

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS 2011-12

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE, FURTHER INFORMATION AGREED TO BE SUPPLIED AT THE HEARINGS

PLANNING PORTFOLIO

- 1. Please indicate what KPIs you would expect for the Peri-Urban Unit, and provide details of the scope of the plan and the background to the unit. (Page 20 of the Planning portfolio transcript)**

The Peri-Urban Unit was established in February 2011 to address land use and development issues being faced by local communities in the hinterland and on the fringes of a rapidly growing metropolitan Melbourne.

In partnership with local government, the Unit will undertake spatial analysis to identify towns where growth is preferred and areas where other values may seek to limit urbanisation in favour of tourism, recreational or environmental priorities. Many councils are advanced in their municipal strategic planning which will be a major input into the work of the Unit.

The Unit will also review issues relating to the former government's green wedge areas and the potential scope of localised statements of planning policy or highly valued areas at the edges of Melbourne including the Bellarine and Mornington Peninsulas, the Yarra Valley and the Macedon Ranges. A careful analysis of the character and liveability of towns and villages in the peri-urban areas will help identify key attributes which make these places desirable locations and which should be protected from increased urbanisation and suburbanisation.

The work of the Unit will be integrated with other major policy initiatives including the metropolitan planning strategy and the regional development programs led by the Department of Planning and Community Development. The Unit is resourced from the reprioritisation of existing funding and staff duties and includes senior policy and statutory officers.

The key performance indicators for the Unit will measure:

- active engagement with the officers and representatives of relevant local government areas and communities; and
- the development of planning policy to address growth management and prioritisation of growth into established locations that can support additional population.

2. Please indicate what KPIs you would expect for the Housing Affordability Unit, and provide details of the scope of the plan and the background to the unit. (Page 21 of the Planning portfolio transcript)

The Government's pre-election planning policy commitments included the establishment of a "new Housing Affordability Unit within the Department of Planning and Community Development, to provide a whole-of-government overview to the Planning Minister about state and local government policies, legislation or procedures that could be reformed to help improve housing affordability"¹.

The Housing Affordability Unit was established in January 2011 and is leading the development of the policy and legislative base to establish the Urban Renewal Authority. This major piece of work is the Unit's key focus in the short to medium term. The Urban Renewal Authority will be a key mechanism in facilitating sound residential and mixed-use development in urban locations and for supporting the delivery of Government's metropolitan planning strategy and our housing affordability policy agenda.

The Housing Affordability Unit is also working in collaboration with the Department of Treasury and Finance on whole of Victorian government policy input into the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Housing Supply and Affordability Reform agenda.

The following key performance indicators are being used to measure the progress of work the Housing Affordability Unit is responsible for:

- Finalise the legislative, financial and policy framework to establish the Urban Renewal Authority by 30 September 2011.
- Establish an Inter-departmental Committee to provide policy advice to the Minister for Planning on policies, legislation and procedures that can be reformed to help improve housing affordability by 30 September 2011.

3. When do you expect to release the report on the Gippsland coastal management strategy from December 2010? (Pages 21-2 of the Planning portfolio transcript)

The report being referred to is the '*Coastal Climate Change Advisory Committee – final report – December 2010*'. This is a report prepared by an advisory committee appointed pursuant to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The committee had terms of reference to inquire into and provide advice to me on how the Planning system should and could respond to future impacts of climate change and related storm events in coastal areas.

The Department of Planning and Community Development has assessed the report and provided me with recommendations that I am carefully considering prior to making a final decision on the release of the report.

I expect to release the report in full in by September 2011. I am currently seeking advice on how some of the recommendations may be given effect to so that I can then make comment in relation to future steps at the time of releasing the report.

¹ <http://www.vicnats.com/policies/CoalitionPlan/Planning.pdf>