not based on councillors’ personal views, while also fairly representing community views".
Due to booming land sales in Melbourne, one developer has come up with an innovative way to allow home buyers and investors to lay by land for 3-5 years before they have to pay for it and share in the profits.

The demand is currently so high that some housing developers are now offering investor and homebuyers the chance to secure their housing lots in Tarneit, Melbourne 3-5 years in advance.

Melbourne Grove is one such new development that is allowing buyers to secure their lot now at discounted prices through an option. Yet they have 3-5 years before they have to pay for their land.

Any capital growth over the next 3-5 years goes to the buyer and best of all they have no interest or holding costs for 3-5 years.

"The idea was to assist homebuyers in having a chance to lock in land for their future home ahead of time, or for parents to do so for their children," said a Melbourne Grove Estate spokesperson Varun Pachnanda. "However, savvy investors have been queuing up to buy the land using options and many are also using their SMSF where applicable", he explained.

Even though Mr Pachnanda said they don't officially launch their planned development until March 26, "we have already tallied up quite a few pre sales. With less than 40 being released in stage 1-3, it will sell out quickly because such is the demand in Melbourne's property market'.

On the weekend of March 20-22, the first stage of a massive new housing estate in Melbourne's suburbs completely sold out, as its developers embraced a ballot system to accommodate growing demand.

The appetite for existing homes is also strong, especially in Sydney where the clearance rate has grown by ten per cent to 70.9 per cent in mid-February.

Robert Larocca, CoreLogic RP Data's auction specialist, has said that the ascending trend in auction clearances suggests how buyers greeted the rate cut set by the Reserve Bank.

Mr Larocca added that the current trend will encourage more vendors to enlist their properties on the market to comply with the strong demand.

The auction specialist recently said to the Australian Financial Review, "in terms of volume and clearance rate the auction market is breaking records right now". On the weekend of March 20-22, in Melbourne's outer west, private developer Victoria Investments & Properties and Mirvac sold 69 lots at Woodlea housing estate following a ballot at Galli Winery. Although there were only 70 lots available in stage one of the 711-hectare master-planned community near Caroline Springs, there were 185 registered buyers.

Matthew Dean, Woodlea's project director said it was unprecedented to have such a high level of interest in a new housing estate's first stage. Mr Dean opined that the appeal of the project itself and market conditions were key reasons for that, the newspaper noted. Woodlea offers 500-square-metre lots priced at $183,000 AUD, less than the $200,000 AUD average for Melbourne land. It is also a 30-minute direct ride to the city and there are plans for parks, schools and a town centre.

Property adviser Richard Wakelin said the latest rate cut had reset the Melbourne market after it absorbed an oversupply of properties in late 2014. "People are bold in their bids" and are trying to force offers on vendors ahead of auction, Mr Wakelin opined.
"Buying land, not houses I believe is now the most suitable investment strategy", says millionaire property investor and motivational speaker Jamie McIntyre who heads the 21st Century Media and Education Group of Companies.

The Australian Financial Review reported last year that Mr McIntyre and the Reserve Bank Governor Glen Stevens have one thing in common, which is, they both believe inner city apartment markets are overheated and are wary of it as an investment, particularly in Melbourne and Sydney.

McIntyre, a property investor for almost two decades has been bullish on both Australian and US Real Estate. In the past, he said “I would agree that simply buying houses and never selling was an ideal strategy. "Even though that's still a good strategy, smarter investors would be better off acquiring land in areas that will be developed in the future because if done correctly, not only are the profits are much greater, but it also contains less risk".

McIntyre says he likes the ability to use options to buy land as opposed to borrowing money and paying interest on the land for a decade or more waiting for it to rise. He said, “Options are commonly used in the stock market but the average investor doesn’t know that you can simply and easily buy property options to be able to profit from property without the risk of debt, interest repayments or any holding costs”. According to McIntyre, because the Australian Property market is starting to overheat, it would be smart for property investors to start buying property options ahead of increasing their debt levels in the current market.

“There are only a few select suburbs I would consider buying Australian property in now, as most suburbs will not grow as well as many hope, whereas land prices tend to rise faster than houses.

“That’s why I don’t like inner city apartments as investments because there is virtually no land component. Whereas buying land on the outskirts of capital cities or even better in fast growing regional cities that will become prime for residential development in the future, is a far more profitable strategy”.

McIntyre goes on to state: “Especially if you can use ‘property options’ to avoid borrowing, it means you get all the upside of capital growth without any interest repayments or holding costs or the need to beg a bank to loan you money”.

He explains that if you were able to secure an option over a future lot of land worth $150,000 today and let’s say it is a ten year option, in ten years time you could expect the land to be worth $300,000 or more in a fast growing area. Alternately savvy investors can turn $120,000 into $1.2 million by becoming a mini land developer by using a $120,000 option to secure for instance a one acre lot of land and sub dividing later into 4 lots worth $300,000 each (approximately) in ten years time totalling to $1.2 million. Certainly not a get rich quick strategy, but for slower ten year strategy that is hard to beat with managed funds or stock market strategies.

“You can then purchase the land easily as you have 50% in equity that you purchased with an option for $150,000 now worth $300,000. Then you can sell the land to a home buyer via local agents or preferably build a house on it and then sell it or rent it. "A great idea to action now, for children to lock in property at today’s prices. Or you can resell the option for a handsome profit and never need to buy the land as it has intrinsic value.

“The best thing about property options means you aren’t obligated to buy i.e. as they are simply call options, you have no risk and can walk away at any time. “Plus if the option is by a legitimate supplier, they will offer a 100% money back guarantee if the worst should happen and the development doesn’t proceed, secured by the land development itself.

“These quality 100% money back property options secured by real estate are becoming highly sought after products for savvy investors. I believe these will become a common investment strategy in the future because of their profitability and security and this is why I’m moving into this space in a big way”, said McIntyre.
Why you need to be a sophisticated investor to make it in land banking?

March 7, 2015

News Articles

You need to be a sophisticated investor to make the big profits in land banking. Being a mum and dad style retail investor won’t cut it.

Here’s how to see if you are a retail investor, meaning you have to pay retail for investments for the rest of your life or a sophisticated investor and qualify to access wholesale land deals where savvy investors turn $135,000 into $1.2 million in a decade.

Plus, this is why councils can’t tell you if (and when) a wholesale land project would be approved and why ringing them is a waste of time?

Firstly a wholesale land project (that offers you the chance to turn $135,000 into $1.2 million in 10 years or so) only exists when the land is currently outside the current Urban Growth Boundary or not currently zoned Residential.

If it is already zoned Residential or inside the UGB and thus is automatically going to be rezoned residential by council then land prices already adjust to reflect this and thus a lucrative opportunity doesn’t exist.

You could go and buy land at retail if you want this sort of guarantee and build a home on it, however, that’s not Land Banking nor will you make large potential profits.

Land Banking is when developers use foresight to buy land with a view to rezone in the future; and they lobby the council over years to get the rezoning or often won’t even apply for 10 years to get rezoning.

This creates opportunity for larger increases and profits in land value. However these developers generally are large ASX listed companies that won’t share these enormous profits with you unless you buy their stock in the ASX and then you’ll get maybe 4-5% dividend return, but never the massive windfall that developers make.

If people who want to qualify to buy an option in one of our highly sought after land projects ring the council wanting some sort of guarantee that it will be developed, it just won’t happen.

Why?

1. Firstly it’s not their job to answer development questions about a project at a wholesale stage, which hasn’t been submitted to council and may be years away from being submitted. It is rather annoying for them.

2. If they categorically said yes that it will be rezoned and approved (which they can’t) then that would be the worst news you could ever hear.

Why?

Because the land would be worth ten times the current value already and we would never be able to let you acquire an acre of land that could be acquired for say $135,000 option.

It would more likely be $500,000 or $1 million and the opportunity would vanish for you to make such profits.

The council staff can only state what the current guidelines are, period.

Let’s use the example of Wallan and our Secret Valley Estate Project 45 minutes from Melbourne CBD.

It’s outside the current UGB and will remain outside even when the boundary is extended in a few years.

Council will say we have no plans at this stage to apply for rezoning that area as we have 50,000 potential house lots that can be developed inside the new UGB.

Thus, as far council is concerned, there is nothing to talk about.

The thing about bureaucracy; their position (in the long run) is somewhat irrelevant as based on these supposed guidelines half the housing estates around Melbourne and Wallan wouldn’t exist today. Yet they do.

In recent years, the Mitchell Shire Council, which includes Wallan have approved numerous developments that were and are going to remain outside the UGB. You can Google and find many of these selling retail land as we speak.

According to their same guidelines, these should never been approved, however they do so today.

In fact they approved the “Hidden Valley” estate over 30 years ago.

The UGB was a long way from Wallan back then, and Hidden Valley will remain outside the UGB for years to come. Yet it exists and is growing still to this day. Therefore, relevancy of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is limited. UGB simply means the council at some point in the future will rezone it where if it’s not UGB it will require developers to submit rezoning request to try an achieve a rezoning.

So to be a sophisticated investor and take advantage of land banking you can’t expect retail security. Retail security is for mum and dad investors and not sophisticated investors.

That mindset doesn’t get you a pass to be a partner in our projects.

We have retail land, which we can offer those with that mindset in UGB that council is rezoning residential without us needing to apply for rezoning.

Wholesale and the big profits are not for those types of investors.

So you need to decide if you’re a sophisticated investor and if so then such an investment can be suitable. If not a retail type offering with less risk is more suitable.
Family to become multi-millionaires as the farmland they bought for $300,000 in 1982 is now worth $70 Million

Sally Lee - 4 October 2014

- The 108ha farmland in Sunbury, northwest of Melbourne, was bought in 1982 for $300,000
- It was bought by ten investors, among them five brothers
- The area was considered 'the middle of nowhere' but is now a prime housing development site said to be worth $70 million
- The site is made up of ten blocks, ranging in size from 6.25ha to 19.59ha
- The property, which will hit the market next week, has also gained interest from overseas buyers

A patch of land which was once worth $300,000 is set to turn a group of Melbourne family and friends into multi-millionaires. The 108ha farmland in Sunbury, northwest of Melbourne, was bought in 1982 and was considered 'the middle of nowhere' which has now transformed into a prime housing development site - worth $70 million.

Ten investors, among them five brothers, told Nine News they had to borrow funds to place a deposit on the property as they were destitute at the time.

The three blocks of land, ranging in size from 6.25ha to 19.59ha, is expected to be rezoned and developed into 2000 properties to create a new suburb - South Sunbury.

The investors put the property on the market when they realised nearby farmland was being turned into residential areas.

The sale will be divided up among them, based on the size of the blocks each investor owns.

They include tradesmen, aged in their sixties and seventies, who say the property sale will help them enjoy their well-earned retirement.

"For me and my wife... we didn't have much holidays, because working hard, now we try to enjoy a little bit more than we did before," one co-owner told Nine News.

The Croatian immigrants hope to share their earnings with their family and also take trips to their home land.

"I got a grandchildren, a little bit for them and a little bit for me too," said another co-owner.

If the hobby farm is sold for $70 million, current owners will earn about $65 per square metre.

Real estate agent Joseph Ngo said the property, which is set to officially hit the market next week, has already generated interest from buyers in China and Sweden.

"They do have in the pipeline a train station, of course a school, a park," he said.
Demand for house and land packages booming, as buyers chase Australian dream

Emily Power - March 26 2015

First home buyers Anjeza Hoxhalli and Alex Talezski sign contracts for their new block of land at the Woodlea development in Rockbank.

Ballots, camp-outs and $1000 registration fees – like Willy Wonka's golden tickets – are part of buying a house on the city fringes amid a new estates boom.

Melbourne’s auction market is flush with an autumn record of almost 1400 homes going under the hammer this weekend. But an unprecedented surge in demand for house and land packages is also seeing thousands of families achieving the great Australian dream in a process that is just as competitive and as hyped as the auction market.

Melbourne’s housing affordability squeeze, growing population and low interest rates are fuelling the uptick in Victorians buying into so-called masterplanned communities, developers say.

A UK housing report recently identified the growing number of “rururbs” – rural suburbs – with the trend in Britain mirrored on the outskirts of Melbourne, from Maddingly in the west, Mernda in the north and Officer in the south-east.

About 30 kilometres west of Melbourne at Plumpton on the Melton Highway, around 350 people keen to buy into the new Woodlea development packed into a winery last Saturday for a lotto-style ballot.

A random draw, with much fanfare, was necessary after 3000 inquiries for just 70 blocks of land.

About 185 families paid a registration of $1000 for the right to attend the event, which was hosted by Channel Nine weather presenter Livinia Nixon.

Families cheered and cried as Nixon plucked their names from a barrel, after which they chose their plot – priced at an average of $186,000 for 500 square metres – and signed contracts.

The first names pulled were couple Anjeza Hoxhalli and Alex Talezski.

After renting at nearby Caroline Springs, the first-home buyers wanted somewhere to start a family and were keen to skip the “too-hard-basket” auction system, said Mr Talezski.

“Hord was a lot of anticipation and a lot of nervous people,” he said. “When the first name was drawn out, the whole crowd cheered.

“We had people crying because they were so relieved to secure their land.”

At Wantirna Rise, $53 million worth of land was also sold last Saturday at a rate of four blocks, worth on average $477,000, every 15 minutes – equating to more than $7.5 million every hour.

Buyers had to register for what the developer dubbed a “Golden Ticket”.

Real estate agent Peter Nicolls started inking contracts on site at 7am, in the dark, and sold out of the 113 available plots.

“It was a frenzy,” he said. “It all comes down to how well it is priced.

“We have been very successful selling projects in Berwick and also in Keysborough, and other areas like Pakenham and Cranbourne, and it has definitely now reached new heights.”

Developers say 2010 was a peak for the housing estate market, stimulated by the government’s first home buyers grant.

Following that spike, developers were dangling carrots of free cars worth $40,000 and furniture along with house and land bundles.

Now, demand is again so high that they don’t need such enticements, with some eager buyers even camping out for days at new housing estates around the country for first dibs at the best blocks.

This weekend, in Kalkallo – 33 kilometres north of the CBD – Stockland will launch the $4.6 billion Cloverton development, Victoria’s largest ever residential project.

Cloverton covers more than 1100 hectares along the Hume Highway, with 11,000 dwellings and a town centre equivalent to 30 MCGs.

House and land is priced from $270,000, or a vacant block from $129,000, and it’s expected about 30,000 Victorians will move to Cloverton over the next 30 years.

Stockland’s Victorian residential regional manager Jason Shaw said sales across its Victorian estates are nudging 2010’s high point.

“Our trading across all of our existing eight projects has really been very solid … and probably this year that has stepped up to another level,” Mr Shaw said.

“We are returning to those levels of demand. Certainly with Cloverton and the launch this weekend we are confident we’ll have a sell-out result based on the level of interest.”
Making land available for housing can take as much as 7 to 10 years, sometimes even longer. Finding ways to speed this process up along all facets of the supply pipeline will help respond to changes in demand and pass savings on to housing consumers.

**LAND SUPPLY PIPELINE**

**LAND ACQUISITION BY DEVELOPERS**

**REZONING PROCESS (2 - 5 YEARS)**

**MASTER PERMIT PROCESS (1 - 2 YEARS)**

**SUBDIVISION PERMIT STAGE 1 (3 - 6 MONTHS)**

**NOTIFICATION TO CLIENTS (120 DAYS TO EXERCISE OPTION)**

**SIGN CONTRACT / PAY 10% DEPOSIT / SETTLE (1 – 2 YEARS)**

**LOT CONSTRUCTION STAGE 1 (1 - 2 YEARS)**

**HOUSING CONSTRUCTION (6MONTHS +)**
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