

# Plan for Victoria

Joint submission from  
an alliance of built  
environment institutes

August 2024



Australian  
Institute of  
Architects

**Urban Design Forum Australia**

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## Purpose of this submission

The purpose of this submission is to ensure that the upcoming Plan for Victoria is underpinned by the prioritisation of initiatives that address the critical challenges of our time and prioritises the liveability and sustainability of Victoria's communities.

These recommendations represent a consolidated position of an alliance of peak built environment professional bodies in Victoria. The core interest of this alliance is in the quality of places and resultant quality of life for all Victorians.

We seek through this submission to share our expertise, knowledge and awareness of the aspects of Plan for Victoria that will be critical to the delivery of the Victorian Government's stated objectives.

We acknowledge that Plan for Victoria is just one step in a broader program of planning and reform across government. Plan for Victoria cannot do everything, but it is crucial that the Plan provides the framework for future strategic planning and implementation measures required to deliver liveable and sustainable places.

Our submissions is framed in response to a series of four key questions:

1. *What does the plan need to do to be effective?*
2. *What should the plan look like?*
3. *What complementary elements are required to support effective delivery?*
4. *What thematic areas does the plan need to address?*



Combined PIA, AILA, AIA and Urban Design Forum Australia Plan for Victoria Workshop in July 2024.

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# 1. What does the plan need to do to be effective?

## 1. **Have a spatial plan/s**

Spatial plans are critical to both implementation and to provide clarity for all stakeholders and decision makers. Plan for Victoria needs to be more than words and must illustrate a sustainable development and settlement vision for the future.

## 2. **A clear line of sight from state to regional to local**

Plan for Victoria should be designed to 'cascade' from State, to Regional and Local scale. Plans for each of these scales should be developed using a consistent framework, becoming more refined and detailed at each subsequent level.

## 3. **Certainty, consistency and community buy-in**

To support this aim we need to transition from a system which couples sweeping policy statements with discretionary controls and promotes conflict and speculation. To deliver certainty in the planning framework, it is critical to have community buy-in for the trade-offs and compromises inevitable in a rapidly growing State.

## 4. **Integrate a 'Country' lens**

The Victorian Government's commitments to Victoria's First Peoples should be reflected in consideration of not only the impacts on Country, but also the rights of Traditional Owners and aspirations for Country for all elements of the Plan. Direct engagement with Indigenous communities must inform the Plan.

## 5. **Be the basis for infrastructure planning and provision**

The desired development and settlement future shown in spatial plans, needs to directly inform and influence State and Local Infrastructure planning and funding. The transport infrastructure provision, in particular, shapes where people live and work. Other state and local infrastructure provision, such as open space and community infrastructure is required to support sustainable and liveable communities.

## 6. **Be supported by complementary programs**

While Plan for Victoria is an important project, plans are only one piece of the puzzle - without the suite of complementary programs outlined in Section 3 it will not succeed.

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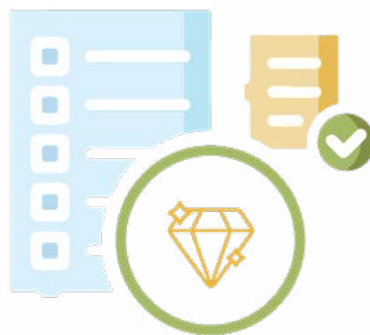
## 2. How should the plan be structured?

We believe the Plan will be most effective if it is structured with key thematic frameworks which establish state level directions. These frameworks should include three key elements:



### 1. **A spatial plan**

A spatial plan will allow for the layering of relevant spatial datasets and scenarios to clearly articulate where trade-offs need to be made at a state level (such as areas where the delivery of renewable energy infrastructure needs to be directed, where biodiversity objectives should be prioritised over urban development, or when environmental hazards preclude urban development etc).



### 2. **Key values and objectives**




The priorities established in the spatial planning are articulated as a series of values and objectives organised around each theme. These key values and associated objectives must then flow through to local area planning and decision making.



### 3. **High-level measurable targets**

Quantifiable State level targets (such as emissions targets, housing targets or quantum of open space or land regeneration) must be established and these then inform more specific targets at regional and local levels.

# Critically Plan for Victoria should be framed as a multi-scaled response to support policy clarity and practical implementation. Regional scale is a critical filter between high level state aspirations and the 'place specific' outcomes identified at the local scale.

	Biodiversity example	Housing example
STATE	 <p>Identify objective for increase in urban biodiversity outcomes within cities and towns</p>	<p>Establish a State-wide settlement strategy. Identify the need for dwellings being built to match demographic projections and demand (e.g.. family friendly or aged adaptable dwellings)</p>
REGIONAL	 <p>Identify key habitat and biodiversity corridors, significant missing links in ecological regions, identify key threatened species, identify key success indicators</p>	<p>Identify regionally specific needs and priority locations for high, medium and low growth.</p>
LOCAL	 <p>Consider spatial implications, implement controls to give effect to targets such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– X % tree canopy cover increase</li> <li>– X sqm new understorey planting in the public realm</li> <li>– X sqm land allocation to threatened species conservation</li> </ul>	<p>Identify specific catchments and locations for a range of housing densities and establish the supporting infrastructure needed to deliver liveable communities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– X sqm of land allocation for infill low rise housing</li> <li>– X sqm of new public open space assets</li> <li>– X new community hubs</li> </ul>

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### 3. What complementary elements are required to support the plan's delivery?

Plan for Victoria cannot exist in isolation if it is to support more effective delivery of both state objectives and the principles of good planning and design. Complementary elements supported by all peak bodies include:



1. **An Integrated Governance Framework** based on an audit of existing systems. Governance should be designed to avoid duplication and assign decision making responsibilities and associated timeframes to achieve the strategic objectives of the Plan.



2. **A highly graphic, user friendly Digital Twin Plan for Victoria** platform to support real time monitoring of targets by both decision-makers and the community who have a stake in the outcomes. This will also support robust scenario planning and an accurate understanding of the cumulative impact and trade-offs of incremental decisions.



3. **An Integrated Design Policy for Victoria** to set a framework and policy which places good design as front and centre in achieving the objectives of sustainable planning as part of Plan for Victoria.



4. **Infrastructure planning** which demonstrates how State investments, particularly in transport, and local infrastructure mechanisms will support plan delivery and success.



5. **A series of detailed and issue specific Implementation Plans** recognising implementation of aspects of the plan need to be supported by more detailed work which will cut across levels of government and department. Importantly these all need to inform each other rather than be siloed.







6. **A re-framed planning approvals system** that is more explicit to improve certainty, and which focuses energy, resources and integrates deliberative community involvement at strategic rather than lot scale. Planning processes and regulations should be refocused to better consider the needs of future generations as well as existing communities or interest groups.

## 4. What thematic areas does the plan need to address?

The Plan for Victoria consultation to date establishes four pillars, supported by a range of big ideas. This submission supports the broad ambitions of these pillars, however seeks to identify priorities and gaps within the emerging framework.

Our organisations share an ambition to ensure that all Victorians not only understand the need for sustainable growth but benefit from it through the creation of thriving and liveable suburbs and towns. As a long term strategy Plan for Victoria must consider not only Victoria's existing community but also our future generations.

The four pillars outlined by the Victorian Government, using the colour regime of brown, blue, ochre and green as follows:

-  Affordable Housing and Choice
-  Equity and Jobs
-  Thriving and Liveable Suburbs and Towns
-  Sustainable Environments and Climate Action



## DENSITY DONE WELL

### Housing



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#### **Adopt a lifecycle definition of affordability** –

to ensure that costs to future communities are considered (e.g. including design quality, access to open space, transport, food, jobs, education and healthcare).

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#### **Consider the needs of all Victorians in defining housing targets** – not just the headline numbers – to support equitable access to the housing market, including social and affordable housing.

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#### **Maintain a focus on delivering 20 minute neighbourhoods and investment in infrastructure and services to support thriving and distinct neighbourhoods** –

ensuring housing is accompanied by measurable improvements in liveability and climate resilience.

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#### **Focus on design quality and future character not ‘neighbourhood character’** and develop the systems, metrics and regulations to ensure this is delivered.

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#### **Empower communities** by engaging them through deliberative processes and the provision of a ‘growth dividend’ through investments in local infrastructure.

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#### **Refocus precinct planning** to more meaningfully utilise public private partnerships to support lot amalgamation, investment in the public realm and the delivery of climate adaptation and mitigation.

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Nightingale Village, Brunswick

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A national exemplar in mixed tenure housing with social and market housing in a mid-rise precinct where pedestrians and people on bicycles are prioritised.



Vancouver Housing Strategy

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A case study in the value of community involvement in planning for housing growth, supported by targets and incentives to assist communities in navigating complex trade-offs.



## ACCESSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES

### Jobs and Community



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**Prioritise access to meaningful local employment - as well as city centre activities** – to maximise economic and social engagement. Accessible clusters of economic activity will underpin a productive Victoria.

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**Support more quality mixed use development** – across our State – redefine what this looks like in a climate resilient future and explore ways to allow a greater mix of uses in our residential areas to facilitate life, low impact activity and employment in our neighbourhoods.

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**Link investment in transport to increases in density** - deliver improved services where density is naturally increasing as well as larger scale 'deliberative' project designed to encourage increased density in specific locations. Development density should be directly coupled with the level of public or active transport infrastructure, with accompanying location-based targets for the reduction of vehicle usage.

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**Create frameworks and processes that support good design** so that the places and buildings are spaces where all people want to work and visit, supporting increased productivity. We need to design to reflect the diverse needs of all people in society.

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**Ensure sufficient land for urban services, freight and logistics and industrial activities** connected to the motorway, arterial road and rail freight network as appropriate.

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Cremorne Precinct, Richmond

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A precinct of high significance for emerging start ups, creative enterprise and large employers alike anchored by Richmond Station, tram and bus services.



Northbourne Avenue, Canberra

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A significant investment in light rail transforms a highway oriented environment into an emerging mid-rise mixed use hub of employment and housing uses proximate to the central city.

## CLIMATE ACTION

### Zero carbon and climate resilience



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Ensure climate responses embedded in the Plan are flexible enough to allow **timely responses to updated scientific consensus.**

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Better support climate adaptation through **embedding spatial recognition of key climate actions in the plan** and delivering amendment planning provisions – identifying high hazard areas, renewable energy infrastructure, key habitat corridors, landscape scale revegetation and agricultural areas that will remain productive under a range of climate change scenarios .

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Ensure **all new housing recognises the climate crisis** and is designed for resilience and a zero carbon future.

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Meaningfully consider **opportunities for reuse and regeneration within our built environment**, shifting a focus to reimagining our spaces and adapting our built structures to support a zero carbon future.

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2024 Olympic Village, Paris

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The Saint Denis village committed to ambitious environmental targets, including embodied carbon, recycled materials and circularity as key drivers.



Hines T-3 Office Building, Collingwood

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A significant new mass timber office building in Collingwood which responds to the urgent the need to entirely decarbonise the construction sector by 2050.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

### Landscape and biodiversity



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**Define Green Infrastructure** (or blue-green infrastructure) and recognise this as part of urban infrastructure required to support biodiversity, and deliver liveable and climate resilient places.

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**Establish an inspirational statewide vision** that acknowledges the natural environment, designed open space, and the ancillary open space that form the links to recognise the critical role green spaces play in creating liveable and thriving places and ensure this is supported by a stronger regulatory framework and funding mechanisms.

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**Increase urban biodiversity** to support reverse species delivery, improve biodiversity and amplify the value of natural assets.

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Recognise the critical contributions private land in urban areas will play and adopt tools that represent best practice - to **ensure green infrastructure can be more effectively delivered**.

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Direct resources to **engage with Traditional Owners at landscape scale** not lot scale to support cultural landscape awareness and protection.

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Blind Creek Corridor, Wantirna

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A regional 'daylighting' program releasing a sub surface drain into a thriving blue green corridor with high biodiversity values.



Kororoit Creek Shared Trail, Altona

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A significant bicycle trail connection is combined with ecological investment in a long neglected and important waterway of the inner west.

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This joint submission is prepared by

### **Institutes**

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