



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports **PLANNING BACKLASH**

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MEG Newsletter.....July/August 2024

From Council Election Executive Officer.....re Council Election October 2024

Nominations open at 9am on Monday 9 September
and close at 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September.

Each day the VEC will publish a list of people who have nominated in each ward, both on their website and also on the door of the election office at Malvern Town Hall.

As the VEC is conducting the election on behalf of Council, they have a dedicated Stonnington page on their website here:

[Stonnington City Council election Victorian Electoral Commission \(vec.vic.au\)](http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/vec)

From the Convenor's Desk

As usual there is so much to say about housing and the apparent lack of it in Victoria. I say "apparent lack" because we also read about the staggering number of empty houses in this city. We read about people living in excessive luxury and people living in unbelievable poverty and then we read about how State Government Is going to solve the problem of homelessness by getting rid of pesky rules and regulations and allow the building of huge numbers of apartments around 'activity centres.' We read that existing residents are to have no rights of objection to Council, no right of appeal to VCAT when threatened with some looming monstrosity in their backyard...or front yard!

Emeritus Professor Michael Buxton says in The Age on August 8 that "*government argues that removing planning controls is the only way to increase housing supply and lower prices.*" He says further "*Every element of this is false.*" In the article he quotes facts and figures which prove that State Government is playing its usual games.

**Core Logic's report in June 2024 states that there are
100,000 vacant homes in Melbourne.**

This was reported in The Age on July 13.

After our years and years of spending endless hours fighting for some rules and regulations to preserve the neighbourhood character of our cities and towns we read an announcement in The Age on August 31 that "*leaked planning department documents*" show that the former Brack's Government ResCode will soon hit the rubbish bins because there are so many changes in it, it's not worth the paper it's printed on while there are **100,000 empty houses** and **nothing** is done about this abysmal situation.

"Where is the outcry over public housing?" The Age...Aug. 19

Dr. Kate Shaw wrote this interesting article. When I knew Kate some years ago she was a community worker. Since then she has worked on urban planning issues and is now an urban geographer at Melbourne Uni. Initially she says, "*Perhaps even more dispiriting than the Victorian government's recent decision to roll back and underfund previous commitments to public housing is the lack of public outcry.*"

She cites two examples of State Government's backdown on public housing, one at Preston where public land was sold to a developer to build homes with only 14 being "affordable" and the old VicRoads headquarters in Kew where 500 homes can be built with a mere 10% to be "affordable." This is on top of the proposed demolition of 44 public housing towers with 10,000 residents to be displaced.

Perhaps the most interesting part of her article is the dissection of the term "affordable housing."

"The market rent for a two-bedroom unit in Preston is \$500 a week, the "affordable" version is \$450. In Kew, the market rent for a two-bedroom apartment is around \$30,000 per annum, while the "affordable" apartment is around \$27,000 a year."

Not a great difference, is there?

In Victoria the requirement of a developer is 10% of the total number of apartments in a development. In countries such as Germany, Belgium, Sweden, some American states and some Canadian provinces the requirement is **30%**.

Renters saving by squeezing in together The Age July 30th

"Tenants crushed by skyrocketing rents and the cost of living crisis are moving in with more housemates to save money."

"Rents for 5 bedroom plus houses rose 8.7 per cent over the year to June." Last year the rise was 5.7 per cent. Core Logic's head of Australian Research said that the growth in rent for larger houses could be a reaction to the "deteriorating affordability of smaller houses."

MEG'S Convenor has vivid memories of being one of 5 students from the country squeezing into a tiny flat above a shop in St. Kilda when we completed our studies at tertiary institutions.

That incredibly tiny cramped flat was all we could afford.

It seems that not much has changed except now renters can 'squeeze into mansions.!

New rules to make building faster, easier The Age August 27

"New housing developments up to 20 storeys high will be fast-tracked under a state government plan to deliver an extra 60,000 homes across 10 suburban activity centres including Camberwell, Chadstone (in Malvern East), Niddrie and Ringwood."

As well as those mentioned above there are Broadmeadows, Epping, Frankston, Moorabbin, Niddrie, North Essendon and Preston.

Planning Institute's Victorian President "urged the government to balance its targets with future liveability in these areas."

When referring to the inclusion of Camberwell Junction in the list of proposed hubs Premier Jacinta Allan defended the project saying, *"The alternative is to see young people who grew up here in Camberwell have to live further away from their families, their friends, their jobs and the services they rely on."*

MEG can't imagine a worse situation than children who grew up in Camberwell not being able to live in Camberwell all their lives if that's what they want! What's the next atrocity which this State Government has plans to avert?

Developers can go to VCAT...residents will not be allowed to do so

In The Age on August 31 (4 days later)we read with growing horror these headlines

The Age article referred to "leaked documents" from the Department of Planning and Transport.

Planning revamp to slash rights, speed up approvals

Planning laws revamp clips right to object

It seems that if a Planning Application technically meets all the rules then an objector cannot do a thing. We all know that, for example, there are instances of environmental factors, overlooking issues, measurements in plans not quite as they should be. Parts of plans that do not meet requirements, etc....valid grounds for objection and appeal. Well in future there'll be no appeal BUT if a developer has plans refused by the Responsible Authority they can be off to VCAT in a flash.

No longer will Council or residents be able to consider "neighbourhood character" as a requirement for new buildings or extensions. *"....a raft of other development standards*

including those related to setbacks from the street, and neighbours, site coverage, overlooking, over-shadowing and the provision of private open space" will see standards changed...or abolished altogether.

This State Government knows no bounds in terms of destruction
of the suburbs as we know them.

MEG asked a member of a residents' group in the seat of Carrum what we could expect from the then newly appointed Planning Minister Sonya Kilkenny and was told that she was a very reasonable person who was keen on protecting the suburbs from over-development. I think we were led astray by one of her constituents, don't you?

Way back in the Sunday Age on July 21, Norman Day talked about Planning

He declared that all the ideas of governments have suffered the same fate as, for example, the ideas/plans for Docklands, Arden, etc. He refers specifically to plans for Arden in North Melbourne...*"There will be urban design which is not described, but noted as "measured by performance assessment", whatever that means. The latest plans appear not to contain much allowance for useful public open space."*

Well, we can say the same applies to State Government's latest plans for the numerous activity centres. WHERE is the provision for open space? Where is the provision for sporting activities? Where will the trees go? Where are the gardens?

Norman Day refers to people to think up these "plans" as "uncreative experts" who meet in "war rooms" to hash out new plans.

Plan to turn offices into apartments

This is a 'thought bubble' of the present Lord Mayor who wants to stay being the Lord Mayor of Melbourne. Apparently the Property Council thought of it last year.

Meanwhile all candidates for Lord Mayor are spending an inordinate amount of time thinking of ways to get workers back into the city...and, of course one way of enticing people to the CBD is to provide housing for them, so retro-fitting empty offices for residential use would make sense....except that in the meantime 'someone' is going to build all the proposed towers in the suburbs so that people can "live where they work."

Has this State Government ever thought of de-centralisation?

LOCAL NEWS

Woolworths at 173 Burke Rd.

Against the wishes of residents and Stonnington Council, Woolworths took plans for a development at this site straight to the Minister who duly bowed to the wishes of the developer and said she would allow her Department to hear the case. So Woollies cleared the first hurdle. The next hurdle is presenting the case for their 5 storeys of STUFF and persuading members of Minister Kilkenny's 'staff' that what they propose is an appropriate addition to Burke Rd. Glen Iris....and that the "affordable housing" element is sufficient to get it over the line. Objectors are permitted to have their say by lodging an objection

There is no doubt that there will be much to say about this "over the top" development and about the proposed new set of lights at the corner of Burke Rd and Hope St. which will add to what is so often traffic chaos in Burke Rd. State Government is always on the side of CHAOS so the chance of Woolworths getting their way is high.

You might remember that a slightly larger proposal without the
"affordable housing." was defeated at VCAT some time ago.

851-853 Dandenong Rd.

There was a Compulsory Conference regarding the 10storey application for this site. No agreement between the parties was reached so there will be a full hearing at 55 King St. on October 7,8,9 & 10.

1 Thurso St.

There was community consultation on the matter of what to do with this house and 18 people responded. 72% (13) were in favor of selling the property and investing the money in capital works. It was used as the greenkeeper's residence until early 2020 subsequently used for storage and then as a residential investment. It was decided at Council Meeting on August 5 that as Council has no need for it now it should be sold. An auction will be arranged.

241 Dandenong Rd. Windsor Bus. Age...August 10

"Private aged care operator Infinite Care has snapped up its first Victorian property buying a vacant facility in Windsor for \$11.75 million.

Infinite Care is planning to open a new 60-bed home on the site mid-2025."

This was a former aged care facility managed by Estia Health.

Dumbfounded traders kicked out as Prahran Market pushes for fresh look

In The Age on July 29 *"Long-standing traders at Prahran Market say they are facing financial ruin after being forced out by management in a quest to modernize the centre."*

Prahran market is owned by Stonnington Council but is not managed by Council. One long-time trader was told he had to upgrade the premises he was using and when he presented the plans to management he was refused a new lease.

"Prahran Market chief executive Noel Dempsey said the market and its tenants needed to evolve to meet the needs of shoppers and a shifting demographic, tilting towards more young professionals under 40 with no kids."

Families left furious as uni moves to evict kindergarten....The Age...July 18

*"...a community kindergarten was served an eviction notice by its landlord, one of the city's major universities. Swinburne University is moving to have the Union Street, Windsor, land re-zoned in order to sell it **for development** ..."*

Swinburne says the land is *"surplus to requirements."* State Government could have bought it last year but didn't. We guess that land for a kindergarten and child-care centre is not a high priority for this government so now parents and children in a quandary. They have to go, but where?

The university has lodged a re-zoning application which will allow up to 5 storeys on the site. The land is worth several million dollars now and much more if the re-zoning application goes ahead.

Do some research before you vote in October for your councillor.

We hope that by now that Stonnington residents know that State Government decreed some time ago that "single councillor" wards are back in fashion. It is even more important with single councillor wards that voters research the candidates. We know of a deal or two already being done by councillors and would-be councillors. We know that groups such as the **YIMBYs** (Yes In My Backyard) and **My Place** are putting up candidates as well as the Greens and, we assume, the other political parties. It seems that the YIMBYs want to build multi-storey atrocities everywhere even in heritage areas and in Business Age July 30, David Clark, President of the Municipal Association of Victoria in referring to My Place candidates said, *"it's hard to see how candidates who don't believe in the system of local government they would be representing could become constructive councillors."*

MEG can't quite understand why people who don't believe in local councils even WANT to stand for Council.

Council Meeting...September 2

At this meeting it was reported that there are 1,800 unregistered **Airbnbs** across Stonnington mostly in the western part of the municipality. MEG is not too sure how that figure is arrived at if they are unregistered but we do know that this was the reported figure.

Also at this meeting we heard that the State Government has decreed that by 2051 Stonnington has to add 61,400 houses to its present housing stock. That's an increase of 83%. No mention was made of where the extra housing will go though what they've decreed for Chadstone Shopping Centre and a large area around it will add some thousands of places for people to live.

From MEG's Convenor.....

*If there is ever a **State Decentralisation Party**
standing for seats in State Government that's where my vote will go!*

Some of the Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

- 23 Coolgardie Av.** Part dem.or remove a bldg in H.O. Construct a bldg. in a H.O.
- 66 Wheatland Rd. Malvern** Pt. dem. Carry out works externally in H.O.
- 38 Elizabeth St. Malvern** Constr. Of 2 double storey dwellings.
- 41 Stanhope St. Malvern** Pt. dem. bldg. in H.O. Constr. Wks to place of worship in H.O.
- 2A Epping St.** Pt. dem. of bldg. in H.O. Construction of building in H.O.
- 636 Warrigal Rd.** 2 lot subdivision.
- 37 Westgarth St.** Proposed alterations & addns (incl.pt. dem) on a lot in H.O.
- 15 Serrell St.** Pt. dem. of bldg. in H.O. Construct bldg..
- 24 McKinley Av. Malvern** Rear addns to existing dwelling.
- 20-22 Robinson St. Malvern** Carport on property in H.O. & S.B.O.
- 2007-2009 Malvern Rd.** Build extensionon existing house & renovate existing house and landscape site.
- 24 Chadstone Rd.** Constr of 17 apartment bldg. over 3 storeys with 28 car spaces in basement.
- 41 Stanhope St. Malvern** Pt. dem. bldg. in H.O. Const. bldg. to existing Place of Worship in H.O. Reduction in number of car spaces.
- 26 Clarence St.** Pt. dem. Construct bldg. in NCO.
- 641-647 Dandenong Rd. Malvern** Angel Tavern. Use of land for consumption and sale of liquor. Internal layout changes.
- 39 Kerford St.** Pt. dem. in H.O.
- 196 A Burke Rd.** Extend dwelling on a lot less than 300 sq.m. in H.O.
- 1 Edna St .** Dem. of existing lean-to rear extension & replace it with single storey extension & granny flat at rear of property.
- 12 Rushmead St. Malvern** Dem of existing bldg. & construction of new dwelling in H.O.
- 22 Thanet St. Malvern** Construction of new crossover.
- 9 Hilda St.** Dev. Of site for 2 new dwellings.
- 14 Boardman St.** Proposed alterations including new external windows and doors.
- 10 Bretonneux Sq.** Pt. dem. bldg. in H.O. and externally alter it.
- 31 Station St. Caulfield East** 351 lot subdivision. (*Glasshouse site.*)
- 4 Parkside St. Malvern** Alterations & addns to Existing dwelling in H.O.
- 14 Henderson Av. Malvern** **Pt. dem. Construct bldg. in H.O.**