



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

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MEG NEWSLETTER.....MARCH/APRIL...2019

From the Convenor's Desk

There are so many planning issues to be concerned about that I often don't know where to start. The non-compliant cladding issue is one that should worry all of us...even those people who really only care about their own backyard! We report on that in this newsletter and I wish we could be more specific about WHICH buildings in Stonnington are affected...**but it's a secret!**

The level of secrecy in this municipality beggars belief. Certain documents regarding the proposed 'desecration' of Percy Treyvaud Park are also **a secret**. (See Local News section!)

The big news item in Local News is the latest on the Masterplan for the expensive proposal at Percy Treyvaud Park. This controversial matter has given rise to a new residents' group called **Stonnington Ratepayers**. See attachment for a petition issued by this group. Signed forms should be sent to 8 Abbotsford Rd. Malvern East before May 6.

Breaking News on April 17

"The Andrews Government is putting Victoria's local government rating system under the microscope to ensure Councils are held accountable to the ratepayers they represent."
A panel headed by Dr. Kathy Alexander will deliver their recommendations to government in March 2020. *(Perish the thought that the Andrews Government might be setting up a panel to examine **State Government** and see if it is being held accountable to the taxpayers it represents!)*

Cladding Issue...who pays?

Herald Sun Mar.1 *"The Victorian and Civil Administration Tribunal yesterday found builders LU Simon liable for \$5.7 million in compensatory damages over the inferno at the Lacrosse tower."* The article goes on to say that the firm only has to pay \$172,000 of that. *"The fire engineer Thomas Nicholas must pay \$2.2million, building surveyor Gardiner Group \$1.9 million and the architect Elenberg Fraser \$1.4 million"....and then VCAT found that they were all to blame. It seems that none of them exercised due care and skill.*

The article goes on to say, *"Hundreds of buildings nationwide are believed to have used aluminium cladding."* Scary, isn't it?

Dangerous cladding must go!

The Age Feb. 26 *"British engineer spent a year investigating Britain's building regulations and fire laws."* She identified the basic problems which both Britain and Australia have.. ***no enforcement, unclear standards and a race to the bottom.*** It's an 'inspection nightmare.'

In a letter to The Age on Mar.27 the writer laments the privatisation of the 'building inspectors (surveyors). He says this system has never worked and never will. Money,

carelessness or haste are some of the reasons why the system hasn't worked. He declares, *"They are not doing due diligence and serious breaches of compliance are being committed."*

BUT WE ARE NOT TO WORRY! Clay Lucas in The Age Mar.29

"Planning Minister Richard Wynne has taken over responsibility for 283 buildings in the city that may have dangerous cladding."

Well...that's a relief! Some people think that if Minister Wynne has the responsibility we needn't worry any more! He handles the Planning portfolio with such admirable dexterity and finesse ...**and** with the wholehearted approval of the PROPERTY COUNCIL.

(That august body has remained strangely silent about the cladding issue!)

Lucas also reported that *"a fire last year at the government's planning department prompted the owners to remove dangerous cladding immediately."*

Shadow Minister for Planning said in Parliament that Minister Wynne's own office was being fixed while residents of buildings with non-compliant cladding had received a letter from the VBA. Was it the Minister for Planning who **prompted the owners to fix the building in Nicholson St.?** Is he SO self-concerned? Probably!

Stonnington buildings with cladding issues

We were informed some time ago that there are **5 buildings in Stonnington** with non-compliant cladding. Tom Minear reported in the H.S. on March 20 that there are **41 buildings in Stonnington** with this 'disease.' (No, we can't tell you where these developments are. **That's a secret...like so many things in Stonnington!**)

It is also reported that Moreland has 145, Port Phillip 59, Monash 55, Glen Eira 35, a staggering 283 in the CBD...and there's more.

Victoria to cut red tape in building and planning approvals

Michael Bleby reported in the Australian Financial Review on March 28 that State Government has appointed a **Red Tape Commissioner** ..(so help us!)..*"to review the state's housing and development approval processes and report by year-end with recommendations on how to speed up the creation of new housing and infrastructure."*

Treasurer Pallas said that this *"will be the catalyst for much needed change in Victoria's planning systems."*

The Property Council and other development groups are delighted and if they're delighted we should all be shaking in our shoes! It means more STUFF being built BESIDE YOU!!

At present State Government rules regarding Planning issues override those of Local Government. This won't change. **What will change will be our right to "have a say!"**

MEG asks you to just imagine what's going to happen when it's all made easier for the developers. We are aware of how resentful residents often are about Council Planning Department's processes and decisions and how furious you are if a proposal gets a tick of approval. It's time that everyone realised that the enemy is NOT within the buildings in Glenferrie Rd. but it's ensconced in buildings in and around Spring St.

Now MEG is wondering just WHERE the office of the **Red Tape Commissioner** is.

Wonder if her office has some of that cladding that Government rules has allowed!

Gosh! We hope not!

Yarra Council thumbs its nose at Planning Minister...no more 'dog-box units' for Yarra

The .Age.. April 7...*"Mandated minimum floor sizes- a policy supported by the major renters' association, which was implemented in Sydney more than a decade ago- would limit developers selling high volumes of cramped apartments at lucrative profit margins."*

Yarra Council wants to introduce minimum sizes BUT councillors will need the tick of approval from Minister Wynne who “was persuaded” come time ago not to do this. (Of course you would know who ‘persuaded’ him!) *“CEO of the Property Council believes minimum standards would risk profitability of developers, ...(Gosh!..Can’t have that!)...saying they would drive up the cost of production and eat away at the yield developers could achieve.”*

Alliance of 30 Councils seeking sunlight...CASBE

Bus.Age..April 20 The Victorian Planning Scheme refers to “adequate daylight”... whatever that might actually mean! MEG can assure you that it means different things to different people. Developers have one interpretation and residents another. CASBE will conduct investigation on the health benefits of daylight and, eventually this will affect unit size and standards. The inevitable result will NOT please the property Council and if it doesn’t please the Property Council then it won’t please Minister Wynne.

Stonnington Council is NOT listed as a member of CASBE.

BHP investing in technology to clean the air

A letter writer in The Age on Mar.9 reported that *“BHP is investing in technology ‘to remove carbon dioxide from the air to cut the company’s global emission levels.”* The writer indicated that we already have that technology. It’s called **TREES!**

This is SO BASIC we think that everybody should have caught on by now!

In the H.S. on Feb.27 we read that *“Growing up in the country or leafy suburbs can protect you from mental illness ...”* Kristine Engemann of Aarhus University in Denmark has done extensive research in *“integrating natural environment into urban areas”* and the benefits of doing just that. MEG thinks she should tell BHP. That would save them a lot of bother!

More about trees and our need for them

We are all aware of the hundreds of mature trees that have been destroyed in the process of State Government getting rid of level crossings and building Skyrail. Hundreds more have been destroyed to create the Metro tunnel, with State Government giving no thought to using a “cut and cover” method to build this tunnel. We are sure that every MEG member knows of a development near them where the site has been moonscaped to make way for some sort of development that is allowed by State Government planning rules. Some of you may not be aware that the ‘stadium’ development proposed by Stonnington Council includes the destruction of 77 mature trees. Mature trees have been destroyed in Serrell Avenue to make way for the main drain and on April 11 the Age reported that to build the North-West link **26 million trees will be destroyed.** Soon Melbourne will not be able to breathe! A writer to The Age on April 16 suggested that there would really be no need for this road at all if *“if light or heavy rail was built going straight up the centre of the Eastern Freeway.”* He added that the idea for rail to Doncaster was first suggested in the 1890s and has been periodically suggested since then!

Trees put young minds at ease....and older ones too!

BUT FEAR NOT!....The Federal Government has the solution and it’s found in Cape Grim in Tasmania. (H.S. Mar.25) Since 1976 Cape Grim Baseline Air Pollution Station has housed *“the seemingly eccentric task of bottling air.”* (We kid you not!) *“The facility’s isolated location makes it perfect for collecting what many have dubbed the cleanest air in the world...what air would be like without choking exhaust fumes or industrial smoke.”*

No, please don't ask us how or where you can get some of this bottled air or what has happened to all the bottle of air collected since 1976. **We have no idea!** We just thought you'd like to know that clean air does actually exist....but it's not where all levels of governments destroy trees with apparent gay abandon!.

LOCAL NEWS

Stadium in a Park...the plot thickens!

In our last newsletter we told you about the work of Jenny Lawlor and Denise Wallish in preparing an FOI case seeking certain (**secret**) documents from Council regarding the proposal for the stadium in Percy Treyvaud Park. We regret to inform you that Council using an expensive barrister won the case. The release of the documents is **not in the public interest**..... said the VCAT member. MEG repeats, "**WHAT IS COUNCIL HIDING?**" We do know that the decision to use Percy's Park for this wretched stadium was made by the last council and that a Feasibility Study was an Agenda Item in July 2015. We don't know the contents of that study, nor do we know WHY Council had to do yet ANOTHER feasibility study. **Your rates at work!**

At Council Meeting April 1/2019 Councillors were to vote on the adoption of the **Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park Masterplan**. Councillors Davis and Atwell had prepared a detailed 8 point Recommendation to Refuse the adoption of the Masterplan. This alternative motion stated that the initial cost of \$44.65 million to implement the Masterplan and the annual maintenance figure of over \$1 million makes the plan is "**economically unviable.**" The Davis/Atwell Refusal suggested a modest upgrade of existing facilities costing around 10% of stated price and the remaining moneys be used to pay down **Council's debt**. (Were you aware that we are paying interest on Council's debt?)

On April 1, before anyone could comment, Cr. Klisaris moved a Deferral motion which was rapidly seconded by Cr. Sehr and then supported by Crs.Koce, Chandler and Stefanopoulos....4 of whom had been on Council prior to the 2016 election when the decision was made. Cr. Davis said that it was "irresponsible to defer a decision" and Cr. Atwell declared it "an abrogation of duty." Clearly the 5 Councillors had decided that they would not have a debate on the issue and were not deterred by such comments. The 5 Councillors voted to defer a decision to Council Meeting on May 6.

It would seem that the cost blowout of the Masterplan to \$45 million had one or more of them concerned. (*Dare we say that some constituents just MIGHT remember their extravagance with the 'rates dollar' at the next election?*) MEG predicts some hasty cost-cutting before May 6.

And there's more!

Within days of this debacle, MEG received information that the Mayor had written to 29 schools, 27 of which are in Stonnington, asking support of students and parents for the Masterplan. The letter states that "Council resolved some months ago to build a new indoor multipurpose highball sport recreation facility..." and that... "Council is now poised to make a decision on **investing \$40 million on sporting facilities for your students who reside in the municipality.**" The letter also states that 2 of the outdoor hard courts for tennis, will also be used for netball and basketball and that there will be 2 lacrosse fields. Some of the information is not in the Masterplan.

MEG has a copy of a letter from the Principal of one school to an irate parent who had objected to the inclusion of this 'request for support' in the school newsletter. The Principal apologised and assured the parent that the intention was not to enter into a political debate

by including excerpts from the Mayor's letter in the end of term newsletter. On April 5 the Mayor again wrote to the 29 schools correcting some of the errors in his first letter. Previously the Mayor had written to 52 sporting organisations across Australia seeking letters of support for the Masterplan for Percy's Park!

Meanwhile...

PNA(Prahran Netball Association) has lodged an application with the Equal Opportunities Commission because there are not enough courts in Stonnington for them and in the Leader of April 16 Prahran Netball Association coach Lauren Millay said, "*Currently there is only one indoor court in the Stonnington area for the 4,500 netball and basketball players.*"

4,500 ??? Just how this number is reached we will never know...and it's not 4501 or 3999. It's precisely 4,500! Perish the thought that it would be an uneven number.

To add to that, we simple do not understand why Council (for considerably less than \$45million) doesn't extend the non-compliant court at Orrong Romanis, build a court above the existing compliant court and add some underground parking. The existing structure is on a bus route, almost on a tram route and across the road from a station.

We have been told that there is contamination at Orrong Romanis. No-one we know has ever seen that report. We don't know when it was carried out. We don't know to what part of Orrong Romanis it refers. **It's another secret!**

Penpraze Park...Joint Use Agreement

Council Notice Paper..March 18 Council staff has written a lengthy report on the background of this park and its use...(or misuse)... since 1982. A MEG member who was a member of the Penpraze Park Committee has told us that he only ONCE saw a full complement of staff at those meetings. He is adamant that neither Council nor the Education Department has ever fulfilled the specific conditions of the agreement.

In brief, Malvern Primary School has sole use of Penpraze Park from 8.30 to 4.30 every school day throughout the year and others may 'traverse' it during these time but not **stand still!** It is bewildering to consider that State Government believes that we, the ratepayers should provide parks for schools. No open space has been provided for the new Prahran Secondary School so children are driven to a Council park for recreation. Malvern Central children use Malvern Gardens. Armadale P.S. walks children to Orrong Romanis etc. etc.

It's time State Government met its obligations and ensured that our parks are for general community use.

Stonnington Council...Proposed 2019-20 Budget

The Draft Budget was an item in Council Notice Paper of April 1. A notice asking for submissions was in The Age on April 17....on the same page as the Death Notices!

The proposed Budget can be viewed on the Stonnington website or at the Service Centre at 311 Glenferrie Rd., Prahran Town Hall and at the Stonnington Depot at 293 Tooronga Rd. You will need to ask Council why it is not on view at Malvern or Phoenix Park libraries.

MEG has NO IDEA of the reason for this exclusion!

Oakleigh Recreation Centre FYI....Monash Council is building a 5 court indoor stadium at this nearby Centre at a cost of a mere **\$23.3 million**. The Centre is within walking distance of Percy Treyvaud Park where Stonnington Council wants to spend \$45million in turning a PARK into a SPORTING PRECINCT!

Parks are for people! Parks and trees are for quiet recreation and contemplation!

Chadstone Shopping Centre...the 'big gun' retail profit landlord

The Vicinity and Gandel owned Chadstone is the first centre in the country to reach the \$2billion mark, a 10% increase on last year. (Bus. Age March 20) This might bode well for Vicinity and Gandel but is not something that has the residents in the area clapping their hands in glee and if Council gets away with building that stadium on Chadstone Rd. the traffic issue will inevitably make life more difficult for residents.

Vicinity centres and solar panels

Bus. Age March 9. " *The country's largest owner of shopping malls, Vicinity, could power 3600 homes from the clean energy generated by its 13MW of solar output.*" Vicinity's Elizabeth City Centre mall in S.A. is covered in solar panels.

In Meg's submission to Panel re Amendment C154 (CSC) we suggested that the Panel recommended the addition of solar panels at CSC. We also suggested sensor-activated taps in toilet areas and we even went so far as to suggest **clean toilets**. Haven't seen a solar panel out there. Have you?

Not getting the Leader?

Leader Newspapers has a new man in charge of distribution. He's happy to receive calls from residents who are not having the Leader delivered. Be prepared to have a lengthy conversation and to tell him frequently that you really don't know ANYONE who wants to be a "walker" delivering the papers. Be prepared also to ring him a second, or even a third, time if you don't get the paper. Once he's got someone moving you'll receive the Leader for about 6-7 weeks. When delivery stops ring again and repeat the process.

Max's ph. no. is0456 070 729

A few Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

1655-1661 Malvern Rd. Glen Iris Multi-dwelling development (48 apts.) in a GRZ.

34 Armadale St. Armadale 3 storey dev. 10 apartments. Refusal by Pl. Dept. VCAT appeal against Refusal. Merits hearing 4 days from April 15.

117 Darling Rd. Multi-dwelling development in GRZ. Refusal by Council. VCAT appeal against Refusal. Merits hearing 2 days from August 8.

14 Wilmot St. Dual occ. In NRZ and NCO. Refusal by Council. VCAT appeal against Refusal. Merits hearing September 16.

5 Durward St. Dual Occ. In NRZ. Advertising complete.

25 Dixon St. Malvern... Dem. of dwelling in NCO. Constr. Of two 2 storey dwellings and waiver of car parking req. (*That's near Cabrini and they want a waiver of parking req.!!*)

1341 Dandenong Rd. (Chadstone Shopping Centre) Secondary Consent to facilitate a number of 'reconfigurations' in the Atrium development....more storage, more retail, extension to 'back of house' service areas, changes to roof envelope, roof plant and loading bay areas. REDUCTION IN CAR PARKING RATE! (Gasp!)

7A Isabella St. Malvern Dem. of existing building & constr. & use of medical centre bldg. & reduction in car parking req.