



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

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MEG Newsletter.....January/February 2019

From the Convenor's Desk

I seem to spend a large part of my life being AGHAST and what we send out in this newsletter shows the reasons for my "aghastness." (*Is there such a word?*) From "a stadium in a park" (in a municipality with so little **open space** per capita) to the hundreds of buildings in Melbourne with flammable cladding (*at least 5 of those in Stonnington*) and most things in between I spend much of my time in a state of utter bewilderment that governments at all levels can get away with what they do ...AND appear to be so VIRTUOUS in the process. Beggars belief!

Wynne may tweak CBD controls

The Age Dec.22/18 This Minister put controls on the height of developments in the CBD and, no sooner is he re-elected, than he proposes to whip them off. "*The provisions (existing) limit the height of new buildings by restricting the ratio of total floor area in the building compared to the size of the site.....BUT.....Mr Wynne revealed he had made the decision (i.e. to tweak) AFTER industry bodies, including the Property Council of Australia, raised their concerns.*" SO good that the Property Council has such influence. This 'tweaking' will allow more flexibility in the planning rules. Just what we need!

Cladding issues

We can't count the times we have mentioned this issue over a number of years and although hundreds of buildings (at least 5 of those in Stonnington) have been identified as having flammable cladding little has been done to force remediation. (Oops! Sorry! A committee was formed.) Now it's reported that all Planning Ministers in Australia have demanded a ban on the import of flammable cladding...**BUT NOT JUST YET!** On Feb.9 The Age reported that the proposal "***will now be subject to a cost-benefit analysis. A report is expected in time for the next building ministers' forum in July.***"

It seems that the lack of action re compulsory removal of the flammable cladding in the identified buildings is the confusion about who is to pay for the removal. MEG's view is that State Government could fund this vital project and then bill the appropriate body, whether that is the developer, builder, owner, body corp. or whoever and it should be done BEFORE there is another building bursting into flames.

Didn't Nero fiddle while Rome burned?

Is the Planning Minister 'tweaking' while Melbourne's towers burn?

Why won't State Government release the list of endangered buildings?

Cracks in Sydney's Opal Tower.....Could it happen here?

Well of course it could happen here! After the Opal Tower cracked on Christmas Eve and tenants were evacuated a subsequent independent report ordered by the NSW Government found *"while the building was structurally sound, horizontal support beams were of inferior strength and were non-compliant."* (Guardian Dec.26) The term '**non-compliant**' will haunt the construction industry for years. Buyer beware!

Fire in buildings with flammable cladding made worse by overcrowding

H.S. Feb.5 ... A report on the fire in the Neo200 building revealed that *"some units were dangerously overcrowded."* Overcrowding can hinder safe evacuation and slow down the firefighters. One long-term resident said that *"the tower's overcrowded flats were a tinder box."* Apparently over-crowding is illegal but Council officers are prevented from inspecting units by the difficulty in accessing buildings such as Neo200. Another danger factor is the practice of covering smoke alarms with plastic.

In a Letter to the Editor of The Age on Feb.7 *"Overcrowding is common in suburbs that are popular with international backpackers and students. Accommodation agencies rent by the bed, offering cheap deals to young foreigners and huge rental returns to owners and agents."* MEG has reported in previous years that this has occurred around the Holmesglen and Monash Caulfield areas. We have no recent reports.

Flammable cladding to be removed....from SCHOOLS!

H.S. Jan.25 *"16 multi-storey Victorian government school buildings were identified as having the highly flammable materials....."* The Department would not disclose which schools *"due to the risk of arson."* A spokeswoman for the Dept. said *"We are removing non-compliant cladding identified at 13 schools...."* (MEG wonders what is happening to the other 3!) DELWP (Minister Wynne's Dept.) released figures in January and indicated *"that it was likely that cladding would have to be removed from many of the **44 buildings** deemed to be at greatest risk."*

Homelessnessa sign of our times

Adam Carey wrote in The Age on Jan 25 that *"our hidden homelessness crisis grows."* The Productivity Commission *"underlined how badly Victoria is failing many of its most vulnerable citizens. Almost 40% of those who went to homelessness services for help were turned away last year."* BUT DO NOT DESPAIR! *"Acting Minister for Housing Lily d'Ambrosia said the state government had made significant investments in updating housing stock and was working closely with community housing, local government and the private sector to develop long-term solutions to the social housing shortage."* No doubt those in need of a place to lay their weary heads must be filled with hope to hear that!

Monique Hore reported in the H.S. on Jan.22 that *"Victoria is spending half the national average per person on social housing.....the expenditure equates to just \$82.94 per Victorian compared with the national average of \$166.93n per person."* Shame on State Government!

And there's more about this crisis

On Feb.14 Miki Perkins wrote in The Age that *"Fifty homelessness and family violence organisations in Melbourne will no longer refer people to unsafe and squalid motels and boarding houses as a form of emergency housing."* These services have launched a report

called "A Crisis in Crisis." *In 2018 \$2.5million in public funds had been used to house 9000 households in substandard housing. In Victoria there are only 423 government funded crisis beds.* An example of the use of these funds was cited..."*A mother and 3 children were housed in a motel room, no kitchen, 3 beds at a cost of \$700 for one week.*" 3 of the motels were named in the report. One charged between \$90-\$120 a night!

Victoria's the place to be

The Age Dec.21/18 *"More than 5000 residents left NSW in the three months to June, with 21,000 leaving in 2017-2018...the fastest rate since 2008. Most of them went to Victoria..."*

Royalauto Feb.-Mar. 2019

Our attention was drawn to a comprehensive article on decentralisation in this edition of Royalauto. **"The Rural Dilemma"** discusses the 'pros and cons.' The challenge of populating our STATE instead of endlessly populating Melbourne is *"at the centre of the state's political and economic conversation"* and in The Age on Feb.17 an article **"Will we never learn? Urban sprawl is not the answer"** explores the same issue.....and looking at the present state of infrastructure deficiencies in Melbourne MEG wholeheartedly agrees.

On Jan.4 ... Letters to the Editor

Under the heading, **"Trees not densification"** we read that trees have a multitude of uses. The writer was agreeing with what **economist** Ross Gittons had written in The Age on Jan2. Dr.Dimity Williams of 'Doctors for the Environment' referred to the article by Gittons saying that now than an **economist** (no less) had pointed out the health and aesthetic benefits of trees various levels of government might sit up and take notice. She said that *"we need a commitment to more parks.. (From MEG...hopefully without huge buildings dumped on them!)...to cool us down during heat waves, improve our mental health, clean our air and make us happier. **How can that not be a priority?"***

Little does Dr.Williams know about the ACTUAL priorities of the various levels government.

And NOW we have a doctor AND an economist agreeing with us!

LOCAL NEWS

Breaking News.... 803 Dandenong Rd. ...Sebel Hotel

MEG received an email from Andrew Dixon about the 18 storey thing on the corner of Dandenong & Tooronga Rds. That's the building that so many of you have commented on and one that was fought for 2 long weeks at VCAT.....and for months before the hearing! It's the one that is 'bang up' against single storey homes. It's the one that stands out like a vast sore thumb in Malvern East...a monument to greed. It's the one that received a Permit for 332 apartments, 10 of which are supposed to be 'home offices' and 3 shops. Apparently a part of it is now the **Sebel Hotel**. It seems that they didn't sell all of the apartments so without so much as a *'by your leave'* 90 of them became a hotel. Below are a few snippets from the website. You'll just love these! The reviews are interesting too!

Luxury stay in Malvern East awaits you at the Sebel Melbourne Malvern.

Luna Park and St. Kilda beach are in the area. Other places in the area of this 4.5 star Malvern East property include Royal Botanical Gardens and Melbourne Cricket Ground. It's located in picturesque Malvern. Stylish and exquisitely serviced apartments provide all the comforts of home. It's in close proximity to Melbourne

CBD, Monash University, Caulfield Racecourse and Chadstone Mall.

One bedroom apartment \$199 per night, two bedroom \$259.

(Don't you just LOVE it?)

Surprised? Neighbours were surprised! Council was surprised when we reported this "change of use" without a Permit. Planning Enforcement Officers are checking out every little bit of that development as we write this newsletter.

Saga of the 'stadium in a park'

Two members of the MEG Committee and a number of residents attended the VCAT hearing on January 29 regarding a resident's request for Council to release under FOI two documents regarding this proposal. We are in awe of the amount of work Jenny Lawlor and Denise Wallish have put into this case and we are appalled at Council's strenuous efforts to stop the release of the documents. We are also angry at the amount of money Council is spending to stop residents accessing the documents...and we say yet once again **...WHAT IS COUNCIL HIDING** and **WHAT IS IT COSTING US TO KEEP IT HIDDEN FROM OUR PRYING EYES?**

The barrister presenting Council's case at the hearing had a plethora of cases showing precedents of Supreme Court decisions not allowing certain documents to be released under FOI. These were considered by the Member to be irrelevant to this case and he gave the **expensive** barrister another 2 weeks to see if he could find something that had some relation to the actual case before him. About 6 weeks after receiving that information the Member will issue his report and decision.

Draft Master Plan for Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park

This document is out for 3 weeks of consultation with the community. The stadium is there along with a new clubhouse for the Bowls & Recreation club to be built on the existing site (the moment this eminently suitable one is demolished!) ,extra bowling greens, upgrading of all facilities, loss of trees ...no road through the park ...(how the very **thought** of a road in the park ever got into the picture we'll never know)... **so much in a PARK!!** We have asked Council officers why there has never been a box to tick that would allow us to say "**no stadium in a park**" and it's the one question to which we cannot get a reply. Surprised?? We can't help but wonder if the decision was made by the previous Council in **Confidential Business**. We heard at a recent meeting that after an election Councillors are taken on a bus ride around the municipality and told what's happening in Stonnington and among the projects they were told about on the 2016 bus ride was the proposed **stadium in a park**. **So was it a 'done deal' prior to the last Council election and someone had forgotten to tell the ratepayers about it?**

Stonnington Leader reported on Jan.8 that "*outraged residents*" have demanded an inquiry into Council's decision to build a **stadium in a park**. MEG understands that no such investigation is underway.

Cost blowout

On Feb.12 the Stonnington Leader reported that the "*early costs put the build at \$25 million.*" MEG can report that the cost is \$45 million and rising. Council says that this is because more is being done at Percy Treyvaud Park. The Leader article quotes the CEO (who will soon leave this mess to a new CEO) as saying "*the \$44.6 million stadium should be seen as an investment in quality facilities in the municipality and the project was partly paid*

for by the state and federal governments.” MEG is aware that the Federal member for Higgins (soon to be no longer in that role) has promised \$4million towards a stadium. Will that still be forthcoming with a new Member for Higgins? Who knows! We are not aware of any funds promised by the State Government.

All of this is on top of \$65 million for the Cato St. development, \$19 million for upgrading facilities at Toorak Park...more millions to upgrade Harold Holt Pool, Gardiner Park, Union St. tennis courts.....lots of 'high cost' Council projects on the way and a leap of \$20 million in the cost for Percy Treyvaud Park! **Your rates at work!**

Here's a twist to the 'stadium' saga

A resident has lodged an application to have Percy Treyvaud Memorial park listed as a place of "Significant Community and Historical Importance." He is seeking on behalf of all of us "*a determination that the park and the land associated with it has significant cultural and historical benefit for the community and therefore should not be altered in any way.*"

An application from Melbourne City Council to pave a large area of the heritage-listed Fawkner Park for sports courts gave rise to the possibility of our very own Memorial Park being also a "heritage" place. Melbourne C.C. is the Management Committee for Fawkner Park but cannot make any changes to it without permission of Heritage Victoria. Could that happen to OUR park? Dean Hurlston has set the ball rolling and we will follow the path of this application with great interest.

HOW can we get Heritage Victoria interested in the listing of OUR Memorial Park?

\$80 million dollar development adjacent to Malvern Station

Leader Dec.18/18 This proposal is for 2 towers, one of 10 storeys and the other a mere 17...(MEG *thinks developers must be losing their touch...they could have had 18 to match the one at 803 Dandenong Rd.*) Planning Panels Victoria recommended 6, 8 & 10 storeys at various points on this site. That's State Government telling this developer what height he can have and clearly he's thought it through and decided, "*What's 7 storeys between friends? I'll make it 17 and see how we go!*" Unbelievable!

Worst stations for sex attack surge

On Jan.26 Saturday's Age listed the worst stations in Melbourne for assaults with a percentage change from September 2017 to September 2018 and **Caulfield Station** was on the list. 14 assaults occurred at Caulfield during that period and that was up 133%. We have heard on the grapevine that Caulfield is a venue for the sale of drugs. Protective Services Officers are on duty at Caulfield Station!

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve

At a meeting on Dec.13/18 Trust chairman reported that the Trust had inherited advanced negotiations regarding the MRC's lease of the Reserve and, apparently, that's why the rent is not at commercial rates. He was asked when training would be re-located and he assured residents that the agreement was "within 5 years!" (Couldn't say WHEN within those 5 years.) The Trust will appoint a General Manager of this project and in January 2019 that position was advertised at a salary for of \$167,000 a year for 2 years. The income of the Trust is \$375,000 in rent from the MRC and a Government grant of \$250,000 annually.

Cabrini Hospital

It's revealed....all 7 storeys of it in a residential street. The bars across 7 storeys of windows are louvres....i.e. just in case you might have thought they were incorporated into the design in order to keep the paying guests inside! Driving east along Wattletree Rd. the GANDEL WING sign can be seen in stark white contrast to the apparently smaller and barely seen red Cabrini sign. (MEG wonders why there is no Gandel sign on Chadstone!)

Skyrail to ease notorious Toorak Road bottleneck

The elevated line will be 550m long between Kooyong and Tooronga stations. There was no community consultation and Stonnington Council has called for an urgent meeting with State Government. The day this project was announced the Premier was heard on radio indicating that it had nothing to do with the Stonnington Mayor and that Michael O'Brien, the local Member for Malvern "*is irrelevant.*" The arrogance is staggering!

Council Notice Paper...February 18

On p.79 if this Notice Paper Council declares....

"Council has adopted a zero tolerance approach in respect to the failure to implement the vegetation requirements of Planning Permits and endorsed documents."

Residents need to do some checking on this. We cannot expect to employ enough officers to check that every bush and tree on approved Landscape Plans has been planted. If you find omissions let Council know. MEG can assure you that through our experience the desired results will eventually be forthcoming! We've had to keep nagging!

A few of the Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

433 Waverley Rd. Constr. of multi-dwelling in GRZ. Refusal to Grant Permit. Appeal against Refusal. Merits hearing July 25.

252 Waverley Rd. Three 3 storey semi-detached dwellings in GRZ. Refusal to Grant Permit. Appeal against Refusal. Mediation Mar.22. Merits hearing May 13.

10 Finlayson St. Malvern First floor addn at rear of dwelling in H.O. NOD to grant. Appeal against NOD. Merits hearing May 6.

385-387 Wattletree Rd. Use & dev. of land for Early Learning Centre in GRZ.

18 Turner St. Pt. dem. & bldg. & works to dwelling in H.O.

288-291 & 293 Waverley Rd. Dem. & construction of mixed use dev. in Commercial Zone 1, with SBO & H.O.

15 Wattle Grove Bldg & works to dwelling in NCO.

14 Wilmot St. Dual occ. in NCO. Council Mtg. Feb.18. Recommendation to Grant Permit. Deferred for one cycle.

5 Durward Rd. Dual occ. Info req.

1 Mountfield Av. Single storey dual occ.

2A Boardman St. Pt.dem.& constr. of dwelling on a lot less than 300 sq.m. in NRZ & NCO.

3 Clarence St. Pt.dem. & constr. of 2 dwellings on a lot in NRZ & NCO.

4 & 6 Harvey St. Malvern Constr. of a 3 storey bldg. comprising 2 dwellings and 2 double storey townhouses over basement car pkg. Council Mtg. Feb. 18. Rec.to Grant Permit.

349 Waverley Rd. Existing rooming house has 8 bedrooms. Proposal to create 2 extra bdr. Council Mtg. Feb. 18. Rec. to Grant Permit. Refused at Council Mtg. Feb.18.