



MEG NEWSLETTER FEB./MAR. 2015

From the Convenor's Desk

By now "the tears of disbelieving joy will have dried on Prince Philip's cheeks" (*Annabel Crabb..Sunday Age Feb.8*) so we can get on with the business of informing you of some of the things that are happening in the area of Planning. We have a new Minister for Planning (Hon. Richard Wynne) and a new Shadow Minister (Hon David Davis). Minister Wynne had heart surgery in December 2014 and returned to work during February. Hon. Robin Scott was Acting Minister for Planning. We hope the Planning portfolio does not prove to be too great a burden for Richard Wynne...and we hope that all of them know something about planning and that at least one of them believes that the city simply cannot keep growing. Dare we hope that one of them has a vision of a new city?

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve...Auditor General's Report

In our Sept./Oct. newsletter we told you of the damning report by the Auditor General about the management of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve by the Department of Environment & Primary Industry and the MRC Trustees. We want to follow this up with an interesting titbit from a MEG member. Geoff Westcott's grandparents lived in Glenhuntly during the early 20th century and their local park was the Racecourse Reserve. Recently Geoff found in family archives a letter to Editor from his grandfather deploring the fact that the public seemed to be excluded from the Reserve which in 1912 his grandfather called "the people's property." Geoff took the letter into the Auditor General's office and staff found a copy of it published in the Argus. At least they weren't selling 'the people's land' or developing it in 1912. It took them over 100 years to come up with that idea!

Melbourne's Growth

On Dec. 20/14 The Age reported that our growth continues to surge. Associate Professor Alan Marsh of University of Melbourne said, "...the city's residential growth was **unsustainable**. We have created an increasingly unpleasant place for people to live." On Dec.8/14 we read in The Age that developers are dumping architects to save cash. "Gardens are being scrapped, extra

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apartments squeezed in, cheaper materials used and decorative elements cast aside.” **(Sound familiar?)** Some councils have requested Minister Wynne to make it a condition of Permit that the same architect be kept on each project. Stonnington is one of the councils which has made this request.

The Greening of a City

Ross Gittins wrote on Dec.24/14 that the dark side of a city is “*insufficient grass and trees.*” We all know (or should know by now) the advantages of trees. They absorb pollution, provide a counter to the effects of heat, provide a greater sense of well-being. **Direction 4.25 in PLAN MELBOURNE** appears to encourage the retention and planting of trees.

(**Warning...you have to be slightly deranged to read PLAN MELBOURNE.**

Meanwhile Planning Ministers and Councils still allow the moonscaping of sites to make way for lumps of concrete filled with our future slums. The area in Malvern East where this is obvious is from Tooronga Rd. to Finch St. where each of the developments has resulted not only in the loss of trees but the loss of **significant trees**. The proposal for 887 Dandenong Rd. will see the destruction of 2 significant trees. Our Planning Dept. simply says that these trees “cannot be retained” while giving approval for an 8 storey, 43 apartment ‘thing’ on 540sq.m. This was refused by Councillors but not because of the loss of significant trees. (No VCAT decision on that yet!) All Planning Ministers have allowed this in the sacred name of “**urban consolidation.**”

We’ve said it before and we’ll keep on saying it...**plant a city and stop destroying the one we’ve got.**

Letters to the Editor

Letter after letter deplores the endless growth not only in the CBD but also in the suburbs. Jan.4 “**Glory days lost.**” Jan.4 “**Widespread problem**” Jan.14 “**Suburbs deluged by tasteless monoliths.**” **Open-ended growth is reckless.**” “**Public open space already limited.**” Jan 25 “**Decentralisation is the key**” Feb.10 “**Hemmed in.**”

And MEG says, “Doesn’t anyone in power ever listen to the people?”

And people in power say, “Don’t be ridiculous!”

VicRoads

You may be pleased to know that VicRoads has a list of 8 congested arterials where it hopes to improve traffic flow during 2015 by “tweaking traffic lights.” (The Age Jan.1/15) One of them is Dandenong Rd. between Oakleigh and Windsor.

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Alas, VicRoads is not going to do anything about the 5-way schemozzle at the corner of Dandenong Rd, (including the service lane) Derby Rd, Finch St & Waverley Rd. service lane. The light sequence there will remain as it is...lethal!

Dairy Bell site

No doubt you have already read about the sale of the Dairy Bell site on the corner of Belgrave & Waverley Rds. It's been sold to "Little Projects." MEG heard on the grapevine last year that the owner of "Little Projects" doesn't want any community opposition. (In his dreams!)

The site is zoned Commercial 1 and Business Age reported on Jan 31 that we can expect a medium density apartment block (we know what that means!) with lower-level shops....i.e. high at the rear where single storey houses abound and low in the front...and 'Little Projects' wants no community opposition...so help us!

The Age article refers to a number of sites Little Projects has redeveloped. One in Stonnington is a former Telstra exchange tower in Toorak Rd. near the Fun Factory.

A BIG Chadstone...a vision for Melbourne

In its latest report *Intensifying Melbourne* Melbourne University names Chadstone "as a prime location" for residential development up to 30 storeys with underground railway lines linking local stations. MEG suspects that the residents in the low-rise neighbourhood around the shopping centre might have a word or two to say about that and they'll have a chance to say those words when Council presents them with a new Structure Plan for the area.

Lane Closures?

The whole of Stonnington has a series of lanes behind the residential areas. Some of them have been closed off for years with residents either buying the area behind their homes from Council or claiming a part of the lane under adverse possession or just using it. 19 Clarence Street has advertised an adverse possession notice for the area behind that residence. Many of us would not have known that there was a connecting lane from Chanak St. to the lane that runs between Boardman & Clarence Sts.

At Council Meeting of Feb.16/15 Council refused a request from the owners of 79 Manning Rd. to discontinue the lane at the rear of the property and sell it to them. The lane also abuts 77 Manning Rd. Other property owners in the area opposed this and Council refused the discontinuance and sale of the land.

Cabrini Traffic & Parking Study

Also at Council Meeting of Feb.16 Council approved the conditions laid out in the final report from our Parking & Traffic Dept. regarding special conditions re parking in the residential streets around the hospital. This has been a sore point with residents for many years. MEG has heard on the 'ever-active' grapevine that the Glenferrie Rd. traders aren't too pleased about Cabrini Staff using the upper area of the Dryden St. carpark for unlimited free parking. Perhaps residents & traders should start talking to one another...and **then** talk to Cabrini about providing adequate parking for their staff.

VCAT

No doubt you are aware of the increased charges for appeals to VCAT. Recently we were at 55 King St. for a Merits Hearing and saw where the money has gone. The 5th floor where most of the Planning cases are heard has been transformed ...and we were told that VCAT needed the extra money just to keep on hearing the appeals! Sometimes it seems that we are NEVER to be told the truth. WHY do governments do that? They must know by now that we eventually find out the truth.

A 'VCAT' snippet from a resident of Monash Municipality...

"It seems to me that you get a fairer hearing if you've committed murder than you do if you appeal to VCAT against a developer."

And further to that...MEG has heard that if you want to be 'joined as a party' with a resident who has lodged an appeal against a Council NOD you have to pay \$980 which is the price the appellant has already paid to lodge. If you wish to be 'joined as a party' with Council you pay nothing.

Another of those 'leave you speechless' decisions.

Snippets from North & South Wards

The application by Capitol Bakery Pty.Ltd. for 57 storeys on the corner of Toorak Rd. & Chapel St. was refused by Council on Dec.15/14. The applicant already has a Permit for 43 storeys granted by VCAT. WHEN do they get to the stage of 'enough is enough?'

LendLease has started work on 590 Orrong Rd. Armadale. 448 apartments on 2.5 hectares. (Age Feb. 19)

The Quaker House at 631 Orrong Rd. is demolished and VCAT has given approval for 3 storeys of precast concrete, black glass, metal chrome blades, alucabond wall cladding & powder-coated window frames. Landscaping to be

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provided by the street trees reflected in the black glass. (Another 'leave you speechless' decision by VCAT.)

Some Armadale residents have begun a "No Confidence in Stonnington" movement. They have set up a website and Facebook page. (Leader Feb.10)

On Feb.7 The Age reported that *"the Joel family has ended its 96 year involvement with the Leonard Joel fine art business by selling its prominent South Yarra auction room to a local investor for \$8 million.."* The present business owners will stay at 333 Malvern Rd. as tenants.

Decentralisation woes.

In case you were considering a 'tree change' think again. On Feb.14 The Age reported that planning in the regions is a 'time bomb.' Professor Michael Buxton of RMIT predicts a loss of rural landscape to "a fragmented network of residential settlements " Housing on the outskirts of Bendigo and Ballarat is rampant and "a mosaic of subdivided farmland threatens food production." Planning is required to keep development inside town boundaries and within reach of public transport and services required by residents. Dwelling numbers in areas such as Woodend, Castlemaine and Kyneton are growing by 20%...the same as the big regional towns such as Bendigo. Does this sound all too familiar? Don't governments ever learn?

Planning Applications

Listed are **some** of the applications in which our members are involved and an update on some applications previously listed.

18-20 Leopold St. Glen Iris...3 storey multi-unit dev. 40 objections. Cons. Mtg. Feb.10

32 Tooronga Rd. Dual Occ. Awaiting Planner Assessment.

8 Macgregor St. Two 2 storey dwellings with garages.

18 Goode St. Dual Occ. Appeal against a NOD. VCAT hearing Jan.8. Appeal allowed. Concessions made during Mediation.

1015-1019 Dandenong Rd. Use of land as motel & emergency accomm. Permit issued.

72,74& 76 Serrell St. 61 dwellings..113 car spaces. Refusal by Councillors at Council Mtg. Dec.15/15. VCAT May 4th ..5 days.

226-228 Waverley Rd. 25 apts. & associated basement car parking. Permit issued.

1009-1011 Dandenong Rd. Multi-unit dev. Appeal against Refusal of Permit.

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383 Wattletree Rd. Multi-unit development...3 storeys,10 dwellings, basement car parking. Appeal for FTD. 11/5/15.

86 Burke Rd. Multi-unit dev with reduction in car parking requirements. 29 objections. Cons. Mtg. Fe.b.2...7.15p.m.

82 Burke Rd. Multi-unit dev. In GRZ. 3 storeys, 23 dwellings. Reduction in car **parking** requirements.

7 John St. Demolition of existing dwelling & constr. of 2 storey dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m.

64-66 Chadstone Rd. 4 two storey dwellings. Info. requested.

131-135 Waverley Rd. 4 storey mixed use dev. 29 dwellings and 2 retail spaces. Basement car parking.

32 Ferncroft Av. Constr. of new dwelling on a lot in an NCO.

4 Kingston St. 3 storeys, 13 dwellings, basement car parking in GRZ. Reduction in car parking requirements.

887 Dandenong Rd. 8 storeys...43 dwellings...reduction in car parking requirements. Refusal to Grant a Permit. Appealed. Awaiting decision.

875-879 Dandenong Rd. Application to add an extra storey onto existing Permit for 7 storeys. Reduction in car parking requirements. Refusal to Grant. Appealed. VCAT hearing March 25/15.

1(a) The Avenue & 239-241 Waverley Rd. (Cresthaven) Aged Care facility. Refusal to Grant ...Appealed...VCAT hearing...April 29th ..3 days.