



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports **PLANNING BACKLASH**

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MEG Newsletter Feb./ March 2016

From the Convenor's Desk

After our last newsletter I received an email from a MEG member saying that he hoped we would have the peace and strength to continue the work of MEG...AND he had just bought a Jacaranda and planted it! That gave me heart. Believe me, as MEG Convenor at times my nerves are sorely tested and I consider that I am slightly deranged to have taken this on in the first place and more than **slightly** deranged to continue.

It will be interesting to see what our members think. We hope that you will respond to the questionnaire which we'll send out in a few weeks and the MEG Committee will let you know what we decide to do with the Group after reading your responses. We may decide that we have done as much as we can and that you are all quite capable of handling the issues and gathering information without our help in the future.

State of Play Reports

In December 2015 MEG lodged a submission re *Plan Melbourne Refresh* the latest strategic plan for Melbourne. We know that submissions re that have not yet been read yet because we have just received an acknowledgement of DWELP's receipt of the submission. Before they even acknowledged receipt of that lot, we received yet ANOTHER load of documents from DWELP asking for submissions by Feb.29/16.

Though it's called *State of Play Reports* it's hardly that. The first 7 pages are closely typed lists of suggested changes to the ZONES. A Committee **without community representation** will eventually read the responses and make recommendations to the Minister about how to stuff it all up again. Stonnington asked for so little of the Neighbourhood Residential Zone that it's hard to see how they can make it worse for us but they've got some ideas in that endless list.

Ban on Political Donations

Ellen Sanders (Greens MLC) attempted to have a Bill banning donations to political parties debated in Parliament. Neither Labor nor Liberal would allow the debate and it died. This issue requires an open, honest discussion and it's FORBIDDEN! If there is nothing to be ashamed of why do political parties refuse to discuss the issue? Oops...we forgot! It's **because** they have something to hide.

Age Editorial on Feb.2 ...*"It's time to stop ducking and weaving on this important integrity issue. Politicians and parties that refuse to support reforms towards transparency, efficient and timely disclosure must be condemned."*

Royce Millar & Ben Schneiders said, *'...the Andrews government shows no interest in campaign funding reform or even greater transparency.'*

Alas, hardly anyone of them show any interest in the issue at all.

Warning from London

Sunday Age Dec. 15 reported that *"an ever-growing labyrinth of multi-storey basements, garages....reveal substantial damage to properties, including walls moving and cracking, doors and windows jamming, ceiling collapses, gas pipes moving and leaking, etc."* One Kensington resident was quoted ***we have witnessed the misery and complete disruptions caused by these greedy and selfish developers."***

She said it all, didn't she?

Wellbeing Tied to Green Spaces

In our last newsletter we talked about "the need for green." There are many who agree with us. There is a growing body of evidence that our physical and mental health is tied to the amount of "green space" we have around us. *"Hospital patients who have a view of some sort of nature...even a tree outside their window...recover faster and need less medication."*(Age Dec. 5/15) For this very reason the new Peter McCallum Cancer Hospital in Parkville has *"a landscaped sanctuary"* Age Feb.5.

We lost a Federal Minister for Cities due , we believe, to an accidental slip in Hong Kong but the P.M. quickly replaced him with an **Acting** Minister for Cities who also happens to be the Minister for the Environment and whose most recent thought bubble is to put a "green canopy" over all of our cities. Well, Mr. Hunt the first step in doing that is to stop wretched developers chopping down trees to make way for the soulless monstrosities that have invaded what was once 'The Garden State.' (Remember that?) The second step is to start planting trees and stop just talking about it. Where there is one tree plant another.

At an early stage as Minister for the Environment the Minister wanted to plant 20 million trees and asked for ideas. MEG suggested to him that he embark on a task of creating "green corridors" along every railway line across the country. A member of his staff responded to this about 6 months later saying that he would put the idea to the Minister. (Guess what???)

(N.B. On Feb.10 in Dubai Mr. Hunt was deemed to be the Best Minister in the World.)

Words of wisdom

A letter in the Age on Jan. 29/15 was so impressive that we thought we would tell you about it. The great-uncle of the letter-writer was Chairman of the Board of Works. In his retirement speech in 1927 he said, *"Melbourne's greatness is to be achieved only by having men of vision and a capacity for hard work at the head of affairs. Success doesn't just 'happen', it is organised, pre-empted, captured by common sense."*

Well, how about that! 88 years later we're waiting for the 'men of vision' and particularly some 'common sense.'

More Crown Land to be used for development.

It's enough to make a grown man (and woman) cry! Flemington Racecourse is situated on Crown land. The VRC with the help of a Chinese developer is to use 'surplus land' for 1100 apartments some in buildings as high as 31 storeys. State Government architect is not impressed with the plans (Age Dec. 29/15). A Planning Panel was not impressed with the density and height of the towers.

If this Crown Land that is owned by the people of Victoria is 'surplus to the needs of the VRC' it should be handed to the people who own it and they should decide how it should be used for the benefit of the community.

MEG says, "What about an Urban Forest?" And we can just hear the developers and Government muttering, "What a waste THAT would be." There's a sad lack of 'men of vision!'

More about pending sales of public land

(Age Feb.15) *"A list on the Department of Treasury and Finance website shows dozens of properties being readied for sale.The list features crown and freehold properties..."*

The sites include *"former schools, police stations, department buildings, health care sites and research facilities."* **Can you believe that the custodians of public land are even**

considering this 'fire sale' of our land?

The article includes suggestions about how this land could be used. Social housing features strongly in the list and who can argue with that? Nobody suggests that it shouldn't be sold at all. Nobody suggests that trees should be planted to give the city that 'green canopy' that is vital for the health and well-being of the citizens. Perish that thought!

"Can our city be saved from the planners and developers and polities?"

In the Age Dec. 28/15 Kenneth Davidson poses this question and MEG's response is, "It doesn't look like it."

Davidson says, *"The key requirement is that future governments abandon the 'developer-led' planning installed by the Kennett Government in 1992."*

He says that Matthew Guy followed this *"developer free-for-all"* and that Guy's "Plan Melbourne" followed the same pattern of 'gung-ho' development with the Labor Party's "Plan Melbourne Refresh" providing little improvement.

MEG would say that it provides **no improvement** and would appear to be a retrograde step. *"Lipstick on a pie"* Davidson says. Another example of private profit dictating Melbourne's development.

He wants the MMBW re-instated and the malign influence of the Department of Treasury and Finance removed. MEG wants these too and recognises that we don't have a chance in hell of getting either.

42 storeys and 56 storeys

(Age Feb.3) On two adjoining blocks in LaTrobe St. Scape Student Living is proposing purpose-built student accommodation ranging from 12.1sq.m. to 29sq.m. It will cost students \$400 a week to live in these serviced Scape towers.

RMIT Professor Tony Dalton said, *"Apartments in this price bracket would probably cater to relatively well-off students."* (Gosh! That's an insightful statement!)

12 sq.m. at \$400 a week!!! Is there no end to greed???

The Scape applications are before Minister Wynne who has said a lot about wanting better and bigger apartments.

Vacant Housing in Melbourne

Prosper Australia's 2015 Speculative Vacancies Report published last December found that there were 82,724 vacancies in Melbourne. It appears that there is a disconnect between supply and occupancy and points to a situation where land and housing are being 'hoarded.'

It was only last week that commentators were talking of a 'glut' in the apartment market. Meanwhile residents are spending time and energy trying to stop what Jane Monk (Director of MPA) said at an IMAP meeting in Nov. 2014 a 'tsunami' of residential developments.

<http://www.prosper.org.au/2015/12/09/speculative-vacancies.8/>

State hit by school shortage

This is hardly a surprise. Successive governments from Kennett onwards have diligently closed schools and sold the sites to developers. Needless to say developers have built some form of housing on those sites and people have bought dwellings. It is a mystery to us that governments do not seem to understand that people tend to procreate and that the resulting offspring require a school. We have told you before that no less than 5 school sites in the municipality of Monash were sold to developers last year. In Stonnington our remaining Primary Schools are filled to over-flowing and we **still** don't have an open entry State secondary school and haven't had one since the time of the Kennett Government. (Age Jan. 18) Minister Merlino said that no new state school will be built in 2016 but that the Government had *"dozens of new schools in the pipeline"* and went on to blame the previous government for the present lack of schools.

Council secrecy grows

(Herald Sun Feb.1) *"Victorian councils are becoming more secretive making an average of one in eight decisions behind closed doors."* Those of you who have attended any Council meetings in Stonnington during the life of the present Council will be acutely aware that debate in public rarely exists. Decisions are cut and dried before the Agenda is even made public. We don't know why they don't just publish their decisions and not bother to have a meeting which the public can attend. *(And yes...I have mentioned this to some Councillors.)* In the H.S. Jan 27 John Masanauskas reported that the Victorian Ombudsman recommended changes to encourage councils to minimise the use of closed meetings, *"Secrecy in government creates condition in which improper conduct and poor administration can flourish,"* she said.

Watchdog asked to 'ban dummy candidates'

Residents are aware that a number of candidates in Council elections are 'dummies.' Boroondara Mayor Coral Ross said *"that a large number of councillors were elected with the help of dummy running mates."* (H.S. Jan 27.) Both she and Banyule Councillor Tom Melican said that the VEC should stop including how-to-vote cards with candidate information sent to residents.

Cabrini Hospital...development site including donor wing.

Part of the large planning application (much of which is in the style of a luxury hotel) lodged by Cabrini includes a 'donor wing' with the name of the donor in lights!

On Jan. 16 the Herald Sun reported that the Smorgon family has demanded that their name be prominently displayed on the new Cancer Centre in Parkville and that the Smorgons are *"locked in an ugly spat with the Peter Mac as the hospital juggles competing demands to recognise donors at its new Parkville home."*

We wonder which donor will have his/her name blazoned across the Cabrini development. Will there be an 'ugly spat' as donors juggle for public recognition of their handouts? How

will Cabrini decide which benefactor to honour in lights for all to see? There are pages of benefactors featuring some prominent developers. One wonders why this institution needs so many benefactors when it sells a number of things...amongst which are sandwiches, coffee, tea, drugs, cosmetics, gifts, nighties and dressing gowns and services. (A couple of years ago Chemtronics alone brought in \$345 million.)

When Stonnington started on the 'zones' issue the Cabrini site was labelled '**retail.**' This was later changed to '**employment node.**' The planner for the development told a number of us that "*we are an **institution** and we can do whatever we like.*" So what exactly is it?

Elevated rail causing angst

Residents who live in the vicinity of 10 stations going out along the Dandenong line from Carnegie are up in arms about the lack of consultation. On Feb 7 the Age reported that the Government touts the advantages of Sky Rail while residents oppose it. It is reported that not all residents oppose it but most are angry about the lack of communication. They are aware that the pretty pictures of the single train with a blue cover and small children playing in the spotlessly clean parks underneath are not exactly what will happen. (Bit like the montages that developers produce with not a person nor car to be seen on busy roads and lots of leafy trees surrounding the monstrosity they propose.) On radio last week Robert Doyle was scathing of the elevated lines saying that the spaces underneath simply don't work and that they are drab, unuseable spaces. Residents cite more noise, more visual clutter and want the lines to go underground as they have at the Burke Rd. crossing in Glen Iris.

For information from residents opposed to elevated rail www.noskyrailpakenhamline.com

Local snippets

Confidential Business

Listed under Confidential Business in Council Agenda Dec.14/15 is the following Item....
Penpraze Park Land Swap Request. For those of you who don't know, Penpraze Park is a Council Park behind Malvern Primary School. **You** own it....and it's a mystery!

Council Elections 2016

Victorian Council Elections will be held on October 22/16. At its meeting on Feb.7/16 Council decided to have Postal voting this year.

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Chadstone Shopping Centre

On Feb. 2 a Consultative Mtg was held re tenancies in the new building on the northern side of the Centre intending to have liquor licences till 1a.m.. Apparently the owners don't need to lodge a Planning Application for this. Please don't ask us why. Ask Council!

And more about CSC

Rumour hath it that homeless people are sleeping in the Centre at night. Can anyone verify this?

Prices for parking at Monash Caulfield

Students are now required to pay considerably more to use the car parks at all Monash Campuses. For a single student the charge has zoomed to \$400 a year. It's much less if

students car pool. Those of us who live in the vicinity of Monash Caulfield can look forward to even more crowded residential streets as even more students park for nothing.

High St. with a 40k limit

The mindless ones at VicRoads have decreed that from a point east of Tooronga Rd. to St. Kilda Rd. is now a 40k limit. It's called an 'overkill.' It's no use complaining to Council. They have no jurisdiction over major roads.

781-805 & 807 Dandenong Rd.

This is the site of the dreaded 18 storey thing. We have heard that the last tenant is packing up. Bensons Fund Management had a prolonged dispute with 'Body in Balance' which, we're happy to say, Bensons lost at VCAT but it appears that they've come to some arrangement now and the hell for residents will begin. First they have to destroy (that's what developers do!) and then they have to dig the basement. Ask the residents around Chadstone ...ask the residents in the area from Clarence St. to Finch St. ...what happens when this begins. While they're digging down, the surrounding homes shake and things become dislodged and residents are distraught and developers don't care! MEG advises all residents to take photos of the interior of every room in their homes. If there's any damage done to your home during construction you must have evidence in order to get compensation for repairs.

857 Dandenong Rd.

Some of you will remember the prolonged campaign against this development on the corner of Dandenong Rd. and Clarence St. After no less than 3 VCAT hearings the thing has finally been built and is no longer 857 Dandenong Rd. It now has a much swisher address....It's **2A Clarence St.** We're sure Clarence St. residents are delighted about this wonderful addition to their street!

Cabrini Health fined \$50,000

(Leader Feb.9) A cleaner wheeling an overloaded cardboard waste bin knocked a woman over in an elevator foyer on July 30/15. The victim suffered head injuries and a fractured hip. The Leader reported that Work Safe said allowing an employee to navigate a 660litre overloaded bin created a risk. MEG has heard on the grapevine that Cabrini has been sacking staff in recent months and that parts of the hospital are being closed at night to save costs. We've heard that March 25 is D-Day for some staff. Anyone know anything about that?

MacGregor St. properties cleaned up at last....much to the relief of residents

Despite orders to clean up the owner(s) of 2 Macgregor St. properties failed to do so and Council finally issued an enforcement notice. The Macgregor St. properties were being used as rubbish tips.

After a hearing at the Magistrates Court and a return to the Court in December the owners of the properties still hadn't got rid of the rubbish so Council stepped in and did a clean-up at a cost of \$18,000. (Leader Feb.9) When one or both properties are sold Council will be re-imbursed.

Planning Applications

Listed are some of the applications in which MEG members are involved. There is a number of pt. dem., alterations & additions in Heritage Overlays which we have not listed.

LISTED VCAT HEARINGS

29 Kardella St. Removal of trees, constr. of new dwelling & fence. Against Decision to Grant. Feb. 29

84 Burke Rd. Constr. of multi-dwelling development. Against Refusal of Permit. Mar.29

60,60A &60B Belgrave (Dairy Bell) Multi-dwelling dev. Against Refusal of Permit. April 26

267 &269-271 Waverley Rd. Amendment to Pl. Permit. Against FTD May 4.

3 Wattle Gr. Dual Occ. Against Refusal of Permit. May 19

519-531A High St. Prahran East. 7 storeys, 62 dwellings, basement car park with 77 car spaces & 33 bicycle spaces, shops. Appeal to VCAT for FTD. Pl.Dept. Refusal to Grant. VCAT May 6/16.

8 Kerferd St. Pt. dem., alterations & addns to dwelling in H.O. Against Decision to Grant. June 14

118 Finch St. Pt. dem.. bldg.. & works to dwelling in H.O. Against Conditions. June 17.

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1009-1011 Dandenong Rd. 5 storeys, 31 dwellings, basement parking for 27 cars. Decision deferred at Council Meeting Feb. 7/16.

865-871 Dandenong Rd. 8 storeys. Amended plans lodged. Reduction in no. of apts from 47 to 38, reconfiguration of dwelling layout and basement layout. Full compliance with Best Practice Daylight requirements not possible. Increased setback from St. Johns Lane. Have done the best they can! (Has Council has given the applicants some ideas re how to get a Permit?)

65 Argyll St. Dual occ. In NRZ

13 Sycamore St. Dual Occ.

33 Midlothian St. Dual occ.

71-73 Chadstone Rd. Change of use to Veterinary Clinic.

6 Darling Rd. Constr. of multi-dwelling in GRZ & reduction in car pkg requirements.

114-116 Argyll St. Constr. of 10 dwellings. VCAT Jan 11. Permit refused by VCAT.

207-213 Waverley Rd. (Cnr of Emo Rd.) 5 storeys, 66 apts, 2 shops, 2 level basement car pkg. 68 spaces. On advertising.

19-23 Waverley Rd. 4 storey restaurant with caretaker's flat. 3 car spaces. 247 patrons and liquor licence from 7a.m. to 11p.m. Amended plans with setbacks from dwellings at the rear, reduction of number of patrons to 207 and liquor licence from 11a.m. to 11p.m. Recommendation to Grant Permit Council Mtg. Feb.7/16.

519-531A High St. Prahran East 7 storeys

28 Midlothian St. Dual occ. In GRZ.

547 Waverly Rd. 3 storey bldg. with 2 dwellings and 2 storey bldg. for 1 dwelling in GRZ.

10A Quentin Rd. First floor extension to dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m. One of a pair. On advertising.

615 Waverley Rd. Multi-dwelling development in GRZ. 3 storeys, basement car pkg. On advertising.

22 Millewa Av. Constr. of two 2 storey dwellings.

51 Chadstone Rd. Construction of second dwelling on site.

Don't forget to do your bit by the environment. Plant a tree for 2016...or even a bush!