

**Community Concerns over Minister Gate-Crashing Inquiry
Protectors of Public Lands Vic Inc. Media Release March 14, 2010**

When the Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration hearing convened to hear from Peta Duke on 12 March 2010, she did not attend in answer to the summons. She had written the notorious Media Plan proposing a sham public consultation process to earn favour with the electorate. Mr Madden, who had not been summoned, sat in the chair reserved for the witness - his former Ministerial adviser - and said that he would answer questions. This was a blatant attempt to take over the inquiry being carried out by Parliament into his office's conduct.

By his crass tactics in derailing the hearing of a properly constituted committee, the Minister of Planning has tried to frustrate the accountability to Parliament of himself and his office. The Premier and the Attorney-General have supported this tactic.

This impropriety strikes at the heart of Parliamentary democracy and is a grave abuse of power.

Julianne Bell, Secretary of PPL Vic, attended the hearing. She commented:

"The Minister had the opportunity to explain himself during the nine hours of debate on the subject the previous Wednesday but chose not to attend. Why would he expect a hearing now?"

Over the last six months PPL has made extensive submissions to both the Planning Department and Heritage Victoria on proposed policy, and on planning decisions, including:

- the Review of VCAT (Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal)
- the extension of the Urban Growth Boundary
- the Mornington Peninsula Link (through Westerfolds)
- the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show in the Carlton Gardens
- the Windsor Hotel development

Any suggestion that public consultation could be treated as a sham is of grave concern to PPL disclosing as it does a cynical attitude to the people of Victoria. The actions of the Minister have now treated the Parliament, to which he is accountable, and which represents the people of Victoria, with contempt. The community expects our democracy to be respected."

Brian Walters SC, President of PPL Vic, said