



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

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MEG NEWSLETTER....July/August 2018

From the Convenor's Desk

Overheard in a café at the Como Centre in Sth. Yarra...

"Melbourne's population is going to reach 5 million soon. That must be why they are building so many apartments!" How about that for an insightful comment? **Some people really catch on quickly!**

We had some interesting feedback from MEG members after our last newsletter. From a Queensland member we heard that he had seen Matthew Guy on Sky News telling people about the Coalition's "population distribution" policy and he wondered just how long ago it was when MEG had an expert on decentralisation speak at a MEG meeting. **Takes a while for pollies to catch on!**

From Trentham we had a passionate note from one of us who has done the "tree change" deploring the loss of trees in our city and wondering why *"this lot of politicians want to be remembered as the ones who destroyed beautiful Melbourne and turned it into a slum...."* **Takes a while for the 'pollies' to catch on!**

From a Prahran member we received an official definition of **"the greater good"** and I'll try to enlighten you about that later.

Some congratulatory comments from Malvern East members and a phone call from one bemoaning the 'doom & gloom' in the newsletter, wondering why **they** won't do something about the population issue and telling me that we were wrong about the number of trees to be destroyed in the Sydare Reserve. There are 40 marked with a red cross not 12!

And finally an email saying, "You're a legend!"

It's heartening to know that people on the Mailing List actually READ our newsletter.

Membership Subscriptions

Talking of Mailing Lists thank you to all those people who have renewed their MEG memberships. We remind you that subscriptions were due on July 1. If you intend to renew with MEG we would appreciate it if you did it promptly. In the near future we will update the list. For those who are not renewing their membership thank you for your past support. Please contact MEG for details if you wish to pay through the bank.

VCAT decisions

We have mentioned the VCAT decision in April regarding a development in Hampton. The VCAT Member deemed that **"net community benefit"** and **"the greater good"** prevailed over any other consideration when a planning application comes before that august body. A MEG member provided us with the explanation and for this we are truly grateful...and we hope that you understand the explanation as well as we do.

“Greater good comes from whatever economic definition you want to use.”
*“A vital characteristic of cost benefit analysis in the context of Stonnington (Planning Amendment C172) is that the community benefit delivered by this regulatory initiative is judged by reference to the Kaldor-Hicks rule. **This states that the initiative in question is worth undertaking if the gain in welfare by the beneficiaries is greater than the loss in welfare for those adversely affected.**”*

(Evidence given by Dr. Marcus Spiller.... SGS Economics and Planning . .March 2015.)

MEG member says that this means that *“the state can rob your neighbourhood amenity if it makes the economy look good.....and the State doesn’t even bother to quantify your amenity loss anyway.”*

MEG’s comment....well, there you have it. We think it means that with regard to Planning issues existing residents are going to lose and our once gracious Victorian city is going to be destroyed by greed.

VCAT at St. Kilda Junction

Sun. Age July 22.....*‘One Wellington’* is a **26 storey building** that was refused by Port Phillip Council and approved by VCAT with one storey deleted and **still exceeding the 10 storey height limit..** It was sold with Permit to LAS Property Group and LAS has re-worked the design so that the 25 storeys will be more *“organic, built around the use of sunlight to change the colour of the façade as the day progresses.”* And there’s MORE! *“It would also feature a ‘pixel art-like’ mural across 50 balconies.”* One Councillor called the decision *‘disastrous.’*

We assume the decision was based on the **“greater good”** ...for the developer of course! MEG wonders how State Government can continue to allow VCAT to override State Government’s own guidelines! A 10 storey height limit and VCAT says, “ Well, we think 26 will do!”

Most liveable.....“a largely meaningless title.”

Melbourne is no longer the “Most Liveable” city according to the Economist Index which is based on the cost of living for expats not for citizens. The Economist Index *“is a tool which was actually designed to help companies decide how much “hardship” allowance they would need to pay employees who relocate.”*(Sun. Age Aug.19)...It’s fairly meaningless to those of us who live here all the time. On Aug. 15 Clay Lucas reported in The Age *“we’ve performed more realistically in other polls. Most recently, engineers Arcadia ranked Melbourne the 21st most expensive place on the globe to build new infrastructure.”* A few months earlier the same poll ranked Melbourne 55th in the world for sustainable transport.

Population Policy

You will have seen and heard the endless discussions about Australia’s population. There are repeated calls for a reduction in immigration, repeated calls for immigrants to settle in the regions and not in the State capitals particularly in Sydney and Melbourne. The trouble is that most migrants want to settle in a city and with the national immigration figure sitting at around 190,000 people a year the cities are exploding. No State Government has ever planned for this population explosion and we in Melbourne are bearing the brunt of ‘poor planning’ or, indeed, no planning. A writer to The Age on Aug. 10 said that the result of this is that *“development approvals parade as urban planning.”* How true!

Our food bowl is decreasing as arable land is 'gobbled up' for endless housing. On July 18 Clay Lucas cites instances of owners marketing their properties (farms) as "*land bank opportunity*." There are some farmers who want to continue to farm their land but as houses are built closer to farming land the process becomes almost impossible. For example, residents don't like manure being spread near their homes. State Government and the Coalition have both declared that they do not intend to change 'the urban growth boundary.' MEG is not sure exactly how many times we have heard that. So what is the answer? The Federal Government and the Opposition support a high immigration policy. We have many MEG members who do not support such a policy and we have members who do support it but say it must go hand in hand with decentralisation. What's your opinion?

Population increase in and around Malvern East

The 18 storey 'thing' on the corner of Tooronga & Dandenong Rds. is almost finished and we will soon have about 1000 residents in that area alone. Just across the road is the **billion dollar development** which is whimsically called **Caulfield Village**. (Anything less like a 'village' would be hard to find.) This development will house 1000's of people. "*Glen Eira Council has fought with the developer Beck Probuild to include a minimum of five per cent social and affordable housing....*" (Caulfield leader July 31) Beck Probuild won a VCAT appeal to drop this component "*because it would cost too much.*" (MEG gasps at the sheer greed!) Is that VCAT decision based on '*net community benefit*' and '*the greater good*' or neither?

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trustees appointed... "to improve public access at the site."

Sam Almaliki is the Chair of the group. Its members are Danni Anderson (President Urban Design Institute), Greg Sword (Former Chair of Racecourse Reserve Trust & former National President of Labor Party), Peter Watkinson (Planning & Environment), Julie Busch (Dandenong Market & Cemeteries Trust), Joanne Butterworth-Gray.(Economic Development and David Mandel (Skilled Relationships Builder) There are **no local representatives** in the mix.

Two members of MEG attended the "Meet and Greet" session on August 9. All Glen Eira Councillors were invited and after some 'argy-bargy' Stonnington East Ward Councillors received an invitation but were unable to attend. Sam Almaliki had met privately with Stonnington Mayor and CEO. Cr. Hindle attended on August 9 and spoke at the meeting. Prior to this auspicious occasion it was made public in the Caulfield Leader August 7 that "*plans to unlock land at Caulfield Racecourse Reserve have been put on hold after State Government failed to negotiate a lease with the Melbourne Racing Club.*" The article indicated that the MRC pays \$100,000 annually to lease **54 hectares of public land valued at \$1billion**. \$100,000 would barely cover the allowances of the Trust members. David Southwick MP is reported as saying that "*the new trust barely has enough money to fund itself let alone deliver new public facilities.*" Neither MRC nor State Government would comment. The Chairperson said at the "meet 'n greet" that negotiations were continuing.

We remind you that this is YOUR land. It does NOT belong to the MRC.

Strathbogie Council's incentive to re-locate... and Ballarat a "Gov-Hub"

Strathbogie Council area includes popular spots such as Euroa and Nagambie with its wineries and is the second-most desirable place in Victoria for retirement. Queenscliff is the favourite. (The Age July 14)

The Council is seeking to increase the number of younger people in the area by offering the incentive of a 2 year rates exemption. *“Under the scheme, anyone eligible for the Victorian first home buyers grant can apply for the rates exemption....those buying \$350,000 property would save \$45,000...this includes the first home buyers grant and the rates exemption.”*

Demographer, Glenn Capuano, does not believe that the scheme will attract many younger people.

In 2017 *“Ballarat was marked to become a “Gov-Hub” with agencies such as VicRoads, Services Victoria and the Department of Justice and Regulation moving to the area.”* This movement of Government agencies provides job opportunities for young people and *“is part of a federal and state government decentralisation plan to counter enormous population growth in capital cities such as Melbourne.”*

Here’s hoping it works!

Former Property Council executive director...electoral push in seat of Bentleigh

In The Age on August 23 we read that Asher Judah formerly Executive Director of the Property Council and now Liberal candidate for the marginal seat of Bentleigh *“is vowing to do whatever it takes”* to have plans for a high-rise on top of Ormond station reduced. Already reduced from 13 to 10, he will work to lower the height again. He is quoted as saying, *“The Labor Party will put up 10 storeys, the Liberal Party will reopen the process so a proper consultation occurs.”*

A spokesman for the developer *“claimed Liberal support for the project was also given behind closed doors.”* He said he had met with Matthew Guy who personally assured him that the revised plans met concerns that had been raised about the project. *“and would be supported.”*

Well, well, well...we have a Liberal hopeful and ex-Property Council declaring his opposition to 10 storeys at Ormond, the Leader of his Party reported to be supporting 10 storeys and the Labor party loving it all!

Some local snippets

Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park

Under Confidential Business on July 23 Council listed...“Multi Purpose Sports & Recreation Facility for Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park.” (NO...we cannot tell you what was discussed because it was for Councillors’ ears only!) On August 21 a Mediation session was held at VCAT between a resident and Council regarding an FOI request for residents to have access to certain documents regarding the wretched stadium. (NO...we can’t tell what was said because it was a closed session.) We understand that Council was represented by two lawyers and Council’s own FOI officer. There may be a further 2-3 day hearing about this matter. WHAT is Council hiding? WHY are they employing people to go to VCAT to stop residents from seeing the “needs analysis” and the document on which the motion for a Feasibility Study was based. The secrecy is nothing less than astonishing and the cost to us ...staggering! Two senior Council officers associated with this project have left Stonnington in recent months. Why? Another secret!

While all of this was going on residents were asked to go to the Pavillion at the Park and write comments on the following issues....attractive and function design within the budget, no loss of open space, balance different needs...park users, residents, sports clubs and participants, community and social benefit...welcoming, inclusive, safe and accessible for all

(just like the Bowling & Recreation Club is now)...increase participation in sports and recreation activities for existing organised sports onsite (bowls, tennis, cricket and lacrosse) and new organised sports (netball & basketball)...environment and sustainability...facility & landscape ... AND...be sensitive to the local community.

Telecommunications Facilities in residential streets

Recently TPG informed Council that they would be installing facilities within 10-20m of 418 Wattletree Rd. Malvern East, 1529 Malvern Rd. Glen Iris. and 104 Caroline St. Sth Yarra. Under the Telecommunications Act mobile phone service carriers do not need a Planning Permit for such installations. They are required to notify Council and the residents of their intentions. At Council Meeting on August 6 Councilors moved that TPG be notified that the selected sites were in sensitive residential areas and they urged TPG to confine their activities to commercial zones. On August 21 Stonnington Leader reported that after a backlash from residents in Malvern East and Glen Iris TPG had withdrawn its plans for those sites. The fate of the site in Caroline St. Sth Yarra is not yet known.

Are NBN workers in your street?

Residents have made complaints to Council about the behaviour of some NBN workers. We have no complaints but we do have some concerns about what is in the 'pits' they are working on. We were told by an NBN worker that part of their work was the removal of **asbestos** and we were assured that it was **not dangerous asbestos**. We were also told that it was being removed under the strictest conditions. We wonder WHY they went to all that trouble when it was considered to be **not dangerous** and since when was asbestos considered **not dangerous**?

Beware the Secondary Consent application

We have warned you to be alert to applicants applying to Council for Secondary Consent to approved plans. Secondary Consent applications are not advertised. Changes can be made to developments in close proximity to you **without your knowledge** and possibly to your detriment. The most recent one is at **24 Beech St**. The applicant has applied to make changes to windows in the laundry, kitchen and lounge and changes to 1st floor setbacks on north and west sides. These applications can be seen on **eplanning** on the Stonnington website and when there is a building going up near you we advise you to check the website regularly.

11-15 Chadstone Rd.

No doubt you are all aware of this site and its history. Years ago it was the property of Chadstone Shopping Centre owners. Holmesglen TAFE owned 2 Chadstone Rd. and CSC's owners wanted that site. They had plans to demolish the dwelling and have the land – re-zoned Business. A Planning Panel refused this request. Meanwhile Holmesglen still owned 11-15. They lodged an application for a 3 storey student accommodation development. Council and residents opposed this in VCAT and won. Then Holmesglen proposed three 2 storey dwellings...a more acceptable application. The Permit was granted and the site was sold. Along came an applicant with a proposal for a 2 storey child-care centre. Both residents and Council supported this. The site was subsequently sold with a Permit and eventually work commenced. Some residents became quite concerned about certain buildings on site that they remembered were not on the original plans so they asked Council

to check the site. Nothing happened for 6 months, not even a reply to their email. MEG was requested to help and the situation now is that Planning Enforcement visited the site and confirmed that there was non-compliance with the endorsed plans. The owners can now remove the non-compliant element, or apply retrospectively for planning approval which they may or may not get. In the event of their not getting a Permit for the non-compliant works they may apply to VCAT.

It pays to be observant when there is a development near you.

Remember that Council cannot be everywhere.

1-3 Valetta St.

Council Notice Paper August 20...The building upgrade of 1-3 Valetta St. has been completed for the immediate tenancy of the University of the Third Age (U3A). The official opening is on August 29. Currently U3A uses the old Armadale Library in Orrong Rd. and according to the report that building is nearing the end of its functional life.

Student Accommodation by stealth???

A Planning Application for 11 Chapman St. not far from Holmesglen TAFE is for two 3 storey dwellings with 5 bedrooms and 5 bathrooms each. Is it faintly possible that these are designed for student accommodation? Council has a Student Housing Policy which is not applicable to this application.

Vacant school site at Holy Eucharist in Dandenong Rd.

Negotiations are advanced with the Diocese for De La Salle to have long term lease of the grounds and buildings. MEG understands that the Greek School has use of some rooms on an interim basis.

Office Works

This business is advertising that for every tree that is used to produce the items sold in their stores they plant two trees. Is this a business with an environmental conscience?

A few of the Planning Applications in & around Malvern East

95 Finch St. 2 storey addn to existing dwelling on a lot over 500sq.m. in H.O.

11 Chapman St. Two 3 storey dwellings each with 6 br.on a lot in GRZ and SBO.

22 & 22A Winter St. Malvern Three 2 storey dwellings . Refused by Pl. Dept. Appealed. Mediation July 4. Merits Hearing .. 3 days...Aug.27.

45 Washington Av. Dual occ. in an NCO. NOD recommended by Pl. Dept. Refusal to Grant a Permit... Council Meeting July 9.

102-106 & 2A Nyora St. Multi-dwelling dev. Refusal to Grant a Permit ..Council Mtg. June 4...VCAT hearing...June 18, 19.

4-6 Harvey St. Malvern Multi-dwelling dev. Dem. of 2 existing dwellings. Constr. of two 2 storey townhouses and a 3 storey apartment bldg.

69 Macgregor St. Dem. of existing dwelling and constr. of two 2 storey townhouses.

11 Chapman St. Constr. of two 5br. 5 bathroom dwellings on a lot in GRZ.

225 Waverley Rd. Constr. of 4 dwellings.

117 Darling Rd. Dev. of two 2 storey townhouses and two 3 storey townhouses. Info req.