

Your ref. VPP reforms [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

30 November 2017

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Online: [engage.vic.gov.au/reform-victoria-planning-provisions](http://engage.vic.gov.au/reform-victoria-planning-provisions)

Email: [smart.planning@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:smart.planning@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Reforming the Victoria Planning Provisions**

Thank you for providing stakeholders, such as Coliban Regional Water Corporation (Coliban Water), with the opportunity to provide comment on the above matter relating to Reforming the Victoria Planning Provisions.

Coliban Water provides drinking water and wastewater services to central and northern Victorian communities. We maintain and operate over 50 reservoirs and water storage basins, and associated infrastructure, to deliver raw water for drinking water supplies, and to provide water to customers for irrigation, commercial and domestic and stock purposes. This infrastructure services approximately 140,000 customers across 16,500sq km of Victoria.

As one of Victoria's 16 non-metropolitan urban water corporations, Coliban Water is principally concerned with the protection of human health, by ensuring the supply of safe drinking water to its customers, the management of reticulated sewerage services and treatment of wastewater. Reticulated sewerage services and wastewater treatment are also critical to the protection and management of impacts of development on the environment.

The quality of drinking water that is supplied to communities has a high level of interdependence with the quality of the raw water that is supplied to water treatment plants; the poorer the raw water

quality, the greater the level of treatment that needs to be applied to the raw water to treat it to a drinking water standard. The use and management of land within catchment areas is critical to protecting raw water quality, both for reducing the amount of treatment that is required to produce water of a drinking water standard, but also to ensure high quality raw water for domestic and stock, and commercial, purposes.

The Victorian Planning Policy (VPP) framework and municipal planning schemes play a critical role in the supply of water and sewerage services. Coliban Water's role as a 'Determining' referral authority is the only opportunity available to us as a state-owned water corporation to participate in the orderly planning of land use and development in Victoria, and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* requires the decision maker to apply the principles of integrated decision-making. In the Victorian Court of Appeal's judgment in *Boroondara City Council v 1045 Burke Road Pty Ltd & Ors* [2015] VSCA 27 the following paragraph of Justice Garde's judgment highlights the importance of integrated decision making.

*[75] The objective of the planning framework established by the Act and found in s 4(2)(c) speaks of the integration of land use and development planning and policy with environmental, social, economic, conservation and resource management policies at State, regional and municipal levels*

In broad terms, planning does not generally seek to establish a hierarchy between the SPPF, LPPF and Zone or Overlay, but rather the decision maker should seek to synthesise the various policies, applying the principles of integrated decision-making.

Coliban Water strongly supports the proposals for providing a simpler VPP structure and an improved integrated planning policy framework. The need to better integrate issues of state significance into local planning policy will assist in providing an appreciation of the impacts that local development proposals can either have, or potentially have, on broader areas of Victorian planning. We support improved assessment pathways for simple proposals, but also caution the need to consider risks that are not associated with the responsibilities of a local government decision maker. Overlays are vital in highlighting issues specific to the risks faced by the state's water corporations, and the use of overlays within the assessment process should not be ignored or disregarded for the sake of 'faster' decision making.

Coliban Water is pleased to provide further and specific comment via the online survey to the various proposals and specific provisions. We also look forward to any further opportunities to contribute to, and participate in, the improvement of planning policy and land management in Victoria.

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Regards

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