

PORT PROTECTION SHOULD DELAY CONSIDERATION OF HIGH RISE HOMES LESS THAN 300M FROM MOBIL

Save Williamstown, with the support of WNSRA, has sent a delegation to the Former Port Phillip Woollen Mill Advisory Committee's Directions Hearing today to request that the Committee's public hearings be deferred.

Save Williamstown believes that the public hearings should be deferred until the Ports and Environs Advisory Committee's recommendations have been adopted by the Victorian state government.

Last September the state government set up the Ports and Environs Advisory Committee to protect Victoria's ports against potential developments which might encroach on their ongoing operations.

This committee is reassessing existing safety buffer zones around all Victorian ports including Port Gellibrand, Williamstown.

Currently, there is a 300 metre petrochemical buffer zone around Port Gellibrand, due to the presence of a petrochemical loading dock in the port. State government authorities say that it is unsafe to build new homes within such buffer zones, as the risk to residents if there were an explosion is too high.

Therefore, any decision regarding the development of the FPPWMs will be contingent on those of PEAC'S recommendations that are adopted by the Victorian state government. As such, Save Williamstown believes that public hearings should be deferred until the situation regarding buffer zones has been clarified.

"Our ports, the largest in Australia, are growing fast. Victorian port industry jobs are hugely significant to the economic development of the state," said SW spokesperson Godfrey Moase.

"At Port Gellibrand, next to the former Woollen Mills site, two state significant port based industries are growing. Firstly, there is BAE Systems Shipbuilding, which accounts for up to 1500 local jobs (up from 300 jobs 2 years ago). Secondly, Save Williamstown understands that Mobil has plans to expand its operations.

"That is why the impact of the shipbuilding and petrochemicals Buffer zones on the Woollen Mill Site should be settled prior to any public hearings – especially since the matter of zoning is beyond the scope of the FPPWM Advisory Committee's remit.

"The government needs to consider the recommendations of the Ports and Environs Advisory Committee before considering a private developer's request for high rise high density dwellings at the Former Port Phillip Woollen Mill site."