

NEWS RELEASE



5 March 1999

“GATEWAY FOR GATEWAY PROJECT,” SAYS MAYOR

Port Phillip Council, Dick Gross, says that the State Government’s development plan for the foreshore, *Gateway to the Bay*, is dressed up as a strategic document but underneath is simply a design brief to ensure the erection of four towers - one on the Esplanade Hotel site in St Kilda and three in Bay Street, Port Melbourne.

“You don’t have to be Einstein to work out it represents an open invitation for developers to build high and build big - or that it appears designed to pre-empt the outcome of various planning applications for apartment towers in Port Melbourne which are shortly to be considered by the council or already lodged for appeal at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. In total, it envisages the extension of the CBD sprawl to Port Melbourne,” he said.

Cr Gross said that it was probably no coincidence that the State Government’s plan was entitled *Gateway to the Bay* when the three developers in Bay Street - TEAC Australia, Palm Lodge Pty Ltd and Samdy Nominees Pty Ltd had formed themselves into a promotional consortium called *Gateway Project*.

“The State Government is opening the gateway for developers but simultaneously blocking off the community’s,” he said.

Cr Gross said that the implications for Port Melbourne were particular worrying. “Port Phillip Council agrees that there are opportunities for medium density housing in Port Melbourne. Our new planning scheme reflects this reality. The new towers in Beacon Cove and along Beach Street are creating a new built form and identity for Port Melbourne - but this should scale down into the hinterland - not up! We’ve worked well with a number of developers in Port Melbourne such as Becton Corporation and MAB/Buxton,” he said.

Applications shortly to be considered by the council include Samdy Nominees’ plans for a twenty-three storey tower in Bay Street and a proposal for a four - fourteen

storey development at the old Envelope Factory in Bay Street. TEAC is currently appealing the council's refusal of its eighteen-storey apartment tower in Bay Street but no date has been set for the VCAT hearing.

However, Cr Gross said, he welcomed the assurances yesterday of Becton Corporation, the owner of the Esplanade Hotel site, that it intended to consult the community and the council about a future planning application for the site. In December last year, Port Phillip Council rejected its application for a thirty-eight storey building. The *Gateway to the Bay* document shows a very tall tower rising behind the Esplanade Hotel

"Port Phillip Council has invited Becton Corporation to participate in a working party with local residents and groups like the National Trust. The group will meet next month," Cr Gross said.

Cr Gross warned *Gateway to the Bay* could also set dangerous precedents for State Government interference in the legitimate planning responsibilities of local government. "If the State Government can suddenly decide to impose another arbitrary process on Port Phillip Council, which was the first metropolitan council to have its new format planning scheme approved, then God help other councils which are still slogging away to meet the requirements of the State Government's planning policy," he said.

Cr Gross added that apart from the sections on Port Melbourne and St Kilda most of the State Government plan reflects planning policies already enunciated by Port Phillip Council. As well as informing the community, Port Phillip Council plans to notify the following organisations and persons regarding its concerns about the inner Melbourne foreshore plan: the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Victorian Local Governance Association, local MPs, the Association of Bayside Municipalities, and the Cities of Melbourne, Bayside, Stonnington and Hobsons Bay.

DATES FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS: 7.30 - 9.30 PM, TUESDAY 23 MARCH, PORT MELBOURNE TOWN HALL; 7.30 - 9.30 PM, THURSDAY 25 MARCH, ST KILDA TOWN HALL

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