



**BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP INC.**

*Protecting the distinctive features of Blackburn since 1987*

## **BULLETIN**

**Bulletin No. 78**

**September 2012**

### **Calling all Members**

Below is the notice of our Annual General Meeting and an invitation to share in the work of the Committee. At the end of our twenty-fifth year we ask you to consider assisting our efforts to retain what is special about Blackburn. While it is not always easy to understand the urban planning system it has a direct influence on our suburb and it is essential that we ensure that the resident's views are represented in shaping its future. Please contact me or a member of the Committee to discuss.

David Morrison, President.

### **Blackburn Village Residents' Group Inc.**

(BVRG)

## **Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012 at 7.30pm**

**Blackburn Lake Information Centre  
Central Road, Blackburn**

Members and friends welcome.

A nomination form for Committee Members and Office Bearers is enclosed.

We encourage you to support BVRG by joining the Committee. We generally meet bi-monthly and full support and guidance is given to all new-comers. Items for consideration at the meeting must be submitted to the Secretary by email ([bvrg@ymail.com](mailto:bvrg@ymail.com)) or 55 Main Street, Blackburn 3130 no later than 8<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

### **Is your 2012-2013 Membership Renewal overdue?**

If your 2012-2013 membership is still outstanding, we have enclosed a membership renewal form for your use. We value your continuing support and would appreciate your prompt return of the completed form together with your subscription for the current year.

**If you have already paid your 2012/13 membership – we have not included this form.**

### **New Membership Form**

Please find enclosed a 'hot yellow' New Membership application form. We ask you to pass this onto your neighbours/friends who live locally who may have an interest in the activities of BVRG.



## **BVRG Christmas Dinner**

**Friday 7th December 2011  
6.30pm for 7.00pm**

**Clarion Hotel  
Corner Springvale and  
Canterbury Roads, Forest Hill**

**\$48 per person plus drinks at bar prices  
Cash payment required upon arrival  
No BYO**

**RSVP is strictly  
Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

**Email [bvrg@ymail.com](mailto:bvrg@ymail.com)  
or phone Allison on 0413 188 049**

### **New Zones for Old - Uncharted Waters!**

Three years ago the BVRG made submissions on the former State government's proposals to introduce Substantial, Incremental and Limited Residential Zones. That idea eventually disappeared into thin air but the present government has now foreshadowed a wider reform of all Zones with three new Residential Zones; Growth, General and Neighbourhood, as well as two new Commercial Zones replacing the 5 commercial zones currently in place. See Planning Zones Reforms on <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning>

Announcing this on 11<sup>th</sup> July the Minister for Planning hit the right rhetorical note when he described the zone reforms as reflecting what residents have been desperately seeking for many years – clear identification of areas that can grow and strong protection for areas that are designed to be low rise, low density neighbourhoods. He added that these will be at the discretion of the local councils so that it 'will ultimately be the view of the community that will inform which zone best fits where.'

This triumphant heralding of a system of clarity and certainty with local control of zones seems almost too good to be true, not least that the new Neighbourhood Residential Zone will allow mandatory height limits, stricter regulations around subdivisions and the consideration of minimum lot sizes. But the devil is in the detail...

Submissions on the changes closed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012. Along with representatives of other community planning groups, BVRG attended a meeting in mid-August arranged by Brian Tee MP, Shadow Minister for Planning, at which Professor Michael Buxton spoke on the proposed new zones. We subsequently invited Michael Buxton to Blackburn on 22<sup>nd</sup> August to discuss this topic further with us and with representatives of other Whitehorse and local community groups.

BVRG and representatives of Concerned Residents of Whitehorse Action Groups (CROWAG) also met with Julie Reid, General Manager City Development, City of Whitehorse, to seek answers from Council on aspects of the proposed changes.

BVRG's submission concentrated on impacts for Blackburn. Impacts of reforms will have wider repercussions for the Green Wedge areas and rural land as well as urban areas. In essence, BVRG gave qualified support to some of the stated aims but found that many questions remained.

The key issues are:

1. Lack of detail for implementation:
  - What justification is required for transition to residential zone schedules?
  - Lack of transparency of the review and implementation process.
  - What criteria will be considered by Councils to convert existing zones, how will the department assess if criteria has been met, what public notice is required?
2. Loss of resident appeal rights for planning proposals and increased 'as of right' developments (those not requiring a permit).
3. Loss of residential amenity in residential zones including:
  - Commercial creep from 'as of right' commercial developments within 100m of a commercial or mixed use zone (ie. shops, medical centre, offices, service stations, food and drink premises).  
*Note: 'As of right' means that standard provisions (hours of operation, car parking, landscaping, traffic, signage, contribution requirements etc.) don't apply and distinctive interface features such as is in Blackburn will be blended away.*
  - Much smaller lot size is permitted 'as of right' leading to higher dwelling density and vegetation loss, particularly where vegetation overlays are in place. Blackburn SLO's protect vegetation that also provides habitat linkages to Blackburn Lake and Creeklands.
  - No restriction on social or recreational activities for Places of Worship – noise, traffic etc.
  - Increased density – the stated purpose of Residential Growth Zone is medium density, Commercial 1 Zone is high density and Mixed Use Zone is higher density.
4. Shopping centre viability is threatened by dispersal of retail activities from centres:
  - 'As of right' supermarket development in Commercial 2 and Industrial 3 zones (potential loss of anchor supermarkets).
  - Promotion of commercial development at small neighbourhood centres.
  - 'As of right' office development in shopping strips could displace ground floor retail frontages.

The bottom line is that council will lose control of development in commercial zones.
5. Implementation of proposals is likely before consideration of the Metropolitan Strategy and Underwood Report.

**Aspects that could be advantageous (though lacking in detail):**

- Height controls for Residential and Mixed Use zones are possible.
- Existing protection may be retained for Neighbourhood Residential Zone for existing overlays (height controls for Residential and Mixed Use zones are possible although these may not apply to commercial developments in those zones).
- Neighbourhood character may be included in a residential zone schedule.
- For Mixed Use Zones all development must respect neighbourhood character.

## Blackburn Road Rail Crossing Removal

The BVRG sought more details from VicRoads on intended changes to the surrounds of the site during and after grade separation works expected to commence in late in late 2014. In addition to asking for traffic and accident statistics we asked about the proposed future of the existing South Parade gardens and whether any of the parkland alongside the library and in Morton Park would be resumed and what steps would be taken to preserve significant trees in those areas. In addition we asked whether the new station design would enhance pedestrian permeability at the present street level.

We also asked what discussions have taken place with the City of Whitehorse regarding the impact of works on the Library and on the path from Blackburn Road, south of the railway line to Morton Park oval and beyond and whether there was any likely impact on changes proposed under Amendment C143. A response is still awaited.

## Lake Road Parkland

The BVRG and other local groups have joined the Blackburn and District Tree Society in formally seeking to kick-start discussions with Council on the future of the land acquired as public open space in 2008. Despite many requests from BVRG, City of Whitehorse Council has been reluctant to commence the most basic of management plans. Hopefully the detailed concept now submitted by the consortium will generate a more positive response.

## 104 Main Street

As anticipated, following Council's refusal to grant a permit for development of this site the applicant has appealed to VCAT for a review, adding in support that '*...plans may be tweaked to accommodate any perceived shortcomings.*' We trust that the Tribunal will see it as a proposal with too many shortcomings to be rendered acceptable by a few tweaks.

BVRG encourages original objectors including those who may not have followed up with VCAT to endeavour to attend the hearing, when the dates are known, and to lend support to those presenting at the hearing. It is important to provide a 'show of strength' that demonstrates the communities resolve against such developments.

## Blackburn Activity Centre UDF - Amendment C143

The Amendment was presented to Council on 17<sup>th</sup> September and they have requested that it be referred to an independent Panel. It is noted that the interim period set for the related reference documents expires on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013. An extension to allow updating as a result of the rail crossing separation may be necessary.

## Committee News and Membership

If you think that you can assist the Committee or know someone who might do so, please contact David or a member of the Committee (see contact details below).

### Committee Members – Phone 9894 2531 or email [bvrg@ymail.com](mailto:bvrg@ymail.com)

|                |                 |                    |                                |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| President      | David Morrison  | Phone 9894 2531    | 49 Glen Ebor Avenue, Blackburn |
| Vice President | Ray Summers     | Phone 9878 6965    | 55 Main Street, Blackburn      |
| Secretary      | Vacant          |                    |                                |
| Treasurer      | Peng Lee        | Phone 9878 4350    | 5 Patterson Street, Blackburn  |
| Committee      | Ron Grainger    | Phone 9877 3348    | 25 Main Street, Blackburn      |
|                | Mike Taafe      | Phone 0409 800 422 | 16 Eustace Street, Blackburn   |
|                | Allison Summers | Phone 0413 188 049 | 13 Orion Street, Vermont       |