

## Local Government Act Review 2015 – Submission

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I submit that:

- 1 Municipal councils should be charged with responsibility for monitoring and enforcing all VCAT conditions of permit regardless of whether or not the Council's position was supportive. This need is due to several VCAT permit decisions being only partly implemented and the desired building/environment outcomes being compromised. Both VCAT and Councils are failing under the current arrangements to ensure building developers are delivering in accordance with VCAT Conditions. This necessitates monitoring and enforcement sometimes for many years after building completion e.g. to delivery mature trees or other established vegetation required by permit conditions.
- 2 Quality assurance is re-introduced to building development through every municipal council employing a Director of Building Surveying to whom all building inspectors and builders are answerable with respect to delivering the permitted constructions via defined consultation and safety processes. The current system of private building surveyor inspectors, engaged and paid for by building developers, involves a conflict of interest whereby short cuts to engineering/building construction techniques are frequently utilised and covered up by their private surveyors, thereby inhibiting safety and other necessary outcomes for the satisfaction of public, neighbouring property owners and Councils. When complaints and permit non-compliance evidence is brought to the attention of a Council, its Director of Building Surveying should be empowered to ensure that private building surveyors enforce compliance or face heavy penalties: otherwise the intended safety standards and building design finishes will not necessarily be achieved through the system.
- 3 The recommendations from the Inner Melbourne Planning Alliance Inc (IMPA) should be made to the Local Government Act to mandate that:
  - All councils have Notice of Motion
  - All councils allow 'dissent from the chair'
  - All councils adhere to regular rotation of Audit Committee membership and council committee membership
  - All councils present live broadcasts of meetings
  - All councils publish agendas and full minutes for advisory committee meetings and that these meetings be open to the public
  - All CEO positions be advertised
  - No CEO be appointed for more than 2 consecutive contracts (ie a limit of ten years)
  - Staff Code of Conduct be published
  - Key Performance Indicators for CEO and senior staff be made public
  - Council meeting minutes include how each councillor voted
  - Provision of open, timely and evidence-based public consultation on major decisions
  - Community representation occurs on all advisory committees, and that representatives are accessible to the broader community members
  - Public questions can be addressed to and are answered by individual Councillors at Council meetings B
  - Budgets reflect community views.