

23 June 2022

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To whom it may concern,

P/2021/6169 and P/2021/6170 - 621 Burwood Highway, Knoxfield

Development Victoria is pleased to provide this letter of support for our planning permit applications currently under consideration by Knox City Council, and open for public submission.

These permits relate to 621 Burwood Highway, Knoxfield – a site Development Victoria owns and is proposing to transform into a thriving new neighbourhood, open space and wetland for future residents and the local community to enjoy for years to come.

As the state's property developer and major projects agency, we create places for people. We partner with industry and community to transform ambitious ideas into reality – places like our Knoxfield project.

The Knoxfield site represents an outstanding opportunity to bring our purpose to life and deliver real benefits to the community. This includes much-needed housing in an identified part of the proposed Knox Activity Centre, and in this fast-growing part of Melbourne.

There will be homes for families, as well as couples and singles, and affordable options for those who need more choice when it comes to getting into the housing market. We're exploring social housing options as well, reflecting both need in the area as well as the Victorian Government's commitment to helping more people into their own home.

Our plans also include beautiful green open spaces, including a new wetland designed for both the local flora and fauna including the Blue-billed Duck. This development complements the vision of Knox City Council for open space in the municipality – that it be sustainable, attractive and green, enabling people to enjoy nature.

Our wetland will also create cleaner local waterways, doing the heavy lifting on water treatment for the stormwater currently flowing through our site and into Blind Creek, and will also contribute to minimising the flood risk for the existing homes and commercial/light industrial businesses.

We know there is strong local community connection to the existing dam on site. Ultimately, this dam is not effective in terms of flood control and the cleaning of drainage water before it enters Blind Creek. Furthermore, it does not provide effective protection for existing species and is currently fenced off to prevent access due to the significant safety risks it poses. It has also been assessed by experts as structurally unsound and at risk of failure.

We looked to keep the dam when we first purchased the site. Experts told us it just wasn't possible as ongoing deterioration meant significant rectification – which cannot be done without draining the dam putting the existing species at immediate risk. The rectification would also not solve the other issues with the dam, such as the flooding risks and stormwater treatment.

We want to assure the community that development of new wetlands and open spaces will be managed carefully and sensitively, to protect existing species including the Blue-billed Duck. We've released our staging plans, allowing for long-term monitoring of the species during the transition to a new, improved, safer and functional wetland.

As also outlined in our planning submission, we have extensive experience in developing wetlands and spaces where people and the environment can connect safely - places like we are proposing at Knoxfield.

We are deeply committed to the important development of this site and the opportunities and benefits we know it will bring to the local community. In doing so, we will respect the local place, the sense of community and the environment and deliver long term benefits for generations to come.

We look forward to continuing to work with Knox City Council and the community to bring this site back to life.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andre van Baalen', written in a cursive style.

Andre van Baalen
Acting Group Head, Property