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Media Release

Metropolitan Strategy – Government’s chance to get it right

The Property Council is concerned with recent advice that the Government has decided to release a “statement of government intent” as policy with regards to the Metropolitan Strategy, rather than a “draft” as has been talked about since the strategy was first announced in 2000.

The Metropolitan Strategy is a long term plan for Melbourne that aims to manage the growth of the greater metropolitan region - with an estimated 730,000 new households to be created over 30 years. The strategy will require changes in transportation systems, job locations, urban amenity and environmental factors.

According to Property Council Executive Director, Jennifer Cunich, the Property Council has been actively contributing its views on the development of the Metropolitan Strategy since its inception, and believes the Government should follow through with its original intention of releasing it first in draft form.

“Further consultation on the Metropolitan Strategy is necessary to get it right,” she said.

The Property Council has already indicated in discussions that there are potential shortcomings with the document, particularly on activity centres, and has major concerns with the implementation of the strategy, and how it will fit in to the planning scheme.

“Cutting to a half-way “policy” without adequate consultation comes with high risks for the Government,” she said.

“A successful strategy needs the commitment from stakeholders.”

The Property Council has identified a number of priority directions for the strategy, including the development of a vibrant city with shared prosperity; promoting a city with a range of residential forms; a range of transport options; and the resourcing of ‘urban’ infrastructure requirements through network planning, efficient management and equitable funding.

The Property Council has also identified activity centres as one of the key aspects of the Metropolitan Strategy, and it is important that the strategy acknowledges the different roles, specialisations, regional contexts and services of centres.
“Activity centres differ markedly around Melbourne and the Metropolitan Strategy needs to be written to allow for these variations – so industry input is vital,” she said.

Ms Cunich said that effective implementation of the strategy has been a Property Council focus since the Metropolitan Strategy was first announced, as it will involve changes to State Government policy, local planning policies and to planning schemes themselves, and importantly, the commitment of private investors.

The Property Council, and other key stakeholders were of the understanding that there would be an opportunity to review a draft of the strategy, and comment on its direction, she said.

“The strategy is well overdue, being promised last year. Given the time it has taken for the actual delivery of the Metropolitan Strategy, it is important there is continued co-operation between state government, local government and those who will be affected by its introduction — therefore viewing a draft is imperative.

“There are so many question marks surrounding the strategy, and it was always believed that a draft would be released to allow key stakeholders time to comment on any potential problems.

“It seems that this is no longer the case. The State Government needs to clarify the new approach, between policy and implementation, and convince the public that the change will be beneficial,” Ms Cunich said.

For more information, contact Jennifer Cunich on 0411 118 099.