# PLANMELBOURNE REFRESH

## Summary of submissions
May 2016

# PLAN**MELB**OUR**NE**
# REFRESH

Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning

# Executive summary

*Plan Melbourne* is the Victorian Government's metropolitan planning strategy, guiding how Melbourne will grow and change to 2050. It is a strategy to house, employ and connect people to jobs and services, closer to where they live. It aims to ensure that while Melbourne grows, its best features are protected and enhanced.

The Victorian Government is refreshing *Plan Melbourne*, with particular emphasis on the future supply and affordability of housing, the city's response to climate change, energy efficiency and to transport priorities. The refresh is not a comprehensive review of *Plan Melbourne*, most of which enjoys bipartisan support.

The *Plan Melbourne refresh discussion paper* was released in October 2015 in addition to the *Plan Melbourne 2015 Review Report* by the Plan Melbourne Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) with recommendations highlighting changes to be made to secure a long term and durable strategy. An eight-week consultation period followed. Written submissions were invited and an extensive program of stakeholder and community engagement was undertaken.

There was a high level of community and stakeholder interest in the refresh. A total of 315 'unique' submissions were received.

Written submissions came from a broad cross section of the community including peak bodies, community groups, the development and building industries, local government, universities and think tanks and individual community members, which is a strong indication of the continued interest of the Victorian community in having a say about the future of Melbourne.

The *Plan Melbourne refresh Summary of submissions* provides an overview of the key themes from these written submissions.

# What we heard

- Submitters offered mixed views about locking in the urban growth boundary. They strongly supported the concepts of the polycentric city and 20-minute neighbourhood. Support for the 20-minute neighbourhood was clarified by some concerns about whether it was possible to achieve in low-density suburbs with an entrenched dependence on cars. There was also support for including a separate chapter on place and identity.
- There was support for National Employment Clusters (NECs) having a stronger focus on innovation, but that planning for them should look beyond core institutions. Submitters also agreed it was important to protect high-value agricultural land and areas for extractive industries.
- Submitters said investment in public transport should be a priority. They supported the inclusion of the Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN) in *Plan Melbourne 2016* to guide residential development and that it needs to be expanded and modified as Melbourne grows.
- There was strong support for an increased focus on affordable and diverse housing and a wide range of opportunities such as mandatory inclusionary zoning, developer incentives and bonuses and value capture, which were highlighted for further investigation. However, submitters had mixed views on a 70/30 target for housing supply, with 70% of housing provided in established areas. Some felt it was a simplistic approach that may have unintended consequences and others were concerned it would lead to lost amenity.
- There was widespread support for all measures outlined in the discussion paper to address climate change. Submitters were in favour of planning policies that support a cooler and greener city, hazard management and the uptake of renewable energy and low-emission technologies. They also backed measures to improve the long-term health of key flora and fauna habitats.
- Submitters felt there was a need for strong evidence that new zones are required to support National Employment Clusters and urban renewal areas and had a mixed response to the option of introducing a 'code assess' approach for multi-dwelling developments.
- In regard to the implementation of *Plan Melbourne 2016*, submitters felt that bipartisan support and a whole-of-government approach were vital. It was also noted that partnership with local government and clarification of the roles of the Metropolitan Planning Authority and Infrastructure Victoria are required.

The summary does not report the detail of submissions. Submissions are available on the Plan Melbourne website and can be read in conjunction with this summary.

Written submissions made up only part of the consultation and engagement undertaken on the *Plan Melbourne refresh discussion paper.*

From October to December 2015 an extensive program of face-to-face workshops and online engagement activities was undertaken involving local government, industry stakeholders and community groups. During this time 266 participants representing 99 organisations contributed to the discussion about the Plan Melbourne refresh.

In addition, an online engagement portal was established where other groups and individuals could access information, share ideas, ask questions and lodge submissions.

A separate report has been prepared that sets out the findings from face-to-face and online engagement activities. The *Plan Melbourne refresh – Summary of engagement activities* sets out the engagement methodology and activities from those workshops and focus group sessions. This report was independently prepared by Capire Consulting and is available on the Plan Melbourne website.

Submissions have now been reviewed by planning experts from the Panel Victoria list of members and will inform the development of *Plan Melbourne 2016*. The strategy will take into account state government policy, feedback from stakeholder engagement, written submissions and available research.

# 1 Introduction

This document provides an overview of the themes from written submissions to the Plan Melbourne refresh. It outlines feedback received on the issues and discussion points raised in the *Plan Melbourne refresh discussion paper*. The structure of this report reflects the discussion paper's chapters.

This report provides a summary only, and does not include the detail of the submissions: full submissions are available on the Plan Melbourne refresh website **www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au**. This summary does not provide the state government's response to the main messages but aims only to overview what organisations and individuals said.

The information gathered from submissions will inform the development of the refreshed *Plan Melbourne*.

## 1.1   Background

*Plan Melbourne* is the Victorian Government's metropolitan planning strategy, guiding how Melbourne will grow and change to 2050. It is a strategy to house, employ and connect people to jobs and services, closer to where they live. It aims to ensure that while Melbourne grows, its best features are protected and enhanced.

It was developed between 2012 and 2014 following extensive consultation. Much of *Plan Melbourne* enjoys bipartisan support and its main priorities are being retained. These are:

- more jobs in the central city and designated suburban locations
- an efficient transport system across metropolitan Melbourne, linking to regional cities
- a fixed urban growth boundary and compact urban form
- housing growth and greater density in the right locations
- protected natural and agricultural values on the metropolitan fringe.

However, in a few areas, *Plan Melbourne 2014* did not accurately reflect the weight of community input or expert advice. For example *Plan Melbourne 2014* did not sufficiently address the challenges posed to Melbourne by climate change.

In March 2015, the Minister for Planning announced that *Plan Melbourne* would be refreshed and re-established the Plan Melbourne Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) to provide independent and expert advice about how best to refresh it.

The MAC was asked to advise on:

- matters included in previous advice that remain relevant
- policy options to address housing affordability
- policy options to address the impacts of climate change and opportunities to support energy-efficient urban design.

The MAC provided its report – *Plan Melbourne 2015 Review Report by the Ministerial Advisory Committee* – to the Minister in June 2015.

This was followed by the release in October 2015 of the Plan Melbourne refresh discussion paper to promote discussion of options for the refresh. The discussion paper was informed by the MAC's review, advice and recommendations. The discussion paper and the MAC's report are available on the Plan Melbourne website. The discussion paper includes as an appendix a preliminary response to the MAC's 93 recommendations. It sought feedback from the community with a particular emphasis on the future supply of housing and housing affordability and diversity, and climate change and energy efficiency. Plan Melbourne will also be updated to reflect current transport network priorities.

## 1.1.1   Consultation and engagement

Written submissions made up only part of the consultation and engagement undertaken on the *Plan Melbourne refresh discussion paper*.

From October to December 2015 an extensive program of face-to-face workshops and online engagement activities was undertaken involving local government, industry stakeholders and community groups. During this time 266 participants representing 99 organisations contributed to the discussion about the Plan Melbourne refresh.

In addition, an online engagement portal was established where other groups and individuals could access information, share ideas, ask questions and lodge submissions.

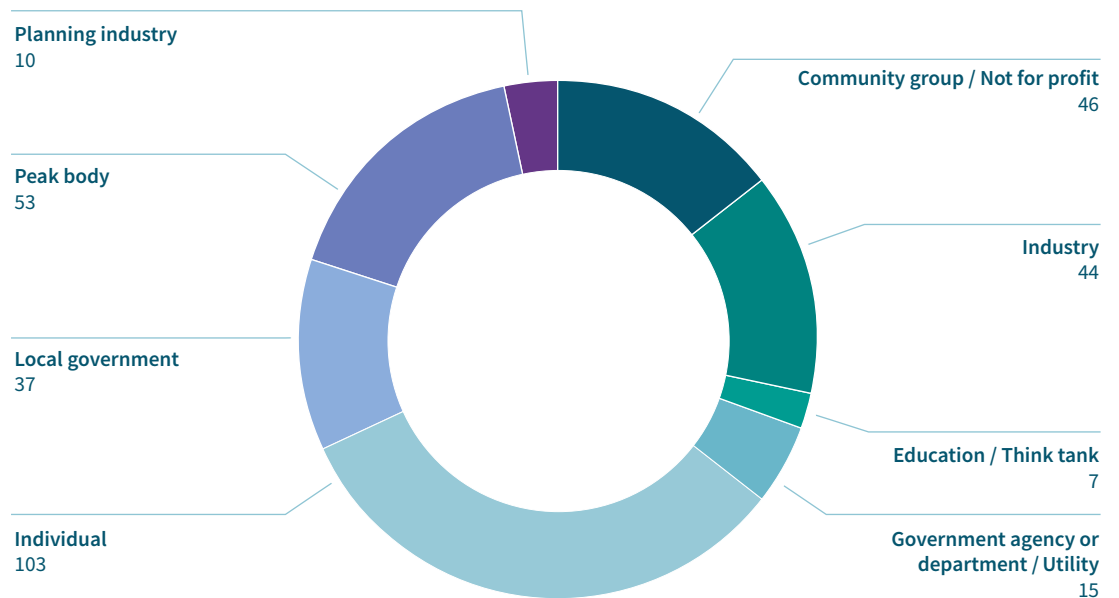This report sets out only the feedback received through the written submissions process.

A separate report, *Plan Melbourne refresh – Summary of engagement activities* sets outs the engagement methodology and activities from those workshops and focus group sessions and is available on the Plan Melbourne website.

## 1.2 Written submissions

Written submissions on the *Plan Melbourne refresh discussion paper* were invited during an eight-week consultation period from 22 October to 18 December 2015. A total of 315 'unique' submissions were received. A further 82 submissions were received from individuals associated with two golf clubs seeking to have land included within the urban growth boundary. These submissions took the form of a campaign, were single issue and related to two specific sites. These submissions were treated as two individual submissions (one for each golf club).

Figure 1 shows the number of submissions received by the type of submitter. Individuals made about one-third of submissions (103) and organisations (212) the remainder. The organisations included community groups/not-for-profit organisations; development industry and planning industry organisations; education organisations; think tanks; government departments, agencies and utilities; local government; and peak bodies.
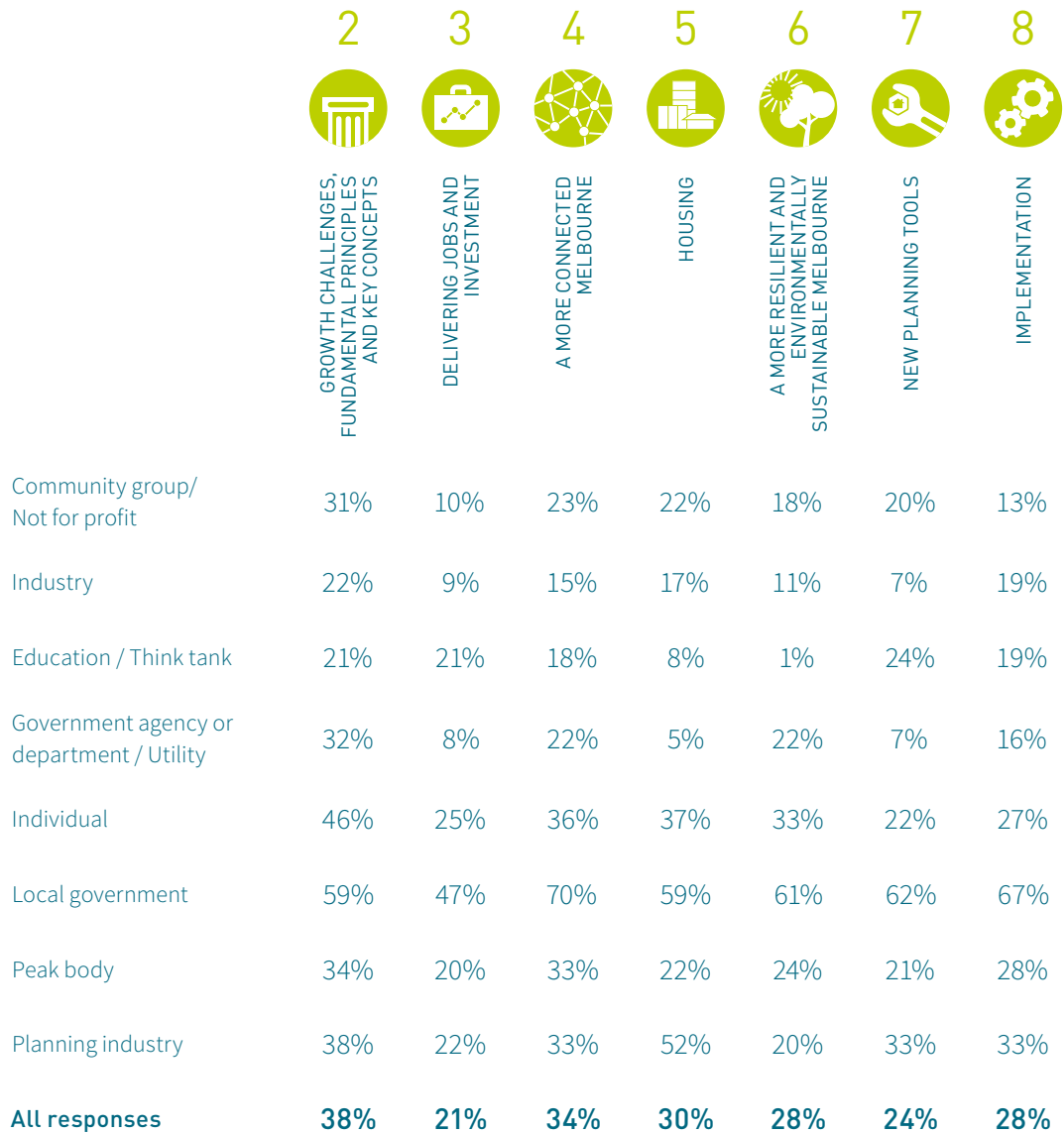
**Figure 1** Number of submissions received, by sector

Planning industry
10

Peak body
53

Local government
37

Individual
103

Community group / Not for profit
46

Industry
44

Education / Think tank
7

Government agency or
department / Utility
15

Sector categories were self selected. The development and industry sector categories have been amalgamated in this report and include the development, construction and infrastructure industry submissions.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of each type of submitter that answered one or more questions relating to each chapter of the discussion paper. Overall, chapters 2 (Growth challenges, fundamental principles and key concepts), 4 (Transport) and 5 (Housing) on average garnered the highest response rates across the range of submitters while chapter 3 (Jobs and Investment) generally had the lowest rate of responses.

**Figure 2**  Response rates by chapter and sector

| | 2 GROWTH CHALLENGES, FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND KEY CONCEPTS | 3 DELIVERING JOBS AND INVESTMENT | 4 A MORE CONNECTED MELBOURNE | 5 HOUSING | 6 A MORE RESILIENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE MELBOURNE | 7 NEW PLANNING TOOLS | 8 IMPLEMENTATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community group/ Not for profit | 31% | 10% | 23% | 22% | 18% | 20% | 13% |
| Industry | 22% | 9% | 15% | 17% | 11% | 7% | 19% |
| Education / Think tank | 21% | 21% | 18% | 8% | 1% | 24% | 19% |
| Government agency or department / Utility | 32% | 8% | 22% | 5% | 22% | 7% | 16% |
| Individual | 46% | 25% | 36% | 37% | 33% | 22% | 27% |
| Local government | 59% | 47% | 70% | 59% | 61% | 62% | 67% |
| Peak body | 34% | 20% | 33% | 22% | 24% | 21% | 28% |
| Planning industry | 38% | 22% | 33% | 52% | 20% | 33% | 33% |
| **All responses** | **38%** | **21%** | **34%** | **30%** | **28%** | **24%** | **28%** |

## **1.3**  Methodology, scope and limitations

A survey was developed for submitters to complete either as an online form or as a Microsoft Word document that could be completed and uploaded online.

Submitters could use the survey form or make a submission in a format of their choosing (including attachments) and upload it to the website. Alternatively, respondents could submit their comments and attachments in an email or via written correspondence.

The submissions template asked questions about options in the discussion paper. There were:

- 21 quantitative questions (comprising 18 'level-of-support' questions—asking for a response on a four-point scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'—and three 'choose-between-options' questions—asking submitters to select from a list of preferred options)
- 53 qualitative questions (open-ended questions where submitters could make statements).

There are limitations to the methodology and analysis of the findings that must be acknowledged including that:

- some submissions raised issues that were outside the scope of the options in the discussion paper; these issues will be considered separately to the Plan Melbourne refresh
- a small number of submitters asked for confidentiality, so these were excluded from this summary
- some submitters did not complete the privacy collection notice; these submissions were analysed but not published.

It is also acknowledged that there were a small number of responses to the 21 quantitative questions. Given the response rate for each question often constituted less than half of all submissions and in some cases, less than a quarter of submissions, the results discussed in the following chapters are not considered to be a rigorous measure of statistical validity. These results have been included to provide a 'flavour' of the responses and should be considered qualitative not quantitative information.

# 2 Growth challenges, fundamental principles and key concepts

Chapter 2 of the discussion paper outlined where the challenges, opportunities and big ideas in *Plan Melbourne* could be better expressed. It noted the MAC's advice that the introduction to a long-term strategy for Melbourne needs to articulate, and make the case for, a planning strategy that will affect the lives of its citizens for years to come.

## 2.1 An enduring strategy

The discussion paper included an option, 'Revise Plan Melbourne 2014 to articulate an enduring strategy with a long-term focus supported by a 'rolling' implementation plan and updated State Planning Policy Framework'. Submitters strongly supported this idea.

## 2.2 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The discussion paper includes an option that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals be included in *Plan Melbourne 2016*. A total of 114 submissions responded to this question with 83% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the inclusion of these goals. Support was strong from organisations. The highest level of disagreement was from some individuals.

**Figure 3** Support for including the UN Sustainable Development Goals



Strongly disagree    Disagree    Agree    Strongly agree    114 responses, or 36%
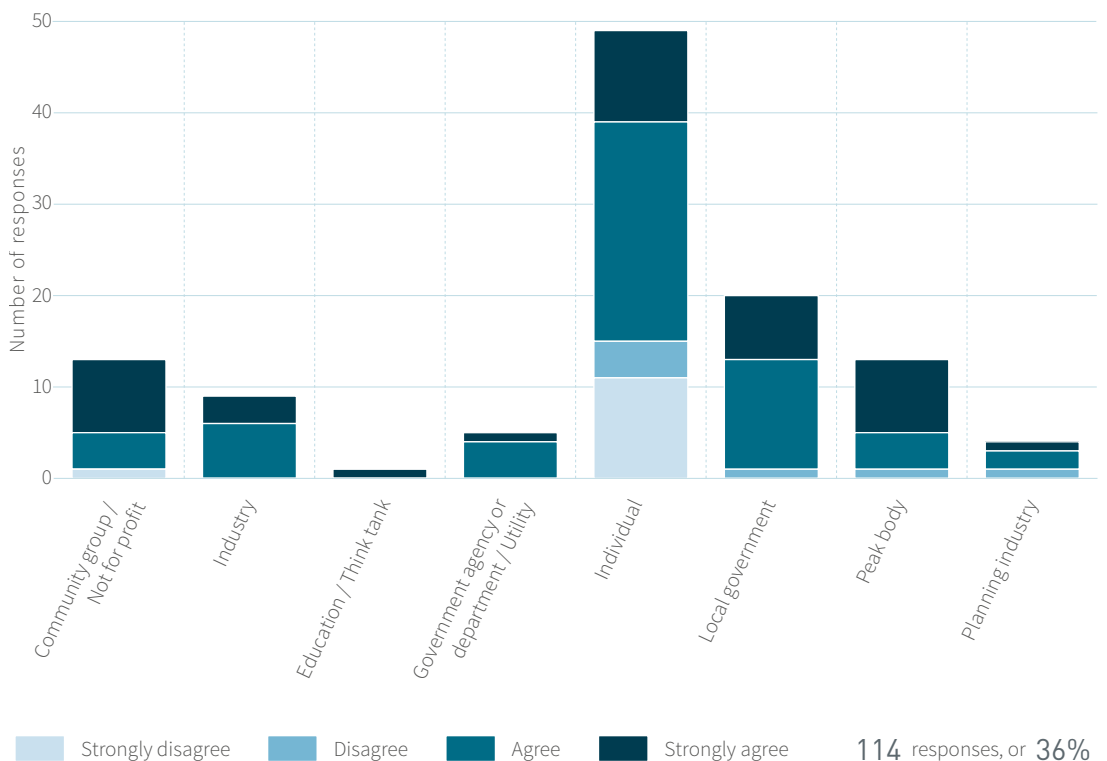
## **2.3** Containing growth, protecting key values in peri-urban areas and green wedges

A total of 158 submissions responded to an option in the discussion paper to lock down the existing urban growth boundary with 59% of these submissions either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the option.

Submitters offered mixed views about locking in the urban growth boundary, with support from local government and some industry organisations and concerns from the development industry and individuals. Some submitters who did not agree felt that ongoing flexibility to review the boundary in line with Melbourne's growth was needed, or that there must be a definitive process to resolve logical inclusions before lockdown. 82 petition style letters raised this issue in relation to two golf clubs.

Submitters also:
- said the State Government should prepare a peri-urban policy statement
- said *Plan Melbourne 2016* should identify important agricultural land, areas of biodiversity importance, high-value landscapes and airport buffer attributes/roles
- said the State Government should better articulate and communicate the importance of the green wedges and the peri-urban area, which need to be understood as part of Melbourne's cultural and social fabric
- asked for specific sites to be included in the urban growth boundary
- raised concerns about residential development encroaching on valuable agricultural land in green wedges and peri-urban areas
- supported replacing the integrated economic triangle concept included in *Plan Melbourne* with a high-level 2050 concept map.

**Figure 4** Support for locking down the existing urban growth boundary



Strongly disagree    Disagree    Agree    Strongly agree    158 responses, or 50%
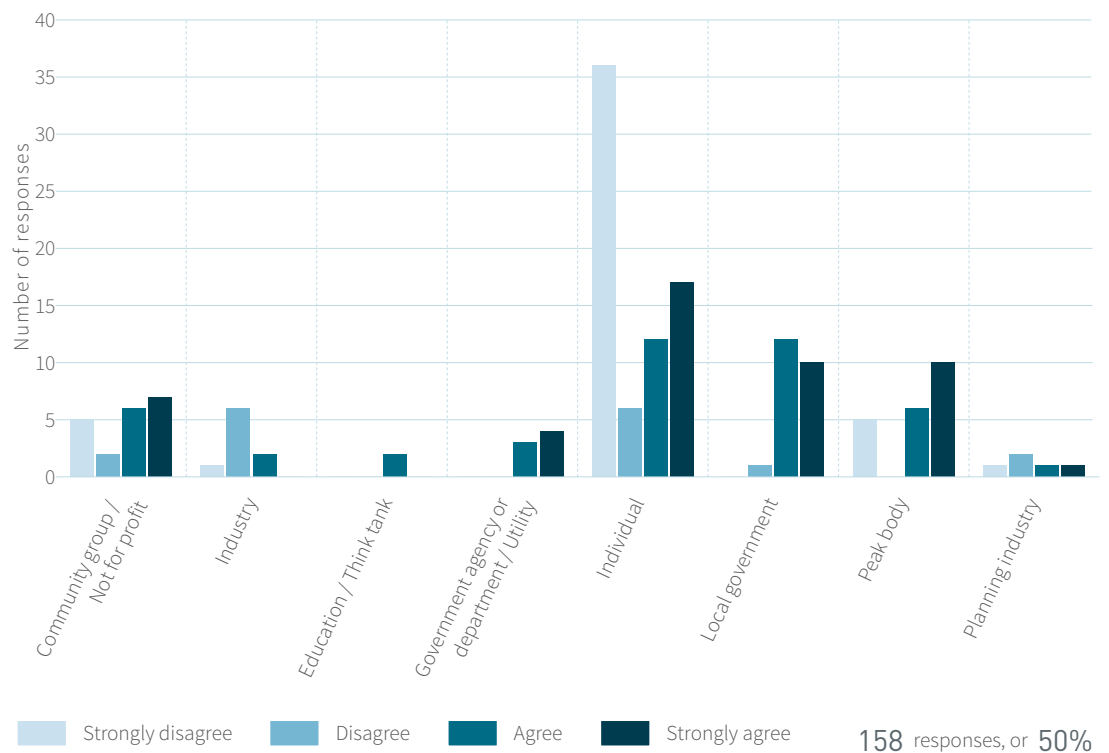
## 2.4 Polycentric city and 20-minute neighbourhoods

The discussion paper included an option, 'Better define the concepts of the polycentric city and 20-minute neighbourhoods—particularly the ability to meet daily (non-work) needs locally, primarily within a 20-minute walk—and include the polycentric city as a key concept.'

A total of 120 submissions responded to this question with 71% of these submitters either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this option. The strongest disagreement came from individual submissions.

Overall there was strong support for clearly articulating the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, but it was qualified by concerns about the effect that increasing residential density might have on the character and amenity of established suburbs, and whether it was possible to achieve the concept in low-density suburbs with entrenched dependence on cars.

**Figure 5** Support for polycentric city, 20-minute neighbourhood concepts
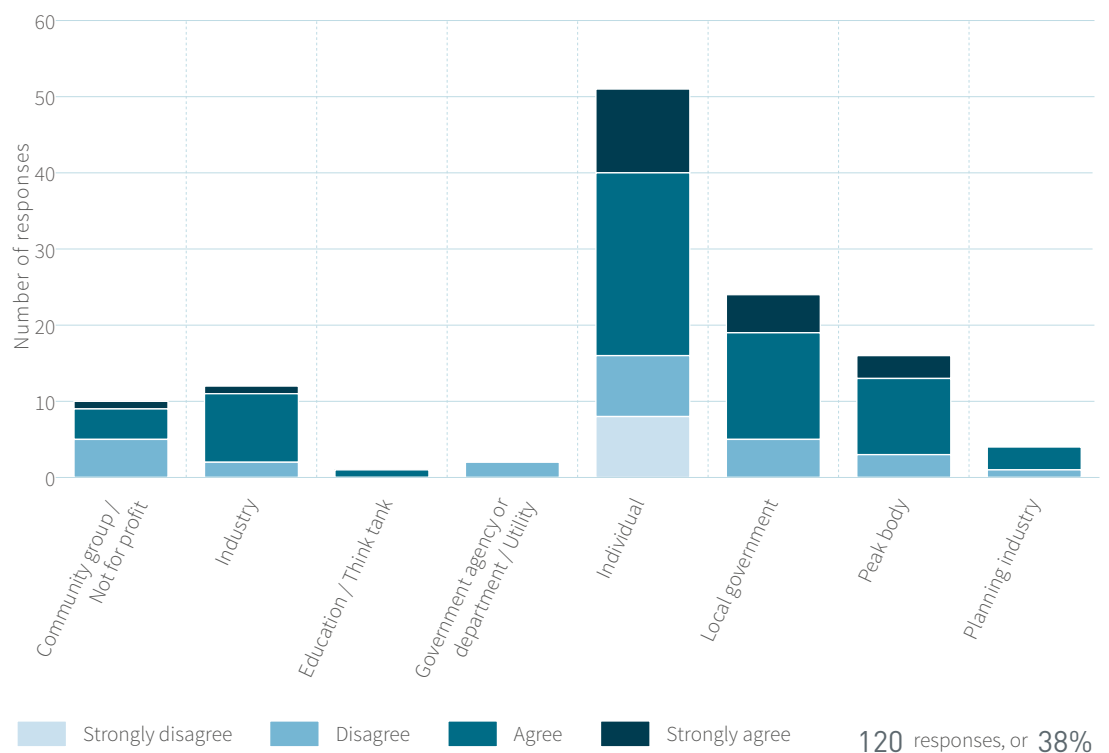


## 2.5 Improved explanation of concepts

Many submitters (including peak bodies, local governments, planning industry organisations and individuals) said that *Plan Melbourne 2016* should better make the case for change. In particular, it should better clarify and explain:

• the imperatives for change and the challenges to which we need to respond (for example, why low residential density in suburbs can be a problem)
• the nine strategic principles on which *Plan Melbourne* was based
• the need to make better use of existing infrastructure
• how the polycentric city and 20-minute neighbourhood concepts intersect.

## 2.6 Housing, climate change, people, place and identity and partnerships with local government as key concepts

The discussion paper specifically asked for feedback on the option of including housing, climate change, people, place and identity and partnerships with local government as key concepts in *Plan Melbourne 2016*.

A total of 114 submissions responded to this option with 90% of these submissions either agreeing or strongly agreeing.

However, concerns were raised about how to deliver improved housing affordability and better environmental management. There was broad support for *Plan Melbourne* showing leadership in relation to the impacts and mitigation of climate change.

It was felt that the key elements raised in this chapter must be integrated and embedded throughout *Plan Melbourne 2016* as 'future proofing' is critical.

There was support for the recognition of a partnership with local government. They also wanted a clearer explanation of the intended roles of local governments, and of the proposed Victorian Planning Authority.

**Figure 6** Support for including housing, climate change, people, place and identity and partnerships with local government as key concepts
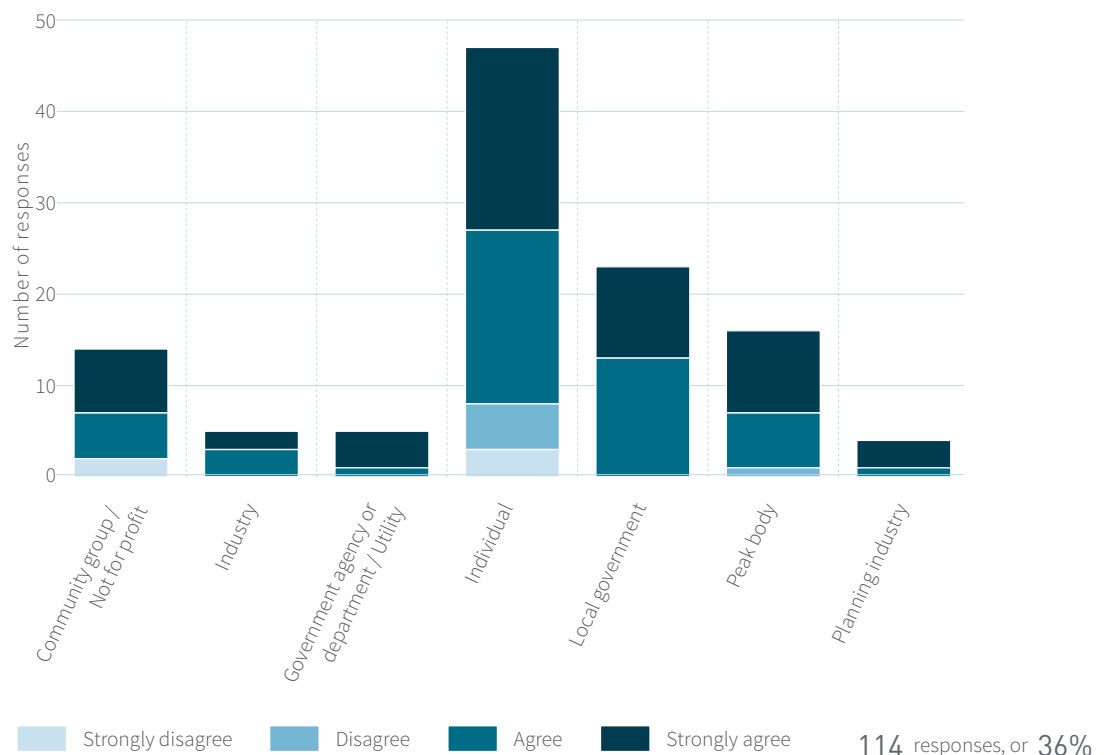
# 3 Delivering jobs and investment

Chapter 3 of the discussion paper dealt with how *Plan Melbourne 2016* could help support jobs and investment. It sought feedback about, among other things:

- planning for the expanded central city to ensure commercial development opportunities are preserved

- renaming and planning national employment clusters

- updating the designation of some activity centres and reviewing planning boundaries for some national employment clusters

- planning tools to protect strategic agricultural land

- protecting extractive industries.

## 3.1 Preserving commercial development opportunities

A few submitters recognised the need to ensure that land for commercial uses is preserved in the central city urban renewal precincts.

## 3.2 National employment clusters

The discussion paper included two alternative options:
- 'Focus planning for national employment clusters on core institutions and businesses' (option A)
- 'Take a broader approach to planning for national employment clusters that looks beyond the core institutions and businesses' (option B).

Of the 65 responses, 86% preferred option B, indicating support for broadening the approach to planning for national employment clusters by looking beyond the core institutions and businesses. There was also support for changing their name to national employment and innovation clusters.

However, many submitters also felt that the specialisations on which clusters are based needed to be supported, and that emerging start-ups and other innovation employment opportunities also needed support.

**Figure 7** National employment clusters: focus planning on core institutions and businesses (Option 21A) or take a broader approach (Option 21B)?



Focus planning on core institutions and businesses  Option 21A
Take a broader approach  Option 21B

65 responses, or 21%
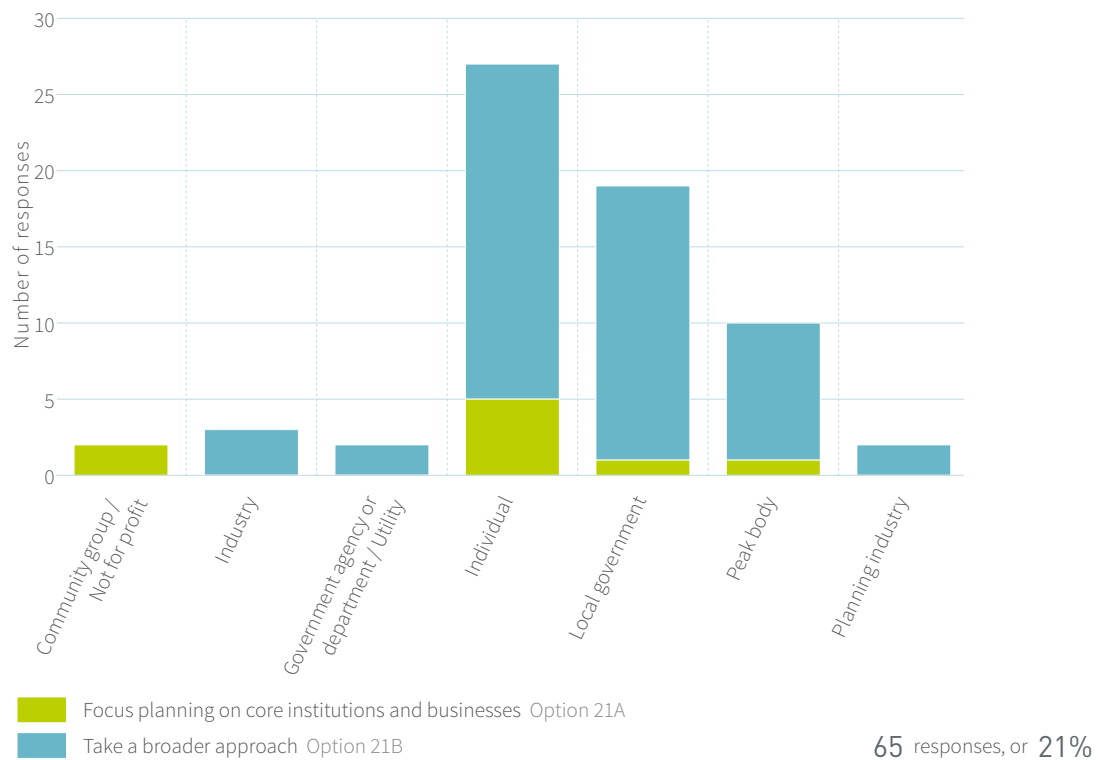
The discussion paper included an option, 'Broaden the East Werribee National Employment Cluster to call it the Werribee National Employment Cluster …'. Of the 50 responses to this option, 82% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option.

The discussion paper included an option, 'Broaden the Dandenong South National Employment Cluster to call it the Dandenong National Employment Cluster in order to encompass the full range of activities and employment activities that make up Dandenong'. Of the 49 responses, 82% of these submissions either strongly agreed or agreed with the option.

Submitters also said that:

• the national employment cluster concept needs to be better described
• how the concept will be implemented needs further explanation, and particularly what facilitation, support and intervention the government will provide.

Many submitters said that good public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure, and the early provision of infrastructure and services, are the keys to the long-term success of national employment clusters, major activity centres and urban renewal areas.

## 3.3  Activity centres

Submitters emphasised the importance of activity centre policy to reinforce the polycentric city and 20-minute neighbourhood concepts. They said:

- *Plan Melbourne 2016* should recognise the different scales and roles of activity centres
- criteria for new activity centres should include the need to meet an identified market gap, but that more clarity is needed about this
- activity centre criteria should also reflect a centre's role in the hierarchy.

The options to change the classifications of Toolern and Lockerbie from Metropolitan Activity Centres to Activity Centres were generally not supported.

## 3.4  Strategic agricultural land and extractive industries

The discussion paper invited feedback on evaluating the range of planning mechanisms available to protect strategic agricultural land. *Plan Melbourne* highlights that highly productive agricultural land around Melbourne is under threat from urban encroachment and residential development.

In regard to the protection of strategic agricultural land, submitters:

- agreed that high-value agricultural land should be protected
- said that current planning mechanisms should be reviewed and strengthened where necessary
- considered the definition and process for identifying high-value agricultural land to be important; and that intensive and innovative agribusiness activities and ancillary uses should not be excluded from land zoned for agriculture.

There was support for planning that provides extractive industries with long-term access to suitable land, to ensure economic growth and jobs.

In regard to extractive industries submitters:

- acknowledged the importance of extractive industries
- generally supported implementing the outcomes of the Extractive Industries Taskforce
- said that the location and use of sites for the extraction of materials (and their possible later use for landfill) must be monitored and controlled, particularly when close to sensitive uses and in areas of natural significance
- said that land used for quarrying must be properly remediated when activity ceases.

# 4 A more connected Melbourne

Chapter 4 of the discussion paper looked at the connection between land-use and transport planning. It noted that *Plan Melbourne 2016* will reflect the state government's current transport priorities. It also said that while *Plan Melbourne 2016* would broadly outline Melbourne's transport needs over the next 35 years, it would not address the detail and timing of projects.

## 4.1 Integrating land use and transport planning

Several submitters emphasised that *Plan Melbourne 2016* must be an integrated land-use and transport plan, not just a land-use strategy with a list of transport projects.

A number of submitters also said that a list of transport projects should be assessed independently by Infrastructure Victoria, to determine the strategic projects essential to delivering *Plan Melbourne 2016*.

Some submitters said that *Plan Melbourne 2016* should give more attention to freight transport and include the Principal Freight Network.

## 4.2 Principal Public Transport Network

The discussion paper included an option, 'Include the Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN) in *Plan Melbourne 2016*'. Of the 111 responses, 94% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option.

Some submitters said that the PPTN should include growth areas, others said it should better link with activity centres.

**Figure 8** Support for including Principal Public Transport Network
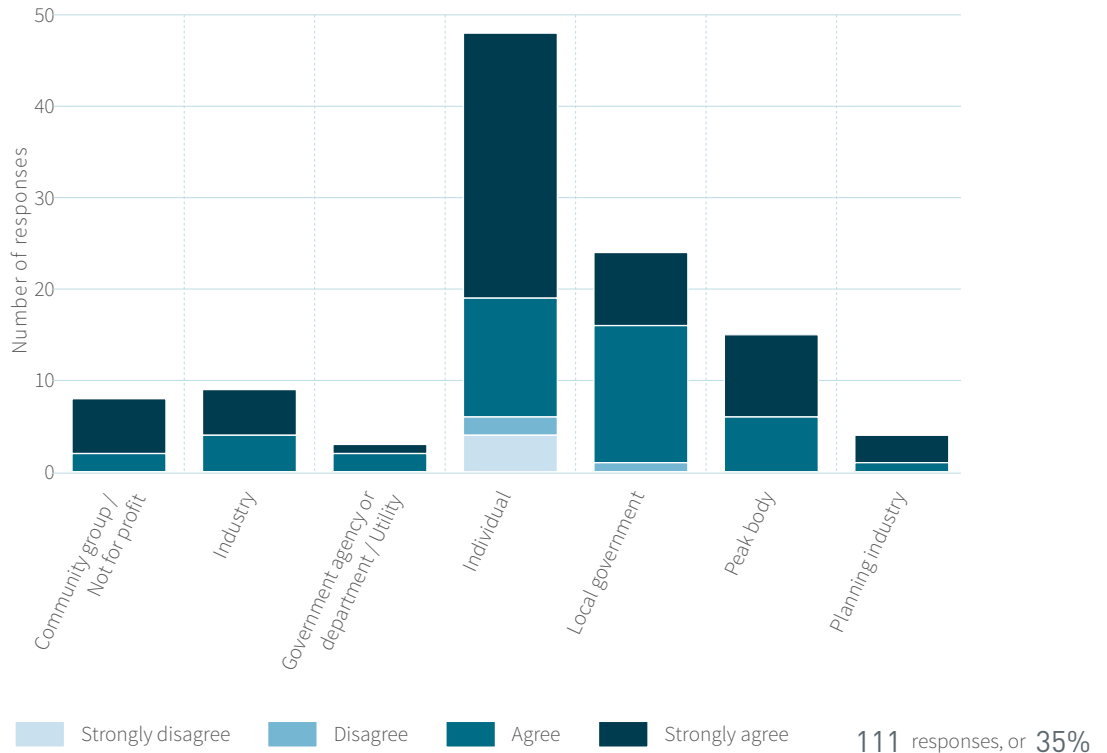


Submitters said:
- the PPTN should be included in *Plan Melbourne 2016* to guide development, including higher-density residential development where compatible with existing uses
- the PPTN needs to be expanded and modified as Melbourne grows; some local councils felt that local government should be consulted in planning the future PPTN
- that investment in public transport should be a priority, not just for trains and trams but for improved and expanded bus services in growth areas and strengthened cross-city links between activity centres and national employment clusters.

## 4.3   Active transport

Submitters supported the option in the discussion paper, 'Incorporate references to Active Transport Victoria and linkages to land-use outcomes in *Plan Melbourne 2016*'.

Submitters said that *Plan Melbourne 2016* should:
- explain the strategic link between land-use planning and active transport
- include targets and measures for investment in walking and cycling infrastructure to achieve the 20-minute neighbourhood city.

They also said that the planning system needs to be updated to better integrate walking and cycling with land-use planning, and that *Plan Melbourne 2016* should include the Principal Bicycle Network.

Some submitters noted that pedestrians and cyclists have different infrastructure needs and travel at different speeds, so each transport mode needs to be planned separately. Similarly, an observation was made about the different infrastructure requirements of recreational and commuter cyclists.

# 5 Housing

Chapter 5 of the discussion paper looked at the need for *Plan Melbourne 2016* to articulate long-term land-use policies and reforms to meet forecast housing needs and expand housing choice and affordability. It noted that the 2015 MAC report proposed many initiatives about housing supply, diversity and affordability.

Options in the discussion paper canvass actions that will establish new housing development goals, increase certainty for housing development, facilitate housing supply in Melbourne's established areas and develop comprehensive data and strategies to better guide housing planning.

Further options to support housing diversity and the provision of more social housing and affordable housing were outlined.

The majority of submitters welcomed the revised approach to housing in the Plan Melbourne refresh, recognising that the key issues facing Melbourne are the need for social and affordable housing, clarity and certainty about where additional housing is to be provided, and a diversity of housing.

## 5.1 Balance between established and growth areas

The discussion paper considered the balance between growth in the established areas and greenfield growth areas. Feedback was sought on several of the options to increase housing supply in established areas that were put forward by the MAC.
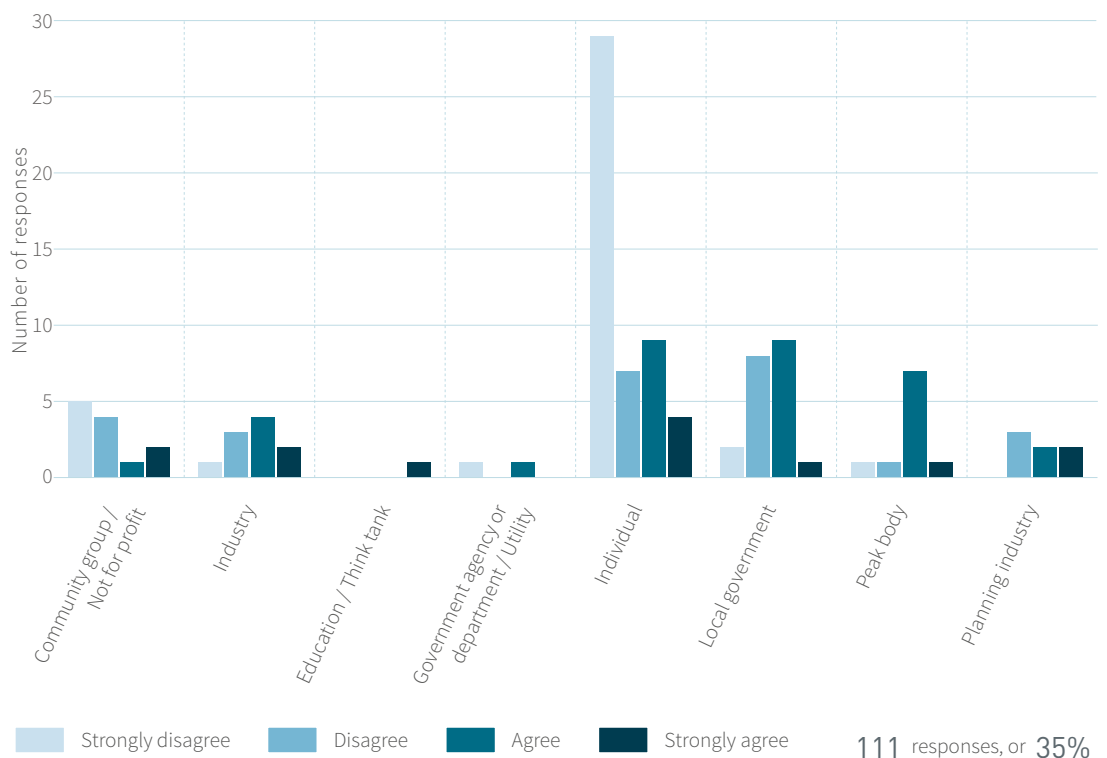
### 5.1.1 A 70/30 target

The discussion paper included an option, 'Increase established area housing supply by … establishing a 70/30 target where established areas provide 70 per cent of Melbourne's new housing supply and greenfield growth areas provide 30 per cent'. A 70/30 target did not get majority support.

Of the 111 responses, 58% either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the option. The highest level of disagreement was expressed by individuals and community and not-for-profit groups, citing loss of amenity and infrastructure constraints. A few disagreed on the basis that the target was too low for established areas, and suggested alternative approaches.

Local governments and industry organisations were split on the issue. Of those that did not support the option, many said that setting targets was a simplistic approach that may have unintended consequences or may fail to deliver the intended outcomes. Those that supported the approach said it was a good way to limit urban sprawl.

**Figure 9** Support for establishing a 70/30 target for housing supply

## 5.1.2 Unlock supply in established areas

The discussion paper included an option, 'Increase established area housing supply by ... focusing metropolitan planning on unlocking housing supply in established areas, particularly within areas specifically targeted for growth and intensification'.

Of the 94 responses, 64% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option. The majority of individuals, and many community and not-for-profit groups, strongly disagreed with the option.

**Figure 10** Support for planning to unlock housing in established areas, particularly areas for growth and intensification
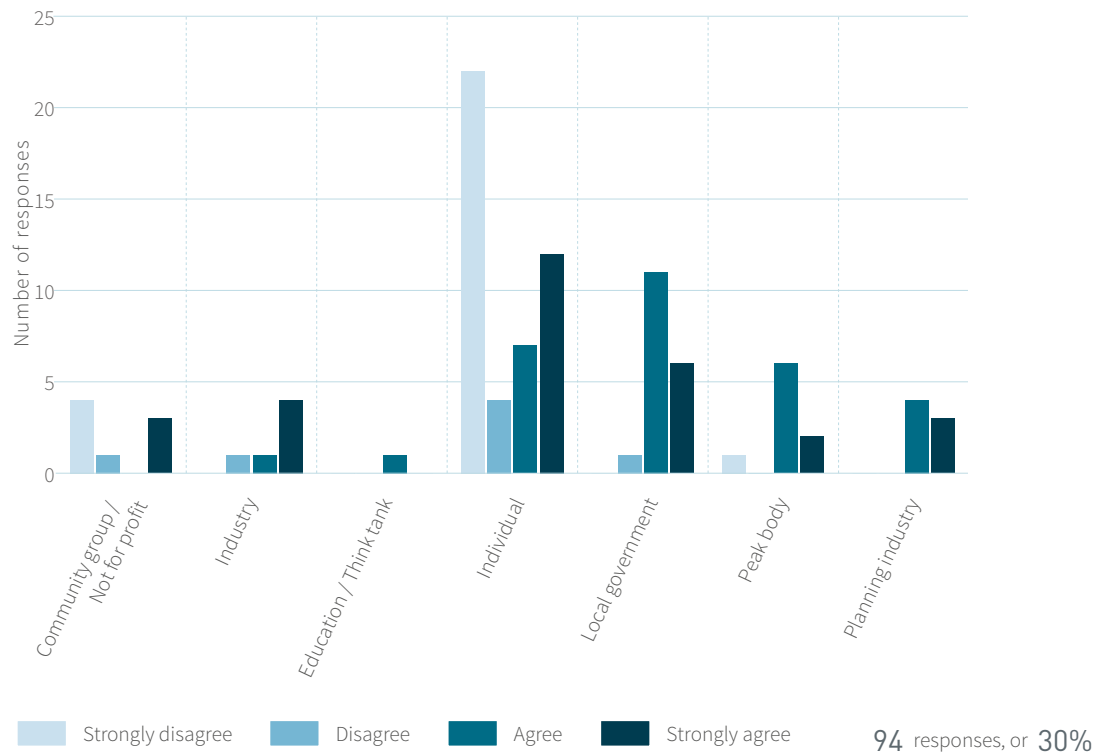
### 5.1.3 Sequencing and density of precinct structure plans

The discussion paper included an option, 'Increase established area housing supply by ... investigating a mechanism to manage the sequence and density of the remaining Precinct Structure Plans based on land supply needs'. Of the 76 responses, 65% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option. Of the 34% that either strongly disagreed or disagreed, these responses were from Individuals or Industry.

**Figure 11**  Support for managing the sequence, density of remaining precinct structure plans
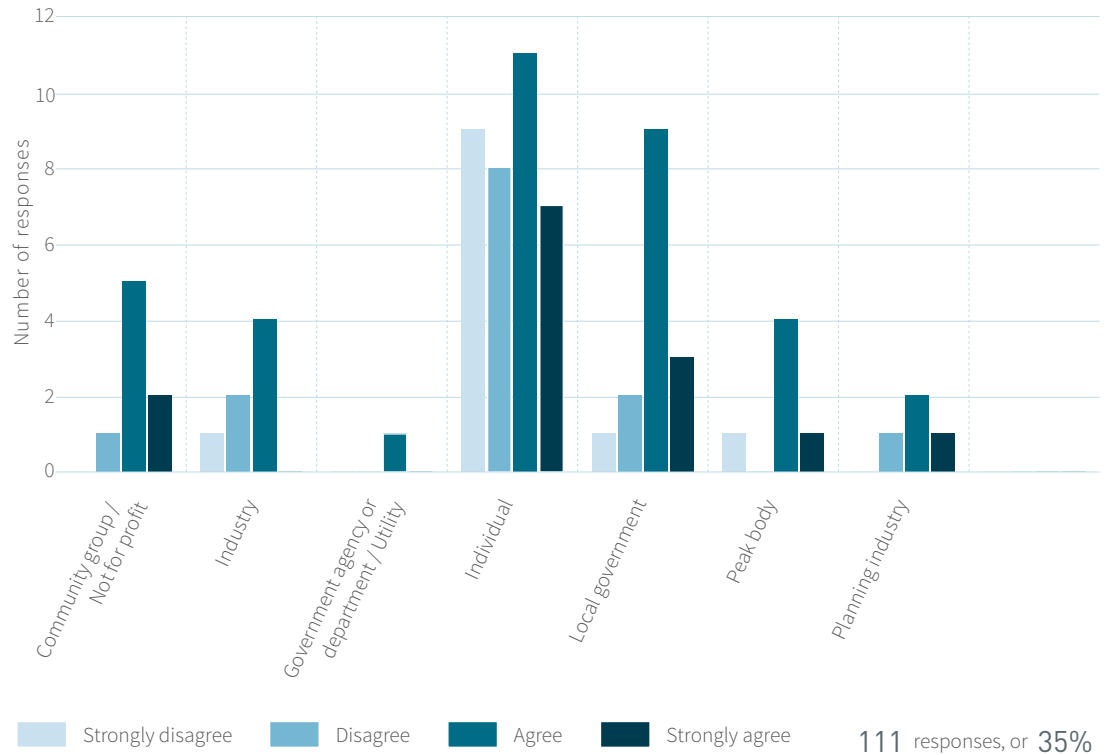
## 5.2  Population growth and housing

The discussion paper included options to better define and communicate Melbourne's housing needs by either:

• setting targets for metropolitan Melbourne and each subregion relating to housing diversity, supply and affordability OR

• developing a metropolitan housing strategy and plan.

Of the 86 responses, 27% preferred the targets option, 36% preferred the metropolitan housing strategy and plan option and 37% did not prefer either option.

Many said that targets, and a housing strategy, should both be adopted. They said that a housing strategy is important for providing the underpinning logic for a subtle approach to increasing residential densities.

**Figure 12**  Housing targets (Option 37a) or a housing strategy and plan (Option 37b)?



Housing targets  Option 37A

Housing strategy and plan  Option 37B

Other

86 responses, or 27%
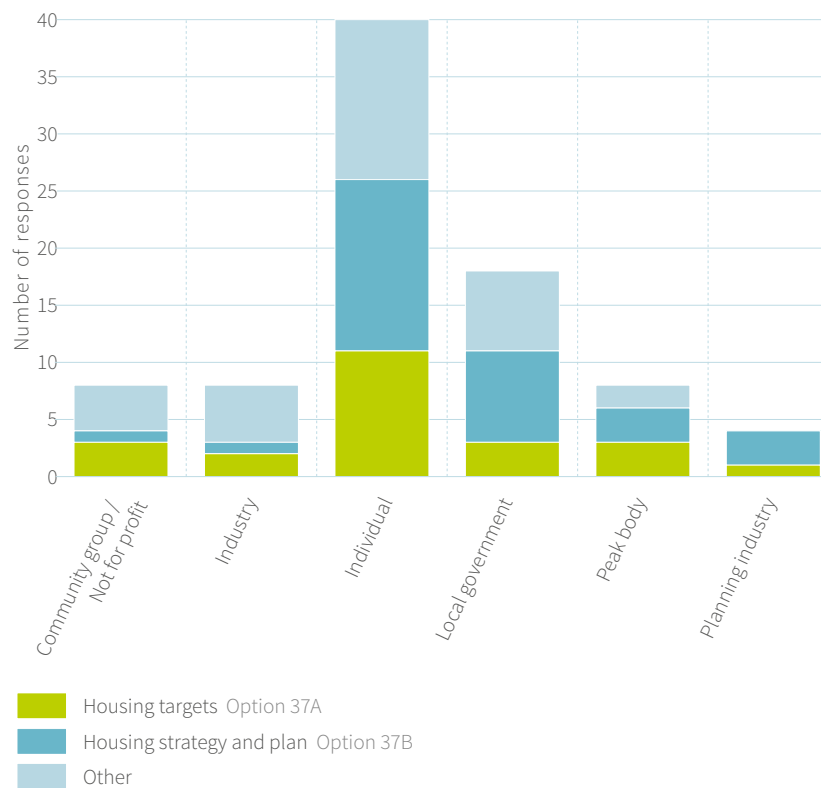
## 5.3 Clarifying locations that support population growth and new housing

Most submitters supported the need for a compact urban form. However, some submitters said that the established suburbs have already taken their fair share of increased residential density.

There was general agreement to an approach that clearly defines locations needing protection and areas where appropriate development could occur. Some submitters suggested locations close to public transport and activity centres as examples of the latter, and that criteria for identifying locations could be included in planning practice notes.

Individual submitters were concerned that further increases in the residential density of established areas would unreasonably detract from the identity, character and liveability of those suburbs.

Local government, industry organisations and peak bodies generally supported an approach that provides clear policy direction about where change can occur, as well as highlighting the need to continue to provide direction about areas needing protection.

Some noted the tension between policies that sought on one hand to protect the suburbs but on the other hand support increased density in established areas. Some submitters felt the use of terms like 'inappropriate development' was subjective and unhelpful.

## 5.4 Housing diversity

### 5.4.1 Application of the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)

In terms of the role of the reformed residential zones in delivering housing diversity, the discussion paper included two alternative options to clarify the action to apply the Neighbourhood Residential Zone to at least 50% of residential land by:

- deleting the action and replacing it with a direction that clarifies how the residential zones should be applied to respect valued character and deliver housing diversity OR
- retaining at least 50% as a guide but expanding the criteria to be applied in variations between municipalities.

Of the 78 responses, 60% preferred the option to delete the action and replace it with a clarifying direction. The strongest support for this came from industry organisations and peak bodies that said the application of a 50% target was somewhat arbitrary. Many local governments also supported this option, saying that a more strategic approach to applying the zones was required. Some local governments supported other options that would offer greater flexibility than a target.

Many individual and local government submitters said that equity is important and that all local government areas should take their fair share of population growth: some perceived this not to currently be the case. Some submitters were also concerned that there may be a requirement to wind back the extent of Neighbourhood Residential Zone currently in place.

Many individual and industry organisation submitters said that the current application of the Neighbourhood Residential Zone will make a 70/30 split target unrealistic.

**Figure 13** Replace action with direction about how to apply residential zones (Option 40a) or retain 50%+ and enable variations between municipalities (Option 40b)?



Replace action with direction about how to apply residential zones  Option 40A
Retain 50%+ and enable variations between municipalities  Option 40B
Other

**78** responses, or **25%**
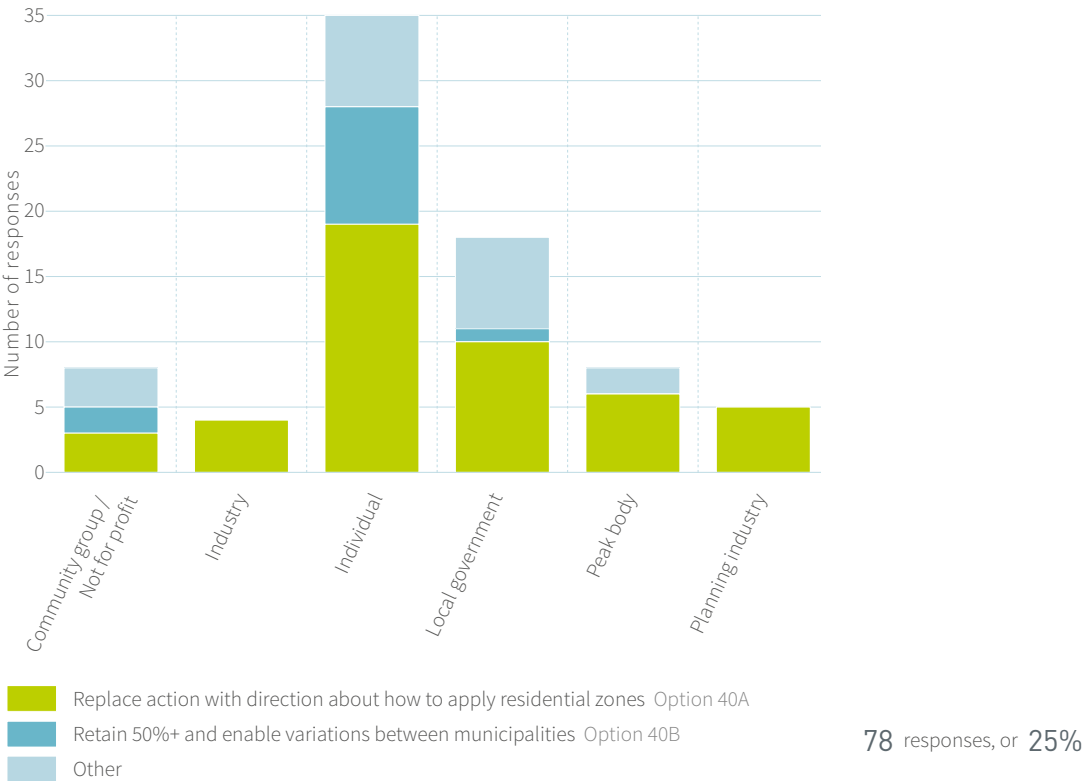
### 5.4.2  How to support housing diversity

Many submitters supported an approach that would help make housing flexible and adaptable to meet households' needs as they change over time, and provide alternatives for a broad range of groups and types of households.

Submitters generally said that current apartment-style infill developments and compact greenfield subdivisions are not providing housing diversity.

Development industry submitters said that increasing average densities and further controlling the release of greenfield development will reduce housing diversity and affordability.

Many submitters, particularly local government, gave examples of how the planning system and guidelines could provide greater housing diversity and adaptability.

## **5.5**  Affordable housing

The discussion paper included options about how to increase or expedite the supply of social and affordable housing.

All types of submitters strongly supported a firmer focus on affordable housing. They suggested further investigation among other things, of mandatory inclusionary zoning, developer incentives and bonuses and value capture.

The development industry organisations said that ensuring an adequate supply of land is the key to affordability.

Submitters generally agreed that 'affordable housing' could be better defined. They also agreed about an expedited approval process for selected social housing projects but some were concerned that this might limit or remove community input.

Many submitters (particularly local governments and not-for-profit organisations) suggested various tools and approaches to increase the supply of affordable housing; and they asked for clearer planning policies and mechanisms to do so. Some put forward that policies concerning affordable housing as well as its delivery, need to take account of market, feasibility, financing, funding and ongoing management matters.

Submitters supported the state government using its land to deliver more affordable housing.

Submitters had mixed views about waiving or reducing planning scheme requirements to encourage affordable housing, but generally supported doing so.

# 6 A more resilient and environmentally sustainable Melbourne

Chapter 6 of the discussion paper outlined how the planning system can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build our resilience to the impact of climate change.

The discussion paper also set out strategic environmental principles and considered the need for improving hazard mapping – the mapping of areas prone to flooding, bushfire or coastal inundation – and new planning tools to respond to climate change challenges and build resilience.

There was also discussion of ways to strengthen high-priority habitat corridors, make the city cooler and greener and environmentally sustainable design, and actions to encourage renewable energy to deliver environmental outcomes, such as reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

## 6.1 Strategic environmental principles

The discussion paper included a specific option to, 'Introduce the strategic environmental principles in *Plan Melbourne 2016* to guide implementation of environment, climate change and water initiatives'.

Of the 120 responses, 86% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option.

**Figure 14** Support for including strategic environmental principles



120 responses, or 38%
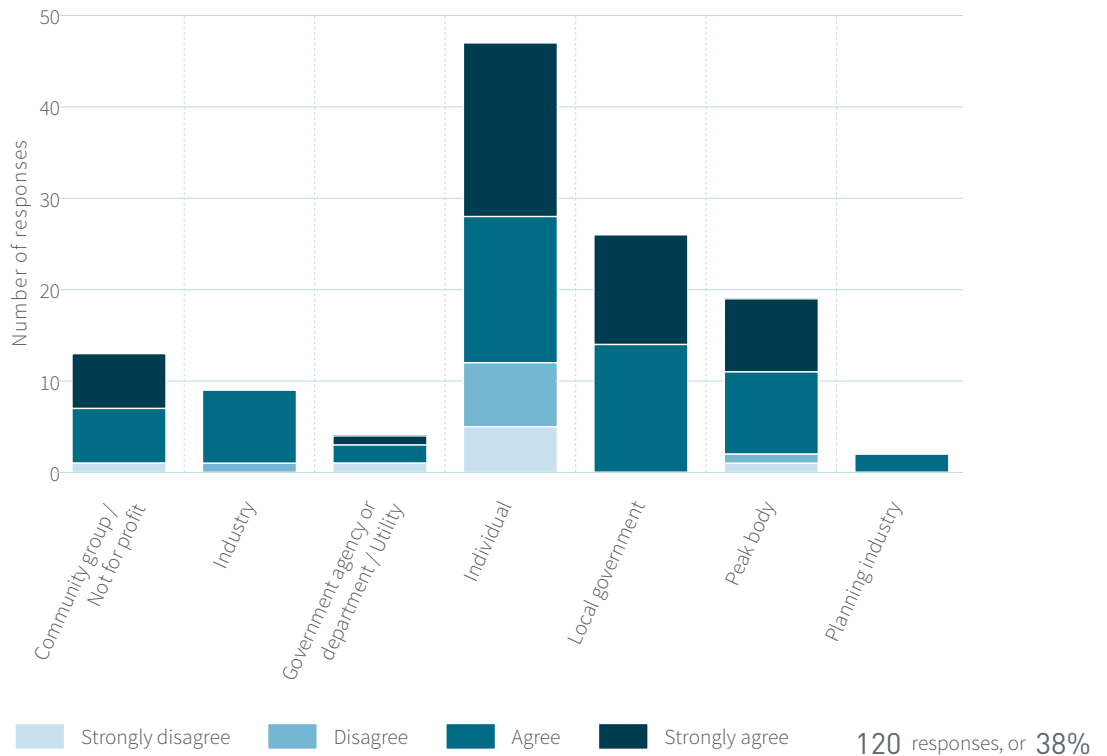
Submitters questioned:

- how the (very broad) principles would be implemented at the metropolitan Melbourne scale
- how the principles would align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Many submitters suggested additional principles and refinements that could be considered for inclusion in *Plan Melbourne 2016*.

## 6.2 Better information and guidance for climate hazards

The discussion paper included an option, '… review policy hazard management planning tools (such as overlays) to ensure the planning system responds to climate change challenges'.

Of the 104 responses, 89% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option. A few individuals disagreed with this option.

**Figure 15** Support for reviewing policy, hazard management planning tools for climate change challenges
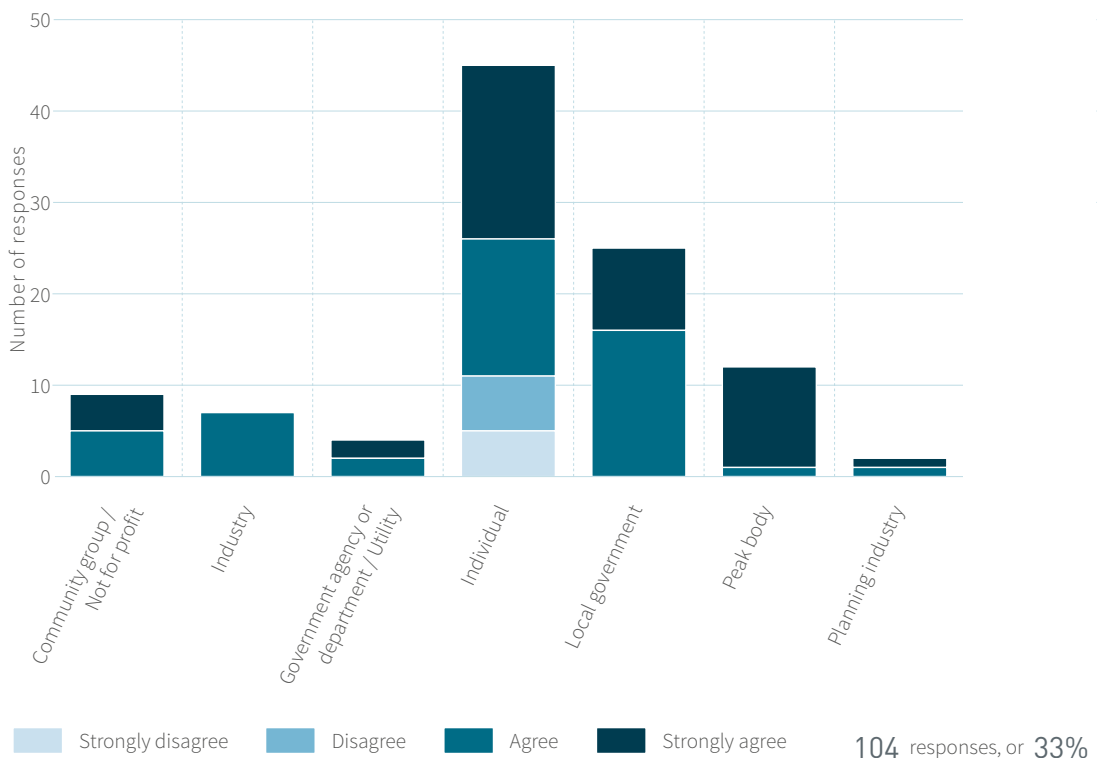
The discussion paper included an option, 'Update hazard mapping based on the best available climate change science and review risk management actions to promote resilience and avoid unacceptable risks'. Many submitters saw hazard mapping as a priority and many said the State Planning Policy Framework should be updated to provide clearer policy direction.

Submitters said there are many existing alliances and climate change action groups and several completed relevant projects that could provide guidance.

Submitters supported considering all aspects of climate change (bushfire, flooding, coastal inundation, heat waves, urban heat island effect and drought) and recognising risk profiles (increasing frequency and severity).

The discussion paper included an option, 'Incorporate natural hazard management criteria into Victorian planning schemes to improve planning in areas exposed to climate change and environmental risks'. Of the 84 responses, 84% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option. There was mixed support from a few industry organisation submitters and strong disagreement from a few individuals.

**Figure 16** Support for incorporating natural hazard management criteria into Victorian planning schemes



84 responses, or 27%
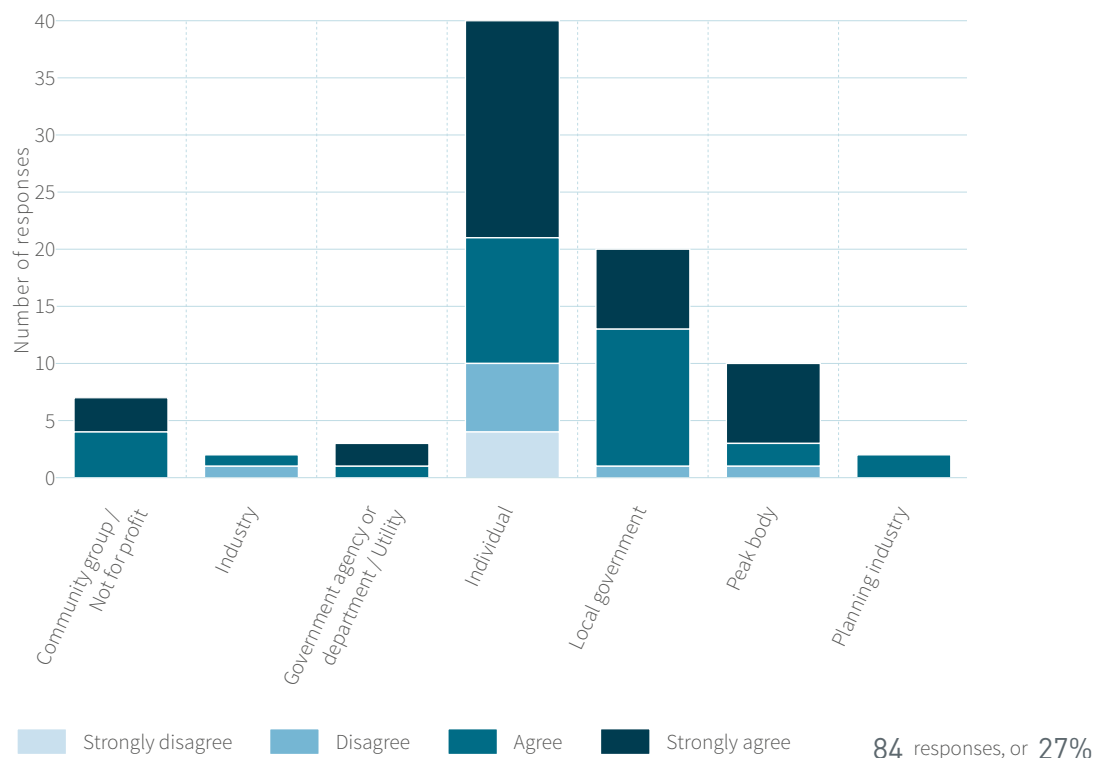
## 6.3 Infrastructure resilience

The discussion paper included an option, 'Investigate consideration of climate change risks in infrastructure planning in the land use planning system, including consideration of an "infrastructure resilience test" – an approach to assess the resilience of essential infrastructure to the effects of climate change.

Of the 91 responses, 84% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option. Submitters generally supported an infrastructure resilience test, though many said the concept needs clearer articulation. There was some support for adopting the new Australian standard AS5334-2013 *Climate change adaptation for settlements and infrastructure – A risk based approach.*

**Figure 17**  Level of support: A more structured approach to consideration of climate change risks in infrastructure planning has merit
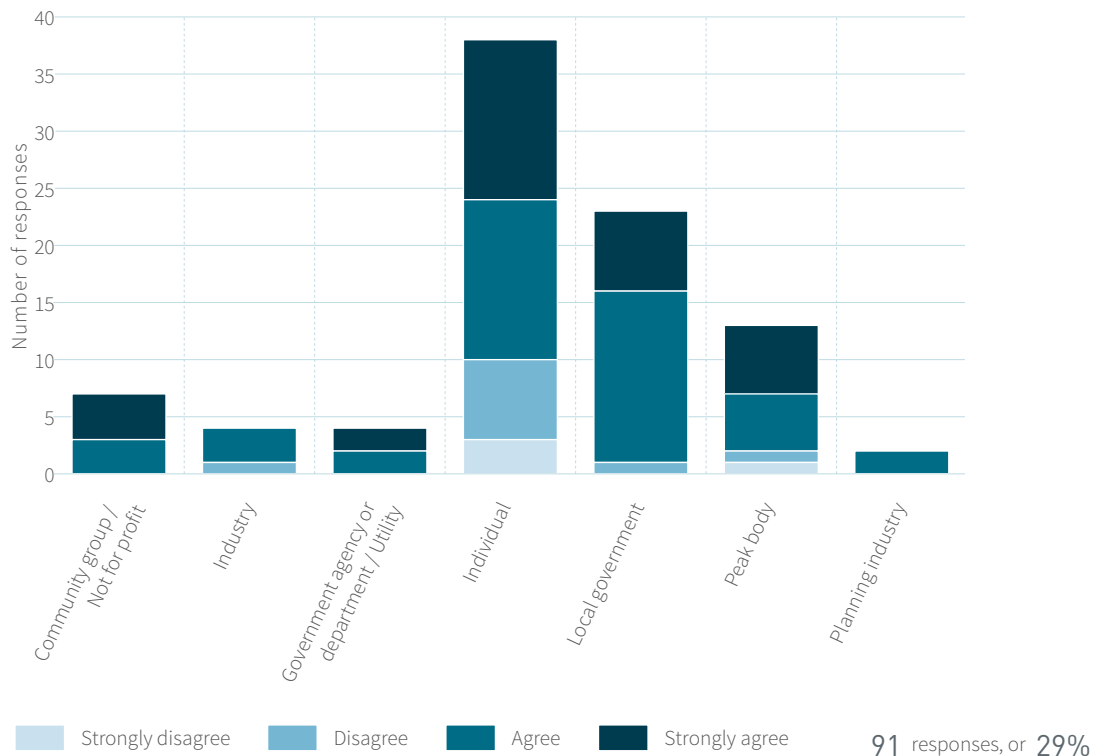
## **6.4** Natural habitats

The discussion paper included an option, 'Strengthen high-priority habitat corridors throughout Melbourne and its peri-urban areas to improve long-term health of key flora and fauna habitats'.

Of the 103 responses, 80% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option. The highest level of disagreement was by industry organisations and some individuals: they said that existing planning provisions effectively addressed this option.

**Figure 18** Support for strengthening high-priority habitat corridors
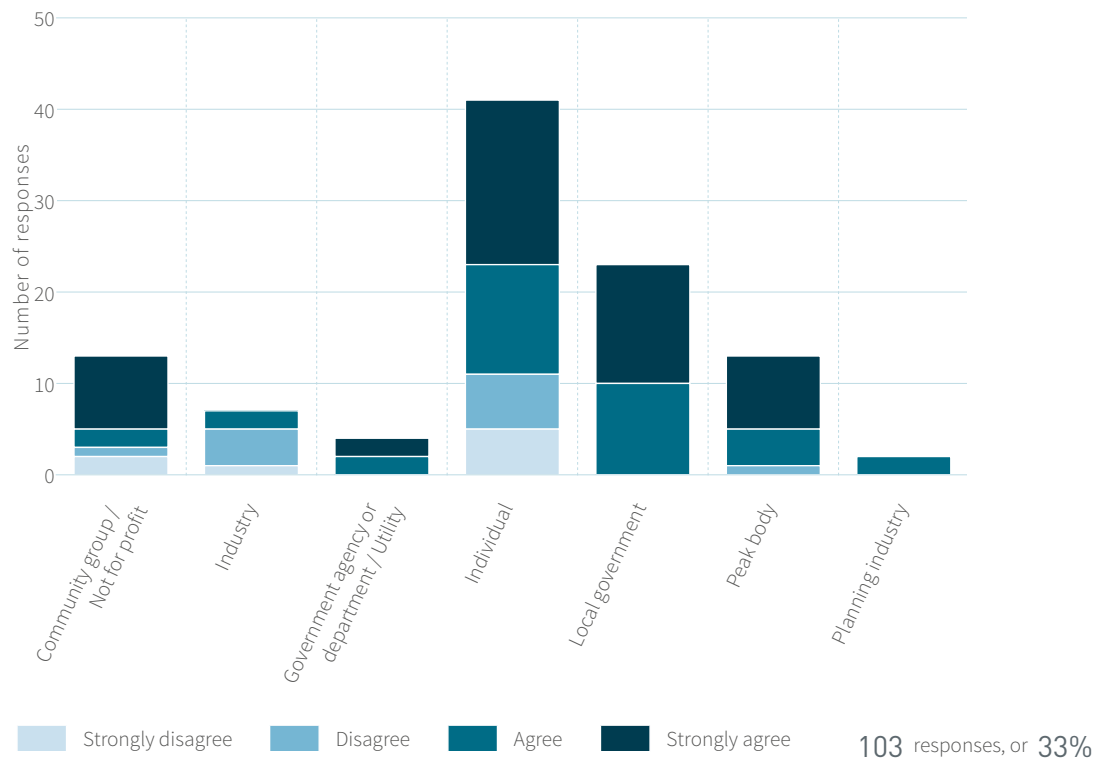


Submitters strongly supported better defining and protecting high-priority habitat corridors, focusing on waterways and Port Phillip Bay and corridors within established suburbs.

Submitters also:
- raised the need to avoid ad hoc planning and creating disconnected sites, focusing instead on habitat corridors along waterways, road reserves and existing conservation areas
- questioned how habitats would be maintained (particularly habitats on private land) and how bushfire risks would be managed
- said that protecting high-priority habitat corridors may be incompatible with most recreational uses, which should be acknowledged
- provided examples of existing or proposed projects
- emphasised the need to connect habitat corridor planning with Plan Melbourne's existing commitment to develop an open space strategy.

## 6.5    Cooling a hot city

Submitters strongly supported innovative design and planning approval incentives to help cool the city and increase tree canopy cover on public and private land.

Submitters noted the many benefits of green infrastructure, including that it can reduce urban heat, improve water management, protect biodiversity and enhance public health.

Submitters supported a holistic policy response: one that addresses not only vegetation issues but also water management and building design and materials.

Many submitters noted the need to manage competing policies (such as urban consolidation) with the loss of permeable areas and canopy trees. Many saw protecting existing street trees as an important issue.

Submitters supported encouraging green buildings, walls, roofs and permeable surfaces in developments, to cool the city.

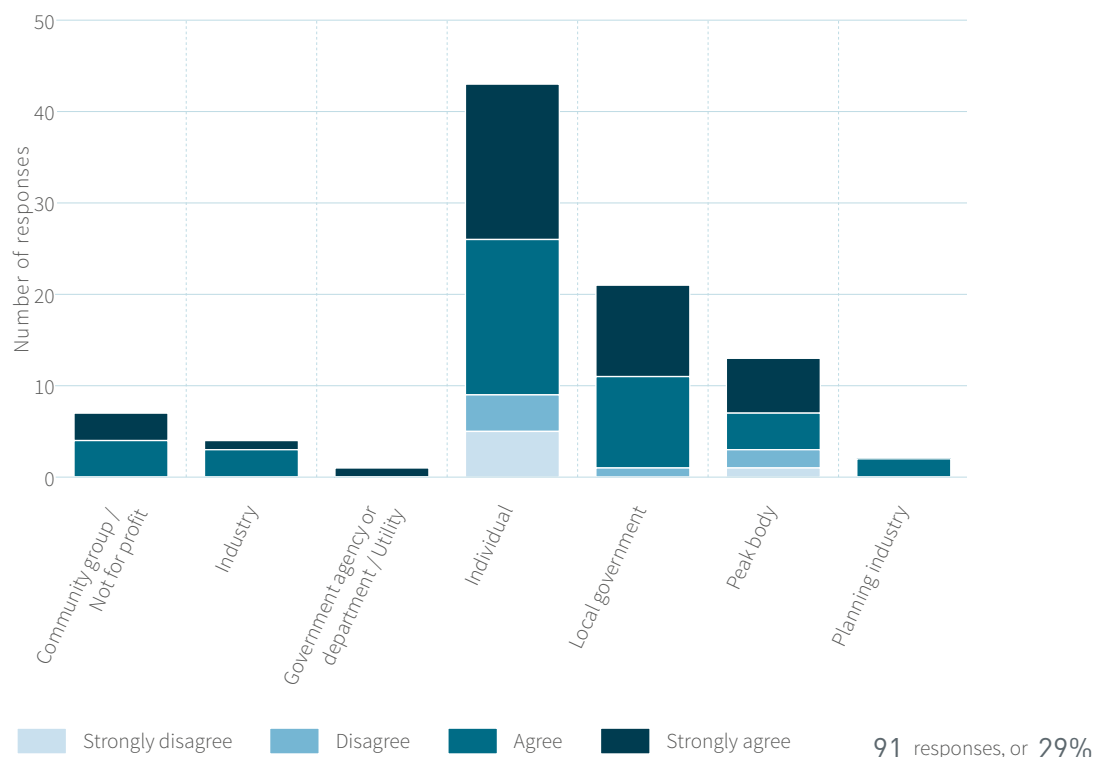## 6.6    Supporting renewable and low-emission energy

The discussion paper included several options that would strengthen land-use planning policies to facilitate the uptake of renewable and low-emission energy.

Of the 91 responses, 86% either strongly agreed or agreed with the options for stronger policies.

Some submitters disagreed, saying the current planning system approach is adequate; it is beyond the scope of the planning system to do anything further; and that renewables may not be truly viable at present.

Submitters supported developing a statewide approach, although some said this is a whole-of-government issue and implementation should not be limited to the planning system.

**Figure 19** Support for stronger land use planning policies for renewable and low-emission energy



91 responses, or 29%

The discussion paper included an option, 'Strengthen the structure planning process to facilitate the uptake of renewable and low-emission energy generation technologies in greenfield and urban renewal precincts'.

Of the 77 responses, 94% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option. Some submitters said that the upfront cost of renewable energy technologies is a disincentive for many builders.

**Figure 20**  Support for planning process to facilitate renewable and low-emission technologies in greenfield and urban renewal precincts



Strongly disagree    Disagree    Agree    Strongly agree        77 responses, or 24%
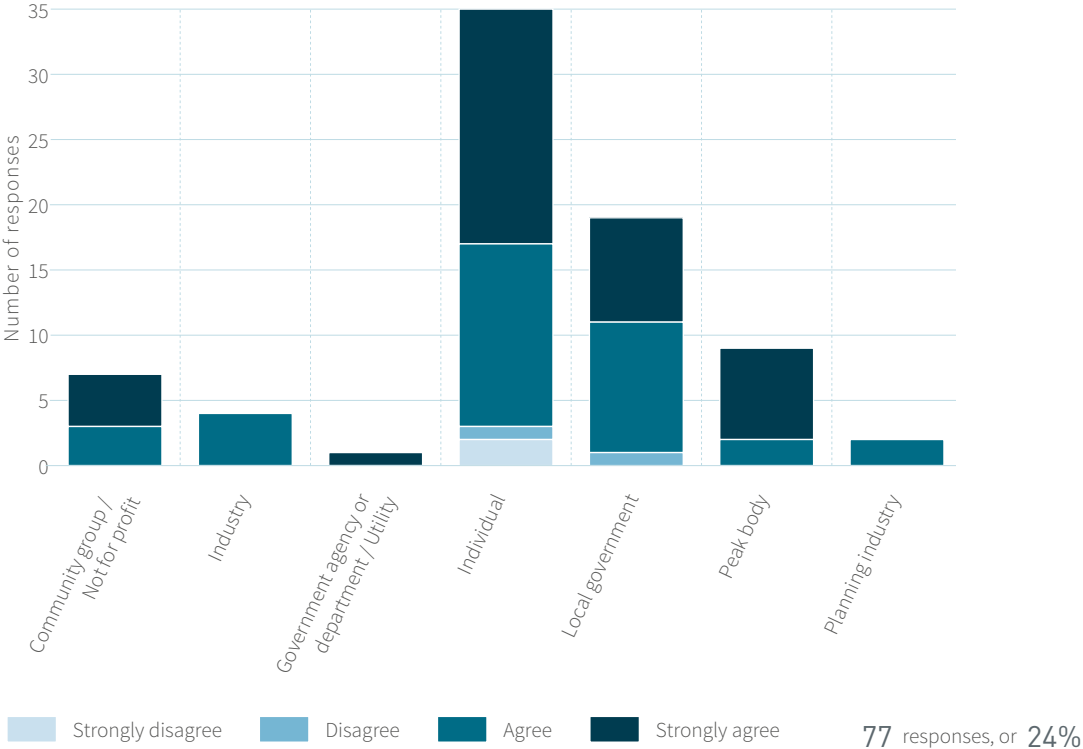
## 6.7   Environmentally sustainable design

The discussion paper included an option, 'Support a Victorian Government integrated planning and building approach to strengthen environmentally sustainable design, including consideration of costs and benefits'.

Of the 94 responses, 87% either strongly agreed or agreed with the option. There was a mixed response from industry organisations that were concerned that the cost of planning could increase as a result, without any certainty that a development would be approved.

Some submitters said that early identification—at the planning stage—of environmentally sustainable design measures helps developers understand and factor in any costs before building approval.

There was strong support for a statewide approach to environmentally sustainable design.

Submitters strongly recognised that housing affordability is also linked to the costs of water and energy, and that we might better focus on affordable living.

**Figure 21**  Support for integrated planning and building approach for environmentally sustainable design
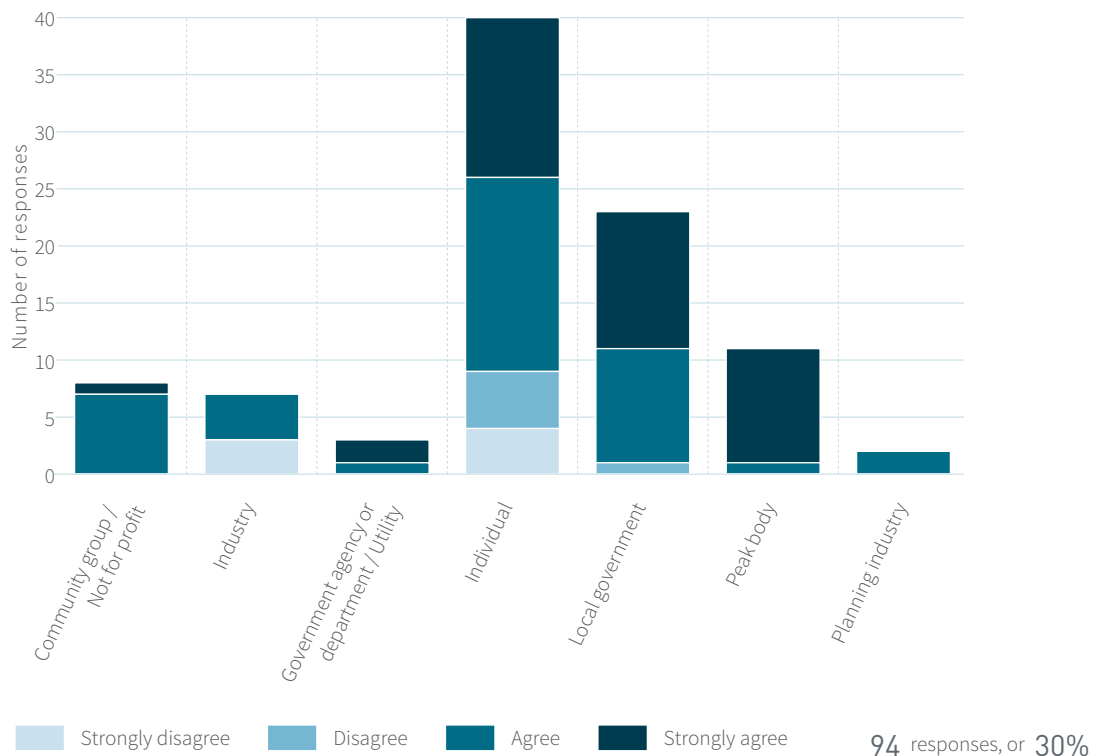
# 7 New planning tools

Chapter 7 of the discussion paper sought feedback on recommendations from the MAC on the need for new planning tools.

The MAC recommended new planning scheme tools for national employment clusters and designated urban renewal precincts.

The MAC also recommended a "code assess" approach to multi-dwelling developments. The MAC felt that this could provide greater certainty and investment.

## 7.1   New zones

Submitters generally said that, for any change, there would need to be strong evidence that new zones are required. They commonly said that existing zones allow for adaptation if required, and that schedules can be framed to suit particular national employment clusters and urban renewal areas.

Some local councils said it would be more effective to consider improvements to existing tools (such as schedules) to allow for greater customisation of zones and overlays.

## 7.2   Code assess

The discussion paper included an option, 'Evaluate the merits of code assessment for multi-unit development ...'. The response was mixed. Some submitters said it worked effectively elsewhere, while others had strong reservations.

Submitters raised several concerns including that community groups and individuals would be removed from the process, and that designs may be to minimum standards or one-size-fits-all and thus affect neighbourhood character and amenity.

Some submitters said code assess could help achieve housing targets. Others said it had potential in particular zones or areas but should not necessarily apply everywhere.

# 8 Implementation

*Plan Melbourne 2014* contains 117 initiatives and 334 actions. It is heavily weighted towards short-term actions, many of which are now either well-progressed or need to reflect current government commitments and priorities.

Chapter 8 of the discussion paper puts forward a range of options to improve implementation. There is a particular focus on specific implementation issues raised by the MAC. These options include developing a separate 'rolling' implementation plan that would be updated regularly to reflect progress with implementation and shorter-term implementation decisions by government.

An option is also presented to review the indicators in *Plan Melbourne 2014*, including addressing gaps relating to environment and climate change.

## 8.1 Response from submissions

In regard to how the implementation of *Plan Melbourne 2016* could be most effective, submitters strongly supported a separate rolling implementation plan, to focus on delivery and reinforce *Plan Melbourne* as an enduring strategy.

Submitters said successful delivery of *Plan Melbourne 2016* requires:
- bipartisan support
- clarification and resolution of the roles of the Metropolitan Planning Authority (or the future Victorian Planning Authority) and Infrastructure Victoria
- a whole-of-government approach
- actions to be clear, funded and allocated
- strong performance reporting, including targets and indicators
- effective partnerships with local governments, including regional governance arrangements.

Some submitters asked to be consulted about the draft implementation plan before it is finalised.

# 9 Next steps

All written submissions have now been reviewed. Feedback received will inform the development of *Plan Melbourne 2016*. The strategy will take into account state government policy, feedback from stakeholder engagement, written submissions and available research.

The Plan Melbourne refresh MAC will provide feedback to the Planning Minister on the strategy prior to its completion.

*Plan Melbourne 2016* will be completed in mid-2016.

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