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Department of Transport and Planning  
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To whom it may concern,

**REF: Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area: Development Contributions Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Victorian Government's draft Development Contributions Plan (DCP) for the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area.

Committee for Melbourne (the Committee) is an apolitical, not-for-profit, member-based organisation that brings together over 140 organisations from Melbourne's business, academic and civic sectors whose common purpose is to shape a better future for Melbourne. As an independent organisation, we represent no single interest group but seek to develop innovative ideas to continue to enhance Melbourne's position as an economically prosperous and highly liveable global city.

The Committee recognises that Fishermans Bend will play an increasingly important role in supporting Melbourne's development. As Australia's largest urban renewal precinct on the edge of the CBD, Fishermans Bend has the potential to help address the demand for various housing choices and contribute significantly to Melbourne's economic growth.

The Committee supports the creation of the draft DCP to help fund 'essential infrastructure', as well as the Open Space Uplift (OSU) development incentive to fund land for some parks. With Fishermans Bend anticipated to accommodate 80,000 residents and 80,000 jobs by 2050, developers should reasonably contribute to infrastructure costs to support this growth, provided the contributions are not too high that compromises development viability.

While the Committee welcomes the DCP and OSU development incentive, its introduction raises questions about the plans for growth, and development trajectory, of Fishermans Bend, and the implications for future economic activity within the precinct. In this consultation process, emphasis is not placed on 'catalytic infrastructure', such as public transport provision. Nonetheless, recognising their intricate connection, simultaneous consideration of 'essential' and 'catalytic' infrastructure is crucial. For example, designing and planning parks, open spaces, parking, sports facilities and other amenities, inherently relies on understanding the transport connections to those places. This submission will therefore highlight four issues that the Department of Transport and Planning could consider as it implements the DCP and OSU incentive: the need for integrated planning, public transport provision, an innovation ecosystem and to safeguard Port of Melbourne's operations.

**Integrated planning**

The Committee recognises that the Fishermans Bend renewal process is a complex undertaking. Significant private land holdings, managing density, transport planning, funding and financing of infrastructure, and meeting sustainability challenges, pose significant hurdles. To help address these challenges, the Fishermans Bend Framework (FBF) was formulated.

While the FBF outlines an ambitious vision for the precinct, with a corresponding integrated plan to realise the vision, its implementation appears somewhat inconsistent with the intended timeline and strategy. For the precinct's development to go smoothly, adhering to the specified timeframes in the FBF and coordinating the implementation of investment, planning and economic development actions, would help deliver optimal outcomes.

Implementing the DCP and OSU development incentive is an important step in helping deliver 'essential infrastructure' for Fishermans Bend. However, it should form part of a more focussed agenda for the precinct, with its implementation ideally synchronised with the delivery of other forms of infrastructure and services. This would help ensure that the precinct's development is not compromised with inefficiencies and operational disruptions, which could lead to ineffective resources utilisation, reduced economic potential, environmental impacts and community discontent.

The Committee's [Transporting Melbourne](#) report, which calls for the design and publication of an integrated transport plan for Melbourne, is highly relevant. The report emphasises the need for strategic decision-making, with targets, timeframes and accountabilities. Although the FBF outlines targets and timeframes for the Fishermans Bend renewal, the delay in achieving key objectives, especially concerning public transport infrastructure (which will be addressed in the following section), indicates that addressing 'accountabilities' is necessary.

### **Public transport**

The provision of adequate public transport, including additional tram and bus services, active transport infrastructure, and in the long-term, an underground rail line, is crucial for the Fishermans Bend renewal process. Such services would improve connectivity to the precinct and likely spur its development. However, six years after the release of the FBF, there have been no major public transport announcements.

Not delivering the required public transport infrastructure in a timely manner could present various challenges for Fishermans Bend. It could increase congestion, limit accessibility, reduce economic productivity and consequently, create a less attractive urban environment. It could also complicate the delivery of 'essential infrastructure,' which, based on the precinct's development progress to date, would likely occur separately from the 'catalytic infrastructure' needed. For example, the construction of the proposed northern tramline and a rail line could influence the necessity and suitability of major car parks or active transport infrastructure near major universities or anchor institutions. This reinforces the need for residential and commercial development, and the corresponding 'essential infrastructure' that will be delivered with support of developers through the DCP and OSU development incentive, to be coordinated with 'catalytic infrastructure,' like public transport.

The Committee notes that the DCP proposes to allocate funding for land acquisition to support the future development of the northern tramline to the Employment Precinct via Lorimer Street, as well as the southern tramline to the Sandridge and Wirraway precincts via Fennell Street and Plummer Street. The southern alignment will take in most of Fishermans Bends' future residential population. With the Victorian Budget 2019/20 allocating \$4.5 million to undertake early planning for Fishermans Bend tram lines, an update on the progress of this early planning to ensure the timely delivery of both the northern and southern tram lines would be welcome.

Development projects may also remain slow or not proceed until developers know when public transport infrastructure will be built. This would impact the government's growth targets and would result in reduced funds to contribute to 'essential infrastructure' costs. Furthermore, not incorporating public transport at this early stage of urban renewal may make it more difficult or expensive to retrofit the area with public transport infrastructure later.

### **Innovation ecosystem**

Innovation is vital to a twenty-first century economy and society. It drives growth, creates high value jobs, fosters competitiveness, improves productivity and overall, enhances people's quality of life. The Committee's data-driven [Benchmarking Melbourne 2023](#) report ranks Melbourne 15 of 20 peer cities for 'leading edge innovation', suggesting work is needed to boost the city's innovative capacity.

The renewal of Fishermans Bend could help Melbourne address this challenge. With its industrial heritage, existing building stock (with repurposing potential) and proximity to a thriving knowledge sector, Fishermans Bend offers a competitive advantage in creating innovative products. The FBF recognises this potential, envisioning the transformation of Fishermans Bend, particularly the National Employment and Innovation Cluster (NEIC), into a vibrant hub of knowledge-based industries and advanced manufacturing.

To realise this vision, planners and policymakers need to optimise the precinct's economic potential through supportive land-use planning and planning controls. To attract talent, businesses and financiers, Fishermans Bend needs sufficient commercial building stock and spaces, nestled within an amenity-rich environment. While the FBF envisions a mix of residential and employment spaces, implementation is crucial. Currently, there are limited mechanisms in the planning system that encourage or enforce the provision of sufficient space for employment purposes in mixed-use zones.

The innovation potential of Fishermans Bend also hinges on sufficient public transport. While having a pool of talent that resides in Fishermans Bend will be important, the precinct's success will also depend on it being accessible to a deeper pool of labour. Ensuring that the NEIC, as well as other sites throughout Fishermans Bend, are easily accessible to workers residing outside Fishermans Bend, sufficient public transport is crucial.

## Port of Melbourne

The Port of Melbourne is a key economic asset located within Fishermans Bend. As Australia's largest general cargo and container port, it supports efficient freight movement for people and businesses across Melbourne, Victoria and south-eastern Australia.

Underscoring the port's importance, it contributes \$10.5 billion in economic activity in Victoria and supports over 28,900 full-time jobs directly and over 18,700 jobs indirectly. It handles over 3.23 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) annually and, in a sign that its importance will grow, this number is forecast to increase by 3.5% annually over the long term, equating to 8.9 million TEUs by 2050.

With urban growth and development in Fishermans Bend having placed increasing pressure on the port's activities, ensuring that the port continues to operate in a favourable environment is crucial. Physical separation of the port and urban developments is needed to help minimise land-use conflict. Buffers, including landscaping, open space and low-intensity land uses, could reduce the impact of noise, air emissions, vibration and lighting from port activities.

The FBF addresses the need to protect the operations and connections to the port, including safeguarding 24/7 access by preserving a direct rail and road freight corridor. However, implementing planning controls that support this endeavour is critical. If these protections become inadequate over time, it will likely have negative impacts for the port, the businesses it serves and the surrounding communities.

The Committee thanks the Department of Transport and Planning for providing the opportunity to offer feedback on its draft Development Contributions Plan and wishes it well as it guides the development of Fishermans Bend. For further information, contact Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer, Brett Van Duppen, at [bvanduppen@melbourne.org.au](mailto:bvanduppen@melbourne.org.au)

Yours sincerely,



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