



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports **PLANNING BACKLASH**

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MEG Newsletter....March/April 2024

From the Convenor's Desk

I'm writing this mid-way through April after hearing of State Government's various proposals to build 80,000 houses this year. They have NO IDEA where the tradesmen will come from and **desperately** want the Federal Government to prioritise and expedite the migration of appropriately qualified immigrants who are **desperately** wanted in their own countries to build houses BECAUSE there is a world-wide housing shortage.

Meanwhile State Government wants to demolish all the high-rise public housing, 'de-house' thousands of people in order to build housing for them! Where they are to be housed in the meantime remains a 'State' secret. It just beggars belief!

In our own area, the news is that there will be "community consultation" ...yes, you have heard the term before ... about what (and how much) development will occur around the very much extended Activity Centre of Chadstone Shopping Centre...all around the Centre, down Poath Rd. in one direction and to Holmesglen T.A.F.E. in the other... and east and west.

It would seem that you can only go to the meeting on April 30th if you've applied to attend and they have liked what you've said in your request

More about your expiring democracy in **Local News**.

"Council can buy it for a pocket park"

MEG is hearing this repeatedly. Residents need to know that Council, neither staff nor councillors, can commit publicly to the purchase of any site. Whoever is bidding at an auction cannot let it be known that Council is a bidder. The reason is surely obvious. If prospective buyers or sellers know that Council is interested in making a purchase, **the price goes up**. If residents see what they think is a likely site for a "pocket park" the MEG suggests they tell their councillors **and don't expect an answer!** Residents will know if and when Council acquires a site.

Further information on this matter is that the money for such purchases **does not come from our rates**. There is an "**open space levy**" on all developments and money from this is allotted according to each Post Code where each development has occurred.

If you want more detailed information about this matter, MEG suggests that you lodge a question to council@stonnington.vic.gov.au or in writing at the office in Glenferrie Rd. or ring the Planning Department on 8290 3329.

Local councils concerned by planning takeover The Age April 13.

"New rules make planning minister Sonya Kilkenny responsible for determining a range of planning applications for housing, retail, commercial and industrial projects that are declared "significant."

This allows the Minister to ignore existing height and setback rules for new developments. Applicants can decide not to lodge an application with Council and go straight to the Minister **"if the application is worth more than \$50 million and with more than 10 per cent of affordable dwellings."**

Woolworths has taken its new application for 173 Burke Rd. to the Minister and the Minister or some lackeys will decide what to do with it. (*More about that in Local News.*)

Squeeze on open space a threat to garden state status Sunday Age ...April 7

"Melbourne could have less open space per person within two decades unless councils dramatically ramp up developer charges to pay for parks, reserves and sports fields."

" The top five areas for public open space are...

Brimbank, Whittlesea, Hobsons Bay, Maroondah and Nillimbik.

The bottom five...

Mitchell, Glen Eira, Stonnington, Cardinia, Bayside"

In the past it has been Glen Eira with the least amount of public open space per capita with Stonnington a close second. This year Mitchell Shire leads the way. Once upon a time we would call Mitchell Shire a country area. Alas, it's being gobbled up by development. The open space on Caulfield Racecourse Reserve is in Glen Eira but is not part of the Glen Eira open space. If it were, it would leave poor old Stonnington with the least open space per capita of any municipality in the 'Garden State of Victoria.'

Bid to save public housing towers by heritage listing The Age April 19

Heritage Victoria has received a nomination for Heritage listing of the 31 floor Park Towers in South Melbourne. It was praised internationally as the **"highest precast load bearing wall building of its kind in the world" in the world when it opened in 1969."**

For the time being State Government is stymied. Not only does it have a Heritage Listing causing a block to its plans for one of the high-rises but it is also facing a class action by residents of another three high-rise developments in North Melbourne.

On April 23 it was reported in The Age that *"lawyers acting for the Victorian government and Housing Minister Harriet Shing will go back to the Supreme Court (today) and attempt to have that class action struck out."*

MEG has not seen the result of that legal action yet.

In March there was a joint push to have the Government release information

in the Age on March 14 there was an article about the Liberals and the crossbench joining forces to compel the Government to release documents regarding the demolition of no less than 44 housing towers and the re-building of them...and *"any on where the thousands of residents will be re-housed."*

Among other details, they want to examine *"costs and options for refurbishment and renovation of the towers versus demolition."*

Makes sense to MEG. The people need to know.

Council admits to felling healthy trees on golf course H.S. April 26

Yarra Council bosses have admitted they broke their own planning rules when more than 24 mature trees were chopped down at the re-development of the Burnley Golf Course. This is a Greens-led Council that apparently is unable to follow its own rules with regard to the protection of mature trees.

Let us never forget 5 members of the last Stonnington Council voted for the removal of 67 mature trees ... 16 of which were deemed **significant** under Council's own Local Laws... in Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park, to build that large concrete thing which now takes pride of place **in a park!**

The same 5 councillors had 145 saplings planted in place of the mature trees and MEG has been told that some of the saplings have died already.

We still have some of *'the five'* on Council.

Building regulator board dissolved The Age...Mar.28

"The Victorian Building Authority has been under scrutiny since the 2022 suicide of building inspector Rob Karkut, which resulted in two inquiries into toxic workplace."

Among the ones who were recently sacked was Justin Madden and we wonder if that was **the** Justin Madden who was Planning Minister

during the time of the Brumby government? Does anyone know?
MEG distinctly remembers that the VBA has come under scrutiny by at least two Planning Ministers and nothing was done until Minister Kilkenney acted and dissolved the entire Board.

No more dark roofs on new homes

"Dark roofs would be restricted on new homes in Victoria's growth suburbs in a move aim at reducing energy consumption and cooling the local climate on hot days."

Well, this isn't exactly rocket science, is it?

MEG would suggest the planting of canopy trees becomes a mandatory condition as does the retention of existing trees and shrubs. Build around them. Incorporate them into the build. We've seen this done in houses. There's one in Central Park Rd. in Malvern East. It can be done.

Has anyone seen the BLACK block of apartments in Spring Rd. Malvern?

All done with VCAT's approval!

Letter to the Editor The 'cram and stack' approach reduces liveability

In Letters to the Editor on March 15, Mathew Knight wrote....

"Revelations of secret surveys on parking requirements issued to some local councils is the latest move in the progressive decline in planning rules in Victoria.

As excessive immigration continues to fuel the housing crisis, with both affordability and availability at record lows, this latest move will see larger volumes of cars parked on the streets as developers cash in on any reduced planning requirements.

With no minimum size requirements for dwellings like most other jurisdictions, this latest move will have many streets swamped with cars.

Entering and exiting a driveway in a street full of parked cars is already a nightmare for many along with visitors trying to find a park to visit. You really have to wonder why we are all being subjected to this cram and stack policy that is reducing our liveability and amenity year on year."

Kilkenney Kingpin leaves H.S. March 8

"Senior bureaucrat Christopher Carpenter suddenly disappeared from Ms. Kilkenney's high profile office in mid-December with Labor sources reporting that his phone was switched off and no official explanation was given for his surprising departure. Sources claim that a female staff member had made a workplace mis-conduct allegation against Mr. Carpenter in a legal letter sent to the Premier's Private Office prompting the swift....and secretive... response."

Mr. Carpenter had worked as Minister Kilkenney's Chief of Staff since 2022. A member of the Premier's Private Office has taken on the role *"with the government now desperately searching for a replacement as it ploughs ahead with a newly announced housing policy and planning system reform."*

This upsetting of the Planning Minister's office has come just as the approval for new houses has for construction *"sharply declined to the lowest level in more than 10 years."*

"In January Victorian councils granted approvals for only 2370 detached houses October 2013, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics."

MEG thought this Government was overseeing the building of 80,000 houses this year!

Councils face home hurdle in fresh push for housing The Age April 30

"Under proposals being considered in the second stage of Labor's push for more homes, housing targets would be written into local planning schemes and require local planners, councillors and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal members to consider them when weighing up whether to approve housing developments."

(No doubt that will all result in loads of job satisfaction!)

The government is considering *"replacing its 'growth areas' infrastructure contribution charge" ... with a universal liveability charge across all suburbs and towns."*

"HOWEVER, the government did not go as far as many expected in reducing councils' planning authority. Senior Labor sources have confirmed that MPs were wary last

year about picking a fight with councils and communities concerned about being overrun by high-apartments."

MEANWHILE.... *"Plan Melbourne is being broadened to oversee the whole state and will be re-branded as Plan Victoria."*

In short, the Government is going to declare more suburban areas will become 'growth' areas, everyone will pay more to make them grow, councils will be allowed their say, VCAT will be allowed its say...not sure that you will be allowed your say and if you are not much notice of it will be taken, no comment about the towers that the government cannot knock down (at least for a while) to provide more housing...and all in all, we have a right mess.....OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN MAKING!

It's democracy-defying!

LOCAL NEWS

Cabrini Hospital

In "Planning Matters" on April 18/24 it was reported that....

"Stonnington C333ston facilitates the re-development and expansion of Cabrini Hospital Malvern."

No details are provided in "Planning Matters" so we assume that one has to read **C333ston** to see exactly what Cabrini is permitted to do. This will be available on Stonnington website or you can ring PLANNING on 8290 3329.

As always, our sympathy goes to the residents in the area around this health facility.

191 Wattletree Rd. Malvern We saw that this this double storey house which abuts the ground level Cabrini car park had a For Sale notice sometime during March. We Googled it and saw that the asking price was \$3,785,000 and an offer had been made. The next time we passed by we saw that it had been SOLD. We do hope that the walls were made soundproof when the house was built. Any house east of the Cabrini site is headed for a lot of construction noise now that the Minister has given the tick for the extensive development at Cabrini.

851-853 Dandenong Rd.

On March 28 Council Planning Department issued a Refusal for this multi-storey student accommodation development. Among the Reasons for Refusal were that it was too high, had excessive visual bulk, had a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties and surrounding streets and was generally too dominant. Council also noted that the building was in a Commercial 1 Zone but had no commercial activity and, in general, did not comply with our Student Housing Policy.

The applicant can lodge an appeal to VCAT within 60 days of the date of Refusal.

173 Burke Rd. Glen Iris

Woolies is at it again. Just as the CEO of Woolworths has been threatened with gaol at the Senate enquiry into supermarket prices for refusing to answer questions, we hear that this company has lodged a Planning Application to the Minister, bypassing Council and the inevitable VCAT hearing. There were 198 objections lodged to the previous application for this site and no doubt there would have been a similar flurry of letters of objection to this one **if only residents had been given a chance**. They will eventually be given a chance to say something about it after the Minister's team has decided whether they will consider it (or not) but there will be **no appeal** against the Minister's decision.

The information we can gather about it is that there will be 5 storeys on Burke Rd. comprising the supermarket, shops, apartments and more apartments in Hope St. There will be basement parking. Now that parking arrangements have been changed in Harold, Willoby and Dorrington avenues parents of children attending the junior campus of Caulfield Grammar will have to find other places to park and it will have to be closer to the proposed Woolworths in Burke Rd.

We can anticipate a right old mess if Woolworths gets its way!

20 Winter St. Malvern and 22 Winter St. Malvern

There is a Permit for 20 Winter St. for a single house and a Permit for 22 Winter St. for a single house. You can view the plans by going to the Planning Register on the Stonnington site OR by going to the office opposite Malvern Town Hall in Glenferrie Rd.

9 Scott Grove Glen Iris

This large heavily treed site was bought by Council in March. (Bus. Age..March 30). In due time the 3934 sq.m. will become a park, somewhat larger than a pocket park. We look forward to seeing some open space near this very busy intersection not far from where Korowa will knock down 5 Art Deco houses to build a school and day care centre.

Chadstone Community Reference Group...CRG

CRG is part of State Government's **Activities Centres Program**. There will be two meetings for Chadstone....one in April and the other in July. The residential area around Chadstone Shopping Centre was letter-boxed and residents were asked to apply to join members of the Transport & Planning Department (DTP) at the at 2 meetings to discuss the Government's proposals for the area.

"CRG is an information sharing group, not a decision-making group. Project decisions are the responsibility of DTP and its project partners."

In other words, State Government will pick the residents with whom they'll have a bit of a chat and then they'll plan with their 'project partners' what will be built and where this will be done. We, the people, will have no say in the matter nor will Council.

We have no information regarding the "project partners" but we have our suspicions. To add insult to injury State Government says,

"The Mayor of Stonnington will be invited to attend as an observer."

**CRG Meeting...April 30 from 6—8p.m.
Hughesdale Community Centre...160 Poath Rd. Oakleigh**

Some late information about that meeting....The Mayor of Stonnington is a resident of the area involved and officers believe that he has a 'conflict of interest.' The Deputy Mayor will attend in his place. **He won't be allowed to say anything either!**

Another example of your 'expiring democracy.'

Do you have the STONNINGTON NEWS delivered?

We haven't had it in our letter-box since mid-2023. MEG has seen the last 2 copies of it thanks to East Ward Councillor Joe Gianfriddo. We have reports from other MEG members that it's not delivered to them either. This is despite what was said at Council Meeting April 22 where some councillors said that the best way of letting EVERYONE in Stonnington know about the upcoming Council elections was to advertise the news in their own publication.

It was the also best way to tell their constituents where there would be an opportunity to meet their councillors. There was much discussion about whether it was better to have "Listening Posts" or "Meet your Councillors" or Ward Meetings...we THINK Ward Meetings got a mention.

We might remind councillors that when we had an East Ward Meeting with 400 residents attending telling the then Council that they didn't want a load of concrete and hard surfaces dumped on Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park, councillors ignored their wishes.

So what's the point!

An interesting tit-bit in Stonnington News

We were fascinated to read in the **March 2024** edition that Stonnington has "*more than 12,000 furry friends registered with Council.*" That's 12,000 dogs and "*just over 3,000 cats.*"

3,000 cats that are not, by Local Law, confined to the premises of their owners. We told you in our last newsletter that Manningham Council had introduced this requirement into their Local Laws and we believe it should be introduced in Stonnington. Cat owners should be expected to be fined if their cat roams the neighbourhood just the same as dog owners are expected to do so.

Our message to councillors is...ensure the delivery of 'Stonnington News' to every household in Stonnington AND restrain every roaming cat.

From the Convenor ... I know that control of cats is not a planning issue but it's my pet hate so I thought I'd take this opportunity to have a word (or two) about it before I die!

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust

On April 11 the Caulfield Racecourse Trust held their Annual Meeting from 5-6p.m. This is a very convenient time for all the people coming home from work...or about to come home from work and for those preparing dinner for the family...OR about to prepare it.

Added to the inconvenient time, more than one person COULD NOT log on so were unable to attend. Despite this the Trust duly sent an email thanking us for attending and listing the questions that we were asked to lodge with them and the apparently unsatisfactory answers.

It's really just hopeless trying to find out what's happening on OUR land other than the information we read from newspaper articles about what the MRC is doing. The latest of that is that it is intending to demolish an historic stand. There is a Facebook page called "Friends of Caulfield Racecourse Reserve" and one can get the occasional snippet on that.

We don't know if Melbourne Football Club will lease some of our land as their home base or if local football clubs will get a look-in or not. The dog-walkers want clarity and consultation....*"a voice at the table"*...but it does seem that the *"big boys"* reign supreme.

Are we surprised?

Planning applications in and around Malvern East

6A Central Park Rd. Pt. dem. bldg. and works to dwelling in H.O.

3/1 Erica Av. Glen Iris Pt. dem. & construction of alterations and addns.to existing 2 storey dwelling.

Menzies Malvern 1306 High St. Malvern Internal alterations on gr. Fl. To convert Unit 122 from accommodation to games room.

93 Claremont Av. Malvern Demolish a bldg. in H.O. Construct a bldg.. in H.O.

22 Thanet St. Malvern Pt. dem.& wks to building in H.O.

9 Chadstone Rd. Medical Centre. Alterations to existing carpark area and minor alterations o existing bldg. in GRZ.

28 Edsall St. Malvern Demolition of a swelling on a lot less than 300sq.m. in NRZ & H.O. Application for replacement bldg. will be advertised.

64-66 Chadstone Rd. Construction of 6 dwellings and waiver of visitor Car space req.

28 Batesford Rd. Construction of 2 double storey dwellings.

26 Millewa Av. Construction of 2 double storey dwellings.

11 Royston Av. Proposed ground floor and upper floor additions.

26 Clarence St. Pt. dem. & additions to rear of dwelling.