

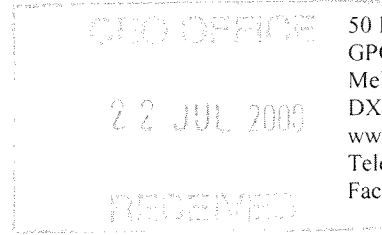


Department of Human Services

SR#793258

Secretary

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Dr Kathy Alexander
Chief Executive Officer
City of Melbourne
PO Box 1603
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Dear Dr Alexander

Thank you for your letter of 26 May 2008 regarding a draft of the *Future Melbourne Plan*. The plan is an ambitious and progressive vision for the City of Melbourne, and includes a number of strategic aims that are closely aligned with those of the Department of Human Services. We welcome the opportunity to offer feedback on the proposal as part of community consultations.

As you are aware, the Victorian Government has taken an active role in improving the liveability of the Inner Melbourne Region. In particular, the Inner Melbourne Action Plan (IMAP), which is partly funded by the State Government's *Melbourne 2030* Local Government Assistance Fund via the Targeted Grants Program, aims to strengthen the liveability, attractiveness and prosperity of the inner city and respond to the demands of *Melbourne 2030*.

In terms of broad social policy directions, it is important to recognise and reinforce the connections between key State policy statements – such as *A Fairer Victoria*, *Valuing Cultural Diversity* – and the *Future Melbourne Plan*. We support a focus on inclusion to specify who might be excluded, such those identifying as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transsexual or inter-gender, and people experiencing homelessness.

We recognise and affirm the City of Melbourne's ongoing commitment to affordable housing, and encourage the plan to consider strategies to achieve the provision of affordable housing options for residents choosing to live in the inner city. We also note the reference to major redevelopments (such as Docklands, E-Gate and Parkville) and support the inclusion of affordable housing targets as part of the planning process for these strategic growth areas.

Efforts to expand responses to people who are homeless through improved pathways out of homelessness, as noted in the Plan, are strongly supported. Initiatives such as the Elizabeth Street Supported Housing Project will provide a foundation for improved partnerships across Governments, the community sector and business in responding to homelessness.

Future Melbourne aims to ensure the needs of people with a disability are taken into account in the areas of employment, transport, housing and access to open space. In particular, we support the need to increase well managed boarding and rooming houses, which provide an important affordable housing option for people with disabilities who don't have high support needs but may be on disability pension. In terms of transport in the city, while *Future Melbourne* acknowledges progress with super stops, and that improvements in bus transport are also required, there is no reference to maxi taxis, which are the key transport option for people who require modified vehicle access. We also note that the City of Melbourne has a Disability Action Plan (DAP) that outlines the Council's commitment to identify access barriers and implement strategies that will enhance opportunities for people with disabilities. *Future Melbourne* should contain the specific issues for people with a disability that are included as strategies aimed at addressing barriers outlined in the DAP.

The report notes that Indigenous people suffer poorer health but the goals do not reflect the specific needs of Aboriginal people. If there is no specific goal or indicator, their needs are unlikely to be recognised. As self-reported information is too limited for this disadvantaged group (as they don't tend to feature in this type of data collection instrument), a better indicator might be numbers of health services that have an Indigenous inclusion policy.

Regarding inclusive community, this goal refers broadly to art and culture. Unfortunately, the indicator is limited to recognition of art. A broader indicator might be the number of events and festivals that promote Indigenous art and culture. For example, the City of Melbourne could commit to supporting NAIDOC week or reconciliation week, or consider adopting an Indigenous Inclusion Policy (and working with local Aboriginal people to implement one). Whilst the healthy community section identifies indigenous young people as a priority, there is limited evidence in the goals, indicators or outcomes to show this. The Victorian Aboriginal Controlled Health Organisation ¹ is currently developing a health plan, and we would strongly encourage the Reference Group to contact them to seek their input.

I hope this feedback will help in progressing the development of the *Future Melbourne Plan*. If you require any further information, please contact Mr Chris Newland, Policy and Project Officer, Housing Innovations on (03) 9096 9919. Thank you again for taking the time to write to me about this matter.

I look forward to the Plan's finalisation and implementation.

Yours sincerely



FRAN THORN
Secretary

¹ See <http://www.vaccho.org.au/>