



Establishing the Department for Victorian Communities (C: Epilogue)

Following the November 2006 State election DVC underwent several machinery of government changes. The key changes included:

- Amalgamation of the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs within the Victorian Multicultural Commission;
- Transfer of the Public Records Office of Victoria to the Department of Premier and Cabinet;
- Transfer of the Register of Births Deaths and Marriages from DVC to the Department for Justice;
- Transfer of the Office of the Chief Information Officer (e-government projects) to DVC – a new Citizens' Access and Transformation Division has been created; and
- Transfer of the Office of Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) from the Department of Education to DVC. The Office of Tertiary and Further Education (OTFE) has been incorporated in the expanded Local Government, Employment and Adult Education Division.

The transfer of ACFE and establishment of the Citizens' Access and Transformation Division increased the focus on learning and the focus on engagement strategies.

In July 2007 Premier Bracks resigned and Premier John Brumby formed a new Cabinet. The majority of functions from the Department for Victorian Communities were combined with a range of planning functions to form the **Department of Planning and Community Development** (DPCD), with Yehudi Blacher as Secretary.

This epilogue has been prepared for teaching purposes to accompany the cases 2009-100.1 and 2009-100.2. The assistance of Yehudi Blacher, David Adams, Louise Hill, Prue Digby, Terry Moran and Terry Healey in preparing the case studies is gratefully acknowledged, but responsibility for the accuracy of the version of events presented here lies with the author.

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Blacher described the creation of DPCD as “an exciting next step in the Government’s agenda to support the planning and building of strong, sustainable communities.”

The Department would advise and support eight Ministers, two Assisting Ministers and 12 Ministerial portfolios:

1. John Brumby, Premier of Victoria, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Veterans’ Affairs
2. Jacinta Allan, Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation (ACFE)
3. Peter Batchelor, Minister for Community Development
4. Justin Madden, Minister for Planning
5. James Merlino, Minister for Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs, Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs
6. Maxine Morand, Minister for Women’s Affairs
7. Lisa Neville, Minister for Community Services (Disability), Minister for Senior Victorians
8. Tony Robinson, Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans’ Affairs
9. Richard Wynne, Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal Affairs

The Minister for Planning, Justin Madden is the lead Minister for the Department.

The machinery of government changes included the Office of Planning and Urban Design moving into the new Department, along with Heritage Victoria and the Building and Housing Affordability Unit.

The Department of Planning and Community Development was created to build strong, active, inclusive communities, delivering improvements in urban development, particularly in the outer suburbs and in the regional areas where there is likelihood of strong population growth.

Minister Madden said: “We are building not only stronger communities but we are locating planning so that we can do the strategic work to ensure we build better and stronger communities.”

The new department will join up planning mechanisms and the community strengthening initiatives to ensure Victoria builds strong communities, not just planning subdivisions, and there will be more focus on local community priority setting.

Mr Madden said: “Our knowledge and expertise in relation to land use and planning for economic infrastructure will be joined with our knowledge and expertise about social infrastructure.”

From the early days of establishing DVC there had been considerable discussion about the importance of linking social capital ideas to ideas about land use planning infrastructure and urban development as critical drivers of active, confident and resilient communities. DPCD formalises this new agenda.