

**MEDIA RELEASE: 'LIVEABLE VICTORIA MANIFESTO' LAUNCH**

Residents and community groups across Melbourne and regional Victoria are hitting back against State Government plans to rip environmental and amenity protections from the Victorian Planning Scheme, deny resident rights to object to development proposals and strip planning powers from local government.

*Planning Democracy* and the *Green Wedges Coalition* are launching the '*Livable Victoria Manifesto*' to push for progressive, democratic planning reforms and reject the demands of developers and their State Government backers.

Community groups are invited to join the launch **at 2pm on Sunday, 24 September at the East Melbourne Library, 122 George St, East Melbourne.** (see attached invitation)

The Manifesto shows that adequate, affordable housing does not have to be won by destroying residential and environmental amenity, heritage and local democracy. It exposes the myths that blame regulation and residents for slowing housing supply and causing the housing crisis.

"The housing crisis is rooted in tax, economic and immigration policies and the ability of developers to bid-up the price of land and cover the cost with low-regulation, high-rise developments", said Ian Morgans, spokesman for *Planning Democracy*. "Add spiralling build and labour costs, supply chain problems, housing buy-ups by foreign investors and the belief that housing must be a profitable investment and you have a housing crisis".

"Governments don't want to pursue difficult policies changes and developers want freedom to maximise profits", Mr Morgans said. "So the Victorian Government and development industry have done a sweetheart deal". "Democratic citizen rights and what remains of hard-won environmental and amenity protections will be dumped in exchange for industry agreements to include lower-cost housing in developments."

"That's a rotten deal that will make Victoria a worse place to live", Mr Morgans said.

"Governments can have developers supply affordable housing and meet their environmental and social obligations". "Regulation and community and council involvement create better decisions, certainty and faster approvals".

"Under this deal, free-for-all development will overshadow Melbourne's pleasant and safe suburbs with crowded miles of shoddy apartments and town houses. Trees and greenery will be consigned to inadequate public parks". "Rural towns within 100km of Melbourne will be surrounded by under-serviced estates of cheap housing that wreck their rural settings and further erode the viability of farming". "And if communities don't like it? Too bad".

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Or launch speakers: Emeritus Professor Michael Buxton (phone)

Jenny Warfe, Secretary, Port Phillip Conservation Council (phone)

Charles Sowerwine, Vice-President, Royal Historical Society of Victoria (phone)