



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

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MEG NEWSLETTER...SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023

From the Convenor's desk

It's not easy writing about local matters when there is so much 'awfulness' in the world but we'll continue with the local 'bits & pieces' because they're always with us and because we have a need to know about where we live.

The antics of our various levels of government in Oz provide, if nothing else, a channel of relief for a moment or two from the tragedies of the war(s) and sadnesses that happen in our world.

I only had to read the article about Malvern East in The Age on October 24 to make me smile for a moment or two.

"Malvern East hides its light under a bushel, or rather a plane tree. If you don't live here it's the kind of suburb you'd whizz by on the way to somewhere else." It manages to be both "affluent and unexciting."

"Malvern East was established not as a destination, but as an afterthought to another place.....adjacent rather than central...one person's dullsville is another's sanctuary."

"While older houses are steadily being gutted, the residents are dedicated to presenting a pleasant exterior that conceals any of the excesses of affluence and behind them looms something excessive and contemporary." The ubiquitous 'box on the back.'

Facadism reigns supreme in Malvern East and is whimsically called HERITAGE.

"The apparent tranquility of this very privileged suburb may be boring to some, while others will view it as a sham. But those of us who enjoy the peace and quiet of the place know we are very fortunate to experience it."

Snippets Did you know that we have in Victoria a RED TAPE COMMISSIONER? We have NO IDEA exactly what he/she does.... nor do we know how much he/she is paid to do it.... nor do we know who has the job.

And another Tim Costello is aghast that Minister Kilkeny has reversed her 3 storey decision about the development on the Frankston foreshore. It's back to 12 storeys.

"I cannot believe a Labor Minister would do this...."

What does the Reverend Tim think Labor Ministers actually **DO?**

Think Commonwealth Games!

The Age Oct.27

More A comment to The Age editor on Oct.11.....

"Are these actually small apartments or just big cupboards?"

From a resident of Wellington Street tower (The Age Oct.22)

"They look at us like we are small fishes and we can't say nothing and we can't do nothing but as long as we try that's all that matters."

Final snippet today

The Age on Oct.11.....*"if we leave it to the market it will be a race to the bottom. We're heading towards New York-style shoeboxes."*

Fire fears raised over widely used cladding The Age September 18

Yes, it's another cladding issue.

"Firefighters have raised concerns about the combustibility and safety of a commonly used cladding product after serious fires at homes around Melbourne wrought worse-than-expected damage and produced toxic smoke."

It's expanded polystyrene which is used as packaging material for various goods. It's called EPS. It's been used for some 20 years WITH a fire retardant and has a finish that looks like rendered concrete.

"It has been used to build many homes and other buildings as it is lightweight and energy efficient." BUT...EPS burns hotter and faster than other products and emits dangerous fumes. It was banned from use in multi-storey apartment blocks in 2021 *"but it is being used widely across the city when building and renovating."*

The hole in city's inner north where hundreds of affordable homes should be

Royce Millar wrote in The Sunday Age on September 17 that *"It's the site of the old Fitzroy Gasworks. Ahead of the 2018 state election, the then Planning Minister Richard Wynne promised an 'unprecedented amount' of public social and affordable housing as part of the 'exemplar' urban development."*

Five years on and nothing has been done!

(Note to Rev. Tim Costello...that's what LABOR Planning Ministers DO.)

The NIMBYs can't be blamed for this aberration. The locals have campaigned for more social housing in their area. Alas, the whole idea was **"subject to state funding."**

"Development Victoria is now in negotiations with developers that are bidding to build private housing on Parcels B and C about how they might incorporate affordable housing across the site."

The site has been remediated and the hole for basement car parking has been dug.

Half way there!!!

Victoria's Housing Statement ... The decade ahead/ 2024-2034

Thanks to our local M.P. Michael O'Brien MEG has a copy of this statement which is introduced with a message from the previous Premier of this State.

Needless to say there's no mention of the site at the old Fitzroy Gasworks.

Must have slipped his mind!

There are some gems amid an excess of WORDS.

For example, there's a small section on **"Making it easier to build a second home...garden units won't require a planning permit if they're less than 60 sq.m."** **"Single dwellings on lots bigger than 300sq.m. where an overlay doesn't exist will be ticked off within 10 days."**

State Government will employ 90 planners to clear the back log. Make good decisions faster and increase housing choices in activity centres.

State Government will build more houses, cheaper houses, closer to where you work!!

In The Age on Oct.11, Jonathon O'Brien of the YIMBY movement says, *"The report advocates reassessing all heritage, neighbourhood character and design overlays in the missing middle zone areas and **abolishing the overlays where an assessment indicates that the negative social impacts of the overlay are greater than its benefit.**"*

MEG says, "What on earth does that mean?"

How does Mr. O'Brien measure 'negative social impacts over benefits'?

Homes or horses? Tussle over track. The Age September 16

Yes, it's the MRC in the news again. We're still waiting for the sporting fields for community use at Caulfield and out at Sandown Racecourse we're waiting for a decision about the 112 hectare site also owned by the MRC which wants to turn it into a new suburb. It needs Dandenong Council to rezone the land and soon the application to rezone will reach the stage of public comment. It's interesting to note that the MRC is exempt from the new "*windfall gains tax*"... (yes, it's another new tax)...and this exemption is worth over \$100 million to the club if it can get the land rezoned.

"The sale of the entire site would be worth hundreds of millions to the club, which wants to use the partial or full sale to help pay for its redevelopment of stands at Caulfield..."

Just how much rent does this Club pay to the people of Victoria
who own the land which it occupies in Caulfield?

There are candidates running for a position on the 10 member Board of the MRC who are opposed to the re-zoning and sale of the land. Some Dandenong Councillors are also opposed to it because of flooding issues and other environmental issues such as the large number of mature trees which will probably be destroyed.

Well, we know what the MRC did with mature trees at Caulfield when it wanted to build. Is something so we don't hold out much hope for those at Sandown if it gets its way on the re-zoning issue. We wish the Greater Dandenong Environment Group all the luck in the world in its opposition to the entire plan.

This information was published before Mr. Andrews abruptly **resigned as Premier** and the article states that he is expected "*to sign off on a new strategy any day with the re-zoning of the Sandown land for homes potentially to be included.*" Well, he's gone and we don't know what's going to happen about Sandown.

Again before the resignation of Daniel Andrews

In The Age on September 24 when the Housing Statement was released we heard of his plan "*to demolish every remaining public high-rise tower in Melbourne and replace them with larger developments of a mix of social and market housing but experts say refurbishing or infilling the existing towers could be cheaper and less disruptive than enmasse re-locations and razing the sites.*"

A study has shown that this could save the government millions and "*the incalculable distress of moving vulnerable residents—by refurbishing the estate and building in-fill units between existing buildings rather than razing and re-building.*"

"According to the government's plan, the 10,000 public housing residents would be moved elsewhere while their buildings are razed and rebuilt."

Where's 'elsewhere?'

VicRoads is to move...AGAIN

The Age...Sept 26

We can't remember when first we heard about VicRoads moving from its large site near Kew Junction but we do remember that it's been going for a LONG time. Now it's been "*deemed no longer fit for purpose.*" Staff will be moved to other sites at Ringwood, Sunshine and the CBD. It's a 2.5 hectare site and could be used to meet the housing targets set by State Government. The Brumby government produced a feasibility study of the site and later the Napthine government re-ignited the debate about this site in 2014 and intended to relocate VicRoads headquarters at Ballarat.

Nuthin' happened!

Just imagine what Kew Junction is going to be like to navigate when it's finally demolished and heaven only knows how much building will go on ...and for how long! It will be 'nightmare time.'

Councils fear being sidelined on housing The Age Oct. 27

We are aware that the Andrews Government released its housing statement over a month ago and local councils say that the vision of increasing housing supply by 80,000 a year in established suburbs will freeze out 'the locals.' They fear they 'will lose decision-making power in the overhaul with government already amending planning rules to enable developers to bypass Council and go straight to the Planning Minister.' You might remember that's what Cabrini has done with its proposed 6 storey development proposed because as the CEO of Cabrini Australia said the hospital needs to build it so that it can be 'competitive.'

LOCAL NEWS

Council Watch

Ratepayers Victoria has been re-named and is now Council Watch. This organisation monitors the activities of all Victorian Local Councils and publishes the news on its website. Individual membership is available as is Group Membership. MEG is now a member of this organisation. For those of you who are interested in how your Council Rates are spent we encourage you to join too.

https://www.councilwatch.com.au/so/06OjZ_DS-?languageTag=en&cid=89b85066-de8f-4ade-ae8d-4fb37070a7aa

From Clarence St. to Finch St.

The site occupied by solicitors Boothby & Boothby for a very long time is For Sale. This is the last site in that section of Dandenong Rd. that hasn't been developed.

At least there are no trees to be destroyed as there has been on all the other sites in that section. Developers even got permission to destroy some significant trees to erect the architectural nonentities that are in that area now.

To plaque or not to plaque

At Council Meeting on October 16 a dilemma arose. Discussion centred around the vexed question of spending money on a plaque or not.

Should there be a plaque on the refurbished Prahran Pool or not? Plaques for refurbishments or plaques for new buildings ... or plaques for what?

As there is no 'plaque policy' midst all the other Council policies and the decision had to be made at the Council Meeting on October 16. Such a dilemma!

One Councillor in favour of plaques seemingly for everything that Council builds or 'does over' said she likes to see the plaques when she walks around Stonnington and can see who was on Council when 'whatever' was done to warrant such expenditure. Another councillor said that plaques are how Councillors communicate to the community what councils do.

Plaques for refurbishments AND new buildings won the day as did the formation of a 'plaque policy' to remove further confusion about this vital matter.

So a plaque will go on the refurbished Prahran Pool AND on that **great concrete blot** on Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park. No question about that one. After all it's a **new** and very expensive lump of concrete officially opened on October 29.

We saw on FB that Stonnington Council was advertising for companies (or anyone) to lease it when the ball players aren't there.

Attempts have been made to lease for events that other expensive piece of concrete situated in Prahran known as PRAHRAN PARK.

Stonnington news

The Mayor announced in the last edition that Council "is embarking on a once in a generation project to transform Chapel Street into one of the greatest streets in the world." (MEG says....Really? Again?) How often has a Chapel St. transformation has been proposed in the life of Stonnington Council? MEG knows of a few so it's a matter of "Here we go again!"

Also in the same edition the Mayor praised "*the high-quality synthetic-surfaced courts for tennis and netball*" at Orrong Park. It is well-known that synthetic surfaces add to global warming.....but who's bothering about such trifles?

Mention is made of the pocket park in Winter St. which is "*bursting with colour just in time for spring.*" The colour comes from the large mural NOT flowering shrubs. At long last tables and seating have been added and that's a plus. Claude Ullin asked MEG many years ago what we thought should be there and we said, "Tables and chairs!"

Toorak Village

The footpaths are being redone in the Village and they are to be edged in **brass**. One trader can't wait to see members of Council on their knees polishing the brass. A ratepayer in one of the arcades hasn't been able to pluck his eyebrows off the ceiling after being told about the brass edging.

There's a plan to upgrade Hawksburn Village too. So far no upgrades for the 'villages' in Malvern East. We guess that's because this suburb is "*not established as a destination*"...except for Chadstone which is nearly not in Malvern East.

Also in Toorak

We read in The Age on September 28 that 14 St. Georges Rd. is FOR SALE for a mere \$50,000,000. "*The boulevard is considered Melbourne's most sought after, alongside Albany Road and holds the city's house price record since crypto king Ed Craven paid more than \$80 million for a knockdown on the other side of the street last year.*"

Corner of Mathoura & Toorak Rds. Bus. Age October 28

The art deco shops on this corner have GONE! Orchard Piper is replacing them with a mixed use development. The same developer owns the Mercedes site in Carters Avenue and there will be a mixed use development there. 428 Toorak Rd. is up for sale on November 30 and in July 2022 "*a host of directors from pharmacy giant Chemist Warehouse paid \$9.25 million for Rokk Ebony salon at 442-446 Toorak Rd.*"

It's called PROGRESS!

833 Dandenong Rd. Boothby & Boothby...Solicitors

From Clarence St. to Finch St. this is the last site to be 'done over.' It's the smallest site in this section of the Dandenong Rd. The rest are all developed with dreary many-storied apartment blocks which replaced a busy **local** shopping centre. All the trees at the rear of the small shops were ripped out to make way for these nonentities. Some trees were deemed to be 'significant' but, as we all know, developers know no bounds and spare no expense when the mighty buck flutters before their eyes.

Some of the planning applications in and around Malvern East

71 Glenferrie Rd. Malvern Proposed bldg and works.

1393 Dandenong Rd. Two level basement and multi-storey residential development.

6 Westgarth St. Pt. dem. at rear. Proposed single storey addn at rear.

14 Henderson Av. Malvern Pt. dem. bldg and works to dwelling in H.O.

2 Prior Rd. Constr. New dwelling on a lot less than 500 in NRZ.

43 Kerferd St. Pt. dem. & constr. Of works & bldg.

27 Forster Av. Proposed townhouses dev.

11 Station St. Malvern Use land as a licensed restaurant & for partial dem., bldg and wks in H.O.

20 Bates St. Single storey addn to existing dwelling in H.O.
710 Waverley Rd. Constr. Of 2 dwellings on a lot in BRZ and NRZ.
60 Abbotsford Av. Constr. additional dwelling on a lot within NRZ.
774 Warrigal Rd. Removal of restrictive covenant within NRZ.
Sunnyside Kindergarten 5 Coinda Pl. Partial dem. in H.O.
46 Central Park Rd. Addns. & alterations to existing double storey residence in H.O.
3/50-52 Tennyson St. Seeking Planning Permit for fence constructed without Permit prior to purchase of property.
32 Karma Av. Ptt. Dem. bldg. & wks to dwelling in H.O.
49 Wheatland Rd. Pt. dem. of existing dwelling on a lot less than 500 sq.m. in H.O.
1 Kerferd St. Alterations & addns. To existing single dwelling, Single storey garage and storeroom.
104 Stanhope St. Malvern Removal of 5 trees in NCO.
29 Glenbrook Av. Dem. & construction of single dwelling on a lot in NCO.