**EASTERN HILL COALITION – POSITION PAPER**

The Eastern Hill Coalition comprises community groups and individuals who are objecting to the State Government’s decision to sell the site of the former Peter Mac Cancer hospital. The Coalition comprises:

* the East Melbourne Group
* the East Melbourne Historical Society
* the Royal Historical Society of Victoria
* the National Trust (Victoria)
* the Coalition of Residents’ & Business Associations of Melbourne
* the Lutheran Trinity Church East Melbourne
* St Peter’s Eastern Hill
* the Owners Corporation 30 St Andrews Place East Melbourne.

The Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for the Diocese of Melbourne also shares the views of the Coalition.

**The site of the former Peter Mac Cancer hospital**

The site is known as No 2 St Andrews Place. This was the registered office of the Peter MacCallum Hospital, but the site in question extends to Nos 6 and 8 St Andrews Place, to No. 12 Cathedral Place and along the length of Lansdowne Street between Cathedral Place and St Andrews Place.

The site measures 8000 plus sq. metres (approx. 2 acres) and currently comprises three major buildings: the Victor and Lotte Smorgon wing, corner Lansdowne Street and Cathedral Place; a remanent wing of St Andrew’s Hospital (the ‘Crank’ wing) facing Cathedral Place; and a modern building on the corner of Lansdowne Street and St Andrews Place. These buildings have modern infillings and a laneway runs almost the western length of the site.

The first governor of Victoria, Charles LaTrobe, saw the value of the district’s elevated position and decreed that it be set aside for the city’s most important institutions and since then the site has always been in community use: school, church and hospital.

This site has always occupied a special place for the citizens of Melbourne and the ‘special character’ of Eastern Hill has long been recognised as one of Melbourne’s most significant precincts in terms of its history and architecture. This reputation derives largely from the buildings such as the Old Treasury Building, Parliament House and the suite of government buildings on Treasury Reserve, including the old Government Printing Office, as well as the community buildings of great significance such as St Patrick’s Cathedral, St Peter’s Church, the Lutheran Church and Tasma Terrace. The area is adjoined by two of Melbourne’s finest public gardens – Treasury Gardens and the heritage-listed Fitzroy Gardens.

The site is currently protected from development by two major provisions:

1 The land is zoned Public Use – Schedule 3 (Health and Community)

2 There is also a Design and Development Overlay on the site - Schedule 13 (Parliament area), which recognised that any future development should respect the unique nature of the site.

The Government has declared the site surplus to its needs and wishes to ‘fast track’ the sale of the site. It wishes to maximize the financial return from the sale and so is proposing to:

1 Change the zoning from Public Use – Schedule 3 (Health and Community) to Mixed Use Zone

2 Remove the current Design and Development Overlay (DDO) - Schedule 13 (Parliament area), and develop a new DDO as recommended by Message Consultants.

The Message Consultants’ Report and other documentation regarding the site can be found on the website of the Department for Environment, Land, Water and Planning:

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/fast-track-government-land-service/site-list/site-list/melbourne/2-st-andrews-place,-east-melbourne>

**The Coalition’s position**

On 26 October 2017, the Coalition wrote to the Premier, Treasurer and Planning Minister objecting to the change of zoning and the removal of the DDO. The letter outlined the Coalition’s position:

1 The Coalition believes that this prominent site with its heritage, cultural and strategic importance to both Melbourne and the State requires consideration of wider criteria than just financial return when considering its sale and asked that the Government take a broader view about the use of the site.

2 The Coalition argued that the area should be considered as a whole as a significant heritage precinct, with uses and buildings that are in harmony with its overall significance, location and appearance, and achieving a high quality architectural and design outcome.

3 The Coalition proposed that the land continue to be zoned for public purposes, with existing planning controls, and that a wider review consider what uses could be made of it for educational, health, aged services or cultural purposes.

4 The Coalition also proposed that the whole area of Eastern Hill, bounded by Albert and Lansdowne Street, Treasury Gardens and Spring Street should be designated a heritage precinct of at least State significance.

As of 20 November 2017, no response to this letter has been received from the Government and no public announcement has been made regarding the future of the site.

On 15 November, Ellen Sandell, State MP, The Greens, spoke on the need to use the Peter Mac site for public purpose in Parliament. See the video here: <https://www.facebook.com/ellensandell.mp/videos/802013469985063/>

There is also an online petition: <http://www.ellensandell.com/public_sites_public_goods>