



Victorian Local Governance Association

MEDIA RELEASE

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VCAT reforms welcomed, but fast tracked large developments need more time for proper assessment

A peak body representing local government councillors and community organisations, the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) has welcomed the reforms announced by VCAT President Justice Bell yesterday, but warns that a fast track for \$5 million projects will attract projects that have not been fully assessed by councils.

“While the majority of Justice Bell’s 78 recommendations will be subject to further consultation, we are concerned that the proposal to direct extra resources for a major cases list of developments worth more than \$5 million only addresses part of the problem of delays at VCAT, said Cr Rose Iser, VLGA President.

“Communities and local governments tell us that the 60 days given to local governments to assess applications is too short for what are often very complex developments. We hope that this new initiative will not see a greater number of applicants going straight to VCAT for a faster decision.

“The other reform to be implemented immediately – fee waiver guidelines to waive application fees for pensioners, concession and health care holders, students and low income earners in certain circumstances is warmly welcomed.

“We are struck by how frank and honest Justice Bell’s Report is in acknowledging the problems many of our local government and community members have had with VCAT. We are even more optimistic that rather than relying on rhetorical solutions, there are 76 other practical recommendations that communities will now be able to analyse in detail, “ Cr Iser concluded.

For further information or comment, contact Cr Rose Iser on 0414 959 427.