



# Malvern East Group

## MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

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### MEG NEWSLETTER....NOVEMBER/DECEMBER....2016

#### From the Convenor's Desk

Alas, no time to write Sept./Oct. newsletter! The Forum for Council Candidates took considerable time and effort to organise. We contacted all the candidates. We also contacted Residents' Groups (of which there are too few in Stonnington), Traders' Groups and our own personal contacts in Stonnington. As you can imagine all of this takes considerable time. It's difficult and SO time-consuming trying to get information about groups from the Council website about which I could write a book!

As I write this the Council election is over and we have some surprising results. After a period away from Council Sally Davis has returned to East Ward, Judy Hindle to South Ward and Steve Stefanopoulos also to South Ward. Re-elected were Melina Sehr, John Chandler, Matthew Koce and Jami Klisaris. Jami moved from North Ward to East Ward. New councillors are Glen Atwell in East Ward and Marcia Griffin in North Ward. Cr. Jami Klisaris is the Mayor of Stonnington.

#### MEG Membership Subscriptions

Thanks to all the people who have joined MEG this year. If you haven't renewed your membership since July 1/16 this is the last newsletter you'll receive. Thank you for your past support.

#### Our Tree Canopy

It seems that every day there are reports of tree removal. All of the significant trees in the strip along Dandenong Rd. service lane from Tooronga Rd. to Finch St. have gone to make way for high-rise 'stuff.' Hundreds of old growth trees are being removed so that Sky Rail can be built along the railway line from Caulfield to Dandenong...hundreds more along the Frankston line. On Sept. 2 The Age reported that *"a 700m stretch of the leafy boulevard between Dorcas St. and Kings Way is set to be stripped of its established plane and elm trees when the Domain Station is built."* A residents' group has been established to try to save the 220 trees along St. Kilda Rd. that are marked for destruction. The Government could dig deeper and save the trees but that's not going to happen.

It was reported in Council Notice Paper September 19/2016 that Stonnington loses 1000 trees every year. The trees must be destroyed to make way for... (you've guessed it)..development! And it's all done in the name of progress. MEG weeps!

And those who are "pro-development and anti-over development" please note that when we suffer from excessive heat, loss of shade, loss of restorative greenery and even more pollution your "pro-development" buddies are to blame.

**Snoring!** A short article in the Herald Sun (Aug.30) indicated that new research suggests that snoring *“may be caused by traffic pollution.”* Don’t forget that one of the many advantages of saving the trees is that they absorb pollution.

### **Slash ‘n’burn in the suburbs.**

We saw this heading in a newsletter we received from the Planning Backlash network. The letter-writer was from Mt.Waverley and he wrote,  
*“The amenity and family character of our suburbs is slowly and relentlessly being destroyed. cashed-up foreign investors/developers methodically slash and burn their way through street after street with at best inappropriate but, more typically, intrusive and tasteless rebuilds. Their sheer visual bulk is intimidating, often grossly intrusive to existing residents’ privacy denying neighbours natural access to the skyscape and quite unsympathetic to a greener environment.* One could almost say that we’re in a **no-Wynne** situation!

### **Infrastructure Report**

No doubt you read about the report regarding infrastructure needs for Victoria....only it didn’t really mean the State of Victoria...just for Melbourne.

On Oct.11 the Herald Sun reported that Lindsay Fox is a bit miffed about the contents of that report which, incidentally, has been dismissed by Premier Andrews. Apparently no-one spoke to the local billionaire about what is proposed and he deemed that to be *“ludicrous”* and said that governments *“suffered from paralysis by analysis and he questioned why they did not seek advice from transport companies when making big decisions.”* He added, *“One way to ease chronic congestion was for satellite cities to feed a rapid transport system.”*

Well, well...we’ve got Lindsay Fox on our side. Satellite cities! MEG suggested that years ago and was ignored and it looks as if Lindsay Fox is to be ignored too!

### **Meanwhile.....the population issue**

In the Age on September 23 we read that the *“State Population Passes 6 Million.”* It wouldn’t be so bad or frustrating or so ludicrous to have such a population if it weren’t the fact that 4 and a half million are in one city which is growing at the rate of 100,000 a year while *“at the same time you’ve got country towns crying out for greater population.”*

There is a number of ‘seed projects’ in Victoria that could do with Government assistance. If this were forthcoming the population pattern would slowly change. We are aware of a number of these projects.

‘The Painted Silo Trail’ in the far west of the Mallee which is in its infancy and is already attracting tourists to hamlets such as Brim and Patchewollock. ..”Australian Eatwell Factory in Donald has a staff of 15 and is making tofu out of locally grown chick peas...Lake Tyrell at Sea Lake in the Mallee is attracting hundreds of Chinese tourists who are drawn to the area by this ‘mirror’ lake...the ‘Luv-a-Duck’ factory in Nhill was ready to close some years ago until it was staffed by the Karen people from Myanmar...Melbourne University, Princeton University and the University of Rome are partners in a huge project at Stawell which involves building a vast tunnel in an old gold mine so that trucks can be driven toward the centre of the earth allowing scientific investigation into *“dark matter.”* This will draw scientists from all over the world.

These are the ones we know of in the north-west of the State. There are many projects in country Victoria that have the potential to draw population to country areas but it’s a sad

fact that successive governments in this State have been Melbourne-centric and the one we've got now is just the same!

### **More about Regional Victoria**

Our views are supported by a letter-writer in the Herald Sun on Sept.4. He wrote...  
*"Let's remember that Melbourne is part of Victoria, a state whose many regions offer stunning lifestyles and delights. .... Victoria boasts many features of regional Italy or regional France and should promote itself as such and boost the efforts of many artisan and gourmet developments in places like Rutherglen, Millawa, the King Valley, etc."*  
And he wrote more!

### **Did you know that....?**

London has only 13% of the UK's population. Melbourne has 75% of Victoria's population and it occupies a little more than 1% of the total area of the state. Ludicrous!

### **The building trap**

In the Sunday Age Sept.25 Aisha Dow wrote that, *"Almost 3000 complaints about defective and unsatisfactory workmanship were made to Consumer Affairs Victoria during the past financial year."* She was talking about the flawed work being carried out in apartment buildings. It also happens in single houses. She wrote about *"cracked and leaking buildings, glass that falls out of high-rise dwelling, diluted paint, windows that are not quite square, sinkholes and car-park fumes that funnelled directly into living areas."* There is poor enforcement of construction standards and cheap materials being used. This matter was on the Agenda of the CCC when we last met with the Planning Minister. He assured us that it would all be dealt with when he introduces the second part of his legislation regarding the building industry...probably in December.

Gad! We wouldn't want any more disasters to happen before December and we would certainly want this Bill to have more teeth than the Minister's "Objectors' Bill."

### **Minister set to have increased densities in Melbourne's south and east.**

It beggars belief that this Minister or any other Minister could consider increasing density in Stonnington. Ex-Planning Minister Guy allowed a mere 37.5% of Stonnington to be in the NRZ, a zone which has a 9m height limit and which allows only 2 dwellings per lot. This is, we believe, the lowest percentage of NRZ in any municipality in Victoria. Neighbouring municipalities were granted roughly 80% NRZ with a height limit of 7m. We are acutely aware of the fact that this is probably another 'no-Wynne' situation for us.

### **Scott Morrison and the States**

In The Age Oct. 25 we read that the Treasurer wants to make houses more affordable and he wants the States to do this by doing something *"to improve planning processes and the provision of infrastructure..."* and to this end he's going to discuss with the States, *"the potential to remove residential land use planning regulations that unnecessarily impede housing supply and are not in the broader public interest."* Sometimes words fail us!

### **News about costs at VCAT**

(The Age Oct. 24) Escalating costs at VCAT at virtually priced residents out of this Tribunal the aim of which is to dispense "natural justice"...whatever that means in VCAT terms! The

latest impediment to justice, natural or otherwise, is a new category called “complex case.” Residents in Somers have appealed against a Council decision to pave a pathway through the village and a week before the commencement of the hearing the applicants were notified that the cost of the process would more than double from \$4098 for a 4 day hearing to \$9407.

We have not been told what defines a case as **complex** nor have we been told **who** decides whether a case is complex or not. And nor have we been told who set the price! We really don't need Scott Morrison to tell us to make the planning process easier when it's already hit rock bottom. There's hardly any obstacle against the concrete pourers left.

### **Better Apartments???**

Minister Wynne told members of the CCC at our last meeting he had been “*persuaded*” that good design would overcome the need to mandate minimum apartment sizes. Three guesses about who or what ‘*persuaded*’ him. MEG, other residents’ groups and many Councils disagree wholeheartedly with him and his ‘persuaders.’ We should have an announcement about the new rules in December and if Mr. Wynne and his ‘persuaders’ have their way, “*Developers will still be able to build the smallest apartments they believe buyers will stomach.....*” (Age Aug.3)

### **NOW FOR SOME LOCAL SNIPPETS**

#### **Not getting the Leader?**

Ring 9819 1139. Give your name and address. Every week that you don't get the Leader ring this number. Persistence works.

#### **Parking problems? Feel like having someone booked for blocking your access?**

Ring Tenix on 9526 2833. Skip the menu and go straight to 5. Give your address and reason for ringing. The offending vehicle will be booked.

#### **Want an answer from Council...about anything?**

Using *Item (e)* on the Council Notice Paper (Questions from the Public) lodge your question in writing or on email before noon on the day of a Council Meeting. Sadly your question won't be read out.... (for some extraordinary reason Council keeps these matters secret!)....but you will receive an answer in writing within 10 working days from a member of staff.

#### **Ward Meetings**

There have been no Ward Meetings this year. When MEG made enquiries about this we were told that “it was just one of those years that we didn't have Ward Meetings” .Gosh! Let's hope the new Council sees some value in consulting directly with its constituents.

#### **Hedgeley**

No doubt you've all heard of the Hedgeley Dene Precinct and the Hedgeley Dene gardens but have you all been invited to visit ‘Hedgeley’ on Nov.19 to join Little Projects for champagne and high tea? In case you hadn't realised the development on what was the Dairy Bell site is called “Hedgeley.” What the relationship is between the real ‘Hedgeley’ and the multi-dwelling development at 60 Belgrave Rd. escapes us for the moment but no

doubt when we see a replica of Hedgeley Dene Gardens rising up on that corner site we will be enlightened. Does anyone know just how far this site is from the actual Hedgeley Dene Precinct? MEG is in a state of bewilderment. All too quaint for us!

### **Chadstone Shopping Centre**

We're never short of a tale about this monolith. Did you hear on the news on September 14 that a driver was challenged by a man with a shotgun in one of the carparks? Fighting for a car park is one thing ...threatening to kill someone for a car park is something else!

Also heard on radio (Nov. 13) that a woman was threatened by a man with a knife just as she was getting into her car in an underground car park. How many security guards are employed at the shopping centre? MEG heard that there were **four!** Could that be true? Wouldn't want anything awful to happen would we?

The 6 storey massive extension on the northern side of site has been opened with much fanfare and is (in our humble opinion) unspeakable!

The 11 storey hotel beside the 10 storey office block is the next item on the agenda.

N.B We asked one of members who lives near CSC to tell us what it's like living there. Once she started she couldn't stop so her story is in an attachment to this newsletter.

### **191-193 Wattletree Rd.**

The long-running saga of this site is over. With a single house covenant on each lot and the existing housing straddling both lots it could only be sold as two lots or one package with the house. It has been on the market for some years and there have been more than one unsuccessful Supreme Court actions and one VCAT appeal to try to have the covenant broken. All attempts failed and finally buyers have been found for each lot. We assume that the existing house will be demolished and a new house will be built on each lot. We understand that the height limit at this address is 13.5m and no Planning Permit is required for a single house on a lot over 500sq.m.

### **Sky Rail**

One of the MEG Committee members has taken a keen interest in this project which will affect so many of the Malvern East community. All we hear about is destruction of hundreds of trees, the damaged environment, the hardships being endured by residents and traders, the lack of consultation between Government and residents. A group of residents has taken their case to the Supreme Court to try to put a stop to the process and have the Government adhere to the original plan which was to put the rail underground in the same way that was done with the Burke Rd. crossing in Kooyong. The court has not reached a decision. The Judge seems to be unable to nail "the point of law" on which the residents' case is based.

### **Cabrini Hospital**

VCAT has overruled a Council decision ...(are we surprised???) ...and granted a Permit to Cabrini for a 7 storey plus building which incorporates patients' suites that are modelled on those of a luxury hotel and which are larger than some of the apartments we see being thrown up by go-getting developers...no less than 27sq.m. Council was represented by one barrister and Cabrini was represented by a Q.C., an instructing solicitor and 8 expert witnesses. MEG is not sure how Council thinks it can win such cases when their

representation is so limited and the applicant's so extensive. Out-gunned, out-manned, out-moneyed! WHERE does a "not for profit" organisation get the money for a development costing \$82 million PLUS the enormous expense of such representation? Beggars belief!

### **Two Malvern East sites sold.**

In Business Age Oct.29 it was reported that "*a consortium of local and interstate investors is paying \$9.7 million for a former Sheridan Hall aged care home at 16-24 Castlebar Rd.*" The 3884sq.m. site was marketed as having potential for a multi-level structure. (Surprised??) The address of the other Malvern East site with an area of 1680sq.m. is not stated but it was sold by Allard & Shelton for \$6.75million.

### **Information re Planning Applications and VCAT Hearings**

It has been our practice to list the applications and VCAT hearings in which MEG members may be involved but Council now has a different way of listing these. It's called **ePlanning**...and it's SO HARD to deal with...and SO TIME-CONSUMING...that we need an army of people to sort it out...AND experts! The system is not yet finalised but will be in a few weeks at which point the **Advertised Material** section will disappear and all information will only be available on **ePlanning**. Residents will still be advised of applications near their homes and you will be able to view the file at the Planning Department. MEG has had help from Council staff in finding out the following information.

### **Some of the Planning Applications around Malvern East**

**728 Waverley Rd.** Multi-dwelling dev. In GRZ7. Height limit 10.5m Cons. Mtg.

**63 Argyll St.** Changes to driveway (from the Boulevard) & nearby retaining wall heights to gain minimum ground height. (No changes to Permit for the building.

**34 Sydare Av.** Alt. & addns. To dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m.

**2 Maroora St.** 3 lot subdivision.

**65 Argyll St.** Secondary Consent Amendment to alterations to internal layout.

**61-67 Chadstone Rd.** Bus shelter signage.

**1259 Dandenong Rd.** Extension to dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m.

**2 Camino Terrace** Dual occ. on a lot in NRZ and on land subject to inundation.

**60B Belgrave Rd.** Creation of easement.

**6 Millewa Av.** Dual occ. in NRZ.

**64 Millewa Av.** Dual occ. in NRZ.

**Penpraze Park** 2 lot subdivision.

**59 Paxton St.** Multi-dwelling construction in GRZ.

**27 Sutherland St.** Dual occ. in NRZ.

**116 Argyll St.** Dual occ. in NRZ

**114 Argyll St.** Dual occ. in NRZ.

**N.B.** Note the number of dual occs. These sites will be moonscaped and the bare minimum of landscaping will appear. Most of the site(s) will be taken up with buildings and paths. Our trees are disappearing at an alarming rate.

## Living Near Chadstone

By Janine Halls

When my parents and grandparents built their new homes, one street apart, in the Malvern Gardens Estate in 1950, little did any of them know that within ten years their peaceful, recently semi-rural suburb would become the site of Chadstone, the Garden Centre. At first it was a fairly small shopping mall, and there was also room initially for the Good Shepherd Convent, St Anthony's school and a Catholic University campus on the site of former farmland. Over the years these were all closed, demolished and swallowed up by the ever expanding behemoth shopping centre, which has now morphed into a "super regional shopping centre".

Despite living so close, my mother and grandmother were always rather reluctant to shop there, and maintained their loyalty to small businesses in East Malvern, Carnegie and Oakleigh for the rest of their days. However we all shopped there, and for convenience I visit several times a week. You could say I have a love/hate relationship with it. I still shop elsewhere for balance!

My family actively participated in community consultations between the residents and the shopping centre management in those early days, and meetings were often held in someone's home. Noise and vibrations from the passing buses was the big issue. My nana's ornaments used to rattle whenever a bus rumbled past, which was many times a day. At first Chadstone actively fostered good neighbourly relations, with an auditorium, in which my mother organised guinea pig shows; there was a 3UZ radio studio, a hexagonal building with glass windows, through which you could watch the presenters do their shows. There were fashion parades, a police station and very little disruption to nearby residents, apart from the buses. Over time, however, this changed. Noise, traffic jams, rubbish, tagging, crime and the ubiquitous noise from buses were all detrimental to neighbourhood amenity. Late night shopping brought night long traffic snarls and noisy groups of people wheeling trollies down the streets in the middle of the night.

Crime often brings the police helicopter, which may hover overhead for what seems like hours. You are then nervous to go out of your house, as there may be criminals on the run, and instils a sense of insecurity in your own home and backyard. With inadequate security at the centre, crime is ever present. One Boxing Day I walked past a car parked in the car park, which contained the dead body of a Burwood butcher, who had been murdered and dumped at Chadstone. It smelt, but I didn't know what it contained till later.

With centre management for many years purchasing peripheral properties, there are many unkempt houses in the area, which detracts from the neighbourhood appearance. No doubt these properties will in time be incorporated into the "envelope" in order to cater for future expansion. The latest development at the northern end is merely one step in already planned future expansions, and I am sure that Chadstone will continue to grow outward and upward, for who knows how far and how high. I am sure that Chadstone will eventually completely cover most of the block Dandenong Road, Chadstone Road, Midlothian Street and Warrigal Road. It is only a matter of time. Thankfully, I will probably be dead and buried before my house is "acquired"!