



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports **PLANNING BACKLASH**

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MEG NEWSLETTER.....Jan./Feb. 2022

From the Convenor's Desk

I looked through Council's **Urban Forest Strategy** document recently and saw on P.29 these words.....

*"Given the time it takes for trees to grow to maturity and provide the maximum social, economic and environmental benefits, **Council's highest priority** is to protect and retain the urban forest that already exists."*

You will remember the North Ward councillor who repeatedly says that although Council is going to destroy 67 mature trees, 16 of which are deemed to be **significant** to build the indoor stadium at Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park, it won't really matter because Council will plant 140 saplings in their place. His words are wholeheartedly supported by 6 other councillors, two of whom are members of the Greens (so-called) Party. The destruction of all of those trees does rather fly in the face of Council's very own Urban Forest Strategy, doesn't it?

MEG received an email in January advising us that work will start at our park in the middle of January. I received another email from the Federal Member for Higgins saying how excited she was that this work had already started with a "sod turning" ceremony on February 1/2022.

Please note the following information that I saw on the FB page of 'Stonnington Residents & Ratepayers' just before this newsletter was to go out to MEG members.

On February 25/2022 Stonnington City Council commenced culling the trees in Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park...they shredded them and then binned them. This was to make way for hundreds of tonnes of landfill and concrete. MEG wept as we saw the bulldozers smash our trees. SHAME.... Stonnington Council....SHAME!

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust and Melbourne Racing Club

On December 24 we read in The Age that a new era was happening at Caulfield Racecourse. The sound of the horses' hoofs would no longer be heard. The MRC has stopped training at Caulfield. *"The racetrack will begin its transformation from a home for the racing industry into one of the largest green spaces in Melbourne's south."* ..This space is as large as 10 MCGs. There will be events and markets, a stadium for indoor sports, natural turf surfaces for cricket or soccer and **(horrors!)** synthetic pitches for sports such as hockey. There will be meeting rooms, a skate park, an outdoor gym, walking, running and cycling trails.....and there's more! According to the article the \$570 million is required and the MRC is contributing \$285 million acquired through the sale of Sandown Racecourse.

AND there's MORE!

On February 2, The Age reported that

"Demolition work at Caulfield began on January 10 after a Christmas Eve amendment by Planning Minister Richard Wynne overruled heritage and council controls on the \$570 million development of the racetrack and surrounding area."

We can always rely on Mr. Wynne to find in favour of developers, can't we?

The Trust declared that there had been no consultation, Glen Eira Council declared that there had been no consultation and the Glen Eira Historical Group applied to heritage Victoria for an IPO...Interim Protection Order!

The IPO forced the Melbourne Racing Club to stop further destruction until Heritage Victoria had made its assessment.

The MRC had destroyed 42 trees amongst which was an Aleppo Pine grown from seeds of the Lone Pine in Gallipoli. Do these people have no conscience at all?

Glen Eira mayor, Jim McGee said, *"the council had been blindsided by the demolition work."* He said that the MRC had destroyed heritage buildings and heritage trees.

In a letter to Mr. Wynne he said that the redevelopment work *"appeared misleading and secretive."* Mr. Wynne said *"the government had engaged extensively with the council."*

If that is so, how is it that the Mayor and Councillors didn't know about it?

MEG wonders if Mr. Wynne actually knows what 'engaging extensively' means!

"Escape to the country tipped to continue"...The Age. Jan.8

"The booming tree-change trend in property is predicted to continue this year."

If only the numbers leaving Melbourne matched the amount of development going on endlessly in Melbourne...some of it actually **authentic!** (*Well a little bit in Malvern East!*)

We know of two MEG members who did a tree-change to Trentham about 4 years ago to escape the endless development in Stonnington only to deplore the recent arrival of the wretched developers who followed them and our MEG members report that trees are coming down with appalling rapidity and housing estates are sprouting, also with appalling rapidity, in that part of Victoria.

MEG wonders why we refer to 'developers' when 'destroyers' would be more appropriate!

COVID and developers

The good thing about this pandemic, according to the **Committee for Melbourne** is that we can still *"strive to become the nation's biggest metropolis."* (H.S. Feb.12.)

Martine Letts, the Committee's chief said *".....being the nation's largest city will be an asset."*

Dr. Bob Birrell (who was the speaker at MEG's inaugural meeting in 2005) declared, *"Why would we want to become denser than we already are? Increasing density is making Melbourne hotter and reducing our tree canopy and open space."*

He said it's our *"main weakness."*

MEG thinks that Bob Birrell is right and Martine Letts is SO wrong!

Up in Nagambie the battle is on The Age Jan.22

Unlike much of the Victorian hinterland Nagambie has an endless supply of water from the Goulburn River and Nagambie Lake and a mild climate with a backdrop of the Strathbogie Ranges. One of the locals calls it a *"hidden gem."*

(N.B. A MEG member from Beech St. relocated to the Strathbogie Ranges some years ago when he saw the slow destruction of Stonnington because of development. He'll now be able to watch it from his backyard.)

According to Council's Summer edition of 'Stonnington News' Malvern East is a *"hidden gem."* We certainly have something in common with Nagambie. There are trees to be destroyed and spaces to fill with STUFF!

Viewed on a Council planning map *the 'old' Nagambie is about to be encircled and dwarfed by huge housing estates."* Gerry Ryan is the leading developer in the area and one of his local detractors has labelled one of his proposals as *"Gerry's trailer trash park."* Another developer has a plan for farming land that will involve the destruction of 68 trees *"including old river red gums."* Another developer has a proposal which involves the removal of 51 trees....AND read this titbit... Mr. Wynne intervened and

saved those trees!!! It's a miracle! There's more to that story....the developer is taking Mr. Wynne to the Supreme Court.

Needless to say, developers have "*seized on the COVID-19 tree-change flight to the bush to press for fast-tracking of planning approvals.*" Surprised???

Mr. Wynne would not be interviewed for this article but said he is "*helping rural councils fast-tracking planning to deliver more residential land...*"

Strathbogie Mayor says says, "*it's time for a well overdue state review of planning rules for rural housing to avoid the worst of suburbia in the bush.*"

MEG wishes them all the luck in the world. They will need it!

Snippet from the bush

Jon Faine wrote on Feb. 20 in the Sunday Age that Castlemaine is known as North Northcote!

Detouring around the REAL issue.

If you have driven in and around country roads in Victoria in recent years you will remember the potholes. They cannot be missed. We are not referring to the Calder Highway but to the roads that haven't had any attention from Government FOR YEARS. In Herald Sun on January 18, Steph Ryan (Deputy Leader of the Nationals. (MP for Euroa) says that "***Slashing speeds is not the answer.***" State Government is looking for a cheap response to crumbling roads and has decided to lower the speed limit. Meanwhile in Melbourne this Government is spending **billions** to tunnel under, build over and make this city bigger but not better. In the process thousands of trees are being destroyed. We suggest that this government diverts its **road** activities to the country roads where they won't have to "detour around the real issue" nor destroy trees to **fix the problem!** Just fix the damn roads!

Developers to face a new \$800m social housing levy...The Age Feb.19

'Property developers will be hit with a new \$800million annual levy to fund an extra 1700 social and affordable homes each year.....'

MEG supports the provision of 'social and affordable' housing and we support the idea of developers paying for it BUT we have no doubt whatsoever that this levy will come out of the profits made by developers. It will be passed onto the purchasers of new properties. It has, of course, ***infuriated Victoria's building and property sector.*** (There's an irony there!)

The levy is expected to raise \$800m a year and *this will flow into the existing Social Housing Growth Fund.* We were not aware that such a fund existed nor are we aware of the bank balance of this fund.

The levy will only apply to Melbourne, Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat. It is added to "*a list of levies and taxes imposed by the government on wealthier businesses and individuals to fund social policy initiatives.*" These include "*the mental health levy.*" "*It also includes so-called windfall gains tax, under which developers and land speculators who reap windfall gains when their property is re-zoned will be hit with a 50 percent tax if the gain is worth \$500,000 or more from July 2023.*" (Not for a while!! Time to make a killing!)

Needless to say the Urban Development Institute of Australia is NOT HAPPY! Victoria's building and property sector is NOT HAPPY! The Property Council is NOT HAPPY!

The trouble is that the development sector will no doubt pass this increase onto home buyers and it is estimated that this "*would result in an extra \$19,600 on the median price of a new house in metropolitan Melbourne.*"

Well, surely the Government doesn't expect the developers to pay it themselves!

STOP! Error, error! Levy to be dumped!

The Age ...Feb.24/2022 It seems that Mr. Andrews forgot to tell the Urban Design Institute or the Housing Industry Association about the levy.

"The Property Council confirmed that it was briefed in confidence by the government about the proposed tax." No details were provided to them.

It seems that the Mr. Andrews thought he had "an agreement" with the Property Council but he didn't! In 2019 they were all consulted "by a ministerial advisory group set up 'to provide advice to the Minister for Planning on possible models and options to facilitate the supply of affordable housing.'" It seems that these "developer" bodies had no idea that Mr. Andrews intended to tax THEM! Perish the thought! That 'advisory' group has not met since 2019. Meanwhile the Victorian Planning Authority is doing its bit towards "fast tracking" as many planning applications as it can and have applauded the co-operation of Minister Wynne in this nefarious activity. Residents' groups can hardly be blamed for their endless cynicism, can they?

STOP! Additional information re Caulfield

Building giant Probuild teetering.....The Age Feb.24

Tradies packed up tools at Probuild sites today. It appears that the developer is near collapse and DeLoitte has been asked to undertake an administration process. Probuild has several projects in Melbourne **including the \$430 million apartment Caulfield Village.** Where does the MRC go from here? We have NO IDEA!

Stonnington Council tax to be added to State Government's tax

At Council Meeting Feb.21 Item 8.1 Amendment C296 Development Plan was discussed and approved. This Planning Scheme Amendment "imposes a development infrastructure levy and community infrastructure levy for all new residential, retail, commercial and industrial development within the municipality."

This will inevitably add to the cost of housing as State Government's new tax on development would have done if Mr. Andrews had realized that the developers were **quite cross** at the very thought of their having to collect a tax for the government. MEG understands that "The levy will fund a range of social and physical infrastructure required throughout the municipality to cater for the growing population and subsequent increase in demand on infrastructure....e.g. aimed at improving Council's roads, public realm, open space, drainage and community facilities." (Council Agenda..Feb.21.) We thought that these matters were funded out of constant increases in rates but clearly this somewhat extravagant Council uses our ever-increasing rates for other things like stadiums, synthetic surfaces, car parks, concrete paths through a park, concrete open space and similar luxuries. (See LOCAL NEWS for Cabrini's contributions to the levy!)

Will Stonnington Council follow the Leader and dump its new tax?

MEG says...."Probably not!"

LOCAL NEWS

Caulfield Racecourse and the MRC and Glen Eira Historical Society

MEG contacted GEHS and congratulated them on their work in getting an IPO on Caulfield Racecourse. Vice President, Anne Kilpatrick, advised us that Heritage Victoria has given a Heritage Permit to the MRC for works with no heritage harm to be done and for anything with Heritage harm to be done while the IPO is in force the MRC must apply for a Permit. It seems to MEG that the IPO is not really limiting what the MRC can do, at all. We had high hopes but the combination of the MRC and Mr.Wynne really have it all wrapped up. It seems that the MRC can really do what it likes and when it likes. How VERY unusual!

Cabrini and the Development Contributions

At the Panel Hearing for Amendment C296 Cabrini argued that "Cabrini is a registered charity and a 'not for profit' which is part of entities owned by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred heart of Jesus registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.....surpluses generated by Cabrini were ploughed back into the provision of further services by Cabrini.

Council countered this, saying that "*Cabrini is a large operation with a commercial focus.*"

Apparently Cabrini has spaces, such as consulting rooms, that are rented and it has a large medical imagery practice but "*profit generated from rent to these commercial operations was retained by Cabrini for delivery of further services.*"

It was argued by Council that "*an expansion of Cabrini would generate a demand for further infrastructure to be provided by Council.....and that exempting Cabrini would lead to a slippery slope of other institutions seeking exemptions.*"

The conclusion of the Panel was...

Cabrini Property Ltd should not be exempt from levies imposed under DCP.

Waverley Rd. Terminus....Shopping Centre

The shopping centre at the tram terminus in Waverly Rd. has a Heritage Overlay which is slowly being eroded. The most recent effort in this erosion is at 280 Waverley Rd. where '**14 authentic apartments**' are in construction mode! Is there anyone out there in MEG Land who could tell us what an **authentic** apartment is....i.e. as opposed to one that **isn't authentic**?

Rumour re Chadstone Shopping Centre

Are they really installing "*time paid parking gates?*" Can anyone confirm this?

Comment about CSC

To view the 'new' Pentridge do have a look at the 4 storeys of large slanting charcoal grey bars surrounding the David Jones carpark. MEG does not remember this in the plans. It is a truly daunting façade!

Updates on the Korowa and Woolworths applications from our Planning Dept.

Korowa...1755-1767 Malvern Rd. A second compulsory Conference has been set down for 23 May 2022. Council is yet to receive any plans for this. The VCAT Order requires any without prejudice plans to be circulated 15 weeks beforehand.

173 Burke Rd. A Compulsory Conference took place on January 19 2022. The conference did not result in any agreement. The matter will now proceed to the Hearing which is listed for 12 days between 28 March and 14 April.

Update on the 7 storey proposal for Hawksburn Village..531-541 Malvern Rd. Retail on ground floor and 6 storeys of office space. Appeal to VCAT for FTD. Compulsory Conference listed for March 10 and 5 day Hearing from May 30.

Windsor Local hit "backdoor approval" Herald Sun Jan.8

"Windsor residents have accused outgoing Planning Minister Richard Wynne of using Covid-19 and the Christmas period as an excuse to secretly fast-track a controversial development reject by the council and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal."

196-206 High St. Windsor will be "*transformed*" into a 26m office tower. Developers sought direct approval from Mr. Wynne who, in his usual fashion, happily obliged. Mr. Wynne was certainly busy over the Christmas period and his activities covered a big area from Caulfield to Windsor...and where else that MEG doesn't know about?

An anonymous Windsor resident said that "*These types of developments are changing the face of Melbourne irrevocably,*" He added, "*....these poor planning decisions cannot be reversed....and (this is) yet another example of the assault by stealth on our suburbs by the Planning Minister who is leaving politics and just doesn't care.*"

"Assault by stealth" is an appropriate description of the activities of Richard Wynne.

Solar-powered park benches for Prahran

Under the title "Eco-Renewable Energy" Council has installed two solar-powered benches with charging points and free WiFi connection for mobile devices in Princes Park. When asked by Neil Mitchell in February about the cost of these benches the mayor said "about \$5,000." Apparently the total cost is \$12,000. The mayor thinks they are "cool."

State Government Planning Reforms

At Council Meeting on February 7, Item 8.5 was State Government Planning Reforms. Council noted its pro-active advocacy to date. We assume that was in 2021 when the then mayor with 9 other mayors went to Spring St. to have a chat with Minister Wynne, only he wouldn't meet with them. Sent a member of staff in his place!

Council also noted that it wants...

Maintenance of third party appeal rights...

so do we!

Consultation with the community...

MEG agrees with this as long as

it's "face to face" consultation NOT online. No-one is automatically excluded if it's 'face-to face.'

Community's voice remains central...

is it central now?

Strong engagement with Council and the community remaining a core process.

Can those without online access take part in this 'core process?'

Retaining a transparent planning system...

Gosh!

Stonnington Council on FB...Feb.24

Stonnington Council is asking what we "*love about our local shopping centres.*" They will be in the streets asking about High St. Armadale, Glenferrie Rd. Malvern, Prahran, Hawksburn, South Yarra, Toorak Village AND Windsor.

They will not be asking anyone in the "*hidden gem*" of Malvern East. Now why would they be omitting the eastern end of Stonnington? Would it be because this suburb only gets Council attention when it wants to take over one of our parks?

Some of the Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

42 Central Park Rd. Alterations & additions to dwelling in H.O.

41 Kerferd St. Pt. dem. Of existing dwelling, constr.of alterations & addns in H.O. on a lot less than 500sq.m.

122 Stanhope St. Proposed 2unit development.

375 Waverley Rd. Alterations & addns to rear of existing dwell house and 1st. floor addition.

22 Findon St. Constr. of 2 storey dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m.

105 Claremont Av. Malvern Pt. dem, bldg.. & works in H.O. and SBO.

56 Erica Av. Glen Iris Constr. of dwelling in GRZ and SBO

11 Glenbrook Av. Constr. of single dwelling & removal of vegetation in NCO.

615 Waverley Rd. Multi-dwelling in GRZ.

132 Waverley Rd. Ext. of dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m. in GRZ and DDO.

13 Glenview Av. Malvern Constr. of double storey extension & garage to existing dwelling.

2 Midlothian St. Subdivide into 2 lots.

85 Finch St. Construction of 2 attached two-storey buildings with basement parking.