



Leading the Agenda in July: Optimising our Planning System 'Wrap Up'

The panel conversation was held on Friday 19 July 2019 as part of the VLGA's *Leading the Agenda* series and presented with support from our LtA partners, Pitcher Partners.

Moderated by Martine Letts, Chief Executive Officer Committee for Melbourne, the panel included:

- Associate Professor Andrew Butt, Sustainability & Urban Planning RMIT
- City of Darebin Chief Executive Officer, Sue Wilkinson
- Tania Quick, TQ Consulting

The conversation focused on a number of issues and challenges facing our planning system and offered insight into areas for potential improvement and reform.

Andrew expressed his views on the complexity of the planning system which includes the planning system having too much emphasis on project efficiency and delivery. He believes the debate needs to be on value for the community and models of collaborative governance to deliver these. The fragmentation of funding, particularly for large projects is also a barrier for good public outcomes. He would like to examine innovative funding of large-scale projects involving intergovernmental cooperation between all three tiers of government.

Sue made comment that our planning system, including its objectives and supporting regulations, has not changed over the past 25 years, but our cities and communities have changed significantly. She believes the system is reactive, with developers setting the pace due to lack of strategic leadership and direction and this lack of policy certainty is leading to conflict between stakeholders. Sue emphasized the need to create a contemporary planning system that focuses on housing diversity and affordability at local levels. The system must also address climate change risks as a shared responsibility between state and local governments, particularly in the absence of federal government leadership and action on this area.

Tania is of the view that a contemporary planning system needs to combine economic development, community development, place-making and health and wellbeing outcomes for communities. The current system fosters conflict due to its complexity and unwieldy planning schemes. This results in increased costs to councils to resolve conflicts rather than delivering outcomes. Tania highlighted the need for a risk based approach to planning with co-assessment pathways by both parties. A long-term vision with a focus on the positive benefits of increasing density of dwellings needs to be developed – something which the National Heart Foundation has developed an evidence base for.

The conversation and discussion concluded that changes need to occur with the Planning and Environment Act being a priority.

To view the video of the discussion please go to our [website](#)

Leading the Agenda in August

Digitally Transforming the Delivery of Customer Services in the Local Government Sector

Friday 16 August

11am to 1pm

Pitcher Partners

Level 13, 664 Collins Street Docklands

[REGISTRATION](#)