

SOS Alternative Strategic Planning Mechanism

Save Our Suburbs suggests an alternative planning mechanism, based on a COMMUNITY UP STRATEGY rather than the TOP DOWN APPROACH. Planning should be initiated at a local level and integrated upwards to form an overall strategic plan. Instead of specifying where development can take place the State Government should only specify where development cannot take place. Local authorities compete with each other for available development.

The mechanism could include:

Assembly of plans should start from the local level and be integrated upwards to form an overall state strategic plan. This should be assessed against overall objectives and the differences quantified. Iterative discussions should be held with the local entities to arrive at an agreed final outcome for a state strategic plan. In more detail:

1. Councils should prepare a Local Plan much like the existing Local Environmental Plan. This must involve extensive community consultation to determine how the community sees the local area develop over the period determined by State Government as reasonable for medium term planning. Consultation should use a range of tools including as public meetings to explain the key objectives, seminars to refine ideas, opportunities for submissions, use of community and resident groups to publicise ideas and events, online surveys, deliberative meetings etc. State Government may need to commit funds to ensure participation in Council areas where there are large groups of people for whom English is a second language.
2. State Government and the Department of Planning will have already determined parameters around the number of new dwellings required, land required for employment purposes, major infrastructure etc. Councils and communities will be able to bid for this development, competing with other Councils to secure the kind of development desired by their community.
3. Local Plans will then be examined either by the Department of Planning or a suitable independent body to ensure that development requirements have been met. If there are shortfalls, Councils may bid again to meet them. If there is likely to be an oversupply iterative discussions should be held to ensure that new development is spread equitably, rather than consolidated in a few areas.
4. The Minister then makes the Local Plans. It must be clear that, once made, these Plans cannot be altered to please individual developers. They cannot be overruled by the Minister, the Department, Councils, developers or any other body. They express the will of the people as to how they want their areas to develop.
5. Regional and Sub- regional growth plans such as the Metropolitan Strategy can be prepared from the Local Plans.
6. Planning Policies will still be the framework to ensure protection of environment, heritage, endangered species and the like. These, too, must be strictly adhered to in the development and implementation of Local Plans .
7. State Significant Development will operate with absolute transparency. All proposals, whether sought by Government or brought to Government as unsolicited will be subject to major community consultation processes. If there is a clear community view, that cannot be ignored. Amendments will also be subject to consultation. This should ensure that they are not used as a form of bracket creep to change the initial concept and achieve outcomes that would not attract public approval.