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New fringe suburbs will cost over \$100 billion more

The Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF), representing 19 councils, said that the state government's proposed extension of Melbourne's urban growth boundary (UGB) will exacerbate the serious backlog in public transport infrastructure across established suburbs and existing growth areas, such as Casey and Whittlesea.

The MTF submission on the proposed boundary extension highlighted that the plan to locate 47 per cent of Melbourne's growth in new fringe suburbs will cost \$102 billion more than if the same number of dwellings were accommodated in established suburbs.

MTF Chair, Cr Jackie Fristacky, said 'the UGB extension with average densities of 15 dwellings per hectare represented a low-efficiency model of land use.'

'It will exacerbate the divide between inner and outer suburbs in access to public transport and other services,' she said.

'The proposals are also inconsistent with local government planning in Casey for more compact development which does not compromise agricultural and flood-prone areas, and the Ramsar Wetlands of Westernport.'

The MTF submission argues that there is sufficient under-utilised land within established areas of Melbourne and in regional cities which should be developed. Cr Fristacky said 'there are sites across Melbourne lying dormant or under-utilised, while the government focuses on expanding the boundary.'

'The government should plan to locate people within 400 m of public transport rather than many kilometres away in the proposed growth areas.' Planning also requires adapting regional tracks to metro trains.

Cr Fristacky said that councils were also concerned about road quality. 'More people, further out, means more transport headaches in the outer suburbs and suburbs that commuters must drive through,' she said.

Cr Fristacky called on the State to work better with local governments and other stakeholders to develop sites on transport corridors. This should include around the four new rail stations to be built in 2010 and station proposed for Cranbourne East.

Media enquiries:

Cr Jackie Fristacky, Chair Metropolitan Transport Forum, 0412 597 794