



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports **PLANNING BACKLASH**

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MEG NEWSLETTER JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017

From the Convenor's Desk

I would love to say that 'it's a New Year with New News' but it's not! State Government and developers continue their relentless crusade against what was once an iconic Victorian city and it was with a certain degree of astonishment that we read in the H.S. on Nov.29/16 ex-Premier Jeff Kennett agreeing with us. He bemoaned the loss of '*so many of our great buildings*' and '*the changes in our suburbs..*'

Damnit! HE started it and every State Government since has added to his legacy.

The planning policies of the Kennett Government gave impetus to the rise of residents' groups which vigorously opposed the destruction of our city and suburbs.

Kennett says, "*It breaks my heart to see so many wonderful homes destroyed.*"

Well, Mr. Kennett, it breaks ours too. If only you had listened to 'the people' when you were in Government this would never have happened!

(Do you think he reads the MEG newsletter?)

If anyone would like to borrow my copy of "Suburban Backlash" by Professor Miles Lewis let me know.

Another rant from me.....No sooner had we sent out our last newsletter than I read in the H.S. on Nov.14/17 that Matthew Guy had set up a Victorian Population Task Force and he said his Government will have incentives for people to POPULATE VICTORIA.

Gad!!! I cannot tell you how often I have said to anyone who would not disappear the moment I open my mouth is "what we need is strategically-directed incentive-driven decentralisation."

I have heard on the grapevine that the Task Force doesn't like the term 'decentralisation.' They prefer 'disbursement of population.' I don't care WHAT they call it. I wish someone (anyone) would just DO it! It was reported in The Age on Dec.6/16 that Victoria has become Australia's most centralised State.

Oh, the irony of it!

We read in the newsletter of the Malvern Historical Society that on Nov.15/2016 that Minister Wynne had launched a book entitled "Remembering Melbourne 1850-1960."

In The Age on Nov.18 Clay Lucas said *"it could rightly be called 'Melbourne Lost.'* Meanwhile the same Minister for Planning gave the nod to a 70 storey tower in Latrobe St. yet again breaking his own rules re height and density and severely impacting residents in neighbouring developments who were not consulted.

Vacant dwellings in Melbourne...AND... a possible solution

We have told you before about the speculative vacancy rates in Melbourne. In February 2016 'Prosper Australia' reported that there were 82,724 empty dwellings in this city. Vancouver just might have the answer to this practice of 'hoarding for profit.' The Financial Post reported in November 2016 that the owners of empty dwellings would have to pay an annual tax of \$10,000 and if a property is vacant and the owner seeks to hide the fact he/she will be hit with a \$10,000 fine as well as the tax.. Vancouver has a mere 20,000 empty properties.

"A city scarred by each little loss"

Monica Dux writing the The Age on Nov.26/'16 bemoaned the destruction of the Corkman Hotel and pointed to *"a constant struggle between the interests of progress and conservation."* She wrote that *"a city can die an incremental death as little things that define it are lost, bit by bit...."* She goes on to say that *"what matters is the context, the contribution that each house makes to the wider streetscape and the meaning that the surrounding community bestows upon it. When we lose that we not only lose just the character, but our connection to history."* Now let's tell all of that to State Government and VCAT!

VCAT hearings...2,781 cases

In the H.S. on Nov.28/'16 John Masanauskas reported that VCAT dealt with developments worth \$20billion during 2016. Glen Eira had the most applications decided by VCAT 149, followed by Bayside 144, Moreland 139, Yarra 137, Boroondara 111, Monash and Stonnington 108.

Reform of VCAT

At the December 2015 meeting of Fitzroy Residents' Association Professor Miles Lewis presented a paper re reforming VCAT. Much has been said about this in this century and, by degrees, VCAT has become not just the 'de facto' planning authority of the State but **THE Planning Authority.**

Miles wrote that *"The present operation of VCAT is illogical and wasteful."* He says that *"it should be the monitor of the planning system as originally intended, not a responsible authority or generator of planning policy."*

We don't know how often this has been said to successive Judges of the Supreme Court who have headed VCAT, to Attorneys General, to Planning Ministers and the only action that has been taken is increases in prices to the point of charging objectors to **speak** at a hearing.

It beggars belief!

Did you know about the bonus scheme for developers?

State Government has approved a bonus scheme for developers to build higher and even higher if they provide “ill-defined public benefits.” (Age Dec. 11/’16.

Professor Michael Buxton declares that *“the public benefit seemed to be the Minister’s appreciation for the tower design.”* He wrote that *“Wynne ignored an independent review panel’s recommendation to abandon the bonus scheme. His failure to provide reasons **shows contempt** for the panel and the public.”*

Problems of faulty buildings

We have seen a number of reports regarding shoddy building practices. It’s time something was done. We believe that any legislation the Government might bring in should contain a retrospective clause. Flaws mentioned in various reports include leaking building syndrome causing mould to form, major fire risks due to the use of combustible cladding, apartments below minimum energy efficiency standards causing deadly heat stress in summer, concrete cancer....the list is endless.

The Age Dec. 18/’16 asserted that a lack of government oversight has allowed flawed buildings to proliferate. In The Age Editorial on Dec. 20/’16 we read that the President of the Builders’ Collective of Australia *“has warned that developers who put profits before safety will trigger an endemic failure of the building industry.”* On Jan.16/’17 Aisha Dow reported that *“The Victorian Building Authority has announced that it will hold an inquiry.”*

That’s right...**another enquiry!**

Better Apartments

(The Age Jan.13) The new guidelines for apartments are to be published in March 2017. Minister Wynne told the CCC of Planning Backlash that he “had been persuaded” not to include minimum apartment size requirement in the guidelines. (Guess who had ‘persuaded’ him!)

We wonder if anyone has told Minister Wynne that banks are refusing loans to people buying ‘off the plan” if the apartment is less than 50sq.m. Looks as if the banks might be making a major change to the ‘guidelines.’

Incidentally, that’s all they are ...i.e. ‘guidelines.’ There are no mandatory requirements.

other than the fact that no loans without a minimum size requirement.

On the Local Scene

Indoor stadium to replace Chadstone Bowling Club???

On Dec.5/’16 Council voted to spend \$100,000 on a feasibility study for a new 4 court stadium on the site of the Bowling Club on Chadstone Rd. Members of the Bowling and Recreation Clubs were informed of this a few days prior to the meeting on December 5.

Council had discussed the proposal in Confidential Business on November 21.

The vote on Dec.5 has resulted in an angry response from members of the Bowling Club and apparent delight from members of the Prahran Netball Association.

51 sites had already been investigated for the stadium and none met all of the criteria for such a large development....including what is now the preferred site on Chadstone Rd. One criterion requires that *"the current sporting users would not be displaced."* Does Council consider that the current users of the Bowling Club would be able to use the netball courts in the stadium or perhaps the roof of the stadium for bowling?

The stadium will cost \$25 million. Federal Government has already promised \$4million.

Amazing what goes on "behind closed doors" isn't it?

Gardiner Park Redevelopment

Another hot topic on the local scene is one that was approved by the previous Council in July 2016. Work was to commence in January 2017. Council had approved a synthetic grass oval and re-location of a new and larger pavilion on the side of the park where most of the residences are.

Irate residents managed to persuade 2 new East Ward Councillors to put forward a "stay of execution" motion at Council Meeting on December 19 so that the 'new' Council could review the July '16 decision.

Always a 'hot' issue....Cabrini Hospital.

The Leader announced on Nov.15 that the \$120 million dollar 7 storey building on the corner of Wattletree and Isabella would proceed with a VCAT approval and no concessions to residents. MEG has already reported this only we said it was an \$80 million project and we got that figure from the application form so we're not too sure where the extra \$40 million figure came from. Escalating costs???

Recent information is that due to Cabrini's past lack of consideration for the nearby residents with relation to construction noise and 'out of hours' construction' at the request of a resident Council has spoken to senior management of Cabrini and informed them of their obligations during the extended construction period. How many years ?? Who knows??

Gandel sues Myer....again!

Business Age on Dec. 24 reported that a writ has been issued against Myer for \$19.4 million in unpaid rent. This is a long-running dispute regarding the drafting of the lease by Myer.

'The action was taken by Mr. Gandel's company Bridgehead and Perpetual which is the trustee for Vicinity Centres which owns the other half of Chadstone.' (SO complicated!)

We thought the matter of Myer owing rent to Gandel had been settled but apparently not.

Apartments at shopping centres

Bus. Age Dec. 10/'16 Vicinity (part-owner of Chadstone) has a Permit to build 540 apartments at The Glen shopping centre. These will be in 13 storey towers.

"In September Vicinity said it had temporarily ruled out building apartments at CSC but it has mooted that thousands of apartments, a university, hotel and medical hub at Highpoint."

We wonder how **temporary** is the ruling out of apartments at Chadstone!

Discontinuance of road abutting 14 Camira St.

Council advertised in The Leader on Nov.22 that is proposing to sell the part of the road abutting 14 Camira to the adjoining owner. Submissions were due on Dec. 22/'16.

Community Gathering ...Caulfield Recreation Reserve..

Wednesday February 15...6-8p.m.

Come with us and join Glen Eira Residents' Association on the 54 hectares of Crown Land that we all own and which is set aside for purposes of a racecourse, public recreation ground and public park. Residents are calling for Minister d'Ambrosia to dismiss the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust and open the land for sporting and recreation activities. For years residents have been waiting for action...and still we wait.

Amendment C223... Activity Centre...Glenferrie & Wattletrees Rds & High St.Armadale

Council received 224 submissions from residents re this Amendment. 82 of these were pro formas. (MEG suggests that is more effective to lodge one's own thoughts rather than just signing a pro forma) The amount of opposition to the Amendment as proposed by the previous Council required the new Council to undertake further consultation with interested parties.

To ensure that there is time for this Council has requested that the Panel hearing be moved from February 2017 to June 2017.

Other matters We can't report on everything we hear but there are a few issues of relevance to residents in certain areas of Malvern East that we should let you know about.

Keep your eye on the progress of **Sky Rail** which adversely affects so many residents and also keep informed of the **Murrumbeena to Malvern Flood Mitigation Project**. A new stormwater drain will be installed from The Rialto in Malvern East to Bute St. Murrumbeena. Investigations will start in January 2017 and there will be noise, removal and pruning of some trees and construction noise during the day. Investigations of critical issues in and around Waverley Rd. and Princes Highway may need to be performed during the night to minimise traffic disruption. Residents will be notified. And on the grapevine we hear that the Trustees of **Cresthaven** will

decide in March if the approved and enlarged development will proceed. Nothing will be done before September 2017.

Planning Applications

We hope you understand that it's difficult to track down applications and absolutely hopeless trying to find Upcoming VCAT Appeals & Consultative Mtgs since Council changed its online system. We have done our best!

728 Waverley Rd. Construction of part 3 storey, part 4 storey apt. bldg.. with 12 dwellings, 13 car spaces in basement. Cons. Mtg. held in December '16.

730 Waverley Rd. Reduction in car pkg. req. associated with use of site as a massage parlour (as of right) and bus. sign in Commercial Zone 1.

67 Manning Rd. Construction of second dwelling.

1 Derrill Av. Malvern Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of new dwelling in H.O.

30 Findon St. Ext. to dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m. in NRZ.

1458 High St. Glen Iris...Multi-dwelling dev. In GRZ & reduction in car pkg. req.

42 B Darling Rd. Alt. to existing dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m. in GRZ10. Part dem. and re-modelling of ground & 1st floor. Add loft in roof.

3 Clarence St. Addition to family room and division of house into 2 dwellings.

945-947 Dandenong Rd. (old Masonic Temple)...application for 6 storey building for purpose-built Student Accommodation. Lapsed.

10 Warley Rd. Pt. dem. additions & alterations with a 1st floor on a lot less than 500sq.m. in a H.O.

55 Emo Rd. Dual occ. in NRZ.3

31 Burke Rd. Pt. dem., bldg. & works in. H.O.

48 Darling Rd. Two 2 storey dwellings.

280 Waverley Rd. (Beside Clancy's Bakery) Dem. of existing bldg.. in H.O. Constr. of 4 storey bldg. with restaurant for 200 patrons at ground level & 17 dwellings above. 18 car spaces for residents in car stackers. No visitor pkg.

Appeal lodged for FTD. Compulsory Conference March 4/17.

109 Waverley Rd. BYO Permit for existing restaurant.

13 Glenbrook Av. Single house in NCO, Permit Refused. Appeal lodged. VCAT hearing June 7/17.

5 Durward Rd. Two 2 storey dwellings in NRZ. Called up by Councillor.

102. 104 & 106 Burke Rd. 3 storey multi-dwelling development and reduction in visitor car parking requirements.