



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

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MEG Newsletter....July/August 2023

From the Convenor's Desk

Our newsletter is a bit late...AGAIN!

I noticed in recent Council papers that 2 of the 11 residents...(yes, 11)... who attended the "Meet Your Councillors" in East Ward had brought up the subject of 'roaming cats.' I was SO pleased to know that we are not the only residents who are utterly distressed by other people's cats invading our property on a regular basis. WHEN will Council do something about requiring cat owners to keep their cats on their own properties in exactly the same way it requires dog owners to restrain their dogs from roaming? I live in hope but fear I shall die disappointed!

We've seen several articles recently about illicit tree-felling. In almost every newsletter we have sent out since 2005...(yes, 2005)...we have urged our members to protect the trees, to plant a tree, to save the trees and NOW this message is mentioned day after day in the papers and, with straight faces, even councillors mention the same thing at their meetings. On each Council some councillors have always wanted to protect the trees. Now it seems they all do. SO good to have them all on our side or, at least, appear to be.

Beware of the balconies...and, it seems, lots of other things!

In The Age on July 7 it was reported that "*inspections of 339 buildings that received government funding to remove flammable cladding found half had other faults and one in four had balcony defects. More than 550 balconies were found to be defective.*"

Cladding Safety Victoria said that "*Defects with balconies can arise as a result of poor architectural design, defective construction by builders or maintenance issues and have the potential to present serious safety issues to residents.*"

MEG thought that covered just about all the possibilities except for the cladding issue, of course, until we read the next article on July 8 titled "**State facing new crisis of leaky homes.**" "*Roscon, a company that specialises in identifying building defects has inspected hundreds of buildings throughout Melbourne in recent years and found that most have problems with waterproofing and water ingress.*" A spokesperson for the company predicted that the next big issue will be water leaks, water-proofing and mould.

Let us not lose all hope because "*a Victorian government spokesperson said its building reform **expert** panel was conducting a comprehensive review of Victoria's building system that would reshape the system and deliver safe, compliant and durable buildings.*"

Well, we can all breathe a sigh of relief. The Victorian government has got it 'in hand.'

The Age Editorial on July 12 says, "Developers have cut corners at the expense of safety, while builders and private surveyors have lacked rigorous oversight. The regulatory system has been grossly inadequate."

Inadequate indeed!

Minister intervenes...The Age... July 6

"At least two major high-rise developments along Frankston's foreshore have been thrown into doubt after a surprise last-minute intervention by the State's Planning Minister." She applied a DDO limiting buildings to a maximum of 3 storeys with the Overlay expiring on October 27.

Residents delighted, developer NOT PLEASED!

The Minister's intervention caused the VCAT case over the 16 storey building to be adjourned. Community activists had presented Minister Kilkenny with a **6000-signature** petition to overrule council's powers.

"The developer of 446-450 Nepean Highway, Urban DC founder Danny Ciarma, said that the Minister's intervention was "suspicious," "a slap in the face" and would undermine investment confidence in the state, not just Frankston. She's unsettled the whole investment fraternity....."

Gosh! Imagine that! All the developers are **unsettled**. How will we cope?

Councils in housing heave-ho H.S. July 26

"New high-rise precincts based around transport hubs are set to be established across Melbourne's inner and middle suburbs, in the biggest planning reform in decades. Councils will be stripped of decision making powers in new 'priority precincts' in a desperate bid to fast-track housing developments and squeeze one million homes into established suburbs by mid-century."

And there's more predictions!

"Local government controls outside of the new planning zones are also likely to be curtailed in the light of a damning report into council and developer bribery report ..."

The report was released the first week of August. **By implication** it condemned all councils. At Council Meeting of August 28 Councillor Gianfriddo with the support of all Stonnington councillors succeeded in a motion to set up a register of councillor contact with developers. (More about that in Local News.)

Councils make final effort to maintain their planning power

In The Age on August 26 Royce Millar wrote,

"Local councils are making a last-ditch defence of their planning powers as the Andrews government works to finalise a landmark housing reform set to strip them of some development authority."

He went on to report that "The peak body for councils, the Municipal Authority Association of Victoria, is gathering data from councils across Melbourne in a desperate bid to persuade the state and federal governments the local governments and their communities should not be held to blame for the current housing crisis."

Millar reported that the Premier "seized on the findings, suggesting that trusting "part-time" local councillors with big planning decisions such as re-zoning was **risky given the large sums of money involved.**"

The Premier would know about matters dealing with 'large sums of money'...we think!

Build-to-rent is all the go

"Property giant Lendlease has struck a deal with Japan's largest home builder, Daiwa House, to develop a large-scale build-to-rent tower in the heart of Melbourne and help alleviate the housing affordability and shortage crisis." (Business Age...July 18)

This one will have 797 build-to-rent apartments in its 45 floors. (Gasp!)

"Lendlease has also also committed to a build-to-rent component in its \$1.7 billion Queen Victoria Market redevelopment that will include affordable housing, student accommodation and a commercial building, with a new market square and restored Franklin Street sheds."

You wouldn't think we have a wide brown country, most of which is empty...would you?

When we have said repeatedly "build a city" we haven't meant Melbourne. Melbourne is already built. We meant that government should select empty, non-productive land and actually build a new city. Cost too much? Of course it would cost a mint but it's 'doable' without destroying this once wonderful Victorian city.

Since when did the high cost of anything bother this State Government??
Just wondering!!

In The Age on July 24...Housing policy overhaul

"Planning decisions would be fast-tracked under a major package to ease Victoria's housing crisis....."

Premier Andrews said *"this would be one of the state's biggest policy shake-ups..."*
He has been accused of *"distraction tactics after cancelling the Commonwealth Games."*

Perish the thought that our Premier would be so devious!

"This followed frustration with planning delays at the local level and the reluctance of councillors to support higher-density projects because of the fear of backlash from residents."

Well the way to force councils to bow to the wishes of State Government is to stomp on them and that's what's happening and it's what the Victorian Planning Authority has been quietly advocating for some years. Slowly but surely **fast-tracking** of planning applications has been infiltrating the system.

Locals could be barred from planning objections.....Sunday Age August 13

"Neighbours are set to be barred from lodging local government planning objections against medium-density housing projects provided that developers agree to include a proportion of affordable homes in their proposals."

Josh Gordon and Tom Cowie go on to say that State Government *"is set to offer developers added protection against costly battles with councils and residents groups in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)."*

This is *"part of a push to add an extra one million homes to Melbourne's existing suburbs by 2050."*

A government source says ...(don't you just love that expression?)... *"Because councils either refuse to make hard decisions or because they are motivated by objections from existing residents, **it has become VCAT's job to plan Melbourne.**"*

MEG is left almost speechless and helplessly wondering who the "government source" is.

Councils consider 'name and shame' tree-felling list

"Fed-up councils in Melbourne's leafy eastern suburbs are considering publishing "name and shame" registers to deter residents and developers from illegally chopping down trees."

"City of Stonnington, which takes in Toorak, Kooyong and Malvern, issued 22 fines totalling \$44,000 for illegal tree works over the past year, and 112 fines worth \$226,000 over five years."

Stonnington Council got rid of 67 mature trees, 16 of which Council had deemed 'significant' when they decided to destroy Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park to fill a large section of it with concrete structures and artificial surfaces so we don't think they should be feeling virtuous about issuing fines to people who do what Council itself does!

LOCAL NEWS

Cabrini Hospital

You must have all heard by now that Cabrini is in development mode AGAIN. After its success on the corner of Wattletree Rd. and Isabella St. with the 'louvred lovely' (which won an architectural award) plans for the next phase were in hand ... as were the means to avoid any local accountability. Cabrini has gone straight to the Minister with a 96A application "to re-zone the wider hospital area, making it a special use zone and removing the Council as the responsible authority." (The Age...August 2)

"The development proposal is under **fast-tracked assessment by the Development Facilitation Program.**" This prioritises projects that "boost Victoria's economic recovery and provide substantial public benefit."

A government spokesperson ..(yes, another anonymous person)... said that a formal decision is expected this year.

The Coonil Estate residents' group is vigorously opposing the proposal, hoping to get the size of it down and preventing Cabrini from removing heritage overlays on Cabrini-owned houses.

The development will have 6 storeys on the corner of Wattletree Rd. and Coonil Crescent (where the on-ground car park is now) with 88 single bed ensuite rooms, consulting suites and a cancer research facility. It will be linked to the existing hospital by an overhead bridge and there will be a 350-space underground car park.

We have told you that Cabrini wants to buy Coonil Crescent from Stonnington Council. Local residents object to that and some who spoke at Council Meeting on August 28 said they wanted it kept by Council as open space.

Council can, of course, refuse to sell the street and Cabrini can immediately take that decision to the Minister who will, undoubtedly, override Council's decision and give Cabrini what it wants.

During the so-called 'community consultation' webinars that were **informative rather than consultative** "Cabrini Australia CEO Sue Williams said the upgrades and expansion were necessary for the ageing hospital **to stay competitive.**"

This great bulky expensive, not-for-profit (?) monolith is a far cry from Mother Cabrini's vision.

THE PLAZA

You probably all know by now that Monash Caulfield has finally closed the Plaza. The closure includes the basement car park so Derby Rd. is somewhat congested. The new Coles store in in that appalling development between Normanby Rd. and Station St. is open. Apparently there are other shops in that complex and MEG has no idea what they are. It takes nerves of steel to visit one of the ugliest developments we have seen. Do you remember that we told you a couple of years ago that the Urban Design Institute had given it an award? Beggars belief!

Council Meeting ...August 28/23...Meet your Councillor

"The purpose of the Community Meetings is to 'provide an opportunity for community members to speak directly with their local elected official in a relaxed informal setting, offering the opportunity to ask questions, share ideas and exchange views and information about matters important to the community and individual.'"

A total of 164 people attended the first of these meetings in 2023....East Ward ..11, North Ward 74 and South Ward 79. Residents of North and South Wards received notification of the meeting(s) by postcard. Residents of East Ward received nothing in hard copy. There were notifications online.

The lesson, hopefully learned by Council, is that we need to be told through the letter-box that a meeting is to be held. We know this is a more expensive way of communicating with the community so perhaps Council has to cut expenses in other areas. For example, it could resolve to build no more monuments to concrete!

Developer Contact Register

At the same meeting, Cr. Joe Gianfriddo moved a motion *that would require "Council to implement a "**Councillor Contact Register.**"*

Such a register would require ALL Councillors to register *ALL CONTACT (phone, email, text, messaging applications, written mail, face to face and the like)* with developers within the City of Stonnington, relating to any proposed, current or future PLANNING Applications.

There is much more to this motion. In moving it Councillor Gianfriddo gave an 'epic' speech, if you have online access to Council Meetings, you can hear a replay of the entire meeting.

The motion resulted in animated discussion, some changes which didn't alter its essence but ensure unanimous approval from councillors.

As far as we know this is the first **compulsory developer contact register with compulsory disclosure of any and all beneficiaries of ANY Council decision to be listed in every motion of Council.**

A plaque

At Council Meeting August 14 Cr. Koce commented on the recent opening of the Orrong Park Tennis Centre and the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the occasion. Orrong Park is where the Prahran Netball Association played all their matches until they decided they wanted a better centre and their eyes lighted upon Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park ... and the rest is history.

It's interesting to note that A MEG member informed us that just recently she stood in Orrong Rd. for some time and watched **netball** being played on all the courts at the **Orrong Park Tennis Centre.**

MEG seems to remember that they are **multi-purpose** courts.

The names have been decided

The name of Percy Treyvaud will be remembered in the naming of the park as we know it now, all the concrete stuff and hard surfaces will be called 'Stonnington Sports Centre' and the courts will be name 'Margaret Connellan Courts.'

Were we asked? As far as MEG knows, we were not!

Chadstone Shopping Centre

In The Age on August 18 Nicole Precel warned parents and carers about attacks on students.

Sacre Coeur emailed parents recently warning them about "*a number of recent violent incidents at Chadstone Shopping Centre.*" Parents from 2 other schools reported that their children were assaulted and robbed at Chadstone recently.

Another snippet from Chadstone

Heard on radio recently that in 2024 CSC would start charging for parking. It seems that there would be some free time before the charge kicks in, similar to the system operating at Malvern Central where bars have been installed and a bar will automatically go up to allow a car to enter the carpark and exit if it has been registered as being there for less than the designated time. At Malvern Central the designated time is 3 hours. We don't know what free time the owners of CSC will allow before the charge starts. Apparently, this will not apply to all of the carparks in the centre.

Parking Sensors

Council has decided to instal parking sensors in certain areas of Stonnington. We don't know what areas where these are to be used yet so keep your eyes open.

Some of the Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

- 29 Claremont Av. Malvern** Proposed addition & alterations to an existing building in H.O.
- 5 Parslow St. Malvern** Dev. Of 2 dwellings on a lot.
- 48 Sycamore St.** Construction of 3 dwellings.
- 1159 Dandenong Rd.** Renovate and extend existing house.
- 54 Osborne Av. Glen Iris** Construction of multi-dwelling development in GRZ.
- 98 Stanhope St. Malvern** Pt. dem. & works to existing dwelling.
- 50 Glendearg St. Malvern** Pt. dem. bldg & works to dwelling in H.O.
- 3-4 Sydare Av.** Dev. Of 3 dwellings.
- 19 Glenbrook Av.** Pt. dem. Bldg & wks to dwelling.
- 14 Evandale Rd. Malvern** Pt. dem. & dev. Of additions to dwelling.
- 40 Thanet St. Malvern** Pt. dem. Alterations & additions to dwelling.
- 25 Belson St.** Addns. to dwelling in H.O.
- 4 Sorrett Av. Malvern** Pt. dem. of dwelling in H.O. Renovations & extension to rear of property.
- 119 Finch St.** Pt. dem. Bldg & wks to dwelling in H.O.
- 75 Serrell St.** Pt. dem. Bldg & wks to dwelling in H.O.
- 7 Darling Rd.** 3 double storey units on a lot.
- 31 McKinley Av. Malvern** Alterations & additions to existing residence on site over 500 sq.m. in NRZ& H.O.
- 22 Bruce St .** Pt. dem. Bldg & wks in N.C.O.
- 25 Dixon St.** Pt. dem. Bldg & wks in N.C.O.
- 1 Deakin St.** Pt. dem., alterations & additions to existing dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m. in H.O.
- 1 / 2 Oravel Av.** Pt. dem., alterations & addns to existing dwelling in H.O.
- 12 Sutherland St.** Demolish existing single storey dwelling and build a detached double storey dwelling.