



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

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MEG NEWSLETTER....September/October 2021

From the Convenor's desk

We received notice of the Review of Plan Melbourne 2050 from a non-government source. Mr Wynne's department DELWP didn't bother to contact all stakeholders. I'm not sure why MEG was not notified but who can ever understand the foibles of Government departments, particularly the one that deals with what is whimsically known as **PLANNING and Environment, Land and Water** as well!

Mary Drost, Convenor of the Planning Backlash Network, also let us know about this opportunity to "have our say."

I suppose MEG needs to understand that it's faintly possible that DELWP doesn't really want to know what we think. We've told them anyway and we hope you have done so.

Please find our submission attached.

(N.B. The Toorak Residents Group has just sent me an email with a Media Release re an 'Inquiry to examine the Planning & Environment Act.'
It just NEVER stops and when we tell them what we think we are ignored!

City's new design mantra: Cut the 'crap' The Age Oct.12

Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece says that Melbourne has too many "crap" buildings. *"...it's time to end featureless glass towers and monotonous walls that benefit developers not the public."* What a relief to know that someone is saying it the way it is. The City Council has appointed 40 people to a "Design Excellence Advisory Committee." MEG notes that a member of that committee is Karl Fenders. Mr Fenders was the architect of that 18 storey 'thing' on the corner of Dandenong & Tooronga Rds. As we have never heard one person giving that an accolade, we're not too sure of what to expect from this new committee for the CBD. We can but hope!

Fewer people calling Victoria home...The Age...Sept.17

Not surprising, is it?

"Victoria is now home to 43,000 fewer people than at the start of the pandemic, making it the only state to record a drop in population since coronavirus hit Australia.

The state shrank by about enough people to fill Wodonga....."

"Every other state recorded an increase....." CommSec's senior economist Ryan Felsman said that *"the Victorian decline was the first since June 1981 and was influenced by lockdowns."* (We lead the world in lockdowns!)

State Government can now actually DO something about decentralizing the state and we have mentioned this in our submission to DELWP. (See attached document.)

City's exodus to regions sparks new 'gold rush' The Age..Sept. 3

"The largest exodus of people to regional areas from Australia's major cities since the 19th century gold rushes, along with a surge in working from home, will force a re-think of how infrastructure is put in place."

We wrote about that very topic in our submission to DELWP re the Review of Plan Melbourne 2025. Will anyone in State Government take this to heart and ACT ON IT? We doubt it but we live in hope.

"Infrastructure Australia's latest report looks to draw together policy changes and new approaches to infrastructure delivery, while identifying areas of greatest need."

MEG will be interested to see what they come up with this time!

In a Letter to the Editor on Oct.28 a writer from Werribee wrote,
"Labor also needs to curb the movement of tree-changers to the bush, which is its nature and making housing unaffordable."

Well that's a bit bewildering, isn't it?

State Government Planning Reforms

On September 20 Council discussed the various amendments that have been made to rules surrounding the vexed question of what is known as PLANNING in Victoria. MEG notes that certain members of Council staff across the State were consulted about these and were forced by State Government to sign **Non-Disclosure Agreements**. An astonishing action on the Government's behalf! Is it **legal** to do that?

Were members of the staff at Stonnington consulted? MEG doesn't know. The Amendments give the Minister unprecedented powers. The changes outlined in Amendment C148 have already been made. This one does not allow residents to object to any additions made by private schools. Such applications will go straight to the Minister. Residents will not even receive notification. Essentially the Government wants what is known as 'tick-box' development....(Code Assess...That's applications where the developer does the assessment!!)

State Government wants **FASTER** and **FAIRER** development

.... **CERTAINTY** (for developers) **CONFIDENCE** (developers to have less scrutiny) and **INTEGRITY** in planning decisions.

(There's a few oxymorons in that lot! Integrity? So help us!)

All power lies with the Minister.

There is talk of setting up a body over VCAT.

There are another 2 Amendments....C194 and C196. A Melbourne City Councillor describes C194 as an "*absolute over-reach*" and C196 as a "population Ponzi scheme."

MEG is not yet familiar with the details of these so-called amendments but we are aware that the Minister has already assumed even greater powers than he previously had and that Ministerial "call-ins" have become the norm.

The very thought of it is a high-rise nightmare!

On September 20 Stonnington Council voted to write to the Minister about this assumption of so much power while deploring the confidentiality agreements with staff.

We hope you made a submission to DELWP re

Melbourne's Future Planning Framework Review.

Yes, we did say 'confidentiality agreements' with STAFF...not councillors and certainly not residents. It beggars belief that a State Government can go to members of Council staff and discuss amendments to the planning scheme, force them to sign non-disclosure agreements and then proceed with the amendments.

Councillors are of course deeply resentful of this because they consider that they are the first port of call.

Stonnington Mayor reported to Toorak Residents Group that 10 mayors had sought a meeting with the Minister during October and were more than miffed that he sent a member of his staff to have a chat with them rather than his making an appearance. It is MEG's experience that Mr. Wynne is quite *averse to* meeting with residents and apparently he doesn't like councillors either. The MAV is on his list of 'dislikes' too. There's really no end to the list of people Mr. Wynne doesn't like to have a chat with. As a result of this **non-meeting** Stonnington Mayor Hely made an offer to the Toorak Residents Association to organize a Zoom meeting for residents and ratepayers to discuss this situation. MEG has written to the Mayor requesting that our members be included in such a meeting.

"We need our parks" The Age October 24, 2021

In a letter to the editor Rosemary West wrote about Mr. Wynne creating a 'Golf Course Redevelopment Advisory Committee' to consider development of Kingswood Golf Course, "the green heart of Dingley Village" AFTER the Council had refused a housing development for the land. (8,000 objections to that proposal but this Minister is never daunted by resident opposition.)

"Mr. Wynne is riding roughshod over the wishes of the local community, the authority of council, local democracy and over the planning scheme he is supposed to protect."

She writes, "He says he wants a construction-led recovery, **but one lesson from COVID-19 is how much we need our local parks and open spaces.**"

You've said it Rosemary!

Ratepayers Victoria Seminars re the Planning Amendments

We were grateful to receive notice from RPV in September that they would hold 3 online seminars about the "horrifying" amendments. MEG attended one of these sessions. At each one there were different councillors from across the State explaining and making comment on what Mr. Wynne 's latest grab for power. This was a huge effort by RPV and we extend our thanks to Dean Hurlston, President of RPV.

Victorian Planning Authority....an update from the CEO

Stuart Moseley CEO of the VPA reported in his recent communication that <

"For the past 18 months we have been focusing on delivering the VPA's Fast Track Program to support economic recovery." He reports further that the VPA will prioritise the workload to **complete the Fast Track Program**. This means that slowly but surely residents will be shut out of Planning Applications. That's what the recent Amendments mean!

The VPA will also *"continue to pilot alternative delivery methods."* That means even more 'shutting residents out of anything to do with planning. The VPA *will continue the Streaming for Growth projects, including 22 grants to councils (eight of which are to regional councils) to unlock local growth, as well as continuing work on the new volume of our Small Lot Housing Code."*

There's more and more of this and it's all to do with hastening GROWTH . It was heartening to see that the VPA is doing SOME work in the regions but the final sentence dampens any hopes that we may have had by telling us that a key priority is

"supporting the planning reform work underway in government."

In an addition to receiving the CEO's update of the VPA's Business Plan there is a letter from Jude Munro, Chair of the VPA , saying that she is pleased that the Board has offered Stuart Moseley a 5 yr. contract commencing on July 1/2021.

More about saving green spaces

(The Age...August 14) For years the Green Wedges have been considered "the lungs of the city" and State Government is conducting "a review of rules that protect Melbourne's Green wedges." In MEG's opinion that can only spell disaster. State Government's 'reviews' of anything that might impinge on development usually end up not being really "green" any more.

"Planning experts are urging the government to strengthen protection for these prized parcels of land, arguing failure to guard against inappropriate development will result in irreversible damage to Melbourne's lungs."

Mornington Shire Council refused an application for a driving range with a "single storey structure with 16 driving bays, toilets and an office on a 20 hectare site." VCAT overruled the Council's decision. Are we surprised? The Government is thinking about this decision.

"The Urban Development Institute of Australia' Victorian chief executive Matthew Kandelaara said his industry recognized the importance of agricultural land near Melbourne but a balanced approach was necessary to support housing affordability." He went on to say, "This is important to ensure a minimum of 15 years of residential land supply to support the ongoing growth of Melbourne."

Have you ever heard such twaddle?
The "ongoing growth of Melbourne" is exactly what is NOT needed.

LOCAL NEWS

Stonnington News...Spring Edition.....see p.3 for the following items.

1. "Discovering local habitat"...2. "Community sporting facilities get green light."

The first article refers to a group called "**Rewilding Stonnington**," the other refers to the \$40 million plus for sporting facilities that 7 councillors have approved for Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park, the project that will destroy 67 trees, 16 of which are significant.

No, the article doesn't mention that. It has a comment by Ms. Klisaris saying how wonderful she thinks it (the stadium) will be.

AT a recent Council Meeting Ms. Klisaris spent some time chastising a fellow East Ward Councillor for using extravagant language when referring to the "*blowout of costs*" for the stadium....now costed at almost \$50 million. "*Not a blowout at all....just normal increases,*" she said. (See her very words about this matter below... a direct quote!)

In 'Stonnington News, Council applauds the efforts of the "Rewilding Stonnington" group while Council itself "dewilds" a park. Is there something out of whack here or are we just bewildered for the sake of being bewildered?

The Stadium....Stonnington Leader ...Sept. 24

The cost has blown out to \$49.9 million! Might as well say \$50 million! Ms Klisaris is quoted in the article, saying she would ...

"...continue to be a crusader against things (that are) misrepresenting the project or are inflammatory. We costed this project two years ago, this is not a sudden increase, this is measured, considered and due to factors out of our control," she said. "It is not a blowout I will continue to push back on the use of inappropriate language on this project and how positive this will be for the community."

One would be forgiven for even THINKING that wretched stadium isn't an inflammatory issue.....wouldn't one?

Prahran Square

At a Council Meeting in October, someone announced that Prahran Square (that great mass of concrete in Cato St.) which ran over budget by about \$50 million received an AWARD! Whoever doles out these architectural awards really needs some educating. We now have Cabrini's 'louvre lovely' with a GOLD Award,' the concrete pour in Prahran awarded something or other and an award from U.D.I for that high-rise mess just over the railway line between Station St. and Normanby Rd. in Caulfield.

173 Burke Rd. Glen Iris

Woolworths bought this site for approximately \$30 million and appointed "Time & Place" as developers of the site for a 9 storey development with a supermarket, bottle shop and 5 levels of apartments at ground level and 3 basement parking levels. The site is at the northern edge of Commercial Zone 1 in this Small Neighbourhood Activity Centre on the corner of Burke Rd. & Hope St.

Local residents are outraged at this proposal and have taken immediate action. A petition was organized, a letterbox drop went to every street in the surrounding area and posters for display on fences appeared in the neighbourhood. Members on email are aware that MEG did a mailout of the petition and we congratulate the residents in the area of Central Park for the huge effort they have made in "letting people know."

The application has been refused by the Planning Department **under delegation**. The applicant may appeal to VCAT against the Refusal within 60 statutory days of receiving this notice OR they may prepare a new application and lodge it with Council.

Worst case scenario is that Minister Wynne will 'call it in' and give it 'the nod.'
To our knowledge he's done that 3 times in Stonnington...so far!

94 Burke Rd.

This is one of the seemingly endless 3 storey, multi-unit developments in Burke Rd. It was refused by Council and is at VCAT this week. A quick look at the documents showed this gem of a statement....*"the significant trees is a design restraint."* If **all** significant trees were 'design restraints' there'd be **no stadium in a park!**

Stonnington Leader...Sept.24

"An inner city council has backed a climate emergency plan that encourages people to stop eating meat, avoid overseas flights and ditch their cars."

Yes, you're right! It's our very own Council.

MEG understands that they also want us to replace any gas stove tops, gas barbecues and gas heating we may be using and to wash our clothes only in cold water.

Crs. Griffin and Lew believe that these suggestions go *"beyond the remit of a local government."* Greens Councillor Scott disagreed and the Mayor agreed with him...as did the rest of the seven. (Remember that Cr. Scott showed his 'green' credentials when he voted to destroy the 4 significant trees at 18 St. Georges Rd? A true Green!!)

It is MEG's understanding that they didn't vow to stop using artificial turf on Council property. Stonnington Council has been an enthusiastic purchaser of that global warming stuff. We'll have to watch that carefully from now on while we save up to replace any gas appliances...AND buy electric cars or scooters...and do our research about recycling of batteries that we will need for all the electricity we will be using!

1755,1757-1759,1761-1763 & 1765 Malvern Rd. Glen Iris

You might remember that this is an application from Korowa for a Primary School and Day-care Centrewith swathes of artificial turf! The applicant has lodged an appeal to VCAT for Council's FTD (Failure to Determine) within 60 statutory days. Objectors to the application are seething. Councillors have offered to have a Consultative Meeting with them to discuss strategy at the VCAT hearing. The applicant is not obliged to attend such a meeting.

145 Finch St.

This application was for demolition of the existing dwelling and construction of a new 2 storey house. Although it is in the Gascoigne Estate the house itself did not have a heritage listing. An East Ward Councillor in supporting the demolition said *"..this is not a beautiful house....or charismatic..."* MEG is uncertain about what criteria she used to describe a house as *"not charismatic."*

Meanwhile in Haverbrack Avenue..Malvern

(The Age ...CBD...Sept 9).....The home of Robert Menzies and Dame Pattie at 2 Haverbrack Av. has been razed. It had no heritage listing. Spokesperson for Mr. Wynne said, *"The council study found that although the place was of historical significance to the municipality there was insufficient remaining historic fabric."* MEG would have thought that the home of an Australian Prime Minister would have 'historical significance' to the whole country not just to this municipality!

Ah well....it probably wasn't charismatic either!

Some Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

32 Tooronga Rd. 'At home' cake business with one full-time employee working 9-5 Mon. to Sunday.

85 Finch St. Alterations & additions to dwelling in H.O.

2 Villers Square Alterations & extension to existing dwelling. Demolish/construction in H.O.

16 Turner Pt. dem. Bldg. & works to dwelling in H.O.

2 Alcalá Av. New construction of two storey dwelling.

- 153 Manning Rd.** Multi-unit dev.
- 5 Tollington Av.** Install solar panels on dwelling in H.O.
- 24 Prior Rd.** Convert to rooming house with long-term residents.
- 98 Manning Rd.** P. dem., bldg. & works to dwelling in NCO & SBO.
- 8 Boardman St.** Ext. & re-furbishment to existing dwelling.
- 6 The Rialto** Dem. & constr. Of 2 dwellings in NRZ, H.O. & SBO
- 64 Brunel St.** Constr. Of 2 dwellings in GRZ.
- 16 Central Park Rd.** Pt. dem., bldg. & works to dwelling in H.O.
- 149 Burke Rd.** Ext. to rear of bldg.. use of private office to first fl. & private office and gym on ground floor.
- 3 Spring Rd. Malvern** 2 double storey townhouses.
- 56 Belgrave Rd.** 2 dwellings on a lot in GRZ.
- 11 Kingston St.** Pt. dem. & constr.of bldg. & wks to dwelling in H.O.
- 45 Finch St.** Dem. & construction of 2 storey bldg.. in NRZ & H.O.
- 13 Vickery St.** Constr. Of new dwelling.
- 15 John St.** Constr. of new dwelling in NRZ & NCO.
- 56 Belgrave Rd.** 2 dwellings.
- 11 Kingston St.** Pt. dem. & constr. of bldgs. & works to dwelling in H.O.
- 17 Burke Rd.** Pt. dem., alterations & addns. to dwelling in H.O.