

Melbourne Beyond 5 Million, revisited

Committee for Melbourne produced the *Melbourne Beyond 5 Million* report in 2010. The report was borne out of concern; concern about the emerging issues facing our fast-growing city and the short-term, fragmented, partisan solutions being applied. *Melbourne Beyond 5 Million* was a 'foundation of a debate' and the Committee committed to that debate.

When Committee for Melbourne released *Melbourne Beyond 5 Million* in 2010, the Victorian Government's planning policy, *Melbourne @ 5million*, contemplated a city of only 5 million and the *Victorian Transport Plan* existed but was not integrated with *Melbourne @ 5million*. Infrastructure Victoria and the Victorian Planning Authority did not yet exist.

At the time of *Melbourne @ 5 million's* release, Melbourne had a population of around 4 million. We looked at Melbourne, a very attractive and successful city, and saw growth. We were met with incredulity when we contemplated Melbourne with a population of 8 million by end of the century: a milestone now commonly accepted. Ironically, we forecast a population of 5 million within 15 years but it has taken a mere eight years to reach the 5 million mark.

In 2010, Committee for Melbourne held fears that accelerated population growth could lead to congestion, urban sprawl, and social and affordability issues. The fears that were mooted then by the Committee are now widely voiced by the community and there is a sense of not keeping pace with our growth.

Melbourne Beyond 5 Million called for visionary planning ahead of segmented thinking and warned that we needed to avoid incremental thinking to meet the challenges of growth.

With Melbourne having now reached a population of 5 million, having lost our 'Most Liveable City' mantle and facing elections both state and federal, we reflect on where Melbourne is at and how we can manage our future.

Melbourne in 2018

Melbourne is a success story: it is an attractive city where people want to live and do business, but with this success comes ever-increasing challenges. While much has been done in the past eight years to plan for a bigger city and to invest in infrastructure, we are not keeping up.

'Marvellous Melbourne' is at a tipping point, potentially threatening our prosperity and liveability.

Melbourne is fast becoming an economically polarised city, a place of 'haves' and 'have nots', driven by our geographical size, housing options, and access to transport, utilities, services and amenities.

Committee for Melbourne is calling for a '**One Melbourne**' paradigm to guide our future. **One Melbourne** would require fundamental changes in the way we plan, manage and fund our city's growth.

If we are serious about having **One Melbourne** we need to:

- **Introduce Metropolitan-wide Management**, such as a Greater Melbourne Commission, that is empowered to act in the interests of Greater Melbourne. Remove road blocks created by political divides and three tiers of government. Focus responsibilities of such an organisation so that it complements the local responsibilities of municipalities.
- **Develop a 50-year Public Transport Blueprint** that integrates transport with land use and economic planning. The plan needs to cater for mass transit while staying flexible to technological change and be delivered through rolling 10-year implementation strategies.

- **Have Sustained Investment in Infrastructure**, that allows industry to gear up for a major sustained pipeline of projects. Achieve optimal value from public investment by recycling capital through de-risking government investments for subsequent superannuation fund take-up. Make optimal use of the spare capacity in existing roads, energy and public transport assets through the introduction of time-of-use charging. Commit to a 10-year infrastructure program with bipartisan support, based on Infrastructure Victoria recommendations.
- **Ensure an Equitable Energy Future** for residents, business and industry, providing affordable, reliable, dispatchable and environmentally responsible power provision. Be bold in considering our energy options and transparent in putting all options forward. Develop energy solutions that enable city productivity, that are aligned with industry policy and that can power future transport modes.
- **Deliver Affordable Living** solutions that go beyond affordable housing. Accelerate housing options such as build-to-rent into locations with excellent public transport, diverse employment opportunities, amenity and services.
- **Create a meaningful polycentric city**, with Melbourne as the global centre of excellence in **Liveable Density**, demonstrating solutions in medium density development that retain the city's soul while accommodating major growth. Have planning and development mechanisms that ensure our satellite centres (Metropolitan Activity Centres and National Employment and Innovation Clusters) have soul, purpose, connections and affordable services. Plan as much for commercial opportunities as for residential growth.