

URBAN GROWTH ZONE

The Minister for Planning yesterday introduced the new Urban Growth Zone (UGZ) to the Victoria Planning Provisions.

Amendment VC48 to the Victoria Planning Provisions rezones rural zoned land in Melbourne's designated growth areas (Casey, Cardinia, Hume, Melton and Wyndham) to the new UGZ in an attempt to help speed up the delivery of residential land to home buyers.

Precinct Structure Plan

Development and use of land within the UGZ must be generally in accordance with an approved Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) for the area. A PSP will be an incorporated document in the relevant planning scheme - the introduction of the PSP and any change to it will require a full planning scheme amendment. New guidelines for the preparation of a PSP are currently being prepared and will be an important component of these planning reforms.

If there is native vegetation within the area a native vegetation precinct plan will also be required.

Where a PSP has been incorporated into the planning scheme the detailed zone requirements are written into a schedule to the UGZ. This will allow, in theory, considerable flexibility to tailor the schedule to suit the content of the PSP. Some innovative options are available to help simplify the preparation of the schedules.

We note that the provisions in the schedule to the UGZ will also require a planning scheme amendment - presumably concurrent with the incorporation of the PSP (if they are separate steps then one would wonder what contribution the UGZ has made to streamlining the process!).

Where there is no PSP in place (as is the case at the moment) the UGZ provides for predominantly farming and other rural type activities that will not prejudice the future intentions of the area. A permit is required to subdivide land and a minimum lot size of 40 hectares applies. Applications may require referral to the Growth Areas Authority.

Direction No 12

Concurrent with the approval of VC48, the Minister for Planning also announced Direction No 12. The Direction applies to the preparation of planning scheme amendments that:

- rezone land to the UGZ;
- incorporate or amend a PSP;
- introduce or change the provisions in the schedule to the UGZ.

A variety of requirements are to be met to demonstrate consistency with relevant strategic planning documents.

The UGZ in regional Victoria

When the Premier announced the concept of the UGZ in March this year we thought it curious that it had been limited to metropolitan Melbourne. If the UGZ is such a good idea for the growth areas of Melbourne then why not apply it to the regional centres as well?

The Practice Note issued yesterday states that “initially the UGZ will be applied to land in a Farming Zone within the Urban Growth Boundary in Melbourne’s designated growth areas. However, the zone may also be applied to land adjacent to regional cities and towns where a strategy has been prepared that clearly identifies that the land is suitable for future urban development.”

A pleasing concession for our regional clients.

Further Information

For more information on the UGZ and how it could affect you please contact

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We would be happy to discuss the implications of this important announcement in further detail.

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